

Articles and Sermons :: Spiritual Or Mental -- Watchman Nee

Spiritual Or Mental -- Watchman Nee - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2009/2/22 19:47

SPIRITUAL OR MENTAL

Issue No. 13

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 3:6

The word "letter" in 2 Corinthians 3:6 refers to the law. When the law is compared to the Holy Spirit, the former kills because it does not have the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life" (John 6:63). Other than the Holy Spirit, nothing can give life to man. God's life is within the Holy Spirit. Our physical world was formed initially through the brooding of the Holy Spirit. The birth of the Lord Jesus and God becoming a man were done through the Holy Spirit. According to the revelation of the Bible, everything that has life and gives life is of the Holy Spirit. The law is only according to the letter; it is not of the Holy Spirit. This is why it is dead.

Not only does the Old Testament contain "letters" (i.e., the law) that kill, the New Testament also has its "letters." The Old Testament emphasizes the law. The Bible tells us that this law is of God; it is holy and spiritual. But the fact that the Holy Spirit is not within it means that it, like all other literature in the world, has become the letter that kills. Although many truths, commands, exhortations, and teachings in the New Testament are of God and are influential to man's conduct and morality, apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, they are just the letter that kills.

EVERYTHING BEING DEAD AND POWERLESS
WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

A truth that has been neglected by many believers is the fact that apart from the Holy Spirit, there is no life. Apart from the Holy Spirit, everything is dead. We have not thoroughly realized that other than a total dependence on the operation of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing. We admit that the flesh is corrupt, but we have not understood the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, we may admit as much as we like, but we are still not free from the realm of the flesh. God wants to bring us to the point where we will fully live by the Holy Spirit. He wants us to realize that unless all our work, conduct, prayer, and pursuit of the truth are the result of the Holy Spirit's operation within us, and unless they are produced through the power of the Holy Spirit, they all are dead. To Him, all these are dead works and should remain in the grave.

God is calling His children today to receive the more abundant life. God wants us to remove death and overcome death. Yet we only pay attention to overcoming sins; we do not pay attention to overcoming death. God is not only delivering us from the law of sin, but also from the law of death (Rom. 8:2). Only the Holy Spirit can give us this life. Where there is no Holy Spirit, there is no life. Instead there is death. A Christian should not merely be one who does not sin, he should also be one who overcomes death and who is filled with life. God hates death as much as He hates sin. Sin separates us from God, while death blocks our fellowship with God. The overcoming of sin is on the negative side, while the filling of life is on the positive side.

We have to see clearly that everything in Adam is dead and that everything in Christ is living. But in what way is everything living? It is living through the Holy Spirit. "The law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death." This verse shows us that not only is everything of the flesh dead, but even the perfect law that God has given us is also dead apart from the Holy Spirit. The letter kills.

GOD'S WORD AND GOD'S SPIRIT

God's Word cannot be separated from God's Spirit. God has written His word into the Bible and has given this Bible to us. At the same time, God has a condition for man to receive His word—he must receive it through the power of His Spirit. God supports His word with His Spirit; He proves His word with His Spirit. His Spirit guarantees that His word will not fail. Those who only contact God's Word without contacting His Spirit will see that God's Word does not have the power. Without God's Spirit, God's Word will become dead letters.

The Bible tells us that the fleshly person does not understand the things of the Spirit of God; he considers them to be foolish. When an unbeliever studies the Bible by his own wisdom, he finds that the Bible is dead. This does not mean that the Bible is no longer God's word or that it is powerless. It merely means that without the Holy Spirit, the Bible is merely a dead and powerless book to that person.

The Word of God does not change. However, for some it is life, while for others it is just letters. Where is the distinction? The distinction lies in the fact that the former receive God's Word by the power of the Holy Spirit, while the latter understand God's Word with the wisdom of the mind. God's word is powerful and living, but if man receives it into his mind, the truth will merely become thoughts in man's mind. These truths will certainly not produce any effect on him. When need arises, he will not be able to apply them. Although he may know the reason, the fact, and the history, and although he may be well acquainted with God's promises, he will not receive the power in them. These truths will not be truths to him; they will only be empty teachings to him. The reason for this is that he cannot prove the reality of these truths. If we want to know if a believer is receiving God's Word by the power of the Holy Spirit, all we have to ask is whether or not the word that he has received is producing any power in him. God gives the Holy Spirit to the believers to verify His Word. Hence, whenever God's Word is not verified, it is because there is the lack of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The present danger is for believers to listen to sermons, study the Bible, and seek after the truth only by the wisdom of the mind. God has joined together His Word with His Spirit. However, man either separates His Spirit from His Word, or separates His Word from His Spirit. The error of the two is the same. To take God's Spirit away from God's Word will make everything a person receives theoretical, while to take God's Word away from God's Spirit will make a person's conduct very peculiar. However, more people fall into the trap of the former than of the latter.

Many people study the Bible like studying a science book. They think that as long as they have a sharp mind, proper instruction from others, and diligent labor on their part, they will understand the Bible. Research and study may make them understand a little of the history and doctrines of the Bible, but they will not make them experience the power of God's Word. We must be brought by God to the point where we read His Word by His Spirit and understand His truth by His power. Only the Holy Spirit can apply God's Word and the life-power in His Word to a believer. Those who receive the truth with their mind will not see this life and power.

Re: Spiritual Or Mental -- Watchman Nee , on: 2009/2/24 1:17

Thank you for posting this.

Re: Spiritual Or Mental -- Watchman Nee - posted by davym (), on: 2009/2/24 10:25

Quote:
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Amen.

Watchman Nee's writings are potent. He was a true gift from God to the Church.