

# **Spirituality**

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## I. Introduction.

A. Spirituality is a difficult word to define.

B. It is like a baby who pushes a ball under a sink and loses it. He hasn't acquired object permanence. Spirituality is acquiring object permanence - knowing something exists even when we are not seeing it.

C. There is a widespread sense that spirituality is where the life is.

D. Two ways spirituality can be practiced.

1. From our side - anthropologically.

a. We cultivate a sense of who we are.

b. We pray to God and get a better sense of self.

2. A theological spirituality.

a. Involvement with the Father, Son, and Spirit.

b. The renewed sense of spirituality is not an interest in God like this but themselves or other gods.

c. People now expected the speaker as a pastor to teach them spirituality without God.

E. How do we develop a spirituality that is responsive to God and does not just come out of the needs of our life? There are many methods of spirituality, which are not responses to the biblical revelation of God through Jesus Christ.

## II. An introduction to spirituality: two conversations.

A. The story of Nicodemus. (John 3)

1. Nicodemus is probably concerned about all the controversy surrounding Jesus - he comes at night discretely.

2. He opens up the question: what must I do to inherit the kingdom of God?

3. Jesus' answer is to be born again/born from above. He says that one must be born of water and Spirit.

4. The world is full of two types of people - those who say the motion of the trees makes the wind move and those who think the wind makes the tree moves. Nicodemus was probably one who thought that the motion of his life made things move, but Jesus reverses this and tells him that the Spirit makes things move.

B. The story of the Samaritan woman. (John 4)

1. Jesus opens the conversation and asks for a drink. The woman says how can she do this without a bucket and with a deep well. He responds by speaking about the living water.

2. In the midst of a theological conversation, Jesus tells her that those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth.

3. The woman becomes a believer and an evangelist.

C. They enter into spirituality in two different ways.

1. Nicodemus starts the conversation and is probably a good person.

2. The woman is a heretic and is not a good woman (has had five husbands). She is marginalized and has no interest in orthodoxy.

3. There is a reversal of expectations that comes with the word "Spirit." It is not something that they will do, but God will do.

4. The stories democratize spirituality. We all start at different places and come in through Jesus' invitation.

III. Three texts.

A. The Spirit hovers over the water - nothingness takes shape through it into seven acts of Creation. (Genesis 1)

1. The conclusion is called good seven times.

2. There is a context of Spirit in all of this.

B. The Spirit's descent on Jesus. (Mark 1; Matthew 3; Luke 3; John 1)

1. During Jesus' baptism.

2. It introduces a world of mercy and salvation.

C. The descent of the Spirit upon the Apostles. (Acts 1)

1. The church begins here.
2. A life of holy living is initiated.

IV. Conclusion.

A. These texts define our existence - God creating, saving, and entering into our lives by the Spirit.

B. Every time the Spirit works a word follows.

1. This is lacking in our contemporary spirituality.
2. People want spirit without word so that they can experience energy, but the two are tied together in Scripture.
3. The Spirit reveals God through narrative/story.
4. We live storied lives and adhere to spirituality.
5. The Scripture was meant to be experienced as story.

C. Spirituality is not gibberish. There is content to it. We cannot live sinless and Godless.

D. Biblical spirituality is entering into the text of Scripture. We enter into God's narrative. The Trinity pulls us into the life of the Trinity.

**Application questions.**

1. What observations about the modern move to spirituality are set in contrast to biblical spirituality?

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2. Is the speaker correct in associating the Spirit with spirituality as strongly as He does? Do the biblical texts he chooses portray a biblical portrait of spirituality? Why or why not?

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3. What will you do to live the spiritual life with a biblical foundation? Write down something that you can do within the next week to improve upon or enter into the spiritual aspect of Christian living.

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