



Connect
to **FREEDOM**



Week 4

WEEK FOUR

SPIRITUAL ORDER

“Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23

To daily live in the Tree of Life, you need to know two things: God designed you with three distinct parts, and you need to embrace the principles of spiritual order. Understanding spiritual order will help us get rid of the sin in our lives and walk in holiness and freedom. As believers, we long to live lives of fellowship with God. But while this is our desire, life in fellowship with God does not come naturally for us. Since the fall in the garden, mankind has battled a sin nature that wars against our desire to be holy. The Apostle Paul said that there is an internal struggle that goes on between the desire to do right and the natural tendency to do wrong.

Write Romans 7:21-23

God created us with three distinct parts:

1. A spirit that must be redeemed
2. A soul that must be restored
3. A body that must surrender

At the moment of salvation, our spirit is made alive in Christ and immediately put into right standing with God (Romans 3:24, 5:1). The Bible calls this event justification: “just-as-if I had never sinned.” However, the soul and body will require time and effort to be conformed to the image of Christ (Ephesians 4:12–13). This gradual process is called sanctification.

God desires for us to be transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory. We must learn to hear His voice and be led by His spirit.

Write 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

In Galatians 4:19, Paul portrays sanctification as a process. How long this process takes depends on our willingness to engage with the Word of God, accept it as absolute truth in our lives, and apply it to all of our circumstances.

THE SPIRIT

Did you know that you are a spiritual being having a temporary physical experience on earth rather than a physical being having a temporary spiritual experience? God's plan is that our spirits become the strongest part of our three-part design and be the "command center" of who we are and what we do.

"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross."

COLOSSIANS 2:13-14 NIV

The blood of Jesus has forever purchased our capacity for friendship with God. This was the price God paid so that we could be reconciled back to Him and have the fellowship that Adam once enjoyed (2 Corinthians 5:18). The moment we are saved, we are made alive in Christ, forever redeemed and made righteous before the Father. Along with the gift of eternal life, we receive the Holy Spirit and immediately have the ability to be in relationship with God. In short, the cross of Christ bridges the chasm of death and gives us a way to have fellowship, communication, and access to the Tree of Life.

Just as a bride and groom are united in matrimony and become one, at the point of salvation, your spirit and the Spirit of Christ are united and become one.

Rewrite 1 Corinthians 6:17

Ask yourself: How does knowing that my spirit is redeemed and in right standing with the Father change the way I see myself?

Now that we are one with Christ, we have the ability to understand spiritual truth and discern right from wrong. We can adjust our lives to hear the voice of God. It is much like tuning a dial to pick up a radio station. Sometimes there may be static in the airwaves (distraction, confusion, fear, etc.), but if we continue to seek the Lord and His way of doing things, our spirit will rise above the static, and we will be able to tune in to the broadcast of truth.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14, and write why the world cannot accept the things that come from God.

THE SOUL

The soul is one of God's most beautiful creations. It enables us to experience relationships and appreciate the beauty of our surroundings. We have been made in the image of God with the capacity to think, reason, and express emotions. God could have programmed us to do and be whatever He wanted, but instead He gave us the ability to choose.

Our souls are made up of three parts:

1. The mind, which thinks and reasons
2. The will, which makes choices
3. The emotions, which believe, feel, and remember

Write out the verses below and identify which of the three parts of the soul they address.

Proverbs 2:10

Psalms 119:167

Psalms 139:14

Write Joshua 24:15

Ask yourself: Are my thoughts driven by emotion?

THE BODY

In Genesis 2:7, we learn that God formed our bodies from the earth. The body acts as a temporary house or shell that contains our soul and spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, the presence of God was housed in the inner sanctuary of the temple called the Holy of Holies. At the death of Jesus, the veil of the temple was torn and the presence of God moved out of the structure and into the hearts of all believers.

Just as we would not go to church and shatter the windows and destroy the furniture, we should not do anything to intentionally harm our bodies; they are special, designed by God, and given to us in order to carry out the plans He has for us on this earth.

Our bodies have appetites, both good and bad. The Bible says to be careful of any sin that leads to our flesh getting anything it wants. Often people want to know how far they can sin and still enjoy the benefits of God's blessing. The snare with sin is that it never satisfies. We are constantly looking to fulfill the next craving. Carnal desires cause us to need satisfaction, and though we may satisfy them in the moment, the craving soon returns and brings with it an increased intensity. This cycle will repeat itself time and again until we break it by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ask yourself: Are my actions driven by my cravings?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12 (NIV), and fill in the blanks:

“I have the right to do anything,” you say – but not everything is _____. *‘I have the right to do anything’—*
but I _____.”

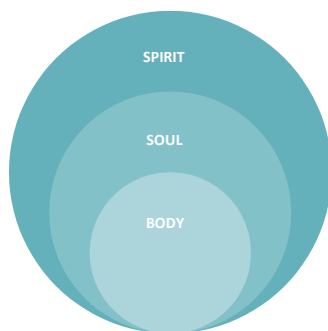
Another real consequence of sin is the ripple effect. A filter for sinful actions should be: How will this action affect those around me? We should rehearse daily the consequences of sins and how they would affect our spouses, our family and our friends. Would your actions cause another to stumble or be offended?

Read 1 Corinthians 8:9 from The Message Bible and hear the heart of our Father:

“But God does care when you use your freedom carelessly in a way that leads a fellow believer still vulnerable to those old associations to be thrown off track.”

1 CORINTHIANS 8:9 MSG

ORDERED LIVING



Spiritual order provides a framework for living in the Tree of Life. It allows you to live with your spirit united with God, and your soul and body submitted to your spirit. In other words, your spirit, which is now one with God, calls the shots, and the soul and body follow. So here's the real question: If I am saved, why do I struggle with sin? The answer is found in the process of sanctification and the principle of spiritual order. When we give our lives to Jesus, we receive everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), but we may still struggle because our spirit is not in the lead. What we give the most attention to will become the most influential. Our spirit can take the lead only if we feed it more than our soul and body.

The world around us constantly feeds our souls through things we see and hear. And our bodies, if starved, make it known that they're hungry. If we withhold gratification from our souls and our bodies, they get loud. Our spirit, on the other hand, when not fed, gets quiet. We have to be intentional to feed our spirit.

Ask yourself: What am I doing to feed my spirit?

Who is in control?

The soul and the body are complex and can often be confusing, especially since we are accustomed to them taking the lead. Let's consider the following: Very early in life we learn to take instruction from our souls. We have all seen the toddler throw himself on the floor and demand his own way. He is being led by his emotions when he holds his breath until the parent gives in to his demands. We might think that this only happens in the lives of children, but adults can possess the same tendencies.

Read Galatians 5:19–21 and list the works of the soul-led nature.

When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22–23)

According to Galatians 6:8, what is the result of living a life that gratifies the body? What happens to a person who lives a spirit-led life?

Daily Living

Living in spiritual order brings incredible benefits, such as protection, spiritual growth, and power to overcome obstacles in our lives. And it's important to understand that living out of spiritual order is dangerous. When we allow our soul or body to lead, it opens a door for the enemy to operate in our lives. We will be protected from the enemy when we choose to do things God's way and give control of our lives to Him.

Read Psalm 91. According to verses 9 and 10, who will receive the benefits of protection and safety?

We want to do things God's way, but what happens when we fall short or give in to temptation? We respond by distancing ourselves from God. We feel shame and condemnation, but that's Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thinking. Remember, God convicts; He does not condemn. Godly sorrow for sin will lead us to repentance, which means "to turn and go the other way."

Write Psalm 66:18–20

When you realize you're out of spiritual order, stop and repent. Then, ask for and receive His grace. It is the kindness of the Lord that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). Remember: He is the God who came looking for Adam and Eve.

Staying in Order

We face decisions every single day, and the choices we make dictate the lives we lead. So how do we make good decisions? We need to change the way we think. Knowing your identity is also a key to being led by the Holy Spirit. Think about who you are in Him.

Write 2 Corinthians 5:17

Write Ephesians 1:4

To walk in spiritual order, we need the power of the Holy Spirit. He is our counselor, our friend, our guide, and the One who reveals truth. Start getting to know Him today. As you grow in your relationship with Him, Bible reading will become more enjoyable, worship more intimate, prayer more powerful, and living in the Tree of Life more tangible and exciting. When you walk with Jesus, life is abundant indeed—and this is only the beginning!

NOTES:
