

Soul and Spirit

The Scriptures state that we have a soul and spirit.

Hebrews 4:12 - "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of **soul** and **spirit**, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

1 Thessalonians 5:23 - "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole **spirit, soul**, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Bible lists **spirit** and **soul** separately in **1 Thessalonians 5:23** and **Hebrews 4:12**. However, some Bible scholars believe that they are the same. Others believe that they are not the same.

Paul seems to be separating **spirit** and **soul**, but he may be using interchangeable terms to emphasize what he is talking about. It may be a kind of parallelism or overstatement for emphasis to give fullness of meaning. The rich vocabulary of the Greek language that Paul used gave ample opportunity for this kind of writing.

Some mysteries within the mind of God are beyond our comprehension. The problem we have is that we always want things to be 2+2= 4 and pure black and white. However, the Bible descriptions of the nature of mankind provide us all that we need to know.

The purpose of this Bible study is to help us understand what we can about our **soul** and **spirit**.

How the **soul** and **spirit** are similar and different is not a simple answer.

One reason is that the words **soul** and **spirit** are used in various ways in the Bible.

The scriptures often use the terms **soul, spirit**, heart, and mind interchangeably and in similar ways at times. The context and setting may be necessary to determine the meaning, function, and purpose of these words.

The soul and spirit of man have clear similarities and differences.

The **soul** and **spirit** are so closely related that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them.

The Bible describes the **soul** and **spirit** both experiencing similar actions and emotions of everyday life.

The **soul** can love, serve, bless, magnify the Lord, delight, desire, trust, cleave, seek, thirst, prosper, wait, remember, pity, hate, loathe, mourn, break, melt, faint, sin, and die.

The **soul** also can be restored, revived, preserved, purified, redeemed, delivered, saved, satisfied, calmed, quieted, troubled, distressed, poured out, wearied, sorrowful, bitter, afflicted, tormented, enticed, warred against, lost, and destroyed.

The **spirit** of man can perceive, know, serve, bless, glorify God, return to God, rejoice, pray, sing, compel, constrain, sigh deeply, grieve, groan, fear, fail, err.

The **spirit** also can be fervent, refreshed, revived, rested, meek, gentle, quiet, excellent, strong, holy, stirred up, pressed, raised, preserved, willing, steadfast, committed, saved, patient, poor, contrite, humble, troubled, distressed, anguished, overwhelmed, sorrowful, sad, wounded, broken, provoked, hasty, haughty, proud, and hardened.

Emotions of both the **soul** and **spirit** are sometimes expressed together in the same verses.

Job 7:11 - "Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my **spirit**; I will complain in the bitterness of my **soul**."

Luke 1:46-47 - ⁴⁶ And Mary said: "My **soul** magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my **spirit** has rejoiced in God my Savior."

These statements by Mary seem to indicate that her spirit and soul mean the same thing. This is a Jewish literary technique called parallelism where one line says something and the next line says the same thing using different words for emphasis.

The Soul

The Bible teaches that a human being **is a soul and has a soul**.

The Hebrew word for **soul** is *nephesh*. It literally means life. *Nephesh* is found more than 780 times in the Old Testament. It is not always translated **soul**. The King James Version uses 28 different words to translate *nephesh*. Therefore, we see that it means different things depending on how it is used.

The Greek word for **soul** is *psuche* and is found 105 times in the New Testament. Our English word psychology comes from this Greek word.

The words in **bold** print in this lesson come from the Hebrew and Greek words for **soul**.

The soul can refer to an individual person.

When the word **soul** is used in the Bible, it can refer to the whole person.

Deuteronomy 10:22 - "Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy **persons**, and now the Lord your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude."

Ezekiel 18:20 - "The **soul** who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."

Acts 2:41 - "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand **souls** were added to them."

1 Peter 3:20 - "who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight **souls**, were saved through water."

The soul can refer to life.

Your **soul** is who you are, the essence of your being. In its most basic sense, the word **soul** means life.

Genesis 1:30 - "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is **life**, I have given every green herb for food; and it was so."

Genesis 2:7 - "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living **being** (**soul** in ASV and KJV)."

Genesis 35:18 - "And so it was, as her **soul** was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin."

Joshua 2:13 - "and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our **lives** from death."

1 Kings 17:21-22 - "²¹ And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Lord and said, 'O Lord my God, I pray, let this child's **soul** come back to him.'" ²² Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the **soul** of the child came back to him, and he revived."

Matthew 2:20 - "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's **life** are dead."

Matthew 6:25 - "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your **life**, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not **life** more than food and the body more than clothing?"

Matthew 16:25 - "For whoever desires to save his **life** will lose it, but whoever loses his **life** for My sake will find it."

Matthew 20:28 - "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His **life** a ransom for many."

The soul can refer to the mind and heart - the intellectual and emotional innermost part of people either good or bad.

Genesis 27:25 - "He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my **soul** may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank."

Deuteronomy 11:13 - "And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your **soul**,"

Mark 12:30 - "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your **soul**, with all your mind, and with all your strength."

Job 30:16 - "And now my **soul** is poured out because of my plight; the days of affliction take hold of me."

Psalms 103:1 - "Bless the Lord, O my **soul**; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!"

Matthew 26:38 - "Then He said to them, "My **soul** is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

John 12:27 - "Now My **soul** is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save Me from this hour?" But for this purpose I came to this hour."

Acts 14:2 - "But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their **minds** against the brethren."

Ephesians 6:6 - "not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the **heart**,"

1 Peter 2:11 - "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the **soul**,"

3 John 2 - "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your **soul** prospers."

The soul continues to live after the death of the body.

This may be the most important thing to know about the **soul** of man.

Psalms 49:15 - "But God will redeem my **soul** from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me."

Matthew 10:28 - "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the **soul**. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both **soul** and body in hell."

Matthew 16:26 - "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own **soul**? Or what will a man give in exchange for his **soul**?"

Luke 12:20 - "But God said to him, "Fool! This night your **soul** will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?"

Acts 2:27, 31 - "27 For You will not leave my **soul** in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His **soul** was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."

Hebrews 13:17 - "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your **souls**, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

James 1:21 - "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your **souls**."

James 5:20 - "let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a **soul** from death and cover a multitude of sins."

1 Peter 1:9, 22 - "9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your **souls**. 22 Since you have purified your **souls** in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,"

Revelation 6:9 - "When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the **souls** of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held."

The Spirit

The Hebrew word for **spirit** is *ruach* and is found about 378 times in the Old Testament. It literally means breath or wind.

The Greek word for **spirit** is *pneuma* and is found 379 times in the New Testament. Our English word pneumonia comes from this Greek word.

Just as with the word **soul**, the word **spirit** has different meanings depending on the context or setting in which it is used.

The words in **bold** print in this lesson come from the Hebrew and Greek words for **spirit**.

Spirit sometimes literally refers to the air that we breath - a person's breath.

1 Kings 10:4-5 - "4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 5 the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the Lord, there was no more **spirit** in her." She was breathless when she saw the splendor of Solomon's kingdom.

Spirit can also refer to wind.

Ecclesiastes 1:14, 17 - "14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the **wind**. 17 And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the **wind**."

Spirit can refer to the nature of a non-physical being.

John 4:24 - "God is **Spirit**, and those who worship Him must worship in **spirit** and truth."

Luke 24:39 - "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a **spirit** does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

Hebrews 1:14 - "Are they not all ministering **spirits** sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"

The spirit of man can refer to a person's intellect and emotions - the disposition of mind and character either good or bad.

Genesis 41:8 - "Now it came to pass in the morning that his **spirit** was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh."

Proverb 20:27 - "The **spirit** of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inner depths of his heart."

Daniel 7:15 - "I, Daniel, was grieved in my **spirit** within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me."

Matthew 26:41 - "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The **spirit** indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

John 11:33 - "Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the **spirit** and was troubled."

John 13:21 - "When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in **spirit**, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

Acts 17:16 - "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his **spirit** was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols."

Acts 18:25 - "This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in **spirit**, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John."

Romans 1:9 - "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my **spirit** in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers,"

Romans 8:16 - "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our **spirit** that we are children of God,"
Our spirit helps us connect with God.

1 Corinthians 2:11 - "For what man knows the things of a man except the **spirit** of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."

1 Corinthians 6:20 - "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your **spirit**, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 16:18 - "For they refreshed my **spirit** and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men."

2 Corinthians 7:13 - "Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his **spirit** has been refreshed by you all."

Galatians 6:1 - "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a **spirit** of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."

2 Timothy 1:7 - "For God has not given us a **spirit** of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

2 Timothy 4:22 - "The Lord Jesus Christ be with your **spirit**. Grace be with you. Amen."

1 Peter 3:4 - "rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet **spirit**, which is very precious in the sight of God."

The human spirit is given by God and returns to God. The spirit continues to live after the death of the body.

This may be the most important thing to know about the **spirit** of man.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 - "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the **spirit** will return to God who gave it."

Zechariah 12:1 - "The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel. Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the **spirit** of man within him:"

Matthew 27:50 - "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His **spirit**."

Luke 23:43, 46 - "⁴³ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."
⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My **spirit**."
Having said this, He breathed His last."

John 19:30 - "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His **spirit**."

Acts 7:59 - "And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my **spirit**."

1 Corinthians 5:5 - "deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his **spirit** may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

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

Hebrews 12:9, 23 - "⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of **spirits** and live?

²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the **spirits** of just men made perfect,"

1 Peter 3:19 - "by whom also He went and preached to the **spirits** in prison,"

One very important thing is certain.

Man has a **soul** and **spirit** and they live on after the body dies.

Humans are not simply and entirely physical and mortal as some skeptics and certain religions such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists who allege that no man has a soul or eternal spirit.

After death the **soul** and the **spirit** leave the body and arrive at the appointed destination in Hades. At the resurrection the **soul** and **spirit** receive a spiritual or incorruptible body - **1 Corinthians 15:42-57**. If one is saved through the blood of Christ and His righteousness, the **soul** and **spirit** end up in heaven. If one rejects Jesus Christ, the eternal dwelling place is hell.