

The Human Spirit: Conscience, Intuition, and Communion

What the Bible says about the deepest part of you, the part made to know God

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

ROMANS 8:16

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	God made human beings with a spirit, the part of us that can sense right and wrong, perceive spiritual things, and connect with God. Through Jesus, the Holy Spirit brings our spirit to life.
SCRIPTURE	Psalm 51:10 · John 4:23-24 · Romans 8:15-16 · 1 Corinthians 2:11; 6:17 · 1 Thessalonians 5:23 · Hebrews 4:12
LENGTH	One or two sessions, 25 minutes each
BEST FOR	High school
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles and a whiteboard with three columns: <i>Conscience, Intuition, Communion</i>

Start here: more than body and brain

Paul prayed for believers that their "whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). We know what our body is. Most of us have some idea about our soul (our mind, emotions, and will). But what is our *spirit*?

Many Bible teachers, including Watchman Nee in his book *The Spiritual Man*, describe three main functions of the human spirit: **conscience**, **intuition**, and **communion**. Let's look at how the Bible uses the word "spirit" in each of these ways.

A NOTE FOR THE LEADER

Christians have long discussed whether people are made of two parts (body and soul/spirit) or three (body, soul, and spirit). Both views agree that we have an inner, spiritual life that can relate to God, and Scripture can distinguish between "soul and spirit" (Hebrews 4:12). Use this study to help students understand that inner life, not to settle the debate.

1 Conscience: knowing right from wrong

Our spirit includes an inner sense of right and wrong. It can be hardened, crushed, renewed, troubled, or stirred:

PASSAGE	WHAT IT SHOWS
Deuteronomy 2:30	King Sihon's spirit was hardened, so he refused to listen.
Psalms 34:18	The LORD "saves such as have a contrite spirit."
Psalms 51:10	David prayed, "Renew a steadfast spirit within me."
John 13:21	Jesus was "troubled in spirit" as He spoke of betrayal.
Acts 17:16	Paul's "spirit was provoked within him" at Athens' idols.
1 Corinthians 5:3	Paul, "present in spirit," judged a serious sin in the church.
2 Corinthians 2:13	Paul "had no rest in my spirit" until he found Titus.
2 Timothy 1:7	God has not given us "a spirit of fear."

2 Intuition: sensing spiritual things

Our spirit can also perceive and know things beneath the surface, a kind of inner spiritual sense:

PASSAGE	WHAT IT SHOWS
Matthew 26:41	"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
Mark 2:8	Jesus "perceived in His spirit" what others were thinking.
Mark 8:12	Jesus "sighed deeply in His spirit."
John 11:33	At Lazarus' tomb, Jesus "groaned in the spirit."
Acts 18:5	Paul was "compelled by the Spirit" (KJV: "pressed in the spirit").
Acts 18:25	Apollos was "fervent in spirit."
Acts 20:22	Paul went to Jerusalem "bound in the spirit."
1 Corinthians 2:11	Only "the spirit of the man which is in him" knows a person's thoughts.
1 Corinthians 16:18	Friends "refreshed my spirit."
2 Corinthians 7:13	Titus' "spirit has been refreshed."

3 Communion: connecting with God

Most important of all, our spirit is the part of us made to know, worship, and serve God:

PASSAGE	WHAT IT SHOWS
Luke 1:47	Mary: "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."
John 4:23-24	True worshipers "worship the Father in spirit and truth."
Romans 1:9	Paul served God "with my spirit."
Romans 7:6	We serve "in the newness of the Spirit."
Romans 8:15-16	We received "the Spirit of adoption," who "bears witness with our spirit."
1 Corinthians 6:17	"He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him."
1 Corinthians 14:15	"I will sing with the spirit, and... with the understanding."
Revelation 21:10	John was carried away "in the Spirit" to see the new Jerusalem.

Why this matters for you

Without Jesus, the human spirit is cut off from God, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). When we trust Christ, the Holy Spirit makes us alive (Titus 3:5) and joins us to the Lord as "one spirit with Him." Then our conscience becomes sensitive to God's voice, our spiritual perception grows, and our communion with God becomes real.

So take care of your spirit. Keep your conscience clean by confessing sin quickly (1 John 1:9). Feed your spiritual sense with God's Word, which is "living and powerful" and pierces "even to the division of soul and spirit" (Hebrews 4:12). And spend time in worship and prayer, where your spirit meets with God.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, what is the difference between your body, your soul, and your spirit?
2. How have you experienced your conscience warning or troubling you?
3. Which verse in the "Intuition" list surprised you? Why?
4. What does it mean to worship God "in spirit and truth"?
5. What is one way you can care for your spirit this week?

TAKE IT HOME

This week, start each day with two minutes of quiet before God. Ask: "Is there anything on my conscience? What are You showing me? How can I worship You today?" Then read one passage from the "Communion" list and pray it back to God.

Made to know God, spirit to Spirit.

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