

Foundations of the Inner Man

Introduction

We read and speak a lot about the inner man, the new man, and other similar things but we never actually define what we mean. It seems to me that it would be important that we come to a spiritual understanding of just what is meant by “the inner man”. There are only three occasions where the phrase 'the inner man' is actually used according to the New American Standard Bible Concordance. Let's look at these and see if we can draw any conclusions about the inner man.

2 Corinthians 4:16 NASB

(16) Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Obviously, from this verse, there is an outer man and there is an inner man. The outer man is our physical body and it is dying and decaying. The inner man, however, is being renewed each day.

Romans 7:22-23 NASB

(22) For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,
(23) but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

From these verses we see that there is a law that is different from the law of God that is working in our bodies, the outer man, and this law is in conflict with the law of God, which is in my mind. The mind then is a part of the inner man, which is in agreement with the law of God.

Ephesians 3:14-19 NASB

(14) For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
(15) from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,
(16) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,
(17) so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
(18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
(19) and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

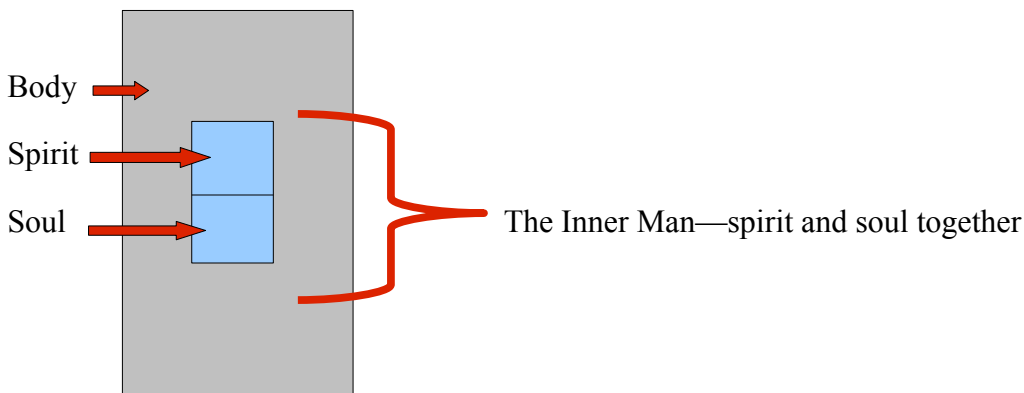
From these verses we see that our desire for ourselves and others is that our inner man needs to be

strengthened with power through His Spirit. This strengthening in power results in Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith, (our hearts, then, are another part of the inner man). The result is that our inner man is rooted and grounded in love and is now able to comprehend or understand the fullness of Christ so that our inner man is filled with all of the fullness of God.

We can conclude that the inner man includes all of the non-physical parts of who we are. This would include both soul and spirit and encompass all that the scriptures call our heart and understanding. It would seem to me then that this is a rather important aspect of our being and something that we need to understand.

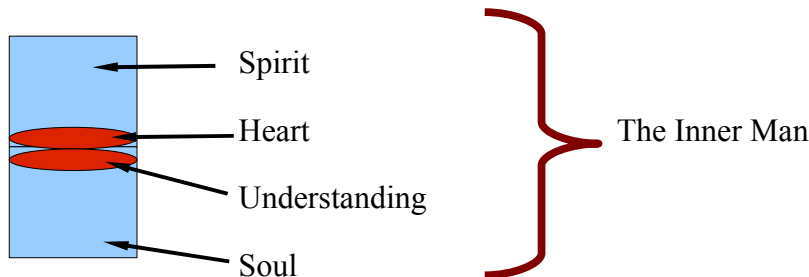
The Inner Man & the Tabernacle

Most of us who have heard teaching about body, soul and spirit have probably seen the diagram of a circle in a circle in a circle representing spirit as the innermost circle, soul as the next innermost circle and body as the outside circle. The finished diagram looks like a target with the spirit as the bull's eye. However, I have come to the conclusion that this is an incorrect representation. The scriptures give us the pattern of our being with the symbolism of the Tabernacle, which was made as a pattern, a shadow, of something in the Heavens. When we use the picture of the Tabernacle we get a representation that looks like this with the body corresponding to the Outer Court, the soul corresponding to the Holy Place and the spirit corresponding to the Holiest of Holies:



To me this gives a clear picture of what makes up the components of our inner man.

We have to add to this picture the idea of “heart” and “understanding”. Where are they located. I believe that they are the interface between soul and spirit. So, I would add them to the diagram like this:



Heart

The Bible says a lot about the heart. We tend to simply identify heart as our deep desires or even strong emotions; however, the Scriptures identify heart as a separate component from the functions of our soul. While the soul comprises our mind, will and emotions; the heart seems to be something different that is at a deeper level of our inner man.

Before knowing Christ the condition of our inner man was a wasteland. The spirit was dead, cut-off from God; the heart had no hope; and the mind was vain, futile, and depraved.

Ephesians 2:12 NASB

(12) *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Romans 1:21 NASB

(21) For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

The heart was darkened. Since the spirit was cut off from God, there was no light coming through the spirit to the heart and no spiritual thought to the understanding. The description of the heart in our fallen condition is given by Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 17:9 NASB

(9) "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

Jesus identified the heart as the seat of our motivations because He told us that these things proceed out of our heart

Mark 7:21-23 NASB

- (21) "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,
(22) deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.
(23) "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

The writer of Hebrews tells us that our thoughts and motivations or intentions of our heart are judged by the word of God. It pierces deep, dividing soul and spirit—the inner man, and the joints and marrow—the outer man. In the process our hearts are laid bare.

Hebrews 4:12 NASB

(12) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and

piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Jeremiah tells us how the exchange and change process occurs. It is inherent in the new covenant in the blood of Jesus. God's law is written on the heart in the new covenant and not on tablets of stone.

Jeremiah 31:33 NASB

(33) "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Ezekiel gives us more details about what God does in the salvation process.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 NASB

(25) "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

(26) "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

(27) "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

We are sprinkled clean by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 12:24; I Pet. 1:2). We receive a new spirit; that is, we are born again. God removes our heart of stone and we receive a new heart, one of flesh. The result is that which is spoken of by the Psalmist:

Psalms 51:10 NASB

(10) Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Hebrews 10:22 NASB

(22) let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Understanding

While the heart is obviously described in the Scriptures with attributes that are in the heart, *understanding* is not as obvious. That is because we think of understanding as something that comes from the mind as the mind gains knowledge. This is not the scriptural idea. We think in the natural and not in the spiritual. Just like we think of the eye as the organ of seeing and we think of seeing as a function of the organ of the eye, we think of the brain as the organ of understanding. However, the scriptures describe the heart as the organ of understanding. Not the physical heart but the invisible heart. The mind is the invisible function of the brain. Understanding is the invisible function of the heart.

The Greek New Testament uses the word “*dianoia*” for “understanding”. The Bible translators translate this word sometimes as “mind” and sometimes as “understanding”. It’s one of several words used to describe the workings of the inner man or of the mind:

- “understanding” draws conclusions about right and wrong, and
- “understanding” makes distinctions and forms opinions.

It is that aspect of the heart and mind that is designed to have insight and comprehension. It is from an enlightened “*dianoia*” that a person can say, "Now I see! Now I understand!"

In the natural man the “*dianoia*” is darkened; that is, without light.

Ephesians 4:17-19 NASB

- (17) So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,
(18) being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;
(19) and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

However, after the new birth we have a spirit that is alive to God and light comes into the spirit and into the heart which illuminates the “*dianoia*” so that we receive revelation and understanding. This should be the norm; but, apparently, there are things that can hinder or block the light so that our understanding remains darkened. But, with our new birth there is the potential of light flooding our understanding. This was Paul's prayer for the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:18-19 NASB

- (18) I pray that the eyes of your heart [NKJV and KJV = understanding] may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
(19) and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might*

Paul was praying for an enlightened understanding “so that you will know” and then he names three “whats” that result from the enlightened understanding:

1. **what** is the hope of His calling;
2. **what** are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; and
3. **what** is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

If we have to sum these three things into single words they would be 1) **hope**, 2) **value**, and 3) **power**.

I believe that these three areas constitute the foundation of the inner man.

HOPE: the hope of His calling gives us purpose and direction—a reason to move forward in the Lord and mature. It provides vision for the future.

VALUE: this is His riches in us—we have value to God. If there is no sense of value to God, that we are worthless to Him, then there is no reason to be obedient to the Lord or to grow up in Him.

POWER: this is His power in us and it is surpassingly great. It is the same power that raised Christ Jesus from the dead and it works in us to achieve these foundations and build on them.

If these foundations are laid in us then we will have a strong inner man that will seek after the Kingdom of God. Without these we will remain babes in the Lord and fail to mature into productive citizens of His Kingdom.