

# Spiritual Men Make Good Fathers

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Paul in writing to the Corinthians says, “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:14 & 16)

*Again he says, “Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ. I gave milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)*

In both these portions of Scripture, Paul makes some distinctions about man. First, he says the spirit of man is deprived because of sin; therefore he cannot understand spiritual things. He needs God’s Holy Spirit to help him. The second distinction he makes is that between infants in Christ and mature men.

## **I. Paul Categorises The Types of Man**

The first type of man is the natural man. The second type is the spiritual man. How do we become a spiritual man? Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again”. Jesus said, “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:6).

We must come to Jesus; it is through Jesus that we can be born of the Spirit. The natural man despises the preaching of the cross for it is foolishness to him. But if we come to God and say “Lord, if you in your wisdom and through the preaching of the cross have provided the way to be born again though it is foolishness to man, I accept you way.” It is in accepting and believing in Jesus that we are born again by the Spirit of God.

To be spiritual, one therefore needs to have that experience of being born again. Only Jesus can take us into that experience. You do not just turn over a new leaf. You are to become a brand new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). The trouble with turning over a new leaf is that the other side is still rotten. And it will not be very long before the rottenness that is on the other side and which we have tried to hide penetrates the leaf. Soon the new leaf will become just like the old leaf.

Do you know anyone who has made New Year resolutions by saying “I want to change, I don’t want to be what I am now?” They may very likely succeed for a while, but by the end of the year they will find that they are not any different from the persons they were at the beginning of the year.

Fathers, if you want to be successful fathers, then you must be spiritual men. Now, you may not be a father, but the principles are the same. I am simply applying it specifically to the fathers. Principles do not change. If you want to be successful, if you want victory in your soul, if you want the joy of God to flow through you, if you want to let God turn you into somebody whom others will admire and wonder “What is his secret?”, you can now say, “It is the power of Jesus that operates in my life. He had changed me”. And in the face of whatever oppositions or trials, you will have the strength to overcome, and the victory will be yours.

The second distinction that Paul makes in relation to man as a spiritual man is that of the infants in Christ who are ‘mere men’. The King James Version translated ‘mere men’ as ‘carnal men’. These men are Christians all right – they have asked Jesus to come in but they are still mere man. There is nothing wrong with being an infant, we all start as infants. But Paul explains that they are infants not because they are young; but rather they are infants by reason of not wanting to grow. They want to be babies all their lives. Have you ever seen a 40 year-old man or a grown woman who may even be married, still acting childish?

Therefore, Paul says there are three types of men: the natural man, the spiritual man and the immature spiritual man.

## Who is the spiritual man?

From the scriptures in I Corinthians, Paul describes a spiritual man as one who possesses the Spirit of God, who understands the things of God and has spiritual discernment. He also has the mind of Christ. Paul writes again in Romans chapter eight, verses one to six, where we will see a further description of a spiritual man.

- There is no condemnation in Him; he is in Christ Jesus. He does not live in condemnation. A spiritual man rises above condemnation
- He is set free from the law of sin and death
- He does not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit
- His mind is set on things above (heavenly)
- He is the Son of God – heir to God's blessings and glory (Romans 8:12-17). There is a tremendous inheritance awaiting him

## II. Why Do Spiritual Men Make Good Fathers?

A spiritual man makes a good father mainly because when he has the Spirit of God, God is changing him continually for the better. God's Spirit develops him into the man that he originally intended him to be.

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

The Spirit of the Lord dwells within us. And as we look upon and submit ourselves to the Spirit of the Lord, "there comes a change in our lives." The Spirit of God gives him the power and the ability to go through this changing process. He will produce the fruit of the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22 & 23)

No one becomes perfect overnight. We are slowly undergoing changes, learning to develop and become more like Jesus. A spiritual man goes through this changing process. And when he finds that something is not right, he does not give up. This is because he hopes in Jesus.

Paul describes in Romans 7:14-20 the dilemma of doing what he did not want to do and not doing what he knew he should do. This struggle is because of the sinful nature in man, that is why God wants to give us his Spirit, that gives us strength and the ability to do what we should. Say to the Holy Spirit, "I welcome you in my life." Paul understood this well when he said, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18), so that the Spirit of God will bring about a change. Spiritual men make good fathers.

The second reason why the spiritual man makes a good father is found in I Corinthians 2:15; "The spiritual man makes judgement about all things". That means the spiritual man has the ability to discern what is right and what is wrong. The ability to discern causes him to make the right choices and judgements. I am often asked, "Pastor, is it a sin to do this or to do that?" Many times it has nothing to do with sin. It has everything to do with values and priorities. Why do we want to spend time to do things that have little or no value? Paul said, "All things are lawful but not all things are beneficial" (I Corinthians 10:23)

The spiritual man has the ability to discern the value of things. He has the wisdom to choose right from wrong and the strength to do what is right. He no longer says, "Oh I want to do what is right but I cannot." Instead he can say, "By the Spirit of God I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Fathers that are spiritual are good fathers.

Let us look at I Corinthians 2:15 again, "The spiritual man makes judgements about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgement." What does this mean? Is the spiritual man above the law?

No! He lives above the law. He is governed by God's love. Jesus lived that way. The people did not understand His success and authority. They knew He was Joseph's and Mary's son but His righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. That is why they could find no fault in Him.

Noah is a good example of a father who was a spiritual man. The account of Noah in Genesis 6:9 & 10 begins with his righteousness and blameless life, followed by the record that he was a father of three sons. We can easily identify with Noah because:

- Noah experienced the grace of God. "But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). Noah was saved by grace and so are we (Ephesians 2:8 & 9).
- Noah lived by faith. "By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith" (Hebrews 11:7)
- Noah was living in the end-time period. God looked at the earth and saw how wicked the people had become and God said, "I am going to destroy the earth with flood" (Genesis 6:13). Noah was living in the last days. So are we.

Noah was living in a world that was exceedingly corrupt, sinful, wicked and evil (Genesis 6:11). We are now living in a corrupt world. There is no country that is free from evil. The world is plunged into wickedness and evil. We are also living in the kind of wicked world as Noah's.

How did Noah make it as a spiritual man and a father? Genesis 6 gives us the answer. Noah found favour with God. Noah walked with God. He heard from God and he obeyed God explicitly in that he built an ark. It was faith and obedience. He lived an exemplary life before his family. Through this, he became an effective father. When the time came for him to lead his family, his sons and their wives followed him into the ark. He led by example and saved his family from destruction.

Through spiritual neglect, some fathers ask their wives to be the spiritual leader at home. But the Bible teaches that fathers are the priests of their homes. Lead that home by example through prayer, faith and obedience. It is the spiritual man that makes a powerful, victorious and successful father. Your children will be saved from destruction and they will bless you in the end.

My wife gave me a Father's Day card. She began with these words, "Following your good example..." This put the fear of God in me and it resulted in this message. The truth is, there are many wives and mothers who are in need of spiritual leadership in their homes.

Fathers, bless your home by being a mature spiritual man and you will see the salvation of the Lord.