



---

DR. DAVID L. LANE PRESENTS  
**TECHNIQUES FOR  
TAMING TEMPTATION**

Text: 1Co 10:12, 13

---



## **INTRODUCTION**

Corinth was the New York City of ancient Greece. It was a hustling, bustling, thriving and commercial metropolis. Goods, ideas and culture flowed freely through the streets, marketplaces and pagan temples. The country club of Corinth was the Temple of Aphrodite, where the who's who hung out there. It was the place to be seen and be noticed; it was the place to rub elbows with the rich and the famous. If you wanted to be part of the temple scene, it was necessary to bring an animal sacrifice to the temple goddess, and hang around for some sex-play worship with some of the temple prostitutes. This was what it meant to be Corinthian; this is the life at Corinth (see endnotes for more on the religion of Corinth).<sup>1</sup>

Christians in Corinth had been converted from that kind of culture. Now, they had a real struggle on their hands. They had come out of the world and really had no desire to return, but had been deceived into thinking that they knew how close to get to the fire without getting burned. After all, they were standing fast in the power of the Spirit of God.

It is to that attitude that Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 10, as he reminds the Christians of the warning signals from Israel's history. These Israelites, Paul says, even had supernatural food and drink from Christ Himself: manna and water from a rock. Nevertheless, God was not well pleased with most of them (v.5). Verse five suggests that like a hurricane hurling bodies in every direction, Israelite bodies were thrown all over the desert floor in death.

Paul then goes on to tell us why they faced God's wrath. Some of them worshipped pagan gods and engaged in pagan practices. Some thought

having sex with people other than their spouse was an acceptable practice. Many put God’s patience to the test by not trusting Him wholeheartedly. Some hurled complaints against God and the leaders of His people.

Paul adds in verse 6, “*Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.*” He concludes in v.12: “*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*”

- A. Prepare for your purity.
- B. Prioritize what you value.
- C. Plan a strategy.
- D. Practice the strategy immediately.
- E. Partner with others for accountability and support.



## A. PREPARE FOR YOUR PURITY

To prepare for purity, you must understand that temptation will come from one of three sources: the world, the flesh and the devil.

- 1. “Faith” is required to overcome the temptations of the world.
- 2. “Flight” is required to overcome the temptations of the flesh.
- 3. “Fight” is required to overcome the temptations of the devil.

---

*All temptation is always motivated by the devil, because he is the tempter.*

---

- 1. “*Faith*” is required to overcome the temptations of the world.

The world will primarily tempt us in the area of our soul.

The word for “soul” is “psyche,” which we use to describe an individual’s mind, will, and emotions. Our soul contains our ego, our desires, and our emotional self (see endnotes for a more intense study on the use of the word “soul” in Scripture).<sup>ii</sup> The world will tempt the “soulish” side of us. When we talk about a person on an ego trip, or a worldly person, we are generally speaking of a person who is easily influenced by and somewhat controlled by the pleasures of this world.

Example 1:

Abraham and Lot: Lot was already wealthy, but he was duped into thinking he could be the wealthiest man in Palestine. He was tempted by the world’s system to be a big shot or a man of political power where the golden rule was in effect: he with the gold rules.

That’s the constant message of the world: “You need more, you can have more.” Lot fell into that trap and it cost him everything he owned, even at the risk of losing his family.

Example 2:

A boy was in class and his teacher asked him “John, what is the shape of the world.”

He said, “I don’t know.”

“John, you know. Think about it. Is it round, or square?”

“Naw, it’s crooked.”

Geometrically and topologically, the boy may be wrong; but theologically and morally, the boy is right. The world is crooked and sin has made it that way. Sin has:

- ⊕ impaired our senses;
- ⊕ warped our wills;
- ⊕ tormented our conscience;
- ⊕ shattered our nerves;
- ⊕ degraded our reputation;
- ⊕ killed our love;
- ⊕ disrupted our peace;
- ⊕ stolen our joy;
- ⊕ burdened our shoulders;
- ⊕ blighted our future;
- ⊕ ruined our relationships;
- ⊕ troubled our hearts;
- ⊕ spoiled our pleasures;
- ⊕ defiled our hands;

- ✦ corrupted our virtues; and
- ✦ damned our souls.

Without opposition, there is no victory. God hasn't called us to a life of ease, but to a life of victory in Jesus Christ. John tells us the victory that overcomes the world is our faith (1Jo 5:4). We don't fight worldliness, we rely on our faith. The only way to get through the temptations of this world is to focus on Jesus Christ. Then, when the world comes to offer you its crumbs, you can reject it because you have feasted on the Lord Jesus. Spiritual faith (Rom 10:17) is the best weapon against worldliness. We are all subject to temptation, but those of us in Christ can experience triumph over it.

Scripture says that if you love the world, its evil system and what it values, then you don't love God. So, if you want to defeat the temptations of the world; love God more. Like the old chorus that says:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.<sup>1</sup>*

2. *“Flight” is required to overcome the temptations of the flesh.*

The world tempts our soul, but the flesh primarily tempts our body. Our body will be tempted toward things like lust, laziness, over-indulgence, and sexual immorality. The flesh wants to use the body as the vehicle for its expression (example: David and Bathsheba).

When faced with fleshly temptation, we should flee or take flight. “Flight,” the Bible says, is to flee immorality (1Co 6:18). It says to *flee youthful lusts* (2Ti 2:22). In the context of warnings about sexual temptation, Proverbs 6:27 says: “*Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?*”

A young unmarried couple can't park their car in some secluded rendezvous and expect to remain clean before God. You can't watch “R” rated movies and expect to keep your mind pure before God. You

---

<sup>1</sup> “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus,” Words and Music by Helen H. Lemmel, 1922

can't watch soap operas and most of the sitcoms today without being influenced by temptation and sin. I've heard people say, "I watch that stuff, but it doesn't bother me" — "*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he falls.*" So if you are faced with a fleshly temptation, or are tempted to watch a movie that you know will arouse sexual impurities, walk away from it. We have to make up our minds to flee from sexual temptations. When Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph, he didn't wait around to consider his options; he *ran* out of the room. "*Flight*" is the key to overcoming fleshly temptation.

3. "*Fight*" is required to overcome the temptations of the devil.

The world tempts our soul...the flesh primarily tempts our body...but the devil tempts our spirit. If our soul is our sense of self-consciousness, it stands to reason that our spirit is our sense of God-consciousness.

Temptation falls into two categories: the desire to do wrong things and the temptation not to do right things — "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth [it] not, to him it is sin*" (Jam 4:17). The first temptation involves wanting to get drunk, committing adultery, or stealing. The second temptation involves staying home from church, not giving from your earnings, or not winning souls.

The devil's goal is to:

- ✦ corrupt every business;
- ✦ dissolve every marriage;
- ✦ wreck every home;
- ✦ shame every Christian;
- ✦ tempt every believer; and
- ✦ destroy every congregation.

Every time you sin; it hurts. It's like buying a brand new car and always having accidents. Every accident hurts the car and decreases its value. So too it is with our soul when we sin. Every sin hurts the Christian. "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (Jam 4:7). "*For we are not unaware of his schemes*" (2Co 2:11).



## **B. PRIORITIZE WHAT YOU VALUE**

### **YOUR VALUES MUST BE DETERMINED BEFORE THE TEMPTATIONS**

Knowing Whatever values you possess came from one of two sources, the World or the Word, Christ or the culture. Come a little Closer, let me whisper some sober words to your soul. There are three values held by the world that will challenge your faith and faithfulness. They are humanism, materialism and hedonism.

*Humanism* is the desire to put me first, to live for myself. I want what I want, I am going to do what I want and fulfill what I want even if it means I have to forsaking my vows, destroying my marriage, or committing sin.

*Materialism* is the greed for more. People over committed, over extended because they are constantly trying to keep up with the Jones. As somebody has well said, “we spend money we don’t have, to buy things we don’t need, to impress people we don’t like”.

*Hedonism* is an ancient Greek word that means what is the greatest good is that which gives me the greatest pleasure. Translated in our language it means, if it feels good do it. It means don’t deny yourself anything that brings pleasure to you no matter what the consequences are to others. It is the philosophy that says I want to fulfill my lust and my desires no matter what the word of God says.

So how do we respond to a culture that says man first, me first, money first, and pleasure first? Romans 12:2 Paul says, “*Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and a different person.*”

## **GOD GIVE US A FEW MORE PREACHING PROPHETS WHO WILL TEACH US THAT ...**

- † The greatest joy is giving.
- † The most satisfying work is HELPING OTHERS.
- † The ugliest personality trait is SELFISHNESS.
- † The most effective sleeping pill is PEACE OF MIND.
- † The most powerful force in life is LOVE.
- † The worst thing to be without is HOPE.
- † The deadliest weapon is THE TONGUE.
- † The most beautiful attire is A SMILE.
- † The most powerful channel of communication is PRAYER.
- † Our greatest teacher is EXPERIENCE.
- † The most prized possession is INTEGRITY



## **C. PLAN A STRATEGY**

This includes six components:

1. Acknowledge your personal weaknesses.
2. Memorize Scriptures that pertain to your weakness, fight back with the truths of the Scripture (example: Matthew 4:1 — Jesus responds with Scripture), and uphold your commitment to Christ.
3. Identify situations that trigger temptation.
4. When are you most vulnerable? Is it when you're bored? When you're lonely or isolated? Under stress? Discouraged or depressed? Feeling unappreciated or full of self-pity? When you're frustrated or angry? At the video store, the theater, a party, with certain friends?

When you fall, take notice of the people you're with; what situations contributed to the fall; the places you fall; and your emotional state. These are triggers that you need to know and be aware of as to why you're most vulnerable so that you can...

5. Take precautions to avoid those situations.

Frequent travelers will ask the motel clerk to disconnect adult programming from their TV, or have it removed from their room. Others simply set pictures of their family on the TV. The idea here is that when you know your weaknesses, you will consciously do what you can to remove the source of temptation so as to safeguard your precious soul. This moral consciousness will enable you to take every step necessary to avoid the places, people, situations and feelings when you're most susceptible to falling. This point is made in *“Autobiography in Five Short Chapters”* by Portia Nelson.

Chapter I: “I walk down the street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in.... It isn't my fault. It takes forever to find a way out.”

Chapter II: “I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don't see it. I fall in again. I can't believe I am in the same place, but it isn't my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.”

Chapter III: “I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see it is there. I still fall in.... It's a habit. My eyes are open. I know where I am. It is my fault. I get out immediately.”

Chapter IV: “I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.”

Chapter V: “I walk down a different street.”

This is what is meant by taking precautions to avoid situations that trigger temptation. However, you can't always prevent it; so...

4. Rebuke the devil.
5. Plan your escape.



#### **D. PRACTICE THE STRATEGY IMMEDIATELY**



#### **E. PARTNER WITH OTHERS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT**

There are times we have to admit we can't handle it alone. That's when we can gain strength and help if only we choose to share our struggle with our spouse, a parent, trusted friend, pastor, or support group.

Five lies that open the door for temptation's trap are all contained in the subject Scripture 1Co 10:12:

1. **“It couldn’t happen to me”** — v.12: *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”*

Often and unaware to us, we are most vulnerable when we believe we are strongest against the wiles of the devil. We don’t take the proper precautions against sin and soon we find ourselves deeper into a mess than we ever imagined. He who stands wrongly is often he who thinks he stands strongly. It’s important that we don’t view ourselves as the exception to the rule. We are all capable of sin and do commit sin.

2. **“I’m the only one”** — v.13a: *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man...”*

Sometimes we think that no one has struggled with what we’re struggling with. We think no one has felt such intense pressure to give into a particular temptation as we are right now.

3. **“God’s abandoned me”** — v.13b: *“...but God [is] faithful...”*

God does not abandon us! God is faithful to us even in our time of intense temptation — *“God [is] our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”* (Psa 46:1).

4. **“I didn’t have a choice”** — v.13c: *“...who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able...”*

5. **“It’s not my fault”** — v.13d: *“...but with the temptation will also make the way to escape...”*

Some of our struggles — those we call addictions — may need the help of a professional counselor. There are qualified people to help evaluate the psychological and spiritual dynamics involved in your battle; professionals who are experienced in guiding you to strategies for victory. If you’d like help finding such professionals, please talk to me.

## CONCLUSION

- ✚ Satan is a dirty fighter. The fact is Satan is always...
  - ✚ going where he has no business to going;
  - ✚ doing what he has no right to do;
  - ✚ saying what he has no authority to say;
  - ✚ promising what he has no intention to give; and
  - ✚ present, even where he has no permission to be.



When you are:

- ✦ trusting in the Lord, he comes around trying to get you to doubt God;
- ✦ believing God’s Word, he comes around trying to get you to discredit the Word;
- ✦ walking by faith, he comes around trying to get you to walk by sight;
- ✦ submitting to the Spirit, he comes around trying to get you to submit to the flesh;
- ✦ taking a stand for righteousness, he comes around to get you to stumble and fall;
- ✦ resisting temptation, he comes around trying to get you to yield to it; and
- ✦ laboring in the vineyard of the Lord, he comes around trying to hinder, or better yet, stop you.



As the chief administrator of all evil, Satan is out to...

- ✦ deceive the saints of God;
- ✦ discourage the work of God;
- ✦ defeat the plan of God;
- ✦ deteriorate the standards of God;
- ✦ defy the wisdom of God;
- ✦ depress the people of God;
- ✦ degrade the promises of God;
- ✦ delay the harvest of God;
- ✦ denounce the blessings of God;
- ✦ destroy the worship of God;
- ✦ deprive the family of God; and
- ✦ defile the church of God.



His goal is to:

- ✦ deceive every mind;
- ✦ burn every Bible;
- ✦ harden every heart;

- ✦ ruin every blessing;
- ✦ discourage every saint; and
- ✦ weaken every stronghold.

The world, the flesh, and the devil are at war with your soul, your body, and your spirit. Satan doesn't want you to understand the power that you have to overcome temptation, but God does. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.



### References

Selected text from “How to Turn Temptations into Triumphs” by Dr. Adrian Rogers

<http://www.bellevue.org/templates/cusbellevue1103/details.asp?id=1360&PID=33050&Style=> March 27, 2008

---

#### <sup>i</sup> The Religion of Corinth

In Corinth you could find the cults of the gods of Egypt, Rome and Greece. The temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, stood atop the Acrocorinth.

“A famous temple to Aphrodite had stood on the summit of Acrocorinth in the Classical Age... It had fallen into ruins by Paul's time, but successors to its 1,000 cult prostitutes continued to ply their profession in the city below. Many of them were no doubt housed in the lofts above the 33 wine shops uncovered in the modern excavations. Corinth was a city catering to sailors and traveling salesmen. Even by the Classical Age it had earned an unsavory reputation for its libertine atmosphere; to call someone ‘a Corinthian lass’ was to impugn her morals. It may well be that one of Corinth's attractions for Paul was precisely this reputation of immorality.” (*The Biblical World In Pictures*).

The city was filled with sailors who gladly spent their money there. The name “Corinth” became a synonym for immorality. This temple gave Corinth its reputation for gross immorality of which Paul often spoke (1 Cor. 6:9-20; 2 Cor. 12:20-21).

“She had a reputation for commercial prosperity, but she was also a byword for evil living. The very word *korinthiazesthai*, to live like a Corinthian, had become a part of the Greek language, and meant to live with drunken and immoral debauchery ... Aelian, the late Greek writer, tells us that if ever a Corinthian was shown upon the stage in a Greek play he was shown drunk. The very name Corinth was synonymous with debauchery and there was one source of evil in the city which was known all over the civilized world. Above the isthmus towered the hill of the Acropolis, and on it stood the great temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. To that temple there were attached one thousand priestesses who were sacred prostitutes, and in the evenings they descended from the Acropolis and plied their trade upon the streets of Corinth, until it became a Greek proverb, ‘It is not every man who can afford a journey to Corinth.’ In addition to these cruder sins, there flourished far more recondite vices, which had come in with the traders and the sailors from the ends of the earth, until Corinth became not only a synonym for wealth and luxury, drunkenness and debauchery, but also for filth.” (William Barclay, *The Letters To The Corinthians*, p. 2-3).

Of equal fame in Corinth was the temple of Poseidon, ruler of the sea (on which Corinth's commercial life depended) and maker of earthquakes (a frequent danger in the area). Poseidon had a very large temple at a nearby village where the biennial Isthmian Games were held. Numerous other temples in Corinth include ones to Apollo, Hermes, Venus-Fortuna, Isis, and one dedicated to “All The Gods” (Pantheon). On the slopes of the Acrocorinth was the sanctuary of Demeter, which dates from the 6th and 7th centuries B.C.

In Corinth, as often found in other parts of ancient Greece, there was a shrine dedicated to Asklepios, the god of healing, and his daughter, Hygieia. The museum at Corinth has hundreds of terra-cotta votive offerings presented to Asklepios by pilgrims who sought a cure or who wanted to thank the god for a healing they attributed to him. Among these votives can be seen limbs, hands, feet, breasts and genitals. In a time-honored tradition, petitioners to Asklepios had dedicated replicas of the particular parts of the body in which they were afflicted. These clay copies of human body parts, which were hung around the temple by worshippers, might have given special power to Paul's image of the church as the “body” of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12, 15-17).

The temple of Apollo stood on the hill overlooking the Roman city's main forum stood the temple of Apollo which served as a reminder of Corinth's ancient splendor, and was 700 years old by Paul's time, but it was in ruins. At one time a bronze statue of Apollo stood in the temple. To Paul it would have served merely as a sermon illustration of the impotence of the Greek's pagan gods. There were several sanctuaries to Apollo inside the city.

David Padfield, *Corinth, Greece In The New Testament* March 27, 2008  
<<http://www.padfield.com/2005/corinth.html>>

## ii Use of the Word “Soul” in Scripture

The word for “soul” in the Bible (Hebrew *nephesh* [from *naphash*, to breathe]; Greek *psuche*) is used in at least four different ways (see Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, pp. 901-902; Thayer, 1958, p. 677). First, the term is employed simply as a synonym for a person. Moses wrote: “All the souls (*nephesh*) that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls (*nephesh*)” (Exodus 1:5; cf. Deuteronomy 10:22). In legal matters, the word soul often was used to denote an individual. The Lord told Moses: “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, ‘If a soul (*nephesh*) shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done’...” (Leviticus 4:2). When Jacob was speaking of himself in Genesis 49:6, he used the expression, “O my soul (*nephesh*)”—which meant simply “me.” Numbers 9:6 records that “there were certain men, who were unclean by reason of the dead body (*nephesh meth*) of a man, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day” (cf. Number 6:6 and Ecclesiastes 9:5). In the New Testament, the word *psuche* is employed in the same manner. In Acts 2:41, Luke recorded that “there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls (*psuchai*).” In Peter's first epistle, when he addressed the topic of the Genesis Flood, he referred to the fact that “few, that is eight souls (*psuchai*), were saved by water” (3:20). In each of these instances, actual people—individually or collectively—were under discussion.

Second, the word soul is used to denote the form of life that man possesses in common with animals and that ceases to exist at death. In their *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Brown, Driver, and Briggs noted that *nephesh* often is employed to mean “life principle” (1907, p. 659). In the King James Version, *nephesh* is translated as “soul” in the Old Testament 472 times, as “life” 118 times, and as “creature” 8 times; *psuche* is translated as “soul” in the New Testament 59 times and as “life” 39 times (Morey, 1984, pp. 45,55). In addressing the use of the word “soul” in such passages as Genesis 2:7 and 1:20, Woods wrote:

...the word **soul** from the Hebrew *nephesh* occurs, for the first time in the sacred writings, at Genesis 1:20, where it is assigned to fish, birds, and creeping things. (See also, another similar usage in Genesis 1:30.) As thus used, it is clear that the soul in these passages does not refer to anything peculiar to the constitution of man. It signifies, as its usage denotes, and the lexicons affirm, **any creature that breathes**, in all of these early occurrences in the book of Genesis. Nor is it correct to conclude that the phrase **breath of life** in the statement of Moses (“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”) sums up, or was designed to denote the **whole** constitution of man. The word “life” here is, in the Hebrew text, plural, literally **breath of lives** (*nishmath khay-yim*). It occurs, in similar form, in three other instances in the early chapters of Genesis (6:17; 7:15; 7:22). In the first of these the phrase is *ruach khay-yim*; in the second the same; in the third, *nishmath-ruach khay-yim*, and out of the four instances where the phrase, the **breath of lives**, occurs in our translation the last three are applied to the beasts, birds and creeping things. It follows, therefore, that the phrase “breath of life” does not designate anything peculiar to man. And in view of the fact that the word “soul,” from the Hebrew

*nephesh*, is similarly extended to include the animal world, birds and creeping things, it may not be properly limited to man... (1985, 127 [22]:691, emp. and parenthetical comment in orig.).

In Genesis 1:20, 24, and 30, God spoke of the *nephesh hayyah*—literally “soul breathers” or “life breathers” (often translated as “living creatures” or “life”—cf. Leviticus 11:10; grammatically the phrase is singular but it bears a plural meaning). The writer of Proverbs observed in regard to animals: “A righteous man regardeth the life (*nephesh*) of his beast; But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel” (12:10). Hebrew scholar Hugo McCord therefore noted:

Then the translators realized that the first meaning of *nephesh* is “breath,” and so Genesis 1:20,24,30 and Genesis 2:7 all fit together in understanding Moses as saying that all animals and man too are breathers. Breathers, coupled with *hayyah*, “living,” the translators thought, would be well translated, in the case of animals, as “living creatures,” and in the case of man as a “living being” (1995, 23[1]:87-88).

In Exodus 21:23, Moses commanded: “But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life (*nephesh*) for life (*nephesh*).” He later wrote that “the life (*nephesh*) of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11,14). Blood often is said to be the seat of life because when blood is shed, death ensues (cf. Deuteronomy 12:23). In speaking of God’s retribution upon the Egyptians during the time of the Exodus, the psalmist wrote: “He spared not their soul (*nephesh*) from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence” (78:50). In this particular instance, the Egyptians’ souls represented their physical life and nothing more. Ezekiel later observed: “The soul (*nephesh*) that sinneth, it shall die” (18:20).

In the New Testament, the principle is the same. Christ observed in regard to humans: “Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for your life (*psuche*), what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body” (Matthew 6:25). God told Joseph: “Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child’s life” (*psuche*, Matthew 2:19). In the book of Revelation, John spoke of the fact that “there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life (*psuchas*); and the third part of the ships was destroyed” (8:9; cf. 16:3, *psuche*). Many a follower of Christ was said to have risked his or her life (*psuche*) for the Lord. In Acts 15:25-26, Luke recorded that Barnabas and Paul were “men that have hazarded their lives (*psuchas*) for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Earlier, John recorded Peter as saying to the Lord: “I will lay down my life (*psuchen*) for thee” (John 13:37-38). In Philippians 2:30ff., Paul spoke of “Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier...hazarding his life (*psuche*) to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.” And in Luke 14:26, one of the conditions of discipleship was to hate one’s own life (*psuche*)—that is, to be willing to deny oneself to the point of losing one’s life for Christ (cf. Luke 9:23; Revelation 12:11).

Third, the idea of the soul is used to refer to the varied emotions or inner thoughts of a man—a fact that explains why *nephesh* is translated “heart” (15 times) or “mind” (15 times) in the Old Testament (KJV) and why *psuche* is translated as “heart” (1 time) and “mind” (3 times) in the New. Man was called to love God with all his heart and with all his soul (*nephesh*; Deuteronomy 13:3b). The soul (*nephesh*) is said to weep (Job 30:16; Psalm 119:28) and to be exercised in patience (Job 6:7-11). From the soul (*nephesh*) originate knowledge and understanding (Psalm 139:14), thought (1 Samuel 20:3), love (1 Samuel 18:1), and memory (Lamentations 3:20). In His discussion with a lawyer, Jesus said: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul (*psuche*), and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37). In Acts 4:32, Luke recorded how, on one occasion, “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul (*psuche*).” In a similar fashion, “soul” also is employed to refer to the lower, physical nature of mankind. In his first letter to the Christians at Corinth, Paul wrote that “the **natural man** receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God” (2:14). In addressing the specific intent of this passage, Woods noted that the phrase “natural man” is literally

**the soulish man**, since the adjective “natural” [*psuchikos*—BT] translates a form of the Greek word for soul, which may be expressed in English as **psychical**. Thus, this usage is supported by etymology and required by the context. See, especially, Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 1:18-28 and 2:6-16 (1980, 122[6]:163, emp. in orig.).

Fourth, the word soul is used in Scripture to designate the portion of a person that is immortal and thus never dies. As early as the book of Genesis, the Bible sets forth such a concept. For example, in commenting on Rachel’s untimely death at the birth of her son, Moses wrote: “And it came to pass, as her soul (*nephesh*) was departing (for

she died), that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin” (Genesis 35:18). On one occasion while the prophet Elijah was at the house of a widow in the city of Zarephath, the woman’s son fell ill and eventually died. But the text indicates that Elijah “cried unto Jehovah..., ‘O Jehovah my God, I pray thee, let this child’s soul (*nephesh*) come into him again’ “ (1 Kings 17:21). When the psalmist prayed to Jehovah for forgiveness, he cried: “O Jehovah, have mercy upon me: heal my soul (*nephesh*); for I have sinned against thee” (41:4). In his discussion of the ultimate fate of those who dared to trust in earthly riches rather than in the supreme power of the God of heaven, the psalmist lamented that such people were “like the beasts that perish.... But God will redeem my soul (*nephesh*) from the power of Sheol” (49:15).

Many years later, Christ warned His disciples: “And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul (*psuche*) and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). In His discussion with the Sadducees in Matthew 22, the Lord quoted from Exodus 3:6 where God said to Moses: “**I am** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Christ then went on to state (22:32): “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living”—a fact that the Sadducees’ opponents, the Pharisees, already accepted as true (cf. Acts 23:8). Yet when God spoke with Moses (c. 1446 B.C.) about the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, those three men had been dead and in their tombs for literally hundreds of years.

Since from Christ’s own words we know that “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” the point is obvious. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still must have been living. But how? The solution to the seeming problem, of course, lies in the fact that while their **bodies** had died, their immortal **souls** had not. When the apostle John was allowed to peer into the book “sealed with seven seals” (Revelation 5:1), he “saw underneath the altar the souls (*psuchas*) of them that had been slain for the word of God” (Revelation 6:9). Each of these passages is instructive of the fact that there is within man a soul that never dies.

Bert Thompson, Ph.D., *The Origin, Nature, and Destiny of the Soul [Part I]* March 27, 2008

<<http://www.apologeticspress.org/modules.php?name=Read&cat=1&itemid=159>

Copyright © 2008 Ja Kem Publishing Co & Dr. David L. Lane  
New York ★ Dallas ★ St. Louis

Compliments of:  
Marsalis Ave. Church of Christ  
2431 S. Marsalis Ave.  
Dallas, TX 75216  
(214) 941-2531  
Website: MarsalisAvenueCOC.org