

Spirit Replaces Self



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Self, sin, and Satan are always connected, and any of the three will lead us outside the will and Word of God. The control of self and Satan *in* the world is obvious from the horrible spiritual condition of the world. When Adam disobeyed the Word of God and decided to follow the way of self, everyone since is born with self in control—*this* must be corrected if *Heaven* is our goal.

Only *God* can do that spiritual work, and only *we* can make that choice to *let* Him do it. Jesus said John 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing [spiritually]."* Self plans, power, policies, procedures, and advice of the world will not lead anyone to the kingdom of God. *"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*

The carnal mind does everything by *itself*, because it does not think that God does anything. That thinking is why John 6:66-68 *"many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 'And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.'"*

Self always does things by its own wisdom; boasts of its own ability, and follows its own way to get a job; to make money; to be protected; to have security; to force a change; to

purchase things; and follows worldly plans or pills to get relief from pain.

This *sin nature* of rebellion must be replaced with the *divine nature* of submission. It is the only way for spiritual growth to be the result. When a job, the money, protection, security, or healing is received in a scriptural way—by prayer and in faith—God is glorified, and we then know that He does things for those who believe and trust Him.

Naaman was given instructions on how to be healed of a serious skin condition. He did not want to follow them at first, but when he did what God wanted him to do—in faith 2 Kings 5:14, *"his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child."* That healing proved what God will do, when someone is willing to believe and act. 2 Kings 5:15 *"Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel."*

The Spirit-filled heart goes immediately to God in prayer and faith. If employment is desired; a house to rent; money for bills; an attitude change; or healing from weakness and pain, we are to trust God in faith to do those things. When Adam chose to follow his own self plans Genesis 3, he moved away from, and avoided, God. Adam would do things his way; he did *not* want to ask God for *anything*, but to obtain *everything* by himself.

When we make a final decision to depend only on God for healing, money, protection, new attitude, or anything else—and the bridge of retreat is burned—*then* self will be gone and God takes its place. A Christian risks their life on the faithfulness of God. Luke 14:26, *"If you want to be my follower you must love me more than your own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, more than your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple."*

We are *not* following Christ, if some person; some interest; a job; or our money has first place in our life. To hate our *own* life, is to hate the *self* life. The only right attitude is that God and His Word will always be first. A believer must be willing to give up any *thing*; any *job*; any money; or any *relationship*—if the choice is between them and God. Abraham left his father's house; Moses left the Pharaoh's palace; and Matthew left his government job.

If our *love* for a friend, for material things, for worldly interests, or for a good-paying job causes us to place any one of those things ahead of God, we must make corrections, give them up, and begin again with God in first place. Such *decisions* are *tests* to prove our *love* for God. The first and greatest commandment Matthew 22:37 is to *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*

The Son of God died on the cross, so self would die in our heart. Jesus rose to life, so that we could begin a new life—free from self's control. When God is first *in our heart*, He has His right place *in our life*. The centurion said Matthew 8:8-9, *"Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me."*

The officer knew levels of command, and that Jesus had authority over Satan. Anything would be done if Jesus ordered it. Matthew 8:10-12 *"When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd, he said, 'I tell you the truth, I haven't seen faith like this in all the land of Israel! And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven. But many Israelites — those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—"*

will be cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

That kind of faith takes a person to heaven—He meant. The Gentiles were more likely to receive eternal life, because they were more willing to give up self and to trust God in faith, than His own people—who were unwilling to trust Him, and very unlikely to give up self-righteous outward religion of dead works—which is no faith in God for anything in life. Jesus then said Matthew 8:13, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.”

The man took his humble place and gave Jesus His exalted place, so the results were marvelous—the healing took place when the Word was believed. That same Word, His presence, and divine power are with us today, so we can expect the same results, when the same faith is on Him. Numbers 23:19 *”God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”*

The officer was now on the path of believing trust that leads to the kingdom of Heaven. If he chooses to *stay* on that path—through every test or trial—he would, as *anyone* else would who keeps their faith on God—*“sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven.”*

God requires that self be removed from our heart, but there are millions of proclaimed Christians who do not even know that this spiritual work *must* be done. Millions of people live honest and decent lives, but still have self controlling their attitude. Romans 8:7-8 *”For the sinful [carnal; unbelieving, rebellious] nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will. That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.”*

This control of self can be polished to look good on the outside, but it is deadly to have on the inside. If self is not removed, there is no trust on God possible. Self will not trust God *in faith*, because self does not believe His Word *is true*.

When self is gone, the Spirit enables us to 1 Peter 3:8-9 *”Live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.”*

The evidence that self is gone is—when we have been ignored, insulted, or forgotten, but we do not resent it, and place it before God in prayer. When some *good* we have done is spoken of as *bad*, and we are not upset—or when our advice is ridiculed and rejected, but we can praise God for the faith lesson, then we know that self is gone.

When we are content with any wage; satisfied with our house; pleased with the vehicle we drive; and glad we are working at a job God provided, *that* is evidence self is removed, and Christ is within. If we are taken advantage of and given no consideration, but by God’s Spirit, we can endure it patiently, that is *dying to self and living for Christ*. *”To this you were called”* 1 Peter 2:21 *”because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”*

When we do *not* boast about our knowledge, our children, or our ability—that is evidence self is removed, and Christ is within. When we seek no recognition, no praise, and no attention—that is *dying to self and walking with Christ*. When we help others, and no one knows it; *”Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you”* Matthew 6:4.

The evidence that self is *still* in control is—if we point out the faults and mistakes of others, but do not consider our own; if we are resentful over a coworker’s pay increase, when ours has been overlooked; if we always have to be right or have the last word, even if it starts an argument; then self is still in control.

The world is controlled by self and the devil, but the believer is controlled by God and His Spirit. James 4:4 *”You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”*

Knowing how self responds, and that it must be replaced, we should Acts 2:38 *”Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

We should say what the apostle said to Jesus, *”You have the words of eternal life; we believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* If anyone finds themselves in Hell, they can be sure it was self who took them there. Self can appear outwardly good, but it is inwardly *deadly*—because it *can* destroy our soul forever!

Self has taken more people to eternal suffering in the flames than could ever be counted. No matter what the disguise *self* may be wearing—it is *Satan* behind the mask! When Jesus said, *”Follow Me,”* He meant it!



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