

Call to Obedience #278
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THE MAN INSIDE

By Reimar Schultze

Who gets more attention in your life: the Outer man or the Inner man?

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” —Ephesians 3:16

In the third chapter of Ephesians, the apostle Paul prayed what could be the highest prayer ever offered to God by mortal man. It begins with, “For this cause I bow my knees...” (v. 14), and it ends with the loftiest, most daring request that could possibly ever come from human lips, “that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (v. 19).

Of course, when we first observe this petition, we say, “Impossible! Incredible! Way off center!” But then, perhaps, on second thought, we settle down to the fact that this is the Word of God—not to be taken lightly. And, furthermore, this word was not spoken by some minor character of holy Writ but by the apostle Paul, God’s chief apostle to the Gentiles.

We humans, filled with the all the fulness of God? Why would Paul pray for it if it were impossible? Why not believe with the apostle Paul that it is possible? Why not believe with him that all things are possible to those who believe?

Now, let us consider the objection that some have with this verse regarding space. The fulness of God in one body? How can there be enough space in one 150-pound body for such divine fulness? Well, the problem is easily overcome by the words of Paul in another passage—Colossians 2:9–10—where he says that “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him...”

Jesus was all man when he was on earth, and he was all God. Had he not had all the fulness of God in his body when he was on earth, he would not have been all God. So that solves the space problem. And all that is left now is the faith problem. Is God able to save us to the uttermost, to sanctify us entirely so that he can dwell in us as he dwelt in his Son 2000 years ago? The answer is found in a study of “the man inside.” In the context of the fulness of God dwelling in man, Paul gives us this phrase “the inner man” (Eph. 3:16).

Who Is this Inner Man?

Man is a compound being. That means he has more than one vital part. Man is made up of a body and a soul. When you go to the creation account of Genesis, you see that God created the first body out of the earth (Gen. 2:7a). All the elements that you find in your body, you find in the earth: nitrogen, phosphorus, oxygen, carbon, calcium, hydrogen, etc. The body, as Paul says, “is of the earth, earthy” (1 Cor. 15:47).

Then after God created the body, he breathed into the first man, Adam, and he “became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7b). The body was created first—it is from the earth. The soul was given to man from God—it is from heaven. So man is a compound being. Man could not move his limbs, man could not see with his eyes and hear with his ears until God breathed in him and he became a living soul. There is no such thing as a soul-less man other than that he is a dead man.

Now, the body of man is visible. That is what the Bible calls the outer man. The outer man can be photographed; he can be weighted and measured. But the inner man—the living soul—is invisible. The outer man is temporary; the inner man is eternal.

When Adam and Eve sinned, the inner man was corrupted. The inner man lost its purity. And because of that, the inner man fell out of fellowship with God. Just as the outer man has a heart that supplies the nutrients that are in the body to every cell for nourishment, so there is a spiritual heart in the inner man that supplies all the cells of the spiritual body with whatever is in the spiritual bloodstream. Because of man's sin, the whole inner man is sin-infected and doomed to eternal damnation. Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19). All the choices of this sinful inner man are evil—all of them—and they come out of an evil heart! None of them give glory to God (Jer. 17:9; Is. 64:6; Mark 7:21). Man is lost; he is doomed; he, in his sinful blindness, paves his own pathway to the eternal flames "Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44)!

But there is hope. The inner man can be saved, redeemed, renewed into the holy likeness and image of God. This is the Gospel.

Jesus Christ shed his blood to redeem our inner man, to bring us cleansing from sin, and to revive the inner man and fill him with the Holy Spirit. We call this conversion. If we confess our sins, repent of all our evil ways, and receive Jesus Christ into our hearts, the inner man will be restored to have fellowship with God.

What Are the Needs of the Inner Man?

Paul's first petition in Ephesians 3:16 is that the inner man would be strengthened. Once the inner man has been saved, cleansed and restored, he needs continuous, daily nourishment, instruction, and care. As the physical body lives off physical food, so the man inside lives off spiritual food. As the outer man becomes weak, sick, and dies without physical food, so the spiritual man dies without spiritual food.

The food of the inner man consists of daily reading of the Word of God. The Word of God is his bread from heaven. If you don't read the Word of God and meditate upon it every day, your inner man will become weak and blind, you will become prey to the temptation of sins, and you will fall out of fellowship with God. Read the Word of God daily and commit God's Word to memory. That is what Jesus did. By the time he was twelve years of age, he could out-quote the scribes, the Pharisees, and the doctors of the law. David, the great king of Israel, said, concerning the saint of God, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:2).

We shall never even get to taste of the fulness of God's glory until we literally bathe the inner man in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God as the man of God is entirely surrendered to the will of God. Without the inner man being fed, our faith will be weak, and it will falter in the time of storm. The inner man must not only obey the written Word but also that which the Holy Spirit reveals to his heart. Disobedience brings the poison of sin into his life and causes him to be separated from God. Sin separates man from God. It separated Adam and Eve from God, and all men since who have eaten the forbidden fruit. But as disobedience brings man out of fellowship with God, obedience brings him back into it. Oh, we must hate sin with a passion, or we will be soft on it and tolerate a little bit or a whole lot of it in our lives.

Now here is Paul's next petition for the inner man, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (v. 16). Where do we get more faith? In Romans 10:17, Paul says, "So then faith cometh

by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Feed the man inside with the Word of the Lord. Faith, great faith to move mountains comes out of that.

Love to God and man comes out of that faith, for Paul’s next petition is, “that ye, being rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17). The inner man needs to be rooted in love. Every one of his thoughts must be rooted in the love of God; his attitude toward all men must spring out of divine love; his actions and reactions must find their anointing through loving God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength.

Why do we have so many sour marriages and divorces? Why do we have so few Christians actually witnessing for Jesus or going to church prayer services to intercede for the lost and for the backslidden church? It is because their lives are not rooted and grounded in love! There is a neglect of the inner man. The outer man that perishes gets most of the attention. The inner man is starved and weak and diseased.

Look at those millions of Christians, those spiritual skeletons, who spend more time watching ungodly television programs, who spend more time in front of the mirror and in physical exercise to show off their mortal, corrupt bodies. Look at how weak they are. They give in to almost every temptation, become subject to doubt at every corner, and are too weak to testify and win souls to Christ. How far would Jesus have gotten had he lived like most modern Christians?

How much attention did the great ones of the Bible—Abraham, Moses and David, the prophets, Jesus and his disciples—give to the needs, the nourishment, the cultivation, the beautification, the equipping of the inner man compared to the time they gave to their outer man?

Oh, thou dear child of God. You abound in earthly riches and clothing and in the latest fashions of the world, but your soul is moth-eaten and empty, and the fire of God you once had is all but gone. How will you stand before the judgment seat of Christ on that last great day: empty-handed, naked, and unclean.

Listen to Paul’s prayer: “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man...that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3:16, 19).

There is an outer man, and there is an inner man. The outer man perishes, but the inner man is renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16). So, who gets more attention in your life, the outer man or the inner man? Your answer to this question will most likely determine where you will spend eternity.

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