

## MAN'S BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT: Are Distinctions Desirable?

1A.

### THE TRANSMISSION OF THE IMMATERIAL PART OF MAN:

When Adam begat Seth, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image: Gen. 5:3. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth. Adam was created in the image of God and his children were generated in his image which, of course, still bore God's image even after the fall: 1 Cor 11:7. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. The transmission of man's being is through natural generation. The fact that our bodies come from our parents is undisputed, but how does the immaterial aspect of man pass from generation to generation? Traditionally several answers have been given to this question.

1b.

**The pre-existence theory:** Plato, Philo, Origen, Hinduism

Man's soul is derived from a pre-existent world soul. It goes through a series of transmigrations and is confined to physical bodies as punishment.

2d.

**The creation theory:** Charles Hodge

God creates a human soul for each individual at the moment of conception or birth and immediately unites it with a body. The soul is sinful because of its contact with an inherited guilt through the body.

3d.

**The traducian theory:** William G. T. Shedd

An individual inherits his soul, like other immaterial facets, from his parents. Shedd offers a three-fold proof for his view:

1) Scriptural:

Genesis 2:1-3 says that God ceased creating and rested on the seventh day.

2) Theological:

There is a problem with God creating a perfect soul (He could do no other) and then having it fall in the case of each individual.

3) Psychological:

Man as a union of soul and spirit argues for the psychological and physical developing together in the individual.

2A.

### THE CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE IMMATERIAL PART OF MAN:

1b.

The controversy concerning the immaterial part of man:

"When God created Adam He took the dust of the earth and breathed into it the breath of life to make a living person (Gen. 2:7). While there were two steps to the act of creating, the result was single, unitary living person. To be sure, the particles of the earth provided the material while God's breath effected life. Material and immaterial combined to produce a single entity. Within the material exists a variety of features—arteries, brain, muscles, hair, etc., and within the immaterial we also find a variety—soul, spirit, heart, will, conscience, etc. But without the unity of man's being, this

diversity could not function. (Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986, p. 195).

1c. Dichotomy: body and soul/spirit

Man is a bipartite unity, composed of a variety of material and immaterial features.

2c.

Trichotomy:

1 Thess. 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1d.

Body:

Phil. 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

2d.

Soul:

Lk. 1:46-47 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, 47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

3d.

Spirit:

2 Cor. 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

3c.

Multichotomy:

(This term was coined by this writer to convey the idea that man possesses a multiplicity of physical and spiritual features.) Along with body, soul, and spirit, one has to take into consideration the human heart. All four of these features are mentioned in Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.



1d.

In terms of make-up, man is dichotomous: material and immaterial.

2d.

In terms of function, man is multichotomous: body, soul, spirit, heart, conscience, mind, etc. Man is rich diversity in unity.

3d.

Man is more than body, soul and spirit. The Scriptures list the heart along with other distinct capacities.

4d.

The Scripture indicates that man's heart is the most important immaterial capacity: Prov. 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (NIV) The literal rendering of this verse is, "Above all things to be guarded, guard your heart, because out of it are the goings-forth of life."

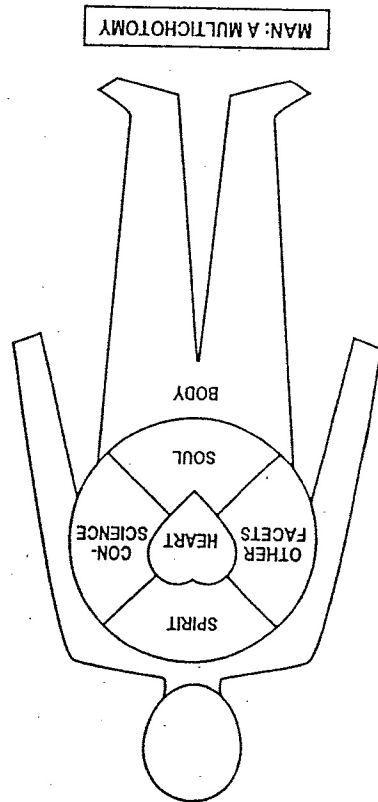
Solomon gives very practical instructions how man's heart, which functions as the center of life, and one might say as the computer of his thoughts, actions, desires, purposes, etc. is guarded.

Prov. 4:24-27  
 24 Put away perversity from your mouth;  
 keep corrupt talk far from your lips.  
 25 Let your eyes look straight ahead,  
 fix your gaze directly before you.  
 26 Make level paths for your feet  
 and take only ways that are firm.  
 27 Do not swerve to the right or the left;  
 keep your foot from evil.  
 NIV

Through: 1) discretion in conversation—proper speech (v. 24).  
 2) determination of character—pure eyes (v. 25).  
 3) discretion in conduct—purposeful walk (v. 26-27).

Solomon himself departed from his own inspired advice when he was old in age (1 Kings 11), as he let his ungodly wives turn his heart from the Lord. However, Daniel (1:8) and Job (31:1) are illustrations of those who guarded their hearts in a God-pleasing way.

## Man: A Dichotomy or Trichotomy?



2b.

The composition of the immaterial part of man:  
 --the body makes man **world-conscious**  
 --the spirit makes man **God-conscious**  
 --the soul makes man **self-conscious**

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK,  
 AND POWERFUL, AND SHARPER THAN ANY  
 TWOEDGED SWORD, PIERCING EVEN TO  
 THE DIVIDING ASUNDER OF SOUL AND  
 SPIRIT, AND OF THE JOINTS AND MARROW  
 AND IS A DISCERNER OF THE THOUGHTS  
 AND INTENTS OF THE HEART.  
 HEBREWS 4:12

AND THE GOD OF PEACE SANCTIFY  
 YOU WHOLLY; AND I PRAY GOD YOUR  
 WHOLE SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY  
 BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS UNTO THE  
 COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.  
 1 THESS. 5:23

That life principle departs at the time of physical death (Gen. 35:18; Jer. 15:2). Yet the corpse is called soul (Lev. 21:22; Num. 6:6; 9:6). In the Old Testament "soul" does not exist apart from the body, emphasizing again the unity of man's being. "Rich and abundant though this use of *n. (nephes, soul)* for life is, we must not fail to observe that the *n.* is never given the meaning of an indestructible core of being, in contradistinction to the physical life, and even capable of living when cut off from that life" (Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974], p. 20).

Soul also is the center of various spiritual and emotional experiences of mankind. These include sympathy (Job 30:25), despair (Ps. 43:5), bitterness (2 Kings 4:27), hate (2 Sam. 5:8), love (Song 1:7; 3:1-4), and grief (Jer. 13:17).

The New Testament reveals some similarities and differences in its use of the word soul (*psyche*). It denotes the whole individual person (Acts 2:41; 27:37, KJV). But it also can refer only to the immaterial part of man (Matt. 10:28). It also designates people in the intermediate state between death and the resurrection of the body (Rev. 6:9).

Soul seems to be a principal focus of redemption (though of course, the physical body also experiences the effects of redemption). Notice passages like Hebrews 10:39; 13:17; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:9, 22; 2:11, 25. To sum up: soul can mean the whole person, alive or after death; it can designate the immaterial part of a person with its many feelings and emotions; and it is an important focus of spiritual redemption and growth.

1d. Facts: Soul is the general rendering of the Hebrew *nephes*, a breathing creature. The Greek counterpart is *pseuche* or *breath*.

2d. Facets: Num 6:6 All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body/soul.

Gen. 35:18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin.

Song 1:7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

John 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

(Ryrie, p. 197)

3d. Features:

1d.

Facts:

The Hebrew word *ruah*, meaning breath or wind, is identical to the Greek work *pneuma* (wind, breath, vital principle).

2d.

Facets:

Gen. 8:1 And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged;

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Luke 1:46-47 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, 47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

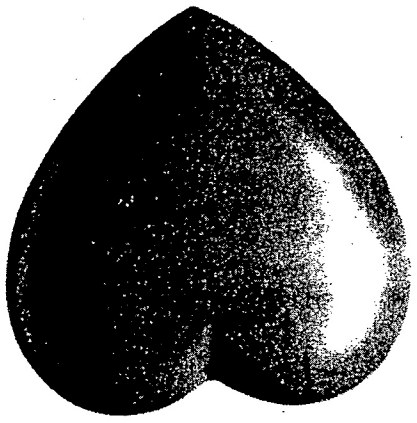
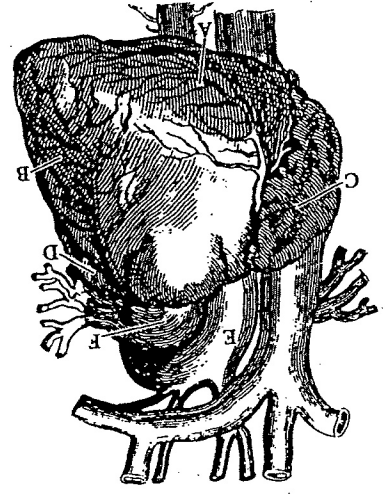
3d.

Features:

Dr. Unger has some helpful distinctions between soul and spirit:

The term soul specifies that in the immaterial part of man which concerns life, action and emotion. Spirit is that part related to worship and divine communion. The two terms are often used interchangeably, the same functions being ascribed to each (cf. John 12:27; 1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 7:13 with Matt. 11:29; 2 Cor. 7:1 with 1 Pet. 2:11; Jas. 5:20 with 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Pet. 4:5). The deceased are mentioned both as soul and sometimes as spirit (Gen. 25:18; 1 Kings 17:21; John 10:17; Acts 2:27; Rev. 24 with Matt. 27:50; John 19:30; Acts 5:5; Heb. 12:23). However, *soul* and *spirit* as synonymous terms are not always employed interchangeably. The soul is said to be lost, for example, but not the spirit (Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1966, p. 1043).

Heart: 3c.



1d.

Facts:

As stated earlier, the heart is the most important immaterial feature of man.

Heart is a very comprehensive concept in both Old and New Testaments. Used about 955 times it stands for the center and seat of life, both physical and psychological. Only a relatively few occurrences refer to the physical organ (2 Sam. 18:14; 2 Kings 9:24). The greater number use heart to denote the inner man, the essence of the many facets of his personality. (Ryrie, p. 198)

2d. Facets:

1e. Intellectual life: Matt 15:19-20 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

2e. Emotional life: Ps 37:4 Delight thyself also in the LORD, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Rom 9:2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3e. Volitional life: Ex 7:23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.

Heb 3:8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

4e. Spiritual life:

Rom 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Eph 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.




3d. Features

1e. The heart is listed as being separate from body, soul and spirit: Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twofedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

2e. The heart is man's most important immaterial facet. It is the center, core and computer governing man (Prov. 4:23).

HUMANITY AND ETERNITY

MAN DECRIES

AT HIS BIRTH	IN HIS SOUL	ENDLESS EXISTENCE	
AT THE NEW BIRTH	IN HIS SPIRIT	ETERNAL LIFE	
AT THE RESURRECTION	IN HIS BODY	IMMORTALITY	

4c. Conscience:

1d. Facts: the conscience is a moral monitor in man.

2d. Facets:

1e.

For the unbeliever:

Rom 2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.)

1 Tim 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

John 8:9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own

conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

For the believer: the conscience in relation to government,

Rom 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

1 Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

1 Cor 8:7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

1 Cor 8:10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

1 Cor 8:12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

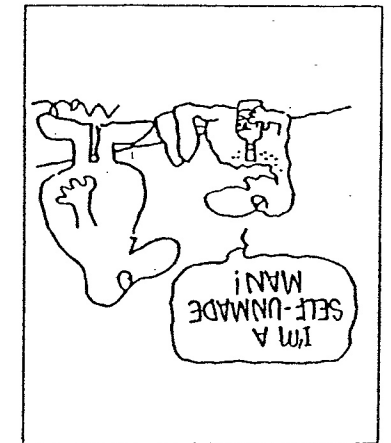
3d. Features:

The believer dare not violate his conscience, but neither must he let his conscience be his guide.

1 Tim 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

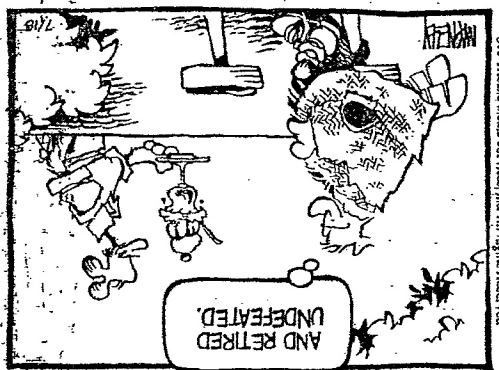
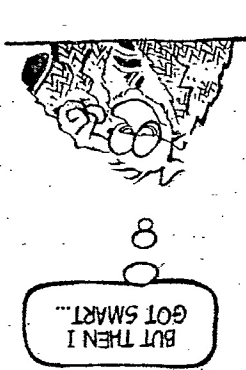
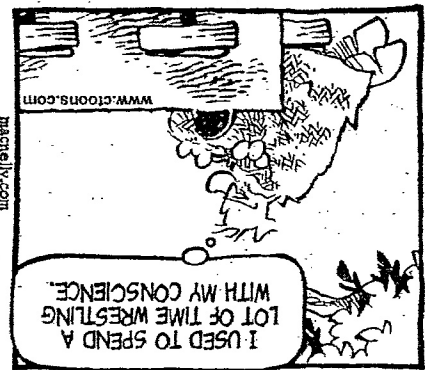
Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.



The Willies

**Robbery sorry, returns \$39 loot**  
OMAHA, NEB. (AP) — Omaha police Sunday were looking for a robber with a guilty conscience. About three hours after robbing a Goodrich Dairy Store, the man returned to the store and handed an employe an envelope containing \$39 cash and a note that read: "I am sorry. Please inform the police that the money was returned."  
Police said that although the money was returned, they still sought the man committing a robbery.



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5c. Mind: the mental capacity to know truth.

1d.

For unbelievers:

Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

2d.

For believers:

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Matt 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Eph 5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

1 Cor 14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

6c. Will

1d.

The will of both unbeliever and believer may effect good actions. Acts 27:43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:



Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

The will of both unbeliever and believer may effect evil actions.  
1 Tim 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.