

UNIT 10

LIVING IN THE SPIRIT

Hymn Part 4

CHRIST'S HUMANITY

*Jesus "was made in the likeness of men:
and ... found in fashion as a man."*

PHILIPPIANS 2:7-8



DAY 1

The Spiritual Controls the Material

DAY 2

Christ's Statements of Purpose

DAY 3

Christ and the Father

DAY 4

Christ and the Holy Spirit

DAY 5

Christ, the Scriptures, and Prayer

Why You Will Find This Unit Helpful

You will understand how Christ lived in the Spirit while He lived in the material world. As you study the example of Christ, you will learn ways to give greater control to the spiritual dimensions of life. You will be able to identify with Christ and follow His example in your relationship to the Father and Holy Spirit.

Lifelong Goal

In Christ you will seek to live in proper relationship to the Father and the Holy Spirit. You will continue to emphasize the spiritual over the material.

Summary of God's Work in You

Christ's spirituality in you begins with a mindset that is first spiritual and second material. God's goal is that you have spiritual perception so that He can guide you. Your growth in Christ can be measured only by Christ's dependence on the Holy Spirit. God directs your outer life through His inner Spirit.

Unit Learning Goals

- You will understand why the spiritual is more important than the material.
- You will demonstrate determination to emphasize the spiritual over the material.
- You will understand the source and nature of Jesus' purposes for His life and ministry.
- You will demonstrate your desire to know and do the will of your Heavenly Father.
- You will understand ways Jesus related to the Father and how you should relate to the Heavenly Father.
- You will understand the ways Christ and the Holy Spirit are related and ways you should relate to the Holy Spirit.
- You will understand ways Jesus used Scripture and ways He practiced prayer.

What You Will Do to Begin Living in the Spirit

- You will study and seek to imitate the examples of Jesus.
- You will examine the Scriptures that clearly speak about your relationship to the Father and Holy Spirit.
- You will spend time meditating on the Scriptures and praying so that God can conform your mind to reflect the image of His Son, Jesus.

Scripture Memory Verse

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

Lifelong Helps Related to This Unit

Your Relationship with Your Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit (pp. 251–52)

The Mind of Christ Cards Related to This Unit

5A. Unit 10: Scripture Memory—John 6:63



DAY 1 THE SPIRITUAL CONTROLS THE MATERIAL

Today's Bible Meditation

“The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly”
(1 Cor. 15:45-49, NASB).

Name of Christ for Today

A Lamb Without Blemish
and Without Spot
(1 Pet. 1:19)

Prayer to Begin the Lesson

*Lord Jesus, I long to bear
Your image more clearly. The
worldly and the material
have such a strong influence
in my life. Teach me today to
give priority to the spiritual
as You do. Cleanse me from
the contamination of the
world and make me without
blemish and spot. Amen.*

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verses and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer on the left to begin your study.

The Spiritual over the Material

The material world dominated my life at one time. I was told that I could be rich and successful in the career I had chosen. In 1956 I sought material success. That was my purpose. That period lasted three years. During that time I was quite active in church and outwardly seemed to be serving the Lord. Inwardly, my purposes were not God's purposes. The spiritual was subordinate.

2. Have you ever focused your attention on the material world to achieve success? Yes No
To become wealthy? Yes No
To experience pleasure? Yes No

3. If you answered yes, briefly describe your experience of focusing on the material world.

In 1959 one of my students gave me a German Bible. I happen to love languages and was delighted for the opportunity to practice my German. However, I wasn't excited about its being the Bible. Early one morning I began reading John 1 in that Bible. I scarcely expected the exhilaration I encountered in the opening verses. Somehow the old, familiar concepts had an electrifying newness about them. The Word was in the beginning—and He was God!

I almost lost my breath at verse 4: “In Him was life.” He has life in Himself; He is Self-existent! As I read with excitement, the most stimulating verse was John 1:14: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” The spiritual invaded the material! This miracle of God becoming a man overwhelmed me with great joy. God was using my love for languages to capture my attention! Day after day I pursued the story of Jesus with energizing intensity. The attraction of my material success began to fade as the majesty of the person of Christ increasingly overwhelmed me.

I decided to read the entire Bible in a modern translation. When I read about God's encounter with Moses at the burning bush (see Ex. 3), I had my own “burning bush” experience. Through His Word God revealed Himself to me. A spiritual Being broke through the wall of materialism I had built around my life. The spiritual is stronger than the material! I felt tremendous awe in the holiness I expe-

rienced at my “burning bush” that morning. Spiritual glory is noble. In the early hours of that November day in 1959, I chose the spiritual glory of the Lord Jesus for my life. I forever rejected the glory of the material.

God showed me that I had made my career my god. Like the rich young ruler who treasured his possessions, I had to put away the false god of career. I had to leave that career. Since that time I have chosen to make Christ’s purposes my purposes. I never have regretted that decision!

4. If God evaluated your life right now, how do you think He would rank your life on the following scales? Circle the number on the scale between the two extremes.

Focused on the material world 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Focused on the spiritual world

Focused on my purposes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Focused on Christ’s purposes

Often many of us are focused on the material world in which we live. We have to be aware of it in order to make a living. The world places many demands on us to dress a certain way, make a certain impression, love certain things, and associate with certain people. Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees, “Ye are of this world; I am not of this world” (John 8:23). The world system is one of controls with which Satan manipulates the people of the world for his desired ends. When you focus on your purposes rather than Christ’s purposes, you are of this world.

We have seen that one of God’s purposes in coming to earth was to show us how to live a truly human life—human as God intended it. That is the reason God became flesh. That is why you are seeking to imitate the perfect humanity seen in the life of Jesus. The most important of all aspects of humanity is the spiritual nature of humans as God intended. Jesus gave us the example of what that kind of life is like.

Jesus Emphasized the Spiritual over the Material

Jesus had nothing to do with this world system. He told the Jews, “I am not of this world” (John 8:23). The disciples heard Jesus say, “The ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me” (John 14:30, NASB). He told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36, NASB). Jesus trained His disciples so well that at the end of His time on earth He said of them, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:16, NASB). The world is against God’s spiritual purposes.

5. Which of the following should you be as Christ’s disciple? Check one.

a. I am to live like the world with a focus on the material.

b. I am to live like Christ with a focus on the spiritual.

Jesus perfectly lived His life in the spiritual realm. His work was done knowing that the spiritual has control over the material.

Jesus perfectly lived His life in the spiritual realm. His work was done knowing that the spiritual has control over the material. The material obeys the spiritual. Jesus' inner being radiated a power that affected everyone and everything He came close to. Jesus was able to call on and use spiritual forces. When He stilled the storm, the spiritual had control over the physical (see Mark 4:36-41). In the feeding of the five thousand, spiritual energies acted on physical material. Disease and all kinds of physical infirmities yielded to the word of Jesus. Wherever Jesus went, the material world was touched and changed by the spiritual.

Jesus never said or implied that matter is evil. He enjoyed aspects of the material world. He blessed material human life. But Jesus subjected the material world to the spiritual world.

The goodness of the material is at its best when it serves spiritual purposes.

6. Which is more important? The spiritual The material

7. Which controls the other? The _____ controls the _____.

Jesus emphasized the spiritual over the material and showed that the spiritual controls the material. Most important of all is the influence of the spirit over our relationships with God and with others. That influence touches all persons, for better or worse. We speak of a spirit of anger or a spirit of love. Jesus was sensitive to the spirits of people by responding more to their spirits than to their words or actions.

Expressing the Importance of the Spiritual

We who want the mind of Christ must be willing to express in tangible ways our conviction that the spiritual is greater than the material. The following illustrate ways a person can do that.

- Going without sleep or another normal human activity can provide you extra time to accomplish spiritual aims. I have gone without sleep in order to accomplish spiritual aims. Usually this has been to pray all night. Jesus did that. Some of the most significant miracles I have seen have been in answer to a night of prayer.
- Fasting (denying food to your body for a period of time) says, "My body is subject to my spirit." Fasting forgoes eating in order to give you time for spiritual concerns like praying.
- Giving can demonstrate the value you place on the spiritual over the material. Financially or materially providing for spiritual concerns can be helpful in gaining victory over a materialistic spirit. If your love for things is great, giving things away for spiritual purposes will help. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:20).

Our works, however, should be done the way Jesus' works were done—with intelligence and balance. We must never pervert the spiritual by causing damage to the material. Only godly wisdom can help us know how to do maintain that balance.

8. Ask God to help you identify areas where the material may have too much importance or influence in your life. Are any of the following areas too important? Which ones? Check all that apply. If you know of others, write them on the blank line.

<input type="checkbox"/> Career/work	<input type="checkbox"/> Cars	<input type="checkbox"/> Clothes
<input type="checkbox"/> Collections	<input type="checkbox"/> Eating	<input type="checkbox"/> Furniture
<input type="checkbox"/> Hobbies	<input type="checkbox"/> House	<input type="checkbox"/> Investments
<input type="checkbox"/> Money	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports
<input type="checkbox"/> Television	<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____	

9. Ask the Lord to guide you to victory over the areas you checked above. Do the following.

- Set your mind on things above—the spiritual.
- Allow God to renew your mind with a Christlike mindset.
- Deny yourself and the importance of the material.
- Follow Christ in giving priority and emphasis to the spiritual.
- Ask God to help you emphasize the spiritual in practical ways.
- Write notes to yourself about the things you sense God is guiding you to do.

10. Conclude today's lesson with this prayer.

Father, I want to see life as You see it, as Jesus sees it. Give me spiritual perception. Then give me through Your Spirit the spiritual energy to follow and do all You want me to follow and do. Jesus showed me how and gave me His name to offer You. So accept His gift to me—the name of Jesus—as Your authorization to answer this prayer. Amen.

DAY 2

CHRIST'S STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verses and the name of Christ for today (in the margin on p. 176). Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer on page 176 to begin your study.

During Jesus' ministry He made several statements that indicated His purpose. None of these come from the world. Neither do they indicate a preoccupation with personal advancement, wealth, or earthly power.

Jesus' entire motivation was to advance causes that cannot be physically or materially measured. These causes can be perceived only by people who are spiritually sensitive.



Today's Bible Meditations

"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).

"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21).

Name of Christ for Today

The Power of God
(1 Cor. 1:24)

**Prayer to Begin
the Lesson**

Heavenly Father, You have placed Your Son in me. He is the Power of God. You have also given me the calling to follow in His steps by living my life with a purpose that reflects His purposes for life and ministry. Please grant me the wisdom to know Your purposes for my life and ministry and then work through me to accomplish them in Your power. Amen.

2. Read the following purpose statements of Jesus and underline words or phrases that indicate what Jesus saw as His purposes for life and ministry.

Purpose Statements of Jesus

- “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (Isa. 61:1-2, NASB).
- “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34).
- “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38).
- “I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent” (Luke 4:43).
- “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).
- “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37).

3. Jesus used statements like “The Spirit of the Lord ... anointed Me,” “him that sent me,” and “I came down from heaven” to describe the source of His purposes. Check the source of Jesus’ purposes.

The world and worldly concerns God and spiritual concerns

Jesus described His purposes as coming from heaven and from the One who sent Him. Jesus’ purposes did not come from the world system. They began with God Himself. These purpose statements help us understand the following.

1. The Spirit’s anointing begins with the preaching of good news to the poor. For Jesus, the good news had to do with His advent and work. Jesus preached that in His coming the Kingdom had come.
2. The poor welcomed Jesus, while the high-ranking and the powerful did not. The authorities did not perceive that they needed good news other than the loosing of the Roman yoke. The poor needed immediate good news, and Jesus brought it. The miserable of the earth were the ones who quickly responded to Jesus. Jesus’ way is the opposite of the world’s way. Our flesh prefers to cater to the rich and influential. Recognizing God’s heart for the poor is profoundly spiritual. Jesus is concerned with the poor, the prisoners, the blind, and the oppressed.
3. Jesus’ occupation with the will of His Father indicates Jesus’ great concentration on the spiritual.
4. Jesus decided to leave the crowds in Capernaum. His first intention was to fulfill the Father’s purpose in sending Him. Jesus also wanted to cover the main geographical sections of Israel with a spiritual message, leaving sparks to ignite the future church.
5. God sees people as they relate to Him. They are lost or saved. In reflecting the mind of God, Jesus shows us the concerns of a spiritual mind. Jesus came to seek and save the lost.
6. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). He indicated a profound preoccupation with the spiritual nature of things. In the intangible world of the spirit, truth alone reigns supreme.

4. John 20:21 says, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Because these are the purposes of Jesus and you have been sent as He was sent, what do you think God would want your purposes to be regarding the following?

Poor, needy, and oppressed people: _____

The will of the Father: _____

Carrying the good news to people in other geographic areas: _____

Lost people: _____

The truth: _____

5. Conclude today's lesson by spending time talking to your Heavenly Father about His purposes for your life. Ask Him how those purposes can be fulfilled in your family, neighborhood, church, and workplace.



Today's Bible Meditation

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1).

Name of Christ for Today

Son of the Most High God
(Mark 5:7)

Prayer to Begin the Lesson

Heavenly Father, You have indeed shown me great love by adopting me into Your family. I have never known love like this before. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, as the sacrifice for my sins. Father, I want to move into a deeper and more personal love relationship with You. Teach me today how I can respond to You in a proper relationship. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 3 CHRIST AND THE FATHER

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verse and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer on the left to begin your study.

Jesus not only established an identification with humans, but He also identified with His Father. Just as Jesus identified with His Father, we identify with Jesus. Therefore, we need to know Jesus' particular points of identification with His Father.

Jesus' work identified Himself with His Father. Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner” (John 5:19, NASB). Jesus told the Jews, “I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me ... I always do the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:28-29, NASB). Jesus placed His work in opposition to that of the Jews: “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father” (John 8:38, NASB). The Father's work was Jesus' work.

2. What was one way Jesus identified with His Father? _____

3. Which of the following best describes one way you should relate to the Heavenly Father? Check one.

I should watch to see what the Father is doing. When He chooses to show me what He is doing, I should become involved in His work. The Father's work should be my work.

I should dream up what I want to do for my Father and then ask Him to assist me in doing it. He should adjust His work to what I want to do for Him.

The Father does not give us permission to set our own agenda. He does not adjust to us. God is the One working, and He invites us to become involved in His work.

Jesus' words also identified Himself with His Father. Jesus claimed, “I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak ... therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me” (John 12:49-50, NASB). He also said, “The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works” (John 14:10, NASB).

Jesus claimed that the Father's possessions were also His own. At the return of the 70, Jesus told them, “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father” (Luke 10:22, NASB). Jesus prayed, “All things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine” (John 17:10, NASB). The Father could not have something that was not Christ's at the same time.

4. What are two more ways Jesus identified with His Father? Jesus identified with His Father in His work,

_____ and _____.

Christ is one with the Father in substance. Jesus claimed, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). Later He told Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. ... Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (John 14:9-10).

Jesus is One with the Father in unity. Jesus prayed for perfect unity among the disciples, just as He and the Father were one (see John 17:11,22). We cannot identify with Christ in His divine substance, but in identifying with Jesus as human, we are one with one another and with Him. Jesus' identity with the Father, like His identity with man, is complete.

5. Circle one of the items below in which you can identify with Christ and the Father.

Substance Unity

The major point at which you cannot identify with Christ is in His divine substance. You can identify with Christ in the unity He expresses with the Father and His followers. Jesus' pattern of identification with His Father gives us a pattern for identifying with Him.

- We can identify with Him in His works, always reaching out to the poor, the hurting, and the needy.
- We can identify with His words. Our words should be simple and direct (see Matt. 5:37), gracious (see Col. 4:6), purposeful (see Matt. 12:36), and exemplary (see 1 Tim. 4:12).
- We can identify with His possessions. Even Christ's possessions are ours, for we are joint heirs with Him (see Rom. 8:17).
- We are in unity with Him (see John 17:21-23).

6. Turn to pages 251-52 in the Lifelong Helps and complete the activity related to "Your Relationship with Your Heavenly Father." Close your study today with this activity and a time of prayer with the Heavenly Father.

DAY 4

CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Today's Bible Meditation

“Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”

(Eph. 5:18).

Name of Christ for Today

Mediator of a New
Testament
(Heb. 9:15)

Prayer to Begin the Lesson

Jesus, my Lord, I am thankful that You did not leave us without another Comforter—the Holy Spirit. I realize, however, that I have probably never experienced the fullness of Your Spirit the way You have intended. I want to be filled with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. Amen.

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verse and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study.

Throughout His life and ministry Jesus had a close relationship with the Holy Spirit. Before His birth Jesus' mother was “found to be with child by the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:18, NASB). The work of the Spirit is indicated in Jesus' advanced insight and understanding at the temple at age 12. Mark describes the scene at His baptism: “Coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him” (Mark 1:10).

Jesus was “led up of the spirit” (Matt. 4:1) and was “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1, NASB) as He approached the temptation experience. His response to the temptations tells us that the Spirit was predominant in His mind. The Spirit had control over His mind as Jesus went through the experience. Then “Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee” (Luke 4:14).

Jesus began His Galilean ministry by announcing, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” (Luke 4:18). This led to the mightiest spiritual work in the history of the world. Jesus' work was done through the Holy Spirit. Jesus expressly said, “I cast out devils by the Spirit of God” (Matt. 12:28). Jesus' life fulfilled the prophecy “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord” (Isa. 11:2, NASB).

Jesus had a special jealousy for the Holy Spirit and strongly forbade blaspheming the Spirit (see Matt. 12:31-32). He had the highest regard for the Spirit, depended on the Spirit, and closely followed the Spirit throughout His life. This is the mind of Christ.

2. In the list below are ways Jesus related to the Holy Spirit during His earthly life and ministry. Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Anointed by the Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> Ignored the Spirit
<input type="checkbox"/> Blasphemed the Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> Jealous for the Spirit
<input type="checkbox"/> Controlled by the Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> Led by the Spirit
<input type="checkbox"/> Depended on the Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> Quenched the Spirit
<input type="checkbox"/> Filled with the Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> Experienced the power of the Spirit
<input type="checkbox"/> Followed the Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> Resisted the leadership of the Spirit
<input type="checkbox"/> Grieved the Spirit	

3. Turn to pages 252 in the Lifelong Helps and complete the activity related to “Your Relationship with the Holy Spirit.” Close your study today with this activity and a time of prayer seeking to rightly relate to the Holy Spirit. If time permits, review the Scriptures you read yesterday about your relationship to the Heavenly Father.

DAY 5

CHRIST, THE SCRIPTURES, AND PRAYER



1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verse and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study.

Jesus' Use of Scripture

Jesus showed a remarkable familiarity with the Old Testament. During His ministry Jesus quoted from 16 Old Testament books and referred to others. The Scriptures were clearly a vital part of His life and ministry. Jesus used the Scriptures in the following ways.

- Jesus frequently demonstrated a knowledge of Old Testament events, like His reference to David's eating consecrated bread (see Matt. 12:3-4, from 1 Sam. 21:3-6).
- Scripture spontaneously sprang from Jesus' lips. When He began His ministry by going to the desert, Satan tempted Him. He answered each of the temptations with commandments from Deuteronomy (see Matt. 4:4, from Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:7, from Deut. 6:16; Matt. 4:10, from Deut. 6:13).
- Jesus used Scripture to answer criticism. When the Pharisees asked Jesus' disciples why He ate with sinners, Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6, "I desire compassion, and not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13, NASB).
- Scripture was the precise basis for Jesus' actions. To justify what He did, Jesus quoted Scripture. When Jesus cleansed the temple (see Mark 11:17), He used the term *house of prayer* from Isaiah 56:7 and accused the people of making it a den of robbers, as Jeremiah had stated (see Jer. 7:11).
- In His parables Jesus freely drew from phrases used in the Old Testament. The parable of the vine growers tending the vineyard derives from Isaiah 5:2.
- Christ used the Scriptures as a witness to Himself. When John the Baptist's disciples came inquiring about Jesus' role, He sent them back quoting Isaiah 35:5-6 (see Luke 7:22). In Caiaphas's court Jesus answered the question whether He was "the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One" with Scripture drawn from Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13: "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62, NASB).
- Jesus used Scripture to point to end times. In His explanation of the parable of the weeds (or tares), Jesus drew from Daniel 12:3 about the righteous who will shine in the kingdom of their Father (see Matt. 13:43).

2. Without looking back, see if you can describe in your own words at least three ways Jesus used the Scriptures.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Today's Bible Meditation

"They said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

Name of Christ for Today

The Word of God
(Rev. 19:13)

Prayer to Begin the Lesson

Word of God, stir my heart by opening to me the Scriptures as You did to the disciples on the road. I long to know more about You and what You want to say to me through Your Word. Open my mind and give me understanding. Teach me how to relate to Your Word and pray in ways that will please You. Amen.

Jesus was especially concerned that His disciples understood Scripture. After the resurrection Jesus reproved the two on the Emmaus road because they were “slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken” (Luke 24:25, NASB). Jesus then explained the Scriptures to them (v. 27).

The spiritual mind finds great light in the Scripture.

Jesus demonstrated that the spiritual mind finds great light in Scripture. He said that “the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35, NASB). His strongest affirmation is in the Sermon on the Mount: “Truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished” (Matt. 5:18, NASB). Jesus revered Scripture, based His actions on scriptural precedent, justified His actions with it, and even used it to point to the great consummation in His second coming.

Earlier I mentioned the fact that when I began these studies, the Lord led me to read nothing but the Bible for four years. During that time I discovered a technique that proved helpful in understanding the Bible. I memorized a passage and then spent months meditating on it. Most of what I learned comes from meditating on memorized Scriptures. If you want the mind of Christ, you must follow His example in His relation to Scripture.

 3. Pause for a few minutes and meditate on one or two of the Scripture verses you have been memorizing these past weeks. If you prefer, use The Mind of Christ Cards to meditate on Scriptures of your choosing. Ask the Lord to open your mind to understand these Scriptures.

Jesus' Practice of Prayer

Prayer is a decisive factor in the life of a spiritual person.

Since the spiritual world dominates the material world, prayer is a decisive factor in the life of a spiritual person. Though we have more prayers by David and Paul, the Bible says more about the prayers of Jesus than any other biblical character. Jesus also taught more about prayer than any other person in the Bible. If we are to have the mind of Christ, we must imitate His prayer life.

- Jesus preferred to be alone and in a private place. He must have been tired after a busy day of healing. But “in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there” (Mark 1:35, NASB). Hypocrisy cannot enter into private praying. When you choose to pray alone, God knows that it is real.
- Jesus prayed on all sorts of occasions and in groups of various sizes.
- Jesus prayed before making important decisions. The entire night before He chose the 12 disciples was spent in prayer.
- Jesus prayed at important events like His baptism and His transfiguration.
- At least four of the miracles were accompanied by prayer.
- Jesus prayed all kinds of prayer except confession of sin. We find Him uttering praise (see Matt. 11:25), thanksgiving (see Matt. 14:19), petition or personal request (see John 17:1-5), and intercession (see John 7:6-26).

4. In your own words, describe the importance of prayer in the life and ministry of Jesus.

The Gethsemane prayers stand in a class by themselves (see Matt. 26:36-46). Christ was facing the greatest struggle any human has ever endured. Through the course of His great struggle, not once did Jesus depart from a firm resolution to do God's will (see vv. 39,42,44). This agony made such an impression on the early Christians that the Book of Hebrews also preserves it: "He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety" (Heb. 5:7, NASB). Even with the mind of Christ, prayer may be a struggle.

5. Conclude today's study and this unit by practicing prayer. Find a place where you can be alone and talk to the Father. Use the following types of prayer.

- Confession. Seek God's cleansing before rushing into His presence.
- Praise. Offer praise to God for who He is. Praise His name.
- Thanksgiving. Thank God for His bounty. Be specific.
- Petition. Let God guide your asking so that you can become like Him.
- Intercession. Join God in His work by praying for others according to His will.