

# What Is Spirituality?

The concept of spirituality varies among different Christian groups.

In some fellowships the highly vocal person who talks religion continually is thought to be very spiritual.

Other fellowships accept noisy exuberance as a mark of spirituality.

In some churches the person who prays first, longest or loudest gets a reputation for being the most spiritual person in that assembly.

Such above actions may be consistent with spirituality but it is important that we understand that they do **not** in themselves constitute or prove that true spirituality is present.

## **True spirituality manifests itself in certain dominant desires.**

These are ever-present, deep-seated desires sufficiently powerful enough to motivate and to control the day-to-day life of the person.

I ask you to consider the following desires that I feel must be present in the heart, mind and spirit of a human being before they can be recognised as being “*spiritual*”.

## **The desire to be holy rather than happy**

A yearning after happiness is a desire that is found among those who live close to this world’s society.

The “*pleasure industry*” is one of the most profitable in this age.

Rather spirituality is an eternal joy that is the result of living in harmony with God’s laws of love and compassion that we should be seeking.

**Hebrews 12:2** [NIV] “*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

Joy is in the future that our Heavenly Father has prepared for us.

**James 1:2-4** [NIV] “*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*”

Joy even in times of trial because they help us to attain spiritual maturity.

**1 Peter 1:6-9** [NIV] “*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith, of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*”

Faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour can bring us eternal joy that is **not** lessened by any adverse circumstances.

**1 Peter 4:12-14** [NIV] *“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”*

Trials if faced with a positive attitude enable the Holy Spirit to work in us to mould us into holy created children of God.

## **A spiritual person is one who seeks to bring honour to God through their lives**

When such a person prays *“hallowed by Thy name”* they will be silently adding *“at any cost to me Lord.”*

What will bring honour to our Creator God?

**John 15:8** [NIV] *“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

When our relationship with the Holy Spirit bears fruits, our spiritual Father is honoured.

If we are acting as the disciples of Jesus Christ should then we bring honour to God?

**John 13:34-35** [NIV] *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

If we show love to other human beings we will be part of the commission Jesus Christ gave to all His disciples [see **Matthew 28:18-20**].

As our person example leads more people to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, this will bring honour to our spiritual Father, God.

## **A spiritual person will love to study God’s Word, the Christian Bible**

**Psalms 119:97** [NIV] *“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.”*

The psalmist loved to study the law and statutes that God had given Israel and meditated on it constantly during the day for many reasons.

**Psalms 119:98** [NIV] *“Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.”*

Gave him godly wisdom.

**Psalms 119:103** [NIV] *“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”*

He found it a delightful occupation.

**Psalms 119:104** [NIV] *“I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.”*

Help him to avoid wrong decisions.

**Psalms 119:118** [NIV] *“You reject all who stray from your decrees, for their deceitfulness is in vain.”*

God cannot bless those who ignore His Word.

**Acts 13:22** [NIV] *“After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: ‘I have found **David** son of Jesse **a man after my own heart**; he will do everything I want him to do.’”*

King David was a man who had the same heart, motivating power, as God.

**Psalms 51:9-13** [NIV] *“Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. **Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.** Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. **Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.**”*

King David desired to be cleansed of the penalty of his sins and have the Holy Spirit in him so he could then teach others God’s Word.

King David had the same love for God’s Word as did the psalmist who wrote **Psalm 119**.

Shouldn’t we also!

**Romans 10:17** [NIV] *“Consequently, **faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.**”*

The reading of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, will give us the faith to trust in Jesus Christ, and the courage to proclaim the message of good news that Jesus Christ brought to humanity from God the Father.

## **A spiritual person wants to carry their cross**

Many Christians accept adversity and tribulation with a sigh and call it their cross.

This is **not** what should be understood by *“carrying our cross.”*

**Romans 6:1-4** [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that **all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

When we are baptised by total immersion, it is symbolically following the example of Jesus Christ.

Just as Jesus Christ voluntarily went to the cross, so we also crucify our past life, to live a new life.

**Romans 6:8-10** [NIV] *“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”*

This new life will be dedicated to Jesus Christ and God the Father.

**Matthew 16:24-26** [NIV] *“Then Jesus said to his disciples, **‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.** For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?’”*

We surrender our life, that is our will, to Jesus Christ by denying ourselves.

**Matthew 10:32-39** [NIV] *“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. **‘Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her***

*mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."*

Jesus Christ must be the first love in our lives, as we prepare for an intimate union with Him as part of His church, who will be His bride at His return. [See **Revelation 19:6-9**]

## **A spiritual Christian sees everything from God's viewpoint**

**John 7:24** [NIV] *"Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."*

We are **not** to judge other people by their outward appearance or even by some of the things they do, but by what motivates of the heart.

**Romans 10:10** [NIV] *"For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."*

True belief is within our heart and by this we are justified, right in God's eyes.

The outward confession, that Jesus is Lord, then follows through our actions and words.

**God looks at and through at the same time.**

God's gaze does **not** rest on the surface but penetrates to the true meaning of things.

**Mark 12:41-44** [NIV] *"Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything, all she had to live on."*

Jesus was looking on the dedication that was in the heart of this poor widow, **not** the amount that was being offered to God in thanksgiving.

**1 Peter 3:1-4** [NIV] *"Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."*

The beauty that God sees in a woman is **not** her outward adornment or bodily beauty, but what is in her heart, that is the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet nature.

A spiritual Christian seeks to see themselves as God sees them, even if it humbles them and exposes their ignorance to the point of real pain.

**Hebrews 4:12** [NIV] *"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."*

A spiritual Christian has the courage to allow the Word of God, the Christian Bible, to expose their inner thoughts and actions to be judged whether they are acceptable to a holy Creator God.

## **A spiritual Christian would rather die than fail to be fulfilling God's Will**

A mature spiritual Christian has a nonchalance attitude towards living.

They do **not** look upon death with numb terror or even fear.

The spiritual Christian goes on living, guided by the Holy Spirit, indifferent to the number of years they have in this physical life.

**Philippians 1:23-26** [NIV] *"I am torn between the two: **I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me."*

Because of the pain that all the trials Paul was facing, death in Christ looked very tempting to him, but as a bond slave of Jesus Christ he left the length of his life for his Master Jesus Christ to decide.

As long as Jesus Christ had a job of work for Paul to do, he was willing to continue to face the pain and trials that witnessing for Jesus Christ would bring.

That is the desire of every spiritual Christian.

**Revelation 12:9-11** [NIV] *"The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; **they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**"*

The spiritual Christian is willing to face physical death in seeking to counter the influence of Satan's deception in this present society.

**Matthew 5:13-16** [NIV] *"**You are the salt of the earth.** But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. **"You are the light of the world.** A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**"*

A spiritual Christian wants most of all to live a life that is a light to others who do **not** know Jesus Christ as their Saviour and is happy to let God decide how long they will live, in this anti-Christian society.

## **A spiritual Christian desires to see others advance in their spiritual life, even at their own expense**

**John 3:26-30** [NIV] *"They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, the one you testified about, well, he is baptising, and everyone is going to him." To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. **He must become greater; I must become less.**"*

The example of John the Baptist is one that all spiritual Christians follow.

Spiritual Christians are happy to see other Christians promoted in the church when they are overlooked.

Contented to continue in whatever task, however humble, that Jesus Christ has given them to do.

**Philippians 4:11-13** [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for **I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**”*

The spiritual Christian finds this contentment because they know that all they do is what the Holy Spirit empowers them to do.

**John 15:4-5** [NIV] *“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. **“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**”**”*

A spiritual Christian knows and lives by this truth.

**Philippians 2:3** [NIV] *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but **in humility consider others better than yourselves.**”*

Such genuine humility can build and strengthen a Christian fellowship.

## **A spiritual Christian habitually makes eternal judgements instead of human time judgements**

**Hebrews 11:8-1** [NIV] *“**By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, **obeyed and went,** even though he did not know where he was going. **By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. **For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**”**”***

Abraham is a very good example of this attitude of a spiritual Christian.

By faith in what God had promised him and his children Abraham lived like a stranger in a foreign land.

**2 Corinthians 5:20** [NIV] *“We are therefore **Christ’s ambassadors,** as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: **Be reconciled to God.**”*

An ambassador is **not** part of the country in which he resides, but represents a different country to which all his loyalties lie.

**2 Corinthians 5:14-19** [NIV] *“**For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no-one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. **And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.**”**”*

Our job as a spiritual Christian is to proclaim this soon-coming new world, that will be governed by the returning Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. [**Revelation 19:11-16**]

Spiritual Christians will also minister to their generation, seeking to encourage them to be reconciled to their Creator and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

All of these deep-seated desires that are part of the character of a spiritual Christian must be by the working of the Holy Spirit within them.

No human being can become by themselves a spiritual Christian.

**Only the Holy Spirit can create a spiritual Christian out of a fleshly human being.**

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