

2008 TURKEY
SPIRITUAL GROWTH #5
TEMPLE AND CULTIVATE
2-9-08

ROGER

Clear up a few matters from the last several sessions.

- The processing God chooses for us is related to the plans God has laid out for us. Training to take care of childcare in church might just be different for the missionary who is sitting blindfolded in the interrogation room, take off blind fold and see wife being raped.

Grace: Martyrs grace to children's worker, he gives children's grace.
But let the children's worker become a martyr—he will give him martyr's grace.

Charles Spurgeon: ready to die on the village gallows tomorrow at noon.

- I don't always want to pray that prayer.
Julie and I: I have had enough. Can't pray it. I have had enough.

But eventually the call returns.

JULIE

Horatio Spafford from Chicago. Sent wife and 2 daughters on a boat to England. He was to finish up some business and join them several weeks later.

Just short of the Irish coast the ship foundered and sank in a serious storm. Daughters lost. Wife rescued and wrote a short telegram: "Saved Alone."

He took a ship in his grief over to England to be with his grieving wife.

Ask the captain to call him when the ship passed over the place where his daughters went down.

Reached the place and he stood by the rail and found his strength in God. He wrote this song: "It is well with my soul.

When peace like a river attendeth my way
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.
It is well...

Though Satan should buffet, though trials
should come
Let this blest assurance control
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate
And has shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my soul.

And Lord haste the day when my faith shall
be sight
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall
descend
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul.

ROGER

As we move into the realm of spiritual young men and women we need to keep in mind the THREE CLASSES OF CHRISTIANS

• <u>SLIDE #</u> : Unsundered	Sundered	Sundered
Deceived	Deceived	Deceived

The most dangerous moment in the life of a spiritual child may well be the moment that he or she decides to go on to maturity at any price—to move from Category One to Category Two. Guaranteed, Satan will offer a counterfeit at that moment. He offered one in the Garden; he will offer one to us when we decide to become spiritual men and women.

“Do you want to be like God?” he asked the first duo. Of course they did. “Here,” he said, “Eat the fruit and you will be like God, knowing good from evil.” But, he omitted the part about becoming like Satan in rebellion and isolation.

Would you like to be a spiritual man or woman at any price? Then, beware, the battle is enjoined. Counterfeits are not all alike—because we are not all alike—but their purpose is the same. They are intended to seduce us into a kind of life that is not the Life at all.

JULIE

Talk about cultivating inner spirit in becoming Spiritual men and women.

•SLIDE #: We must cultivate our inner human spirit in order to become spiritual men and women.

•SLIDE #: First Corinthians 2:10-16: The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God." (Notice that "Spirit" begins with a capital "S".) For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him." (Notice that this word, "spirit," begins with a small letter "s". "In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit (capital "S") of God.

•SLIDE #: We have not received the spirit (lowercase "s") of the world, but we have received the Spirit which is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

•SLIDE #: This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual concerns in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit (*παιχη*) does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. They're foolishness to him. He cannot understand them because they're spiritually discerned.

•SLIDE #: The spiritual man (*πνευμα*) makes judgments about all things but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment. For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him, and we have the mind of Christ"

Notice that the first *Spirit* in verse 10 begins with a capital "S". Also notice that the second *spirit* begins with a lowercase "s" and thus refers to the inner human spirit.

God the Holy Spirit knows and reveals the heart of Christ to man.

Going a step further, Paul declared that the Holy Spirit also reveals the deep things of God to man's spirit. This is one way in which we learn and have the mind of Christ.

The words "Spirit" and "spirit" are the Greek word *πνευμα* (*pneuma*) which means "spirit, breath or wind".

The phrase "man without the Spirit" is the Greek word *παιχη* (*psyche*) which is usually translated "soul". You will recognize "psyche" as the root for the word "psychology." Discerning the difference between a "spiritual" man and a "soul" man—or as the word "soul" is graphically translated here as "man without the Spirit"—is critical as we grow to maturity in Jesus Christ.

ROGER

SLIDE AND DRAW BUILDING:

Adam was created as a perfect three-story building: Body, Soul, Spirit

Perhaps we can understand this best by imagining that Adam was like a three story building. The lower floor was his body. The middle floor was his soul, his self. The upper floor was his spirit where God lived.

But during the fall (Genesis 3:1-6) a spiritual bomb went off inside Adam.

His spirit was decimated—the third floor was totally demolished.

The bomb of self-willed disobedience wrecked great havoc on Adam's entire being. Cracks opened up in the soul and into his body. Adam's mind and body would never be the same.

He was destined to die—both physically and spiritually.

According to Psalm 49, the reason that man is distinct from animals is because he alone has an eternal spirit. Animals have bodies (soma) and souls (psyche). But man is different. He has a "pneuma" (spirit).

JULIE

- **SLIDE** #: GOD DESIGNED MAN WITH THREE PARTS: SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY
- **SLIDE** #: 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "May God sanctify you in your spirit, soul, and body."
- **SLIDE** #: Hebrews 4:12: "The Word of God is living and active, rightly dividing between soul and spirit, joints and marrow."

Word of God = Bible

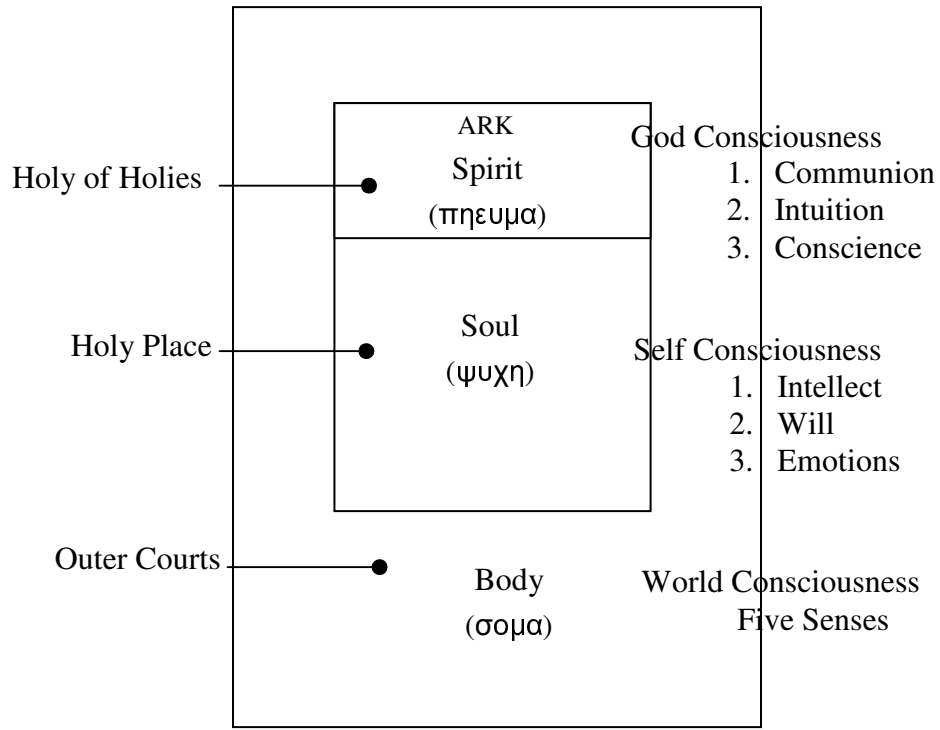
Word of God = Jesus Christ (Holy Spirit to human spirit)

- **SLIDE** #: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

The Old Testament Temple Is A Picture Of Mankind's Physical, Mental And Spiritual Nature. Each Part Of The Temple Had A Different Function

ROGER

Explain Temple



Temple Diagram

JULIE

SLIDE and DRAW: three interlocking circles

Spiritual people are those who hear God speak deep within their spirits, and who then choose to do what God says.

It is possible for a Christian to ignore God's promptings. In that case he or she is living and acting on the basis of their own soul, self and intentions. He or she is now living as a "soul" man or woman.

Satan can never enter into our human spirits. But, he can surely attack our souls. The struggle with Satan is always for control of our intellect, will and emotions.

Satan's goal is to seize the will.
Spiritual battles always go on in the mind.
The battle is always for the will. Who will be in charge of my life? Me or Satan?
God will never take charge. He wants us free so we can be free to choose His way. He will never try to coerce or manipulate us.
Satan has no such values.

BEETHOVEN STORY OF FLOWING WITH THE INNER SPIRIT.

ROGER

ADAM'S AND EVE'S FALL INTO SIN RUINED THE DESIGN (Genesis 3:1-6).

SLIDE and DRAW: Two trees in the Garden: Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil with Adam and Eve standing under the trees.

Two Trees With (1) Intellect; (2) Will; (3) Emotions

In the Fall (Genesis 3:1-6) Satan appealed to:

- (1). Eve's intellect ("God did not say")
- (2). and to her emotions ("she saw the fruit was good to eat")
- (3). and then he had her will ("she took it and ate")

In the Fall Adam was not deceived. He surrendered his intellect. He fell as a result of a calculated, willful decision, and because of his own emotions for Eve. Satan captured his will.

SLIDE: AND DRAW: [Three interlocking circles] All was in balance

SLIDE AND DRAW: At the Fall (Genesis 3:1-6) everything in man was distorted horribly out of proportion. It was like a bomb went off in their human spirits.

Knowledge (and the soul) increased. "They became like God, knowing good and evil." Since the soul is our organ of intellect, the soul got "big" and overly influential within us.

And the human spirit shrunk and was "darkened." It is no longer God-responsive. It is unable to hear the voice of God (1 Corinthians 2:14). Fallen man's human spirit is dead toward God.

SLIDE and DRAW: Diagram of most adults with small spirit, huge soul, and middle-sized body's

God's intention is balanced growth.

SLIDE AND DRAW: BALANCED GROWTH

But, let me show you what usually happens.

SLIDE AND DRAW: Soul increasing and spirit remaining the same.

EXERCISE: DRAW THREE INTERLOCKING CIRCLES TO REPRESENT THE RELATIVE SIZES OF YOUR BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT. WHICH IS MOST LIKELY GUIDING YOUR LIFE? WHY?

CULTIVATING THE INNER-HUMAN SPIRIT

JULIE

- **SLIDE #:** THE INNERMOST HUMAN SPIRIT IS NOT BORN READY TO OPERATE. IT IS IMMATURE AND NEEDS CULTIVATION.
- **SLIDE #:** Luke 1:80: And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.
- **SLIDE #:** 1. PRAY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR INNERMOST SPIRIT.
- **SLIDE #:** Ephesians 3:14-17: For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,
- **SLIDE #:** Ephesians 3:18-19: may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

ROGER

- **SLIDE #:** 2. PRACTICE PRAYING FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

DRAW THREE CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

God speaks from the inside out. Satan attacks from the outside in. This is why so many of Paul's prayers are for the maturing and developing of the inner human spirit.

Many Christians spend more time praying for their sick friends and loved ones to get well than they do praying for the inner-most human spirits of these same folks to be strengthened and matured.

Remember, God's primary goal is to mature our eternal human spirits. Satan often focuses our attention on our bodies which are wearing out.

God will sacrifice the body every time if that is what it takes to mature the spirit.¹

¹ Elton Gillam

God allows and creates circumstances so that we may know Him better. He wants to sensitize our God consciousness. Satan wants to get our minds on our bodies and circumstances in order to desensitize our God consciousness.

When we pray for our spirits to mature with requests like, "God make me like Christ ... make me a man or woman of God ... give me Your wisdom and discernment," then God answers a thousand times out of a thousand.

The most problematic areas in aligning our prayers with God's will are those which have to do with our bodies. When sickness or physical problems occur we may pray, "God, heal my body...make me well...change these circumstances!..." Too often we are totally obsessed with removing pain and tragedies and problems. God, on the other hand is totally obsessed with making us God sensitized in our inner spirits. After all, the human spirit is the only part of us which is fully eternal.

It is a great day when we finally engage with the truth that God often allows sicknesses, calamities, tragedies and difficulties into our lives in order to God sensitize our inner beings. Our bodies are temporal and decaying. God will sacrifice the body every time if that is what it takes to save the eternal!

We can pray to be healed of cancer and be healed seven times. But, eventually, we will succumb to death. Praying for healing is not eternally effective. Life is a terminal disease. Too many Christians get all hyped up over a physical healing. There are no Biblical verses on record which describe angels rejoicing when bodies are healed! On the other hand, the Bible makes it quite clear that the angels rejoice when a lost sheep enters into eternal life.

JULIE

- SLIDE #:** 3. SPEND A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF TIME IN WORSHIP.

John 4: true worshippers will worship God in spirit and in truth.

- SLIDE #:** 4. CULTIVATE THE ART OF PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT AS WELL AS IN THE MIND.

1 Corinthians 14:15: So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.

Pray through prayer list.

Then sit quietly and listen for God to speak deep with in the inner most spirit.

- SLIDE #:** God never reveals the deep things of the Spirit to the Christian who just drops by for a little chat.

The GOAL is to come into a living, intimate relationship with God.

ROGER

- SLIDE #:** MATTHEW 5:8: "Blessed Are The Pure In Heart For They Shall See God."

- SLIDE #:** 5. LISTEN TO GOD AND DO EXACTLY WHAT HE SAYS. DON'T EVER QUENCH THE PROMPTINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1 Thessalonians 5:19: "Quench not the Holy Spirit of God who is within you."

First, how can we be certain it is God who is speaking and not Self or Satan?

GOD SPEAKS IN THE SPIRIT.

SELF OR SATAN SPEAK IN THE SOUL.

1. From the spirit “deep within”

From the soul “not so deep within”

I remember one time we were having a healing service for a woman in our church. She and her husband were very close friends of Julie and mine. She was pregnant with her third child when she got breast cancer.

And the doctors recommended an immediate abortion to stop all the estrogen production that goes along with a pregnancy, which was just fueling the rapid advance of this breast cancer. But she prayed about it and felt like she was going to be okay, that God was going to heal her.

And even so, even if He didn't, she wanted to deliver that baby. So owed it to that baby, and she was going to have that child. So she did. Baby was born, healthy child. This was twenty years ago, that child is still healthy, going strong. But mom died shortly thereafter. Breast cancer.

I remember shortly after the baby was born, we had a healing service with our elders. And I was praying before the service, God, what's your intention here? And I had this deep impression that God said to me, "She's not going to make it. This is one of those sicknesses unto death."

And deep in my spirit, I knew what he was saying. But I shared with you once before that it's possible -- I was in the midst of this prayer meeting, and I was young, and immature, and didn't know how to handle it. I wanted to be encouraging, so I'm sitting there praying, "God, please heal her. Please make her well. This is going to be okay. Can't think of why she ought to die. She's got kids to raise. No, God, you're going to raise her up and ..." I was praying more to encourage the family than I was any kind of deep sense that I was even really praying, because God had already told me, deep within, because I had asked him, she wasn't going to make it.

I remember doing her funeral, not long afterwards. And learning a really good lesson about distinguishing between soul and spirit, and when God speaks, doing what he says.

2. Quiet, Peaceful, Patient, Gentle Leadings

Compulsive, Clamoring, Loud Demandings

1 Kings 19:11-13: "And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'"

Buy this used car.

Relocation outline plan in Colorado Springs: "Glenn will lead Casas."

3. Produces freedom

Produces bondage

Matthew 11:28-30: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Big Burden to lead all of Tucson to Christ. It is one thing to have a sense of the burdened heart of God for the lost of this city. It is quite another to think that it is your responsibility to lead all of Tucson to Christ and if you don't, you have failed.

4. Sense of being "in control"

Sense of being "out of control"

5. Orderly, clear-cut, specific directions

Confused, uncertain wonderings

1 Corinthians 14:40: "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way."

Our call to Tucson

6. Conviction of specific sins

Haunting generalities of guilt

John 16:8: “The Holy Spirit will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness, and judgment.”

Revelation 12:10: “For the accuser of our brother, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.”

7. While consciously seeking God’s mind

Sudden intruding thoughts into the mind

Jeremiah 29:12-13: “Then you will call upon me and come and pray and listen to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Story of neighborhood houses while I was shaving. Told elders. Fiasco.

“Thou shalt not covet your neighbor’s house.” Leads to the next test.

8. 100% Truth (Tested by the Word)

Lies, deceit, and half-truths

2 Timothy 2:15: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, ...and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

Acts 5:3: “Ananias, How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit?”

Woman: “God told me to marry this non-Christian.” Who spoke? Satan or self.

Woman: “God told me to marry this Christian!” Who spoke?

How do you know it was God—and not self or Satan?

How might we quench the Holy Spirit?

When God speaks and prompts, yield and do what He says. Spirit is exercised and grows and matures. If quench the Spirit, human spirit shrivels and shrinks and darkens.

One Sentence Sermon Story.

JULIE

•SLIDE #: LIVE A HOLY LIFE. NEVER GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT BY YOUR SIN.

Ephesians 4:30: "And do not grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

Live a holy life: Don't sin.

We grieve the Holy Spirit when we sin. Christ died to forgive our sins. When we sin, it breaks His heart.

•SLIDE #: MATTHEW 5:8: "Blessed Are The Pure In Heart For They Shall See God."

•SLIDE #: Sin dirties up our inner-human spirit impairs our ability to hear Jesus speak.

ROGER

OVERHEAD: Penelope Windshield Story

•SLIDE #: Confession Is God's Method For Cleansing A Dirty Spirit.

1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins He is faithful to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Washing Clothes Confession Story

Confession restores our fellowship with God so He can speak easily to us after we have sinned. Remember that nothing can impair our relationship with God.

Confess every sin. If can't remember a sin, don't worry about it. H.S. will bring to mind whatever needs to be dealt with!

Jogging Story: Embarrassed by past sin; confessed and could not remember it in the shower 20 minutes later.

•SLIDE #: NOW COMES THE DECISION: WILL WE LIVE BY THE SPIRIT OR BY THE SOUL?

Do what God says.

•SLIDE #: Praying to be a spiritual man or woman is worth it at any price. This is one prayer God is guaranteed to answer.

MIKE BLEVINS STORY and praying to see God's glory.

I was out jogging one morning: "Dear God, sometime before I die, I want to be like Isaiah. I would like to see your glory, high and mighty and lifted up in the temple, just like Isaiah. I want to be like Moses. I want to see your glory."

I remember stopping in my thoughts and thinking, "Whoa, hold it. I mean I'm not Isaiah, I'm not Peter. I'm not Moses, that I could see your glory." Then I thought, "Well, why not?"

Of course in the Bible, God's glory usually appears as light. God tucked Moses behind the cleft of the rock, and God's glory passed by, and his characteristics passed by. And it appeared as light, when Isaiah saw it in the temple. It appeared as light when Peter saw it at the transfiguration.

About six months later, I was preaching one Sunday morning, about ten minutes into my sermon, there was this high school boy, And he picked up this flashlight. It must have been one of those 8 or 10 "D"-cell battery, really long flashlights. And he holds it right at his belt buckle, and he flicked it on, and that light caught me right in the eyes.

And when it did, it was really bright, and my irises kind of shut down, I couldn't see very well. I remember thinking, "Is this rude or what?" So I remember turning my face in the middle of the sermon, and I said to that young man, "Son, would you please turn off that flashlight." And he flicked it off.

Well I preached about ten more minutes, about twenty minutes into my sermon, and the boy takes the flashlight, puts it at his belt buckle again. Next thing I know, he's flicked on the light. And it was so bright. I mean, literally, when it hit me, my irises just shut down. And I realized, I'm looking down at my notes, I can't see my notes, because so little light was coming in as my irises had shut down.

So I was a little bit angry. I remember I stopped the sermon, and I pointed right at him and I said, "Son, would you please turn off that flashlight. I can't see." And he turned off the flashlight.

Well, I was really angry. I said to one of the deacons, "Would you come and dismiss us in prayer?" And while he's praying, I'm making a beeline up the aisle, twenty rows back, so when our deacon said "Amen", I'm standing face to face with this teenage boy, who kept shining this flashlight in my face. I said to him, "Son, I really didn't appreciate you shining that flashlight in my face." He said, "What flashlight?" I said, "What do you mean, what flashlight? I saw that great big flashlight, you were holding at your belt buckle. You were shining it right in my face. I really didn't appreciate that." He said, "I don't have a flashlight."

Well, I was just incredulous. Of course by now, there's some folks gathered around, as the pastor is accosting this boy. "I don't have a flashlight." I remember I bent over, and I looked underneath the pew, and I am thinking, He's got it hidden here somewhere. I stood up and it was on instinct, I said, "May I frisk you?"

Now this boy was a senior in high school. Just turned 18, played football. Local high school. Lineman. Weighed about 280. "May I frisk you?" And he was so shocked, he just raised his arms, and I started patting him down under his arms and down his chest and along his sides, and his coat pockets. And that's about as far as I got. And I'm coming to realize, he doesn't have a flashlight. And I was just stunned.

Of course, mom and dad aren't very happy. Because this boy has been brought to church for nine or ten years while they've been at Casas since he was a child, and he'd never received Christ as his own personal Savior. And one of Mom and Dad's deepest, most heartfelt desires was for this boy to come to Christ. But he hadn't.

And so here he is 18 years old, and here's the pastor, accosting him after the service, accusing him of shining this flashlight, and they were just none too happy.

Well, as I began to realize he didn't have a flashlight, I apologize, will you please forgive me. And he kind of laughed it off, but mom and dad didn't. But he did.

About six months after that flashlight experience, Dad called. said, "Roger, remember about six months ago, when you accused my boy of shining that flashlight...?" and I immediately went into "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, forgive me, Moe."

"No, no, stop it. I didn't call to have you get upset, and make a bunch of apologies," he said. "I called because you need to know what happened last Saturday night." He said, "I got that call that all parents dread. It's 1:30 in the morning, and my boy calls, and says, 'Dad, I'm over at my girlfriend's apartment, can you come over here please. we need to talk to you.' drove over, rang the bell. And my son met me at the door. He said, 'Dad, can you come in and sit down on the couch with my girlfriend and me because, we've been talking, and we want to give our lives to Christ. Would you please pray with us and show us how to receive Christ?'"

And so they did. Dad sat down, explained the Gospel, son and future daughter-in-law both kneeling there at the couch, praying to receive Christ. After they'd finished that marvelous experience, dad says to son, "Why'd you decide tonight to give your life to Christ?"

And son says, " Do you remember about six months ago when Roger accused me of shining that flashlight in my face?" Dad says, "Oh, yeah, I'll never forget that morning." And son says, "Well, Dad, there's something that happened the night before that you don't know. I'd just had my 18th birthday. What you didn't know was that I laid there in bed that Saturday night, before we came to church Sunday.

"And I said to myself, God I really want to know if you're real or not. And so, I'm going to give you a test. And if you pass the test, I'll give my life to Christ. If you don't, then I'm going to assume that you just don't exist.

And so, Dad, I said to God, Tomorrow, I'm going to listen in Roger's sermon for three things that might apply to my life. And if I can find three things, that might apply to my life, then I'll believe you're real and I'll give my life to Christ. And if I don't find those three things, then I'm never going to church again.

"So Dad, I sat there very carefully in that sermon, and I listened to Roger's preaching, and I remember I found a couple of things that might apply, but I sure didn't find a third thing. And I left pretty disappointed that morning, because my conclusion was that God didn't exist. And maybe you noticed, Dad, I haven't been back to church since. And tonight it hit me. I prayed for Roger to say three things in his sermon that might apply to me. And Dad, do you remember about ten minutes into that sermon, Roger looked over in my direction and said 'Son would you please turn off that flashlight?' And remember, Dad, about twenty minutes into the sermon, Roger actually stopped, he pointed directly at me, and said, 'Son, I can't see, would you turn off that flashlight?' And Dad remember when the service was over, there was Roger talking to me, accosting me face to face?"

"You know, Dad, Roger hadn't said eleven words to me in the nine years we'd gone to that church. And all of a sudden, it hit me. God did answer my prayer. God is real. I'm giving my life to Christ."

I thought, isn't that interesting. Here's this preacher, about a year or so before, out jogging, thinking "Dear God, I sure want to see your glory, God mixes that with the prayer of this 18-year-old high school senior. God, do you exist? Are you real?"

I think it's interesting, when God finally showed the light, my first response was what? "Would somebody please turn off that flashlight?" Didn't even recognize God's glory for what it was.

I remember going to choir practice the next Wednesday night. Back in those days, our choir was up on the platform for the whole service. And I remember going to that rehearsal that night, and saying, "Did anybody else see the light?" Of course nobody else saw the light, because nobody else was praying for it.

Now, I'm telling you that very simply, because there's nothing special about me, as a person. There's nothing special about me as a pastor. My premise is God wants to hear us speak, and God's longing to hear us speak, and that any Christian anytime, anyplace, can put their spirits, their hearts, their lives, in a position for God to minister some unbelievable insights, revelations, truths, and promptings.

And so may I just encourage you. As you continue in your spiritual journey, to continue to pray, "Oh dear Father, would you make me a spiritual man, or a spiritual woman, at any price." Because I believe that is one prayer God guarantees he'll answer, and I believe that is one prayer you'll never regret. Amen.

EXERCISE: Share some things you do intentionally to cultivate your inner-most human spirit.

Ask God to show you if you have quenched or grieved the Holy Spirit in any area of your life. Confess your behavior and quietly pray for his forgiveness.

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The Giving Tree

by Shel Silverstein

- SLIDE #: Once there was a tree...
- SLIDE #: and she loved a little boy.
- SLIDE #: And every day the boy would come

- SLIDE #: and he would gather her leaves
- SLIDE #: and make them into crowns and play king of the forest.
- SLIDE #: He would climb up her trunk
- SLIDE #: and swing from her branches
- SLIDE #: and eat apples.
- SLIDE #: And they would play hide-and-go-seek.
- SLIDE #: And when he was tired, he would sleep in her shade.
- SLIDE #: And the boy loved the tree...
- SLIDE #: very much. And the tree was happy.
- SLIDE #: But time went by.
- SLIDE #: And the boy grew older.
- SLIDE #: And the tree was often alone.
- SLIDE #: Then one day the boy came to the tree and the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and eat apples and play in my shade and be happy."
 "I am too big to climb and play," said the boy. "I want to buy things and have fun. I want some money. Can you give me some money?"
 "I'm sorry," said the tree, "but I have no money. I have only leaves and apples. Take my apples, Boy, and sell them in the city. Then you will have money and you will be happy."
- SLIDE #: And so the boy climbed up the tree and gathered her apples and carried them away. And the tree was happy.
- SLIDE #: But the boy stayed away for a long time...
 and the tree was sad. And then one day the boy came back and the tree shook with joy and she said, "Come, Boy, climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and be happy."
- SLIDE #: "I am too busy to climb trees," said the boy. "I want a house to keep me warm," he said.
 "I want a wife and I want children, and so I need a house. Can you give me a house?"
 "I have no house," said the tree. "The forest is my house, but you may cut off my branches and build a house. Then you will be happy."

- SLIDE #: And so the boy cut off her branches and carried them away to build his house.
- SLIDE #: And the tree was happy.
- SLIDE #: But the boy stayed away for a long time. And when he came back, the tree was so happy she could hardly speak. “Come, Boy,” she whispered, “come and play.”
“I am too old and sad to play,” said the boy. “I want a boat that will take me far away from here.
Can you give me a boat?”
- SLIDE #: “Cut down my trunk and make a boat,” said the tree.
“Then you can sail away...
and be happy.”
- SLIDE #: And so the boy cut down her trunk
- SLIDE #: and made a boat and sailed away.
- SLIDE #: And the tree was happy...but not really.
- SLIDE #: And after a long time the boy came back again. “I am sorry, Boy,” said the tree,
“but I have nothing left to give you-
My apples are gone.”
“My teeth are too weak for apples,” said the boy.
“My branches are gone,” said the tree. “You cannot swing on them – ”
“I am too old to swing on branches,” said the boy.
“My trunk is gone,” said the tree. “You cannot climb – ”
“I am too tired to climb,” said the boy.
“I am sorry,” sighed the tree. “I wish that I could give you something...
but I have nothing left. I am just an old stump. I am sorry...”
- SLIDE #: “I don’t need very much now,” said the boy, “just a quiet place to sit and rest. I am very tired.”
“Well,” said the tree, straightening herself up as much as she could,
“well, an old stump *is* good for sitting and resting. Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest.”
And the boy did.
- SLIDE #: And the tree was happy.
- SLIDE #: The End