

Soulical, Carnal, Spiritual

“Men are classified according to their ability to understand and receive these ‘deep things of God.’ Into these ‘deep things of God’ no unaided man can go. ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God’ (knows them). An unaided man may enter freely into the things of his fellow man because of ‘the spirit of man which is in him.’ He cannot extend his sphere. He cannot know experimentally the things of the animal world below him, and certainly he cannot enter a higher sphere and know experimentally the things of God. Even though man, of himself, cannot know the things of God, the Spirit *knows* them, and a man may be so related to the Spirit that he too may know them.”¹

-Lewis Sperry Chafer-

1 Corinthians 2:14, The Base Non-Christian

“Natural”- ψυχικός- “‘of the soul/life’, in our literature pertaining to the life of the natural world and whatever belongs to it, in contrast to the realm of experience whose central characteristic is πνεῦμα (spirit), *natural, unspiritual, worldly.*”² This is one who is concerned with and guided by those areas that make up the soul- mind, will, and emotions (Eph 4:17-19).

The soulical man is unregenerate, being dead in his trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1), without the Holy Spirit, having not believed in Jesus Christ (John 3:18), and having no claim on eternal life. Therefore, he is unable to discern spiritual things, deeming them “foolish.”

1 Corinthians 2:15-16, The Submissive Believer

“Spiritual”- πνευματικός- “pertaining to spirit as inner life of a human being,”³ “one who has received God’s Spirit and presumably lives in accordance with this relationship.”⁴ This is one who is living their lives “out” from the spirit. The method of appropriation is NEVER about doing more and trying harder, but by knowing God’s Word and believing God’s Word regardless of the circumstances. It is a *quality* life in the Spirit rather than a *quantity* life without Him.

The spiritual man is a believer in Christ whose power comes from the Holy Spirit and NEVER the individual’s strength or efforts. They are truly “Spirit-led,” enjoying peace, the Spirit’s power, and discernment (Heb 5:14). The spiritual man looks God-ward, wishing for others to see Christ in them (Col 1:27), manifesting the 9-fold fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

1 Corinthians 3:1-3, The Base Believer

“Carnal”- σαρκικός- “pertaining to behavior which is typical of human nature, but with special focus upon more base physical desires—‘worldly, base,’”⁵ “pertaining to being material or belonging to the physical

¹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual* (Moody Press: Chicago, 1918), 2.

² BDAG, 1100.

³ Ibid, 837.

⁴ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 142.

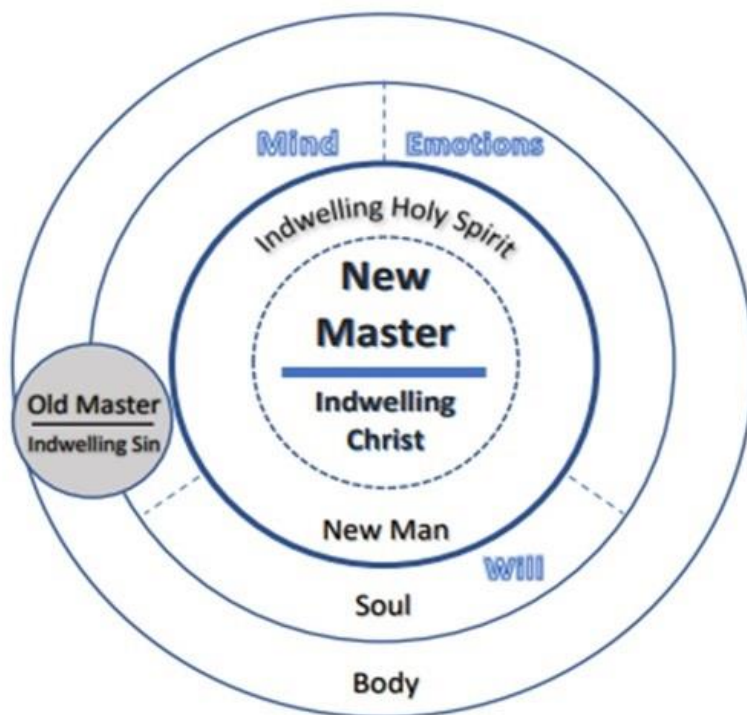
⁵ Ibid, 508.

realm.”⁶ This is one who is most concerned with doing with the end goal being that of personal interest and benefit. They are redeemed but fleshly and base, in their decisions and direction, still looking to appease their mind, will, and emotions- their soul.

The carnal man is indwelt with the Holy Spirit but continues to hold hands with the world and with himself (Gal 5:24). This is also commonly called the “self-life.” The carnal man looks inward, measuring performance, keeping tabs on himself and comparing his performance to others, is often defeated in living a holy life while wishing that others would see and applaud his sincere effort.

Their will may be sincere in seeking to do good, but their ability falls short. All of their works are fleshly and have no merit before the Lord because they are devoid of the Spirit. This is always the condition of those who are immature in the faith, whether it be because they are recently converted, or have stunted growth though they have been a believer for many years, having remained an infant in Christ (Heb 5:11-13).

What separates the carnal believer and the spiritual believer is their reception of truth, their believing the truth that they have received, and the presentation of their bodies- “either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness” (Rom 6:16b).



Redeemed– Spiritual or Carnal?

2 Corinthians 2:15-3:3

⁶ BDAG, 914.