

The Pitfall of Souliness

By: Daniel Orona

I'm sure you are wondering what it actually means to be "soulless". I can't take credit for it as Watchman Nee talks about the issues of souliness in his book *The Spiritual Man*. Nevertheless, it is a significant challenge for all Christians, no matter if they are new to the faith or have been in it for years.

Souliness quite simply is living inside of your soul outside of the Holy Spirit. I often equate this to people who live inside their own head. In our soul rests our personalities, our emotions, our thoughts, our ambitions and the aspects that make us who we are. While we all are distinct as we've been created by a God who makes every snowflake unique, we all must be transformed by the renewing of our minds that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, as Paul says in Romans 12:2.

I know quite a few people that live in their mind and unfortunately it is the greatest hindrance to them being able to move effectively in the Spirit. Their mind blocks the flow of the Holy Spirit as they try to reason what God is doing rather than realizing it is the Holy Spirit moving and there is no reason, but rather the will of the Father. It is for this reason that Paul deals with the mind of the people He writes to. He says in 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of man except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged of no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

There is a lot to unpack in this Scripture, but it basically boils down to this. A soulless person who lives in their mind cannot regard or understand the things of the spirit. Verse 14 is the key here where Paul says, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." In our own thoughts, personalities and emotions we cannot hear the voice of the Lord effectively because it comes as foolishness in that arena. We must understand things spiritually. There is a person I counsel on a regular basis, who is a very emotional person. They have high highs and low lows. When they are overly emotional, they cannot hear the voice of the Lord or find the leading of the spirit in situations. They are constantly worried about the what if and do mental gymnastics to explore everything that can go wrong in any given situation. They do this despite Paul saying in Philippians 4:6-7, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This is the epitome of souliness.

Living in this state shows a few things. The first is that it shows that we don't truly trust the Lord in all situations. Isaiah 26:3 says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Souliness does not allow for peace, but rather creates chaos in the life of a believer. It leads to worry and anxiousness that is not needed for the believer that truly trusts in the Lord. The second thing it shows is that there isn't an understanding of the purpose of situations in the spirit. Everything that God does is with purpose. His word does not return unto Him void. When things happen there is a purpose to it that God wants to accomplish and a lesson for us to learn. Soulless people respond with woe and self-pity when things go wrong and at worse anger and resentment towards God

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when He doesn't fulfill exactly what they want when they want it. Finally, souliness puts your desires over the will and desires of God. We have all at times wanted God to move in certain way, but it wasn't His will or His desire for us. Sometimes He's protecting us from ourselves or trouble in future or He may have something better for us. The frustration with God comes due to our souliness and our own will, thoughts and desires.

So how do we overcome souliness? Quite simply we must be transformed by the renewing of our mind. But that only happens by offering ourselves up to Christ on His altar and allowing Him to rule and reign over every aspect of our lives. Are we ready to give up everything we are and everything we have to the One who gave all that He is and all that He had? Remember we are that treasure in field and the pearl of great price. He gave everything He had for us. When we give all that we are back to Him then our thoughts don't matter, our emotions don't matter, our will doesn't matter. All that matters is Him and His will and desire for us. Only then can we truly say that we have the mind of Christ when our souliness has been done away with.