

Living in the Spiritual Realm, Part 2

Intro

- This series will be different in several respects
- Unfortunately, most of us are handicapped in spiritual realm
- Each of us is personally responsible for our own spiritual growth

Foundation: Character

- It's God's plan for us to be much more active in the spiritual realm than most of us realize
- We're lacking a foundation of character
- Mt 25:21, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things."
 - What does this suggest about the good and faithful servant?
- 1 Co 12:7, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."
 - According to this verse, what is the intended purpose of all spiritual gifts?
- What is agape?
- 1 Co 13:13, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."
 - Does that mean that love is the most important of all godly character traits for us?
- Humility causes you to consider yourself relatively unimportant compared to others
- Agape considers others' welfare, needs, interests, desires more important than your own
- Mt 18:4, "Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."
 - What does this verse reveal about the value of humility in God's kingdom?
- Eph 4:2, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."
- Php 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."
- Tit 3:2, tells us to "show true humility toward all men."

- Jas 3:13, “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.”
 - What is the relationship between humility and wisdom?
- God’s command: humble yourself
- Conclusion: Humility is not one desirable attribute among many; it’s the foundation of godly character.
- “My primary goal must be personal transformation rather than achievement, because my spiritual condition affects what God can do through me.”

Spiritual Development

- Your imagination displays an image to communicate and help your mind to understand.
- Eph 3:20, “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine”
 - “imagine” (Gk, *noeo*): (1) consider well, understand, reflect on with insight; (2) imagine, be able to form an idea
 - Does this verse suggest there’s anything wrong or evil about using our imagination?
 - Does God have an imagination?
 - Is it possible our imaginations are part of our being God’s image and likeness?
- Imagination is ability God gave us to receive spiritual visions, insight, revelation
- Imagination is essential to faith
 - Heb 11:1 — faith is conviction/evidence of things we *don’t see*
- Conclusion: Imagination is essential to faith and to “seeing” the spiritual realm.

Spiritual Experiences

- We’ll examine spiritual experiences described in scripture that are not common experiences for most Christians
- Christianity is a vibrant relationship with God Almighty, creator of everything that is
- It’s a process of becoming increasingly like him so we can actively engage in his kingdom, participate in everything he does, experience him as he really is

- Lk 12:48, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”
 - How does this apply to having unusual spiritual experiences?
- Jn 13:17, “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”
 - How does this apply to our current study?
- In what ways do we become accountable for any unusual spiritual experience we have?
- What is likely to happen if a self-centered believer has an unusual spiritual experience?

Closing

- True growth, progress, meaningful change require deliberate effort over time.
- If you want to grow spiritually beyond your present condition, you need to apply yourself, seek God’s help, persevere until you experience the desired change.
- Blessing
 - May the Holy Spirit stretch your thinking to embrace the great and wondrous things God is about to do.

Daily Activities

- Read one of the passages below and use your imagination to see and hear what the passages describe. Meditate on the images and let them become real to you.
 - Eze 1:26-28; Dan 7:9-10; Mt 17:1-5; Rev 1:12-16; Rev 4:1-6; Rev 7:9-12
- Humility involves considering yourself relatively unimportant compared to others. Becoming like a child requires humility — accepting what God gives you, believing what he tells you, trusting him to take care of you and simply doing what he says. Meditate on one of the passages below and consider how humility requires you to change your attitude and ways of thinking.
 - Mt 18:2-4; Eph 4:2; Php 2:8; Col 3:12; Jas 4:6