

## **WHO ARE YOU?**

This chapter taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg © 1998-2006

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### ***Spiritual Wisdom, Knowledge, and Understanding***

Even though we have covered death in some detail in the chapter “Understanding Eternal Life”, I still would like to explore the subject even deeper. To understand the Gospel, you have to understand eternal life. This spiritual understanding comes by the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Life). And to understand the need for eternal life, you have to understand death also. As we already saw, it was the **knowledge** of good and evil that brought death to man, so we know that death first appeared as a “**state of mind**” because it came by knowledge, as Paul also taught in the New Testament.

***But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:17).***

***For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Romans 8:6).***

The reason is, man can now judge and condemn himself worthy of death.

***For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:21).***

The mystery of all doesn't get any simpler than what I am getting ready to explain.

***But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3).***

The Bible says that God created the heavens and the earth and said all things were very good.

***And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).***

The only thing that has changed is how we perceive in our mind God's very good creation.

*I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean (Romans 14:14).*

*Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled (Titus 1:15).*

*But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:10).*

I want to also stop here and address something that many in the secular world claim that there is no such thing as good or evil or that good and evil is “relative”. The Bible plainly states that good and evil existed already when man was created because the tree of the knowledge of it was in the Garden of Eden when Adam was placed there (Genesis 2:8,9). But the knowledge of good and evil was reserved for God alone. God is the Creator of the world, and only God has the right to judge His creation good or evil. The thing that the Bible says is evil in this world now is the imagination of man’s heart.

*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart (Genesis 6:5,6).*

*And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease (Genesis 8:20-22).*

*And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:14-23).*

This carnal state of mind also is keeping you separated from a true peaceful relationship with God and eating of the tree of life, just like Adam hiding from God in the Garden of Eden with his new found “knowledge”.

*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in YOUR mind by wicked works, yet now hath he (Jesus) reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).*

*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:16,17).*

*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works (Genesis 2:16,17); or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Revelation 2:5-7).*

*And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. (Acts 18:5,6)*

*Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:46-48).*

This is why one of the doctrines of Christianity is “renewing of the mind”. Only the TRUTH will renew the mind. That is the duty of those who have passed on into the spiritual mind as Paul declared in 2 Timothy.

*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will GIVE them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. (2 Timothy 2:24-26).*

Many in the church today have a “double mind”. Paul wrestles with a “double mind” in the Book of Romans chapter seven and then explains how he got the victory through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in chapter eight. This allowed him to transcend into the “spiritual” mind and peace with God. The “double mind” is one that is both carnal and spiritual, like the human mind is divided into consciousness and sub-consciousness.

***For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6).***

The source of the spiritual consciousness is in the heart, not the head.

***And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:27).***

***Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).***

Through the Gospel, the believer’s mind is brought into one pure consciousness. This is called the “renewing of the mind”.

***Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1 Timothy 3:9).***

***And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Romans 12:2).***

***But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:14-16).***

***And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? (1 Corinthians 3:1-5).***

If you are wrestling with a “double mind” then be of good cheer, there is victory over the “double mind” in Jesus. In Romans chapter seven, Paul fights the same battle in his mind and in defeat he declares himself “carnal and sold under sin”. The Christian on the

other hand is *spiritual* (Galatians 6:1) and *bought with a price* (1 Corinthians 6:20)(1 Corinthians 7:23)! All Paul is showing in these scriptures is the futility of the power of your flesh and your own determination to get the victory over sin. It is simply a rebuke to those who use works for salvation in their doctrine. A carnal man cannot keep a spiritual law, and a carnal man cannot bear spiritual fruit. Here is a simple rule of thumb to keep from getting the two confused. In the New Testament, good works are associated with rewards in heaven for the Christian while salvation is associated with faith (Matthew 6:19,20). It really is that simple.

***For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil, which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (Romans 7:14-25).***

Paul finally yields the whole mess over to the Holy Spirit in Romans chapter 8 and gets the victory by the Holy Spirit that he could not get in the flesh. After Paul experienced this amazing truth, he then later rebuked the Galatians for doing the very same thing!

***Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:3)***

How did Paul finally come to this spiritual knowledge of the truth? Jesus said “*ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). How do we get that spiritual understanding and knowledge of truth then? Jesus said:

***I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13).***

The Christian has a Holy Spirit, not a seminary, to guide us into the deeper wisdom of God.

***And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back,***

*and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. (John 6:65-68)).*

*John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. (John 3:27).*

*And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. Therefore speak to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their eyes are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. (Matthew 13:10-17)*

As you can see by all three of these scriptures that you just read (John 6:65,66)(John 3:27)(Matthew 13:10-17), this spiritual understanding is a **gift** that is given by God.

*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath GIVEN us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).*

*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may GIVE unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:15-23).*

The best way that I can explain the need for this spiritual understanding is with a communication I had with a person from an eastern religion that was not associated with Christianity. That person came up to me in a parking lot as I was getting into my truck and wanted to talk about spiritual matters. I stayed in touch briefly with them and found

that person to be quite committed to their search of “self-realization”, but I still got to explain to them why Jesus Christ was the way to get the answers I was looking for. I used terminology that they would be familiar with. I would refer to the Holy Spirit as my “spiritual guide” which is still very Biblical.

***I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will GUIDE you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13).***

***For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Ephesians 2:18).***

The person seemed focused on the "knowing of self" and the search for “Absolute Truth”. I think that many people wonder why they are in this world and what is their purpose in life by the amount of sales on books written about your “purpose” in this world.

***A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself (Proverbs 18:2).***

The “knowing of self” is a very dangerous undertaking that people venture out on. If they don’t know where to look for the right answers then there are plenty of “spiritual leaders” that will give them some answers, which may sound good, but usually brings them into some sort of spiritual or natural bondage to the teacher. All I did was show that person where I found the answers I was looking for. The following is a summary of that communication. I responded to that person like this:

“The “knowing of self” is great if you can find the answers you are looking for in yourself. Many people find out a lot about themselves through meditations, but I wasn't searching for the “knowledge of self”, I had finally come to the end of myself. I was searching for the “knowledge of God”. I came to the conclusion that to completely understand the creation of "myself" and why I was created, I had to look at me through the eyes of my Creator, which is knowledge higher than "myself". And as the Bible teaches:

***For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8,9).***

So now I was faced with a problem. How can I attain knowledge “higher” than myself by an act “of myself”, which is what worldly meditation, is? I knew through worldly meditation, all I could ever attain was the highest knowledge of myself. There is a wall between the natural and spiritual world, which became what I call the "self barrier". Somehow I had to break through this "self barrier" or have someone already on the other side to carry me into this realm of Absolute Truth so that I may know God and the higher

thoughts. Please read the chapter “The Spiritual World”. I came to the same conclusion that they did. I needed a "spirit guide"(Holy Spirit). I knew I needed someone who had been there already to guide me. I knew this was my first step. Now I had another problem, I didn't know of anybody that had been in this “spirit” realm, but Jesus and the apostles and prophets. I decided to study how they did it. Could I get God to send me a "spirit guide" to take me into this higher knowledge that I may know Him.

***John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27).***

Paul had found a way to this higher dimension through the Way (Jesus Christ). If Paul could do it as he told about his experience then possibly so could I.

***It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter. (2 Corinthians 12:1-4)***

As you can see, Paul got a chance to look at himself from the outside, without the distortion coming from the "self" on the inside. In the spiritual realm, Paul could finally see the complete revelation of himself.”

What I was searching for and what I think everybody starts searching for from time to time is “the meaning of life” or “why they were created”? In other religions I have seen a continuing theme that keeps coming up is the desire to attain “self-realization”. So I responded to that person like this:

“Maybe I can offer some help in your journey for “self-realization” from what my “spirit guide”(Holy Spirit) has shown me. There are many teachings and many human spiritual leaders in the world and they can provide wisdom to a certain extent, but I believe the wisdom and knowledge you are seeking and what I was seeking goes deeper than what a human spiritual leader can provide. Let me explain it this way using the physical body as an example.

If you want to know what your body looks like, you can look at a lot of it and see, but there are some parts of your body that are impossible to see without the aid of an outside source. If you want to know what your face looks like you use a mirror so you can see for yourself. I could stand in front of you and try to describe to you what you look like, but then your idea of your appearance would come strictly from my perspective or another person’s perspective. Since you couldn't see your face without a mirror, I would be your only source of information about how you look. I could give general knowledge to you, like "you have a nose" or "your eyes are blue" and "your eyebrows are brown", but even with my best description of you, it still couldn't answer for you the “Absolute Truth” of what your face looks like. You also would have no way to know whether I was telling

you the truth or not. You would always carry some doubt with you in the back of your mind and wonder if I even told you the truth. You have to see for yourself to ever attain any true peace and an honest answer for what you look like. To get the complete picture of what you look like, you have to have some help and so it is with your spirit.

A "spiritual leader" or in the Christian religion "a pastor, prophet, teacher, etc." can each give their opinion based on their experience in spiritual matters or on what they have learned through their studies of the scriptures, but as with the body analogy, then all of your or my spiritual guidance would still be filtered through THEIR perspective. A person can learn through experience, but you cannot teach experience. This is why I did not seek out a pastor or any other human being to teach me the deeper spiritual truths. I sought out all of my wisdom and knowledge of who I was (self-realization) and what my purpose is from my Creator.

***If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (James 1:5).***

To guide me in my quest for Absolute Truth, I used the same "spirit guide" that Jesus said to use. This is very important! Even Jesus didn't teach his disciples everything, but left the deeper spiritual teaching to another source.

***I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come (John 16:12,13).***

God sent His own Spirit to guide me and teach me about the Absolute Truth. This spirit guide entered into my body several years ago, and took over the job of my spiritual teaching and I no longer sought man for spiritual guidance. When this Spirit entered in me immediately a spiritual light was turned on in the distance and my life since then has been a simple walk to it.

***But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: (1 Peter 2:10).***

As I get closer to the light, my path becomes more clear and brighter. See one day somebody could take and throw me in jail without access to a Bible, pastor, or a spiritual leader and I would still grow in knowledge of the Absolute Truth and even though I would be bound up in prison, I could be totally free in the spiritual realm. Each and every day I stand in awe of this magnificent spiritual kingdom of God that has been opened for me! My prayer for you is that your complete spiritual wisdom and knowledge will come from your Creator and not your religion. Only He can truly show you the reason He created you and your true purpose in the universe, both spiritual and natural. Only by looking at yourself through the eyes of your Creator, like looking in a mirror, will you come to the complete "self-realization" you seek.

***Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17,18).***

I now want to discuss something briefly that I see very rampant in the church today. Some pastors believe they can teach you your God given purpose in life, I cannot. I can though point you to the one that can show you if you want to be “Spirit led” instead of “purpose driven”. Please understand that only Jesus Christ can tell you who you are in Christ. Once you know Jesus and had the experience of His touch, nobody can ever tell you any different. The Holy Spirit will show you your true “purpose” and it will flow beautifully with the other people in the true church that the Holy Spirit has also shown.

***These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. (1 John 2:26,27).***

***Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:21-24).***

***But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:11,12).***

***No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. (John 6:44,45).***

***Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (Ephesians 1:8,9).***

***That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (Ephesians 1:17).***

***But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with***

*him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother (Galatians 1:15-19).*

The words may be preached by man, but the understanding of the words comes from God. This level of experiential spiritual knowledge is partaken of only by an invitation from God.