



**THOUGHT & BELIEF:  
THE INNER HUMAN**

**THE BIBLICAL VIEW**

**by NEAL FOX**



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**About the cover:**

"Our inner self is being renewed day by day." -- 2 Corinthians 4:16

**Thought & Belief -- The Inner Human**

by Neal Fox

Version 1.0 December 25, 2021

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"Exploring Deep Concepts & Mysteries of the Bible" 2018

"Time & The Universe: A Biblical View" 2019

"Vanishment & Tribulation" (Novel) 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

Humans think and form beliefs. That much is clear. But we want to truly understand our inner self, and why we humans are the way we are. We want to know how the inner human is designed, the functions of the various components, where decisions are made, where thinking occurs, why we think the way we do, how memory works and where memories reside, why dreams are so weird, where beliefs are held and how they are formed, how thinking and beliefs become distorted, why so many people cannot recognize obvious truths, why people are so divergent and polarized in their views, and how we are supposed to interact with God. These are just some of the issues this book will seek to explain. They are difficult ones, to be sure, and this book is not a casual treatment of this subject, so you can expect real answers to these questions. For starters, if you believe thoughts and beliefs occur mainly in the brain, you are about to be very surprised.

Humans have long sought answers to deep questions regarding their thoughts and beliefs, since these are about the inner core of human life. But most who have sought to explain the inner human have been looking in the wrong place. We cannot simply look inside ourselves since that would be using self to try to explain self. And looking to psychology and science will fall far short since most science denies the existence of a soul, and therefore can only deal with the physical interfaces of the body.

We must therefore find true meaning from the only expert source, which is why this book looks to the Bible, where real answers to our deepest questions about the inner human can be found. There is no better source of truth on the subject of the human soul than the Bible, because God designed this immaterial part of humans, and only He could explain it. So to understand this subject, we must look to the Designer for answers.

This book will challenge the Reader's thinking and question some of your core beliefs about the workings of the inner human. Otherwise, why would you want to read it? Those materials which can explain what the Bible says about this subject are the ones which are truly useful in understanding the inner human and how we think and form beliefs. And internalizing truth from the Bible can also serve to rehabilitate our thoughts and beliefs, and ultimately bring us

closer to God, resulting in an inner peace from God which surpasses all understanding. That is the ultimate cure for all issues related to human thought and belief dysfunctions. Taking a look at the very long list of self-help books and attempts by innumerable "experts" to explain the inner human apart from the Bible, it is easily seen that such attempts have generally been failures. Mostly enormous failures.

The information contained in the Bible which enables us to understand ourselves is amazing and revealing. And it is not just about ourselves, but also those around us, those who have preceded us, and those who will come along in the future. If you have wondered why people can be so polarized, why they can be so diametrically opposed in thinking, why others cannot see what you clearly see, why people think in ways that do not appear to be real thought, why there is such a political and social divide separating people from each other, or simply what makes humans different than animals, then this book will be worth reading. It explains what the Bible says about the inner human, and will do so without apology. The conclusion you should reach is that the Bible is the ultimate self-help book since only it can explain the immaterial human -- the real you.

Let us start by exploring what the Bible says about how the material body interfaces and relates to the immaterial and invisible inner human.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **THE MATERIAL BODY & THE IMMATERIAL INNER HUMAN**

To begin with something which should be obvious, although it is not generally believed, the physical mass of biological cells and support structure which presents to us as a human is not actually a human being. It is instead a physical body which houses a true human -- the immaterial human soul. This is an important distinction because we are defining what a true human actually is, which is the immaterial part. Most cells of the body are constantly being replaced, therefore much of what was formerly our body died and was replaced long ago. Does that result in a new human? No. The material will someday cease to function entirely, but the same immaterial inner self will live on forever. The material physical body interfaces with the immaterial real human, but the two exist on different levels. In fact, the two parts would be physically incompatible if God had not designed and put them together to form humans. And the immaterial is severable from the material, meaning it can exist apart from the material side after the body ceases to function.

Most science outside of the Bible denies the existence of the immaterial part of humans, making science unable to offer much useful information about the subject, or provide real solutions to problems related to the inner self. Real science, when it is honest, seeks to discover and understand what God created, and explain what it has found without undue speculation. When it comes to the structure of the material side of humans, science has discovered many things which have improved our health and enhanced our lives. And we are grateful. But science has failed miserably when it comes to the immaterial part of humans because it cannot reach the true inner human which is outside the material realm. Science calls this "the hard question," because it has no answer regarding why humans can think and form beliefs. But God has told us what He created, how it generally works, what distortions have entered into His creation apart from His will, and how to bring the inner human into alignment with His plan. And He has revealed to us a lot more than most people realize, as we will discuss in detail.



It is beyond the scope of this book to try to explain what most science says constitutes a human. It would also waste your time since it is mostly wrong. But as a very quick and accurate summary of what science itself tells us: 1) there is no human soul, only a material body controlled by the brain; 2) humans are advanced animals; 3) the brain is the center of human existence, and when it ceases to function, that human is gone forever; 4) science is unable to understand advanced human cognitive traits including the human mind, memory, how humans think or form beliefs, how humans have self-awareness and know they exist, dreaming, or any other advanced cognitive phenomena beyond what animals are capable of. In other words, science is baffled by the inner human, and cannot understand it at any higher level beyond the material or animal levels. So they simply call it "the hard question" and move on.

That is what we learn from science about the inner human, and most of it is incorrect. When science starts with a false premise, such as denying the existence of the human soul, there can be no basis for deep knowledge about the subject. We applaud science for how it has enhanced our lives, because when science stays within its proper realm it often makes our lives better, and we are glad for that. But that does not apply to the inner human, which is beyond its reach and understanding. This is not criticism for no reason. It is simply an accurate representation of what science has told us, that it does not understand much at all about human thinking and beliefs. Therefore we look to the Bible for answers, where they have been provided.

The human body is therefore a material mechanism created by God which enables the inner immaterial human to interface with the material universe He created, with other humans, and with Him. The immaterial human needs a body to support it, both on earth and during eternity, although the eternal one will be much different. The human body is formed by DNA passed down from our ancestors, but each soul is created directly and uniquely by God. So we must quickly get beyond viewing the body, including the brain, as the true human when we attempt to understand the immaterial part of humans.

For those who firmly believe the physical body is the actual human, this book is not for them. They believe that when this mortal body dies, that is the end, and nothing exists beyond the material. They believe humans are just another animal, although possibly a bit more advanced. This book will not attempt to refute such a basic unbelief system. The truth is clearly visible to anyone who wishes to see it. For those who have such beliefs, it would be

wise to continue reading and use the immaterial soul to think about the eternal future beyond death. We will all live eternally either way. But there are two very different ways of living eternally. One is wonderful and the other is not. The Bible says "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?" (Matthew 16:26)

So how does all this material/immaterial stuff work? As a preview, the brain is NOT the center of human thought and belief. Therefore it is not the true human. Let us now proceed to discuss the brain and soul, the functions of each, which does what, and how they work together.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **BRAIN vs. SOUL -- WHICH ONE DOES WHAT ?**

We have been taught that the brain is the center of human thought, and therefore the center of humanity. The Bible tells us both are wrong. The reason they are wrong is that humans do not think with or hold beliefs in the brain, but rather in the soul, which we have begun to discuss and will continue to refine. We will show how the essentially human cognitive functions occur in the soul, including thought, decision making, self-awareness, beliefs, memory, emotion, dreaming, conscience, and other high level cognitive functions. Human science attempts to convince that the brain is the center of human life and the source of humanity, because it cannot find the soul. However, the Bible clearly describes the immaterial human soul as the true human, the location of thoughts and beliefs, and the center of our humanity. In fact, the Bible never mentions the brain, although people have known it exists from very early times.

Please do not misunderstand, the brain is a wonderful organ designed by God, and incredible in its function. It is generally an artificial intelligence supercomputer with sensory connectors to the five main senses, plus a central controller for the physical body. However the brain is overrated by those who attempt to attribute the higher level soul functions to it. This misguided approach is based mainly on the premise that if the soul cannot be discovered in a physical way, then it must not exist.

What, therefore, is the role of the brain? And how does it interface with the human soul?

The brain plays a major role in acting as the central controller of the physical body, including autonomic functions (heart rate, breathing, digestion, etc.). But its primary function as related to the inner human is to feed the soul with sensory data brought in by the five main senses which are sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. Although the brain serves as a filter to process those raw sensory inputs into a more refined form of data, it is the immaterial soul

which takes that semi-processed sensory data and turns it into actual information (as opposed to data), and eventually forms thoughts and beliefs based on that information.

The brain relieves the soul of much of the drudgery of life, allowing the soul to live at a higher level than would otherwise be possible. The soul would be completely overloaded if it was required to remember how to perform all the basic tasks required just to survive and be mobile. Therefore the brain relieves the soul from thinking about how to perform countless menial tasks, and frees the soul to engage in more meaningful endeavors, and truly live, not just survive. In this regard, the brain has been delegated certain tasks to perform apart from direct soul involvement. This is designed by God to enable the survival of the person, control basic body functions, interact with the outside world, allow repetitive actions to be performed with ease, and so on. Meanwhile the soul can focus on higher order living which makes life more enjoyable, and provides the ability to interface with God.

The brain has basic memory functions related to performing its assigned tasks. Brain memory includes sensory memory, which remembers and categorizes sensory inputs which are visual, smell, taste, touch, and sound. The brain also has what is referred to as "muscle memory," which enables repetitive muscle movements such as walking, reaching, chewing, turning one's head, physical labor, sports and innumerable other repetitive actions. While these types of memories are based in the brain, it is not the storage location for high level human memories related to humanity which differentiate us from animals. Therefore our higher order memories are located in the soul.

Several types of tasks are delegated to the brain. It performs emergency actions apart from direct soul involvement based on real-time sensory data due to the constraints of time, including emergency "fight or flight" actions. This allows humans to pull back from something hot, step away from a hazard in the path, turn away from an oncoming car in our lane, flee from danger, or grab a child about to fall down the stairs. As such, the brain plays a primary role in the basic survival of the person.

As mentioned, the brain is delegated sensory based tasks and memory associated with the five senses. Sensory information is funneled from each of the senses through the brain, where the brain acts as a sensory gateway between the body's senses and the soul. Sensory data is initially filtered and integrated, such as when a sight and a sound go together to provide a

more complete picture of the sensory experience. We hear screeching tires and then a crashing sound while our sight observes the accident. One sense supports another. The brain therefore interfaces with both the physical universe and the immaterial soul in a two-way manner, both in and out. Brain sensory memory holds information about previously experienced visual inputs, smells, tastes, touches, sounds and other sensory type data which are used to identify incoming sensory inputs based on prior experiences. This sensory memory is why we can relate to the world around us instead of everything being new to us. It makes our surroundings familiar, so we can focus on specific tasks and interests at higher levels. The primary mechanism of sensory memory is pattern matching, whereby the memory of a previous experience by our senses matches what we sense later, and a match is made, whether exact or similar in some way. It is how we recognize people, grass, and sky, why we know certain foods when we taste them, or know a car or lawn mower when we hear them, or a breeze when we feel it on our face. It is the brain which makes the match, then the soul deals with higher level understanding associated with what was sensed.

Additionally, many human actions in life are repetitive ones which use muscle memory information stored in the brain, and these occur apart from direct involvement of the soul. This muscle memory is what allows someone to walk, reach for something, tie their shoes, pick up an item, ride a bicycle, play sports, dance, type on a computer, perform repetitive tasks at work, and engage in countless daily activities without thinking about how to actually perform those tasks. Life would be burdensome if we tried to walk using our soul, thinking about how to make our various muscles put each foot in front of the other and in the correct direction, with the proper balancing of weight, and using a slight forward momentum. It is hard to learn to walk or ride a bicycle, but once it is mastered, it is not forgotten, unless maybe there is a brain injury. The brain can perform thousands of daily tasks without any deep thinking, all of these directly controlled by the brain without constant soul involvement. After the soul decides what will be done, the brain executes most of the task, allowing the soul to focus on the experience itself.

The brain can therefore act on its own to walk or run, avoid a hazard, swing a golf club in the way it learned, shoot a basketball, recall a smell we remember from long ago, test something we are cooking for proper taste, drive a nail with a hammer, execute a triple axel in ice skating, play a musical instrument, and perform other repetitive motion tasks which have been learned and stored in the brain by practice, by repeating the motion over and over. Muscle memory and sensory memory are functions of the brain, so they are actually brain memory, or brain programming. They are stored in and performed by the brain instead of the soul, unless

the soul decides to get involved. So the actual golf swing is brain memory, but the memory of your first hole-in-one or the putt you made from 50 feet or how you felt when you made the golf team in high school is in the soul. The brain performs repetitive work and collects sensory data, but the soul thinks, expresses beliefs, and enjoys the activity. The difference is a matter of low order task accomplishment vs. higher order living as a human. Think about the intricacies involved in walking and running, a golf or tennis swing, ice skating, bicycle riding, basketball shooting, baseball and football throwing, and so on which are based on muscle memory stored in the brain and only supported from the soul. Consider how much time it takes to learn these tasks, let alone to perform them well. The soul remembers why the action needs to be done and makes decisions about doing the action, but the physical brain is programmed to remember how to accomplish the act, and executes previously learned complex tasks with amazing ease, apart from the soul. And practice can lead to increased skill levels as the brain stores additional, more refined muscle memory data.

So the decisions to go for a walk, to choose a book to read, to ride a bicycle on a certain trail, what color to paint a door, whether to go out and play tennis or golf, deciding to go to a dance, or to go meet a friend, are all soul decisions. Then when those actions are to be performed, the brain takes over and allows the soul to enjoy the experience as humanity. The brain relieves humans of much drudgery during daily tasks by using learned muscle memory and sensory memory once the soul has decided what to do in a general sense. The brain therefore acts as a two-way interface and sensing device which translates incoming sensory information into inputs for the soul, then takes soul commands and translates them into outputs which control the body senses, muscle movements, and other actions.

Brain damage can interfere with soul outputs and inputs, but such damage does not change the soul, or eliminate what was already contained in it. Therefore a person with memory diseases such as Alzheimer's or dementia cannot get what is in the soul out through the brain, meaning the core person and their memories are not lost or even changed. The soul can be closed off to some degree by the body, but that does not destroy what was already in the soul. This will be discussed in more detail later.

Because the brain is used to store basic sensory data, this greatly reduces memory storage requirements for the soul, allowing the soul to focus on higher order memory which is essentially "life memories." Among other things, brain memory enables pattern matching for the five senses, such as when we are looking for an object, the pattern of the object (shape,

color, etc.) is in the brain, so when we see a possible match, or hear a sound from it, or smell or touch it, we focus and then understand that it is either the object or not, based on brain memories and pattern matching. For example, when looking for someone we know in a large crowd there can be numerous false alarms from the pattern matching in the brain, but once the soul focuses to differentiate, maybe on the color of the clothing, height, shape, hair style, and so on the brain narrows the search, rejects close look-alikes based on further analysis, and we ultimately know it is a correct match when we find the person. We recognize them from the brain. But we "know" them in the soul, as a spouse, friend, co-worker, or whatever relationship we have with them. While looking for that person we are also walking around and turning our head and doing many other body movements, all brain muscle memory, so that our soul does not need to expend effort thinking about how to perform those basic repetitive tasks.

The brain does not simply dump all sensory data it collects directly into the soul, since that would overload it. Think about driving down a road, and all the potential sensory inputs as the scenery goes whizzing by us. All that sensory data would quickly overwhelm the soul if it were just dumped as raw, unfiltered data into the soul. The soul functions at a high level, so most sensory data must be sorted and filtered in the brain before being turned over to the soul. During this process, which turns raw data into information, most of the raw data is disregarded as irrelevant. How many times have you driven on a freeway and never realized a certain store was along the way? What colors were the cars which passed by you today? You may recall a few, but most are disregarded unless they cut you off and you got mad about it, or some other action required focusing on a few cars. For the data which is passed on from the brain to the soul, the soul takes the semi-processed sensory inputs which have been prepared by the brain for soul use and turns them into higher order information which can be acted upon. Some of that higher order information becomes the source of thoughts and thinking. And these occur in the soul, not in the brain. The brain performs numerous basic tasks to allow the soul to function at a high level without being overloaded, but the essential part of being human is that we know we exist, we think, we make decisions about important life issues, and we form beliefs -- all in our inner human soul, not in the brain.

Sometimes the brain and soul get in each other's way. That happens when the brain muscle memory knows how to perform a task, but the soul decides to try to "help." For instance, Olympic level ice skaters can routinely perform flawlessly in practice, but under the intense pressure of competition the soul starts thinking about consequences, about winning and losing, whether something will disappoint family and friends, what the news will say about

any failures, and other higher order thoughts, but not necessarily helpful ones. At that point the soul tries to help out with the task, and gets in the way of muscle memory, and the results are not elegant at all. The brain tries to perform the task, while the soul thinks of the results in terms of consequences of failure. The soul may even make suggestions in the middle of a complex task. A discordance occurs, and the brain cannot concentrate. The Reader knows the rest of that story. We have all been there. Not necessarily ice skating, but many things in life go like that. The point is that if the entire task were done from muscle memory out of the brain, without soul interference, then all the practice would result in a much better outcome. But we have two parts, brain and soul, which can become involved when the stakes are raised. That is where the soul enters the picture, at the higher level. And this is why people who play sports at a high level must perform from their brain with a quiet soul. Not always easy to do. The soul can be very insistent, and that is when pressure is felt, and the consequences of failure are considered.

The soul is therefore the part of us which must perform higher order tasks, including thinking and forming beliefs. So when you remember your first day at school, your childhood friends, names of people and places, major events in your life, beauty in nature, how and where you met your future spouse, why  $2 + 2 = 4$  as related to your fingers, how you felt when you won an award, where you were when something important happened, and such information, those memories are stored in the soul. The brain does not remember human life events, but it does remember sensory information it encountered in the past. Sights, smells, tastes, things touched, and sounds which were experienced and are now in memory as brain patterns can be used for matching. It also remembers how to perform repetitive tasks without thinking about how to perform them. The brain remembers sensory inputs and stored programming data, while the soul remembers life.

The interactions between the material and immaterial parts of humans, and describing the characteristics of both, are key to understanding the inner human and how it functions in relation to the material world. We have discussed the sensory functions of the body, how the five main senses provide empirical sensory data to the brain. But then what? Where are the connections between brain and soul? Science cannot find them. The connections between the material and immaterial are mostly on the immaterial side, meaning it is the human soul which provides the primary interfaces with the material brain. There are no material "dangling wires" in the brain which lead to an unseen soul. Rather, the soul-brain interfaces are equivalent to a wireless connectivity driven by the soul, which is why science cannot locate or study them even though the brain and soul are co-located inside the head. Science can see



the oscillating electrical voltage and brain waves, but it does not understand that these are manifestations of a system of transceivers providing a wireless connectivity with the soul. When the electrical signals are gone, it shows the soul is gone, even if the physical body continues to function otherwise to some degree.

The brain was designed by God to enable humans to sense and interact with the universe He created, and ultimately to allow humans to focus on higher order living. Thoughts and beliefs go way beyond the senses and interaction with the universe and muscle memory. Our thoughts and beliefs occur inside the human soul, which is the inner human, the image of God, which He designed to enable humans to have thoughts and beliefs as He does, and therefore to be capable of understanding and interacting with Him, and also loving Him. And only a soul can truly love, and have thoughts and beliefs related to love. And once the human body ceases to function, the real person will continue to live on into eternity because God made that part immaterial.

Therefore we can understand why the human brain is not the true human. It performs the lower order functions for the person, and does not survive beyond death. The brain supports the true human, which is the soul. The brain provides sensory data to the soul, and also relieves the soul of menial tasks. Therefore the brain is not the source of thought, beliefs, emotion, conscience or storage for higher level human memory. Higher order cognitive activities do not occur in the brain. Figuring out complex relationships does not occur in the brain. True love does not come from the brain. Trusting God does not occur in the brain. The list could go on and on, but we can begin to understand that although the brain passes data into and out from the soul, it is the soul which performs the higher order thinking and decision making. The brain supports the soul, enabling it to form thoughts and beliefs. Then the soul pushes out decisions regarding desired actions which the brain implements. This makes the brain the physical intermediary, not the true human.

So we can begin to understand the functions of brain and soul, and which does what. Now we can focus on the higher order functions of thoughts and beliefs which occur in the soul. But first, let us take a short side-trip to examine how and why humans are different than animals.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **HUMANS vs. ANIMALS**

God created both humans and animals, and He designed them to be very different types of creatures. He created humans to live eternally, and animals to live only temporally. Because of that, animals have no soul, and do not think in the human sense of the word, nor do they hold beliefs. This is why humans are not animals, since animals have nothing immaterial about them. Animals are stimulus-response artificial intelligence based super-computers. Humans have a greatly enhanced artificial intelligence supercomputer brain, but we also have an immaterial soul connected to it which makes us very different than animals, and also makes us eternal. But since animals have no soul, God gave them something unique which He did not give to humans, as we will see.

The Bible says mankind was created in the image of God, which refers to the soul because it has similar thought and belief capabilities as God expresses through the Bible, but of course on a much different scale. Animals are not said to be created in the image of God because they do not have souls. The real life of a human is in the soul, although the human material body can be viewed as physically alive. But the life of an animal is entirely in the body.

Most people think of human superiority over animals as a given, but that superiority does not come from the physical brain, but rather from the soul of humans. Humans could not be at the top of the animal kingdom without a soul, because the material part of humans is actually inferior to many animals. It is our thinking which makes us superior, not our physical attributes, and that thinking is only in the soul. Animals have been given something uniquely different than humans, namely enhanced instincts, which takes the place of a soul for animals. Humans are virtually devoid of enhanced instincts, and have only a few basic ones to enable newborns to get started in life. Human animals without a soul could not even survive to reproduce since the human brain cannot operate independently from the soul, since it is dependent on the soul, another difference between humans and animals.

However, evolutionary theories assume that humans are animals without souls, and put humans at the top of the evolutionary chain. But this theory does not take into account that a human brain apart from a soul is unable to perform the higher order tasks humans are capable of. Without those higher order capabilities, humans as animals would have become extinct quickly in a body not designed for animalistic living in a wild world. Rather, God made humans far more capable than animals, more capable than any brain could ever become, by putting a soul inside. Therefore the suppositions concerning thought and belief in humans are not the same as for animals. Animals have enhanced instincts which make them highly capable even though they have no soul. But humans have a soul which allows us to figure out how to do things better than animals ever could, because we can think and figure out complex issues, and act in ways which are superior to animals. Beyond that, we hold beliefs, and can believe in God and learn to love Him. We think about the future, and the past. The Bible explains that humans have souls, in the image of God, which makes us very much different than animals.

So is there any possibility of evolution from animals to humans? Science has tried endlessly to find missing links in a theoretical evolutionary chain. But the real missing link is that no animal has a soul, and evolution could never make a leap from no soul to a soul, from purely material to material plus immaterial. Therefore, creatures without souls could never evolve into souled creatures. To go from no soul to a soul is not an evolutionary step. That is an impossible chasm which could never be crossed. Humans think and believe from an immaterial soul. Animals cannot since they have none. Therefore the real missing link of evolution, the wall of impenetrability between animals and humans, is the soul which yields thoughts and beliefs.

Evolutionists cannot allow belief in the existence of a soul since it would destroy their entire theory. Even if we were to consider that somehow animals could evolve from an animal to a human body, which itself defies logic and science, not to mention the Bible, the addition of an immaterial soul is absolutely and literally impossible. This is why the evolutionist must believe that humans are animals with no soul, because the human soul creates an impassable barrier between animal and human, one which evolutionary theory cannot accommodate. The material cannot evolve into the immaterial. Even evolutionists believe this. And if anyone wonders how they can still believe what they believe, that is a later chapter in this book.

Also consider for a moment why no animal species has become dominant on the earth as humans have. No animal comes anywhere near the global dominance humans have exerted on the earth. There is no way they ever could. They do not think and believe in a manner that would allow it to occur. They do not think or believe at all. They instinctively seek food and water and a mate and sleep. Maybe a pat on the head or such. That is about all. No higher order thinking there, just instincts. But advanced animals do have the five senses in common with humans. Since all animals are sensory stimulus-response based supercomputers with artificial intelligence and instincts, they have the same type of senses because those are required to interact with the universe as God created it. But the endpoint for that sensory information is the brain of animals, rather than the soul in humans. They can figure out how to defeat a squirrel-proof bird feeder, but that is simply trial and error. They can also learn tricks, but that is stimulus-response and learned muscle memory, often done for rewards. They do not think and believe as humans can, but their enhanced instincts do give them something which humans lack, and for a good reason as we will discuss.

For the sake of illustration only, if a human body could function with the soul removed, the result would be, at best, a dysfunctional animal. That is because the higher order thoughts and beliefs would be gone without a soul, and since the human brain has almost no instincts, it would have a significant disadvantage for survival. So if a human body could "live" without a soul, it would not function like what we expect from a human. In fact, it would never have consciousness. We see this from people who have lost consciousness due to an accident or illness, and have no brain electrical signals, which shows the soul is gone, yet the body survives physically for some period of time without artificial intervention. This can and does happen. That is what a human is like without a soul -- unconscious. The physical part of humans was not designed to have the brain function as a capable animal apart from the soul, which is much different than how animals are designed. God did not create humans as animals, and He does not want the physical human body to be capable of acting as an animal if a soul is not present. Such creatures would be robots or androids, not humans.

We mentioned how God gave animals something He did not give humans, which is enhanced instinctive programming. Humans have almost no instincts, except for newborns in order to get them started in life -- nursing, swallowing, and a few others. But enhanced instincts are programmed into almost all animals, from large mammals down to tiny insects, to enable them to survive. It is the instincts which make up for their lack of a soul. Some birds find

their perfect nesting place 1000 miles away in a place where they have never been. Baby turtles run toward the ocean at birth. Animals in parched areas of Africa find distant water they cannot possibly have known how to reach. Butterflies and hummingbirds migrate to another continent to survive the winter. Mosquitoes find us no matter how we try to avoid them, and they have a "brain" the size of a pinhead. We can see instinctive behaviors in most animals around us, and many other instincts are less obvious. But God did not give humans such instincts because He gave us a soul and requires us to think our way through life, not act on instincts to merely survive. For humans, God wants more from us than mere survival, He wants us to know Him, understand Him, and maybe even learn to love Him. For animals God wants them to do what He programmed them to do, and support humans on many levels. Instincts take the place of a soul in animals, but it is not thinking or even cognitive, and it is not immaterial. It is programming in their brains, often very tiny ones.

But what is it about animals that make us want to believe we share more of a common bond? Possibly their artificial intelligence based brain and instinctive behaviors which make them appear to be capable of loving their human benefactors. But what we actually see from them is God's wondrous programming of an amazing supercomputer. We see something that looks like affection and appreciation from them, but it is not based on thinking. Animal pets like to be fed and scratched on the head and many other things which they enjoy, but they do so because of their programming, not because they think complex thoughts, or any at all. There is a stimulus and they provide a response. Or maybe they ignore it, if they are a cat. They remember a previous stimulus, and they might even respond in anticipation well in advance. Some actions are complex, to be sure. Squirrels can figure out how to defeat the most complex forms of "squirrel-proof" bird feeders and still get the seeds. Fascinating, but simply supercomputer calculations plus a lot of trial and error repetition. They do not think complex thoughts and hold beliefs regarding the materials of the feeder or the nature of seeds or how the poor birds might suffer as a result of their thievery. They just want to eat and will work tirelessly to achieve this basic instinctive goal, even when the ground is covered with acorns. God designed some animals to look somewhat like human shapes, and to have some very advanced instincts and artificial intelligence capabilities. But they do not have a soul. Animals do not have the ability to think in the abstract, or think at all in our use of the term. They want to remain alive due to instincts, but they do not know they are alive. Humans can think the abstract thought "I am alive" and know the profound implications. Animals cannot think at all in the way we view the issue. Humans do not simply think better than animals. We think, and they do not. We have beliefs, and they do not. They have advanced instincts and we do not. The difference is the soul. The only source of thought and beliefs.

It is the human soul which can believe in God, and can learn to love Him. No animal has ever believed in God. And God created animals because of humans. They were put on earth to support humans in numerous ways. God would not use an evolutionary process to create humans. God also would not tell humans it is acceptable to eat animals if they had a soul. The Bible clearly says humans and the current set of animals were created on the same day, and both were created directly and immediately by God, not over time. God gave humans a soul, but not animals because He has different purposes for each.

So do animals go to Heaven? Sorry, no soul. But there will be new types of animals in eternity because we will live on a New Earth with new plant life as described in the Bible, so there will likely be new forms of animal life as well. Just not your former pet because the physics and environment will be very different, not based on atoms and molecules and such.

But before we leave this issue, which includes instincts, we have discussed that God did not create humans with much in the way of instincts. But although God did not create humans with instinctive behaviors, humans chose to become more like animals in the sense of choosing something which would add negative instinctive behaviors apart from God's will. That addition was the Sinful Nature which Adam and Eve acquired at the point of their sin against God. The Sinful Nature is animalistic, because at its core it is instinctive in a negative sense, not in a positive sense. It makes humans capable of anger, hatred, lusts and violence, and therefore it is animalistic. Not what God intended for humans, but because of sin we have it. Some people give in to it, while others control it to a greater or lesser degree. But it affects all humans. And the sin of the first humans led to God making changes to the earth, which went from a perfect environment to one which is much less hospitable. This also affected all animals, as they went from being tame to having wild tendencies. More on these issues later.

Now that we understand the humans vs. animals issue, we see the absurdity of evolution theories, and also appreciate what God did when He created animals with their unique enhanced instincts. Now we will proceed during the next several chapters to dive even deeper into the intricacies of the human soul in ways few have ever explored, let alone understood.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHTS, BELIEFS, & SELF-AWARENESS**

Adult humans know they exist, commonly referred to as self-awareness, self-consciousness, or sentience. This is one of the highest expressions of humanity, and could only come from a soul. As the source of thoughts and beliefs, the soul expresses the essential traits of being human, namely, we think, we make decisions about important life issues, we form beliefs, and we know we exist, all in our immaterial inner human. These are not brain functions since the material cannot achieve such heights of humanity. But because humans have a soul, we can think high level thoughts and have beliefs in that soul, centered on knowing these things matter to self, to others, and to God.

But to conjecture within the absurd for a moment, even if somehow a brain could have such advanced humanity thoughts and beliefs, it would not matter since at death it would all be gone. Forever. Nothing remaining. Without the soul, nothing about our existence would matter since it would only be very temporary. What use would that be? God certainly would not be part of such an absurdity, which is why He gave us a soul which will live forever. Therefore our life matters. The soul gives life meaning and purpose.

Humans are required by God to use our soul to make decisions and choices, ultimately for or against Him. That is why we exist. And only a self-aware being can ask why they exist. As an added bonus you just learned the answer to the ultimate question of life, "Why are we here?" which is answered only by the Bible. We are here to make decisions for or against God. And the choices we make determine future outcomes, both during our lifetime and forever. One of those decisions might be about what we eat for lunch, and another about our relationship with God. One has eternal implications, and the other does not. But life is about thoughts and beliefs leading to decisions related to God. And those decisions are not from a brain in the body. The brain is not the fount of human existence. The brain is sensory and temporal. The soul is humanity and forever. Regarding why beliefs are important, they are what drive and motivate people. All beliefs are formed in the inner human, and belief is what God requires of

humans if they are to have eternal salvation. That alone makes beliefs the most important issue in life, because it determines our eternal status. By comparison nothing else comes close in importance.

But how do humans develop the ability to think and form beliefs? And how do we become self-aware?

Newborns do not enter the world with thoughts, beliefs or self-awareness. The soul is blank at birth, so these must be developed over time. The first thing a human baby does is to begin taking in sensory data, which is an empirical process of learning about the outside world through the five senses as we have previously described. The newborn's soul must learn and recognize that there is such a thing as the world outside of itself, then learn about it and how it operates. It is a fire-hosing process at first with no frame of reference or memories to relate anything to. Over time repetitive patterns occur which begin to make sense. Those which the newborn will later recognize as "people" show up regularly and then the baby eats, which satisfies a basic need. Things which lead to eating and comfort become associated with goodness. Massive amounts of sensory data is experienced. Language is heard repetitively. Eventually this sensory data is cataloged in memory and becomes recognizable as patterns. Basic thoughts begin to be formed in the soul, usually about food, discomfort, and other needs. Over time as vocabulary is developed, rapid progression of learning occurs. And on it goes as the soul is developed into something which can think, and eventually form beliefs about the world around it. Much later self-awareness begins, once the growing child understands that the outside world and self are different but connected, and that one's own actions affect what the outside world can do for self. So we see that newborn babies are truly human, but do not think until they first accumulate sufficient empirical sensory inputs into their soul, which eventually enables thinking, and later beliefs and self-awareness.

Therefore the human soul develops first by taking in empirical sensory data as the senses identify the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch sensations we encounter, categorize them, and try to match them with sensory memories in the brain. The soul develops mainly through this sensory-based learning process, which is the primary means of understanding the world around us. We have previously described this learning process as a shared brain-soul endeavor whereby the brain supports the needs of the soul. Then at some point there is enough accumulated information to form thoughts, then the person begins learning by teaching from others (a faith-based process), and eventually thoughts form beliefs, then



beliefs serve as a prism for developing future thoughts and higher level beliefs. At first memories are mainly sensory, but eventually thoughts and beliefs develop life memories. And we know it was us who experienced all those things, not someone else, so we know we exist. We are self-aware. That is truly human.

Speaking of knowing we exist, Rene Descartes, the father of modern Rationalism, said his philosophy started with the premise "I think, therefore I exist" as the most basic of human rational thoughts. Sorry, but that is backward. Descartes was trying to ignore his lifetime of empirical sensory learning so he could use only deductive reasoning (rational thought) to know anything with certainty. However, his own thinking and self-awareness were based on that empirical learning, which he tried to ignore, but failed. That is because humans are not born thinking, even though they exist, so the concept "I think, therefore I exist" works only after many years of empirical sensory learning. Newborns exist, but do not think. The ability to think must be learned, because at birth the soul is blank and empty, and therefore cannot have thoughts or be self-aware. Empirical sensory information must be taken into the soul first by the five senses, then through the brain, and then into the soul where the foundation for thinking is formed over time. Eventually this leads to thoughts, thinking, beliefs, and self-awareness. All of this makes empiricism, which Descartes was trying to avoid, the foundational basis of rationalism and deductive reasoning. We use this example to show how someone who is so revered as a great Philosopher for striving to explain how he could know anything with certainty came up with a conclusion which is fundamentally flawed. Descartes is just another example of how far short science and philosophy fall when trying to come to conclusions about human thought and beliefs when the Bible is ignored.

There is also a difference between the immaterial parts of believers and unbelievers. This involves the human spirit, which is separate and distinct from the soul. We define "believers" as those who have believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and we define "unbelievers" as those who have never believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior. The Bible says our beliefs separate us into two groups and determine our eternal futures. It declares "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" and "For by grace are you saved through faith." That one specific belief separates those who are on the side of God from those who are not. There are believers and there are unbelievers, a clear separation among humans. With those definitions outlined, we can proceed to understand the inner workings of the human soul, and we will also come to understand how the human spirit is different than the human soul, but function together and in tandem, although one group of humans (unbelievers) only have the

soul but not the human spirit. We will see how this important difference explains many things about the functions of the inner human.

The immaterial part of humans is amazing. The Bible says "We are fearfully and wonderfully made." But humans are also capable of the most heinous thought distortions imaginable. One of the basic questions people ask about this subject area concerns how different people can look at the same set of facts and come to polar opposite conclusions. This can be related to many things in life, such as politics, morals, religion, economics, environmental issues, business, the origins of the universe, diet and exercise, relationships, and so on. This is where beliefs come into play. Beliefs are often strongly held and will determine what conclusions will be drawn. Beliefs are powerful influencers which are not easily changed, because they are at the core of what a person thinks about themselves, and therefore who they really are. If you ask a person to tell you who they are, they will ultimately describe their beliefs. Humans can be incredibly logical and at the same time hold outrageously illogical thoughts and beliefs in certain specific areas of life. And yet they are not considered to be mentally unstable, or to suffer from a diagnosable mental illness. They may appear to think abnormally to you, but they are not abnormal in a medical sense. And they may think you are abnormal. It all seems unexplainable. But the Bible makes sense of all of it, and these issues will be explained as we proceed. Many of the answers will likely be surprising. Maybe even shocking.

Science, philosophy, and medicine cannot explain what constitutes a true human, which is the soul. They cannot explain its component parts, where the soul resides, how it functions, what causes distortions of thinking in the soul, or a host of other important issues related to true humanity. Most do not even believe there is such a thing as a soul. And when someone starts with the erroneous premise that the brain is the source of humanity, that the soul does not exist, and that humans are just sophisticated animals, their conclusions inevitably fall far short, and most are downright foolish.

So we can begin to see the difference between the brain and the soul as related to thoughts and beliefs. The brain is an artificial intelligence sensory interface and gateway which connects the five senses to the soul, and stores basic data such as learned repetitive actions. It supports the soul, which is the center for high level thoughts and beliefs. The brain sends information into the soul, and then accepts instructions back out from the soul. The brain gathers sensory data, enables repetitive motions, allows us to quickly avoid hazards, relieves the soul of an enormous workload, and provides the soul with information about the world

around us. The brain is the interface between the outside world and the soul, but the soul is the center of being human. It is the ultimate destination of the sensory information fed into the brain, which in turn is manipulated by the soul whereby we make decisions and figure out where we are headed with our life, and also remember where we have been. The soul is where we store high level memories, where we think, and where we love and feel and have deep-seated beliefs. It is where we have self-awareness, knowing we exist as a unique individual. The soul is where we live as humans. The brain is material and programmable. The soul is the immaterial real person and the center of our humanity.

That brings us to the point where we can now discuss the design of the human soul, its components, and how it works.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE DESIGN OF THE IMMATERIAL HUMAN SOUL**

Now things start to get very interesting. The Bible tells us many things about the design of the human soul, what its components are, how it functions, and how the soul interacts with the outside world through the brain and senses. Understanding all of this is where things become both fascinating and complicated, which is why only the Bible can reveal the truth about such complex and otherwise unknowable issues.

The Bible says humans are made "in the image of God," and that refers to the inner human consisting of the soul and human spirit (which will be discussed in detail separately). God thinks, knows He exists, remembers, has standards of right and wrong, communicates, loves, has compassion, has a belief system, makes choices from free will, and has many other traits which are mirrored to some lesser degree in humans. Although His essence obviously goes far, far beyond human capabilities, the inner human is in the overall image of God in such areas. That is because God wants us to be capable of interacting with Him by making free will choices based on independently derived thoughts and beliefs. God did not design humans as robots or puppets which must only do what they are programmed or made to do, because such a creature would not be capable of choosing to love God, so it could only mimic something like love, but it would not be genuine love. Only a truly free will can make choices for or against God. So in order to interact with God, humans must have a degree of likeness with God which provides a basis for a true relationship. And that is how God designed the inner human, in His image.

The human soul is made up of several parts. The Bible calls them the Heart, Mind, Emotion, Conscience, and Memory. (Note: For the purpose of clarity, these will be capitalized when referring to them as soul components, unless quoting from the Bible.) Besides the soul, there is also the human spirit component of the inner human, which is also immaterial, but is separate and distinct from the soul, although intimately connected. The human spirit will be covered in a separate chapter, but as a quick overview, it is the spiritual part of the inner

human which allows us to interact with God, since He is Spirit. The Bible says "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) Therefore the soul defines us as rational human beings, and the human spirit makes us spiritual beings. But we must take things one step at a time, so we must first cover the soul in greater detail. Therefore we will need to delay discussing the human spirit for now. But your patience will be rewarded.

God created the human soul with the five components mentioned above, the Heart, Mind, Emotion, Conscience, and Memory. But as we know from the book of Genesis, perfectly created humans did not comply with the requirements placed on them by God, and so they sinned in revolt against God. That led to distortions in the human soul, mainly an added component called the Sinful Nature, which became an attachment to the soul. At the same time the two humans lost their human spirit, which was spiritual death, resulting in alienation from God. We will discuss later how God found a way to enable their human spirits to be restored or regenerated by salvation.

The two humans did not merely sin, but they also became sinful as a result of acquiring a Sinful Nature as part of their inner human which acts on the soul to promote dysfunctional thinking and behavior, including sinful tendencies. God did not design humans that way, but rather they added this feature to their souls apart from God's will. In the Garden of Eden when the man and woman sinned, both acquired the Sinful Nature by choice, although for the woman it was a deceived choice. God had designed perfection, but humans rebelled and caused distortions and added imperfections to the soul. Thoughts and beliefs changed for all of us after that point because the original parents made this choice for all humanity, making the Sinful Nature an addition to the soul of all their descendants (with the exception of Jesus Christ, as we will discuss).

Let us now look at each of the components of the human soul, namely the Heart, Mind, Emotion, Conscience, and Memory, and also the Sinful Nature which was added after the initial creation. Then we will look at the human spirit, which is a separate part of the inner human, once the soul is understood.

Let us begin with the primary focus of the soul, which is the Heart.

## HEART

The Bible describes the immaterial Heart as the primary component of the soul, the essential being of the person, the integrator of all soul and human spirit functions, the center of thinking, and the decider of the soul, making the Heart the nerve center of the inner human. The Heart is the central controller of the soul which integrates all the complex components and facets of the inner human. It is the Captain of the ship, and therefore the responsible agent for what the person thinks, believes, and does. The Heart makes decisions for the soul, and expresses thoughts and intentions toward the outside world and also toward God. As such it is the center of the free will of the human, and also where self-awareness resides. The immaterial Heart is functionally analogous to the body's physical blood pump which nourishes and sustains the human body with oxygen, nutrients, immune defenses, heating and cooling, cleansing, and numerous other functions. Proverbs 4:32 says: "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." We see the "flow" analogy as with the physical pump of the body, meaning the soul's Heart pumps the flow of thoughts around the soul as they are developed into thinking, and then they flow out from the Heart and into the material world as the expressions of the person.

When discussing the inner human the Bible most often refers to the Heart since it is the main component of the soul, rather than using the word "soul" itself. Although this may seem odd, these passages are dealing with the part of the soul which makes the decisions, and is therefore responsible for the action being discussed. The Bible refers to the immaterial Heart over 700 times, about 200 of which are in the New Testament, but the word "soul" is only used 95 times in the Bible of which 23 are in the New Testament. This shows the importance of the Heart as the main component and decision maker of the soul. The functions and attributes ascribed to the immaterial Heart in the Bible are both positive and negative. The positives include thinking/thoughts, intentions, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, deciding, believing, remembering, love, meditation, reflection, pondering, purposing, seeking, searching, humility, obedience, gladness, caring, tenderness, compassion, joy, self-reflection, yearning, cheerfulness, peace and hope. On the negative side the Bible says the Heart can also have arrogance, foolishness, anger, envy, pride, jealousy, darkness, hardness, folly, deceit, evil thoughts, impenitence, obstinacy, wickedness, perversity, lusting, coveting, can sorrow and be heavy, can be dejected and in anguish, and many other negative things.

Comparing the outputs of the Heart with the overall characteristics of the human soul we find the Heart integrates the Mind, Conscience, Emotion, and Memory which are separate from the Heart, yet are all component parts of the soul. A common misunderstanding about the Heart is to associate it primarily with emotional expression. That is not how the Bible explains the Heart. Looking at the list of Biblical usages of the word Heart which we have previously discussed, we can see that the Heart integrates the Emotion into its expressions, but is not the source of emotional responses since the Emotion is a separate component of the soul. This may seem like a fine point, but it is an important distinction as we will soon discuss how the Emotion can get out of control and revolt against the Heart. They must be separate entities for that to happen.

God is highly focused on the thoughts and intentions of the person, and He evaluates each person based on their Heart. 1 Samuel 16:7 says: "The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." It is therefore clear that the Heart is the inner core, the essential nature, the highest functioning part of the inner immaterial person, both believer and unbeliever, and therefore provides the majority of the soul's important functions. It makes all the final decisions. And it can either act in compliance with God's will and plan or make decisions contrary to them, meaning it is the center of free will in humans.

The Bible says the Heart can treasure things, is the source of the secrets of the person, and conceives plans, and all of these can be either good or evil. We will discuss why later, but for now we will stick with the soul component descriptions to keep building an understanding of how the soul is designed, and how it functions. Overall, the Heart is about decision making. That is its primary role. Salvation comes from the Heart's decision to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. Romans 10:10 says "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified." And the Heart is important in our post-salvation spiritual life: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (Proverbs 3:5)

God is said to have a Heart in Acts 13:22, Jeremiah 3:15, and 1 Samuel 2:35, and this is part of the reason humans are in the image of God. As Genesis 1:27 says "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them." We are alive with a soul which has components which are somewhat like God's essence, although with greatly reduced capabilities, since we think, are self-aware, have free will to make

decisions, and so on. And the human spirit is our spiritual side. God created humans as creatures with a soul containing the qualities of being alive which mirror His own inner Being, but of course on a much lower scale. And a human spirit is required to interact with God in any way, as spirit to Spirit. And while we are on that subject, it takes both a soul and human spirit to be in the image of God. Without a human spirit, part of that image is missing. Unbelievers are therefore missing a critical piece of the image of God, and without it they can never have a relationship with Him unless that missing piece is regained by salvation, at which point the regeneration of the human spirit occurs.

For those who believe the Heart is primarily a source of good intentions, think again. Satan has a Heart, and it is pure evil. Isaiah 14:13 describes what Satan thought when he chose to revolt against God: "You [Satan] said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God'." The following are some of the many verses which describe the Heart as evil under certain conditions, especially when God is rejected by a majority of humans:

Genesis 6:5 "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Ecclesiastes 9:3 "Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives."

Psalms 53:1-3 "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God,' They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice."

Matthew 13:15 "For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them.' "

Hebrews 3:12 "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God."

The Bible never uses the word "brain" or anything referring directly to it. Instead, the Heart is always used as the source of man's cognitive integrating functions, namely thoughts and beliefs. The human physical brain is a material interface and sensing device which enables the immaterial part of man to interact with the material world, especially on a sensory level. But



the human brain is not the location or source of thoughts, conscience, volition, emotions, high level memories or any other essentially human cognitive functions, but rather its purpose as related to the inner human is to support the soul's high level functions and also to connect the soul with the outside world.

Therefore the Heart is the key component of the soul. When the thoughts and beliefs of the soul are finalized and put in place, it is done by the Heart. Proverbs 27:19 sums up the Heart: "As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart."

## **MIND**

The soul component mentioned in the Bible second only to the Heart is the Mind. By design, the Mind is closely aligned with the Heart as its chief advisor. The Mind is the technical, logical, contemplative engine of the soul, and advises the Heart on all issues related to thinking. It handles all incoming sensory inputs from the brain and sorts them out. An analogy would be to view the Heart as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the soul and the Mind as the second-in-command, filling a combination of numerous subordinate roles such as Chief Operating Officer, Chief Technical Officer, Chief Engineer, Chief of Logistics, Head Physicist, Head of Security, and more. The Mind is the soul component responsible for figuring things out and making sense of the world. That means the Mind is the busiest part of the soul.

In this regard the Mind is the soul component which deals most directly with inputs coming through the brain from the outside. It takes those inputs and puts them into a form which the Heart can deal with. This includes issues related to math, science, engineering, physics, safety and all technical subject areas. And not just as academic subjects, but rather being able to relate to the world in all its complex physical aspects. When an issue requires some contemplation, the Mind sorts out the facts related to what the soul should do, and advises the Heart as to how to proceed. As such the Mind is designed to be the primary contemplative engine of the soul, sorting out facts, pulling in memories related to issues under consideration, using established soul beliefs as policy, considering the issues in view of right and wrong, forming conclusions, mulling things over, pondering why things are the way they are, forming conclusions, and making recommendations to the Heart. In general, the Mind sorts out things which are not obvious, therefore the Heart is very dependent on the Mind for developing conclusions and proposed courses of action. After the Mind figures issues out, the

Heart makes the final decision about what the soul will do with the information. Most times the Heart and Mind are in agreement, because they work together closely along the way. Thinking is therefore primarily a Heart-Mind collaborative effort. The Mind does the heavy lifting part of the thinking process, and the Heart does the integration and finalization part of the thinking process. This is why the Bible says that both the Mind and Heart think and possess knowledge and understanding, because what the Mind advises based on the deep thinking part of the process, the Heart usually accepts and finalizes at the finishing stage of thinking.

The Mind is described in the Bible as:

1. The chief advisor to the Heart. A faculty of technical understanding, contemplating, deciphering, and figuring things out for the soul (complex sensory data, math, engineering, physics, etc.).
2. The key to the soul's understanding and knowledge of the outside world. The soul's primary interface to the physical brain for incoming sensory data. Compiles sensory data into a more refined or final product, provides situational awareness for the soul, creates new knowledge and understanding.
3. The "logic" engine of the soul. Determines acceptability and quality of the data and information which comes into the soul.
4. The component of the soul which oversees the Conscience and Memory, since the Mind is their primary interface.

In the ancient Greek the word for Mind is "dianoia" which is a term used by Plato for a type of thinking, specifically about mathematical and technical subjects. It is associated with the capacity for deductive thinking, in contrast with an immediate recognition of the obvious, which is a different word in the Greek. This same Greek word "dianoia" is used in the New Testament to refer to the Mind of the soul.

The Mind is therefore the master contemplative-thinker of the soul which receives all sensory inputs from the brain, combines them with previously known information (memory), and engages in deeper levels of thinking which lead to knowledge and understanding, especially when trying to figure things out. It employs mental tools and takes inputs from the other parts of the soul, and for believers it receives spiritual inputs from the human spirit. The Mind develops conclusions about technical subjects such as professions, mathematics, solving

puzzles, problem resolution, how to fix things or make things work, alternate approaches to an issue, why things are the way they are, and any type of deep thinking which requires figuring things out. It cogitates, theorizes, mulls things over, and tries to make sense of anything and everything it can based on previously learned information plus the new inputs it receives from sensory data passed through the brain. It is therefore the center of curiosity, wanting to know the "why" behind what it encounters. It is also the part of the soul which recognizes that which is already familiar or known, and declares it correct or incorrect according to previous memory and thinking. This allows the soul to see most things encountered as obvious or clear on the surface, as familiar to us, which allows the soul to focus its energies on those things which require special attention, thinking and figuring out what is new or unknown. Therefore it engages to recognize the familiar, and also to decipher and figure out that which is not clear, to compare new things with previous knowledge, to develop conclusions, to put issues into perspective. That can be technical, mathematical, visualization skills (the "eyes of the mind" in Ephesians 1:18). It thinks in three dimensional (3D) and contemplative ways. When functioning properly it is very logical. As the master thinker component of the soul it solves cognitive problems, sorts things out, and makes sense of the world around us.

Once again it is important to note that thinking is not done in the brain, but rather the brain interfaces with the outside world to bring sensory data to the Mind of the soul where that sensory data is used for the purpose of figuring things out and putting them into perspective, which results in an understanding of the issue, or a conclusion that more information is needed to understand the issue. The Mind therefore thinks and creates understanding and new knowledge in association with the Heart, which is its boss. And when mixed with spiritual information from the human spirit the result of the thinking of the Mind can eventually become wisdom.

The issue of relative intelligence often measured by IQ is an interesting issue which shows the relationship between the brain and the Mind of the soul. Although actual thinking occurs in the soul, data from the outside world comes through the brain where it is semi-processed before going on to the soul. Some people process raw data in the brain better than others, or maybe just certain specific types of data better than others. Therefore IQ is a mixture of brain and soul functions. Otherwise all humans have the same thinking capabilities in the soul, which far exceed even what a super-genius is able to achieve while alive in a human body. But the brain affects our ability to think deeply in certain areas of life by limiting the data processing and transfer capabilities to some degree, and it occurs in certain areas more than

others, and therefore differs from one person to the next. Some are geniuses at math while others struggle. Certain people have strong visualization skills. Some have high functioning capabilities as artists, engineers, physicists, architects, garden designers, leadership, writing or whatever. Individuals have varying degrees of abilities in a wide variety of areas, and no person has high levels of everything. Some of it is also related to learning skills, because learning is based on previous learning and accumulated knowledge. Therefore brain capabilities associated with processing and transferring data to the soul causes people to have different levels of ability to think at a high level in certain areas, which is generally called IQ.

The Bible refers to the outputs of the Mind as "understanding" and "knowledge" in a number of verses, such as these representative ones:

Daniel 5:12 "Daniel...was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding,"

Daniel 10:12 "Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard,"

Job 17:4 "You have closed their minds to understanding; therefore you will not let them triumph."

The Mind can be influenced by various portions of the soul and Sinful Nature, so its thinking processes can be distorted. Therefore it is not always truly "logical" even though it is the engine of logical thinking, so the Mind is not always correct about its understanding and knowledge. Sometimes the understanding and knowledge it had previously created are wrong, so the new understanding and knowledge developed based on it will also likely be wrong. Sometimes the sensory data is misinterpreted. And sometimes other parts of the soul interfere with the proper functioning of the Mind by inserting distortions, often based on the person's overall belief system. So the outputs of the Mind can have variable degrees of accuracy because the Mind gets pulled in many different directions by the agendas of the various soul components.

The Mind can be "open" to looking at things differently or become "set" (or "made up," or "determined") so that it thinks in a narrow range on certain issues, and can be either of these at different times on different issues. It is therefore highly influenced by the belief system of the person, whether liberal or conservative, emotional or deliberative, trusting or suspicious, care-free or detail oriented, etc., so that it views all data from a certain pre-determined set of assumptions, biases, prejudices, blinders, prisms, and filters based on underlying beliefs

which have been built up and established over time. This is where beliefs become a powerful influencer in the soul, since they narrow options for thinking, either for good or bad. The Mind figures things out within certain parameters using those underlying beliefs and assumptions built up in the soul. So the outputs (conclusions, knowledge and understanding) of the Mind are not always correct, logical, or make sense in view of the facts of the universe, they just make sense in view of the filters, biases, etc. which have been established inside the individual soul. These beliefs are often "hardened" into the soul, creating inflexibility. Previous incorrect assumptions and knowledge can be difficult to overcome. Therefore the Mind as the "logical" component of the soul can be entirely illogical. But it can also be bifurcated, thinking very logically in one area of life, such as one's profession, doing math and science, problem solving, and so on, while at the same time that same Mind can be totally illogical about social issues, economics, politics, and on and on because of the underlying belief system which affects those specific issues but not the person's profession. In this way many people build up areas of logical expertise mixed with some degree of illogical views of the world around them. This becomes the basis of a split soul to at least some degree. To prevent such mental distortions in the Mind it must be trained in the way of truth from the study of the Word of God in order to align with the will of God:

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

So the Mind can align with truth when the underlying belief system is based on truth. Then in turn the Mind will cooperate with the human spirit on spiritual issues and advise the Heart to align with the Plan of God on a more regular basis as the best course of action. Unbelievers are unable to align with the spiritual plan of God, but they can often be good citizens and generally moral. But for a person who is a believer living a life without learning the Word of God, they will have a Mind and belief system which inevitably becomes distorted to some degree. When this is the regular status of the person, the Mind will gravitate to and align with the Sinful Nature in some way or another, as these verses indicate:

Rom 12: 7 "...because the mind set on the flesh [Sinful Nature] is hostile toward God; for it does not submit itself to the law of God [God's Word]..."

Colossians 1:21 "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior."

The Bible describes a war inside the inner human where the human spirit and Sinful Nature fight each other for control of the soul of the believer. The ammunition for the human spirit is the Word of God, while the Sinful Nature gets plenty of firepower from everyday living and seeks to oppose the will of God. This shows the importance of learning and growing from the Word of God instead of relying on whatever comes in through everyday living as the source of one's "truth." A Mind which has truth from the Word of God as its basis for knowledge and understanding will be far less likely to become distorted in its thinking processes.

All of this means the person can have technical competency while at the same time have illogical beliefs about many other things in life. We might ask: "That person is not dumb, so how can they think that way?" It is not a matter of being smart or not, but rather it is about belief systems which drive illogical thinking in the Mind in certain core subject areas. As such the Mind can try to figure things out using premises provided by distorted beliefs in the soul, which reside in the Heart, and the result will be distorted conclusions. That means a person can be brilliant technically but "walking around" ignorant and confused. Many technically competent people can isolate the technical area of their soul, doing an excellent job at their work, and live the rest of their life based on a belief system which can range from somewhat distorted to absolutely illogical and absurd. More details on this issue later, since we must stick with describing the soul components at this stage. Next, we discuss Memory.

## **MEMORY**

Humans could not relate to their surroundings or even think without the Memory, a soul storehouse of previously learned information. Without it nothing could be related to prior experiences, so nothing could be recognized, recalled, or understood in relation to the past. Learning would be irrelevant, since nothing would be stored. In order to think, there must be information stored somewhere with which to form thoughts, and that location is the soul Memory. The soul is the center of higher level memories, those associated with humanity. These are not stored in the brain, although the brain holds the sensory data memory (visual, smell, taste, sound, and touch), and muscle memory to relieve the soul of unnecessary workload. The interaction between brain memory and soul Memory is important for enabling the soul to focus on high order functions related to humanity, while the brain focuses on sensory data and muscle memory related to survival and physical body functions. In this regard, the soul component Memory works very closely with brain memory, although the two exist at different levels. This section will focus on the real memories of human living which

are stored in the soul's Memory. The issues of soul Memory and remembering are mentioned in the Bible over 275 times.

Every human is born with no memories, meaning a blank soul Memory, and therefore cannot think at that point. Memories form a frame of reference for both recognition and new learning based on information previously learned. And although the Memory begins to be populated soon after birth, the initial information is at first very basic, since a foundation of sensory information must first be built up in the brain before the more advanced soul Memory can be populated to any degree. This is because the brain sensory memory supports the soul Memory. The higher level memories of the life, which are the important memories related to humanity, are located in the soul, so it is important to understand how the Memory works. If not for the Memory, every sensory input from brain to soul would be new to us. Over and over again. We would not remember what food is, or grass, or a chair, or parents, or anything at all. Every input would be completely unknown. Humans could not survive, because they lack the instincts God gave animals. As we have discussed, instincts in animals make up for their lack of a soul. Humans are born with very few instincts, and must rely on adults to nurture them. God gave animals extensive instincts to provide for their survival from birth, but He requires humans to live out of their soul. This issue of memories vs. instincts shows once again that humans are not animals.

Memory is related closely to thinking. Consider how a baby is born with a blank soul Memory, and also a blank brain memory, and must store memories about the outside world before it can understand and relate to its surroundings based on past experiences. Memories are built up over time, first the brain sensory memories to enable pattern recognition, and then soul memories can be formed. At some point there is recognition of people such as parents, who are remembered in a positive way. This is the beginning of soul memories. Eventually words are remembered, and language is developed. The long slow process of storing both brain and soul memories enables a person to mature mentally as they also grow physically. It takes a long time for a newborn to develop enough memories in the soul to begin to think, even at a basic level. Therefore humans are not born thinking in the soul, but rather they are born sensing with the brain. The senses take in sensory data from the five senses, which builds up a repository of sensory memories, which eventually begins to develop and populate soul memories. Only then can soul thinking begin.

Without the Memory there would be no understanding of loved ones, or even who you are. But because we have the soul Memory, during eternity the person will remember who they were while they lived out their natural life on earth. If human memories were located in the brain, they would vanish at the point of death. This applies to both believers and unbelievers. But Revelation 21:4 says about only believers after they die: "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more." But unbelievers will continue to have suffering for eternity, and their memories will haunt them forever as they recall how they failed to do the one thing required of them to avoid eternal condemnation -- to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, which is a single act of belief.

The Memory is located in a sub-compartment of the Mind because the Mind is the primary user of memories as it figures things out for the soul. Lamentations 3:21 "Yet this I recall to mind and therefore I have hope." The Mind is where memories are recalled and used to interact with new sensory information, to compare and contrast that new data with our existing soul memories, and form new knowledge and understanding. Most sensory data which comes in through the brain then into the soul as adults is generally recognizable to us. We know grass, sky, a car, a road, a rock and countless things when we see, hear, taste, smell or touch them because they are compared with what we have learned in the past, and has been stored as memories. Without the Memory of the soul, the Mind would have nothing to use for comparison when trying to figure things out. And there would be no relationships among people since they would not be recognized as family or friends. We would not be able to learn about God and His plan for us. Memories are what turn babies into mental adults over time as learning occurs along with body growth. Older people who lose their memories revert to acting much like a child, trying to sort out basic sensory information, while no longer understanding what adults have learned over their lifetime. All of this shows why the Memory is key to allowing the Mind to build upon previous learning so that it can figure things out in the present time.

There are three levels of soul memory, which are generally speaking short term, long term, and archival. The various levels of soul memory are designed to prevent overload of the Memory's storage capabilities, which is not unlimited. Therefore most information which goes into short term memory never gets into long term memory. Data which passes by quickly and is not relevant to accomplishing our daily goals is quickly washed out into the trash bin. We cannot normally describe a car we just passed, or the features of an object we briefly saw when in a store, or most objects we encounter which were not important to us. We saw the object, just as clearly as a camera sees something, and if our eyes were taking



photographs then we could look at the "eye photos" afterward and would be able to describe the objects in great detail. But that would take far too much memory for 99% of what we see in life, so the visual senses only take a clear "snapshot" when something is important or startling or otherwise gains our attention and focus. When a sensory event becomes important, the memory is activated to store the information more fully and carefully, and this is a shared brain-soul storage process, even though the final high order memories are only stored in the soul. The eyes store a snapshot, the ears a sound bite, the nose a categorized smell, the tongue a taste in one of four categories (sweet, sour, bitter, or salty), and the skin how some specific thing felt, and all of these are first processed by the brain. Then the more significant sensory events go into the soul where the Mind figures them out and either stores the events in the Memory or ignores them. Therefore an extraordinary event is stored in greater detail in our Memory, because our soul focuses intently on the details. For very important events, we can sometimes recall the details many years later as if it had just happened. But if the same event had little importance to us we would not remember much about it even a short while later.

Memory can be stored in various ways. We mentioned the eyes, which produce a sort of "photograph memory" called eidetic memory, which does not mean every single detail seen by the eyes can be recalled, but rather the information is stored in varying degrees of detail as a whole object or scene. Therefore most visual memories are stored in the form of a mental image or video, often associated with previously learned mental images which allow them to be categorized. Shape, size and color (generally light or dark only) would be the things retained longer than other details. Color can be retained longer if it is an expected color, such as grass is usually recalled as green. A specific visual memory is then recalled as a reduced quality photograph of the image we saw. Most images disappear within seconds and cannot be remembered, and many others imprint just a vague image. Only those items which attract our attention result in a "mental snapshot" in time, but not a continuous video unless the situation was intense and extreme.

For instance, we have a mental snapshot of the car we parked next to earlier today. We only noticed it because it parked too close and we had trouble opening our car door far enough to get in. Do we even recall the color? Probably only light or dark. Sedan, SUV, or truck? Probably. But the make or model? Less likely. We may recall there was a sunscreen in the windshield which had a picture of sunglasses on it. We thought that was different. And that is the key. Something in particular caught our attention for a second or two. So we know it was

a light colored car, sort of small, a sedan, with that odd sunscreen. Otherwise it is whatever caught our attention because it was unusual or required our attention, if anything at all.

Most non-visual memories are stored as associations, words, concepts, comparisons, feelings, intensity levels, smells, tastes, sounds, and such, and placed into storage near similar previously learned memories. Smell is often the longest lasting form of memory, and generally fades the least. A smell may invoke a memory of a childhood visit to grandmother's house as she was cooking a Thanksgiving meal. To identify a smell in the air as a freshly baked apple pie is brain sensory matching, but to remember how your Grandmother always baked one for Thanksgiving, and how you could not wait to take a bite of it, that is soul Memory. Tastes and sounds last a long time in comparison to visual memory, and also touch to some degree. But most non-visual memories cannot be recalled easily to mind to the degree visual memories can, but rather they must be re-experienced to recall them in any detail. We cannot conjure up the exact smell of fresh apple pie just by thinking about it, but when we smell it again, we easily recognize it. The non-visual memories will usually be recalled in generalities, such as something which smelled burned, felt like velvet, sounded like a freight train, or tasted stale. Visual memories will be in snapshot or video form, and somewhere between fairly accurate and very blurry representations of the original visual sighting.

Fading and forgetting are capabilities built into the Memory which serve several purposes. It eliminates information which is not deemed useful to free up storage space, and also helps us live with the future in mind rather than dwelling on the past, especially past failures which would reduce our future options. But Memory can be hard to control. Getting rid of bad memories is very difficult. That is because they are imprinted due to the impact they had, and we continue to recall them even though we do not want to. And remembering them further imprints the unwanted information. But what a waste of good memory space. So why is it still there? It sits seared into a photographic image in soul memory, taking up valuable space. And not helpful. We are told to forget our failures so we can move on and grow spiritually, as the Apostle Paul said "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14) Refocusing our Mind on spiritual matters is the most effective way to overcome bad memories, making them less important and causing them to fade out.

So what about that fading memory thing? Is it like those old photographs from the early days of photography, which fade and crack and get yellow over time? Sort of. The soul Memory keeps stuff moving along, making way for new memories. But if we think about the specific item again, that one is refreshed in Memory, something like being retouched, and the soul notes it as one to keep closer to the top of the stack. At some point only the outline remains if it is not accessed again. Colors and other details fade and get lost, because the space is needed. Is the Internet causing memories to fade faster because of the massive amount of new data coming in? Do we sort Internet data better than what we saw when driving down the freeway? Did people out in the Old West frontier keep important memories longer since they had far fewer sensory distractions? I do not know. But memories are not forever. The Bible says: Ecclesiastes 2:16 "For the wise, like the fool, will not be long remembered; the days have already come when both have been forgotten."

We are told by the Bible to remember certain things, such as to worship God. And remembering is the opposite of forgetting. We must know when and how to do both. Note also how often the Mind is associated with memories by the Bible:

Isaiah 65:17 "“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”"

Jeremiah 51:50 "You who have escaped the sword, leave and do not linger! Remember the Lord in a distant land, and call to mind Jerusalem.”"

Jeremiah 3:16 "It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made."

Jeremiah 44:21 "“Did not the Lord remember and call to mind the incense burned in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem by you and your ancestors, your kings and your officials and the people of the land?”"

Psalms 42:4 "These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God."

Psalms 77:5-7 "I thought about the former days, the years of long ago; 6 I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated and my spirit asked: 7 “Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again?"

Isaiah 46:8 "“Remember this, keep it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. 9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other.”"

Lamentations 3:20 "I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me."

2 Timothy 1:3 "I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers."

There are some other unusual aspects of soul Memory. One is how we forget something important to us, and even though we try and try, we cannot recall it. Later it pops into our Mind and we remember it. Where was it when we wanted it? We have all experienced forgetting something we knew well at some point. We try to recall the name of a person. We give up and forget about it. Then a day or more later the name just pops into our Mind and there it is. But where did it come from? We were not even trying to remember any more. We do not know how, but we do know that it happens. Sometimes things get misplaced, or the soul may have moved it to archive memory which is not readily and immediately accessible, but it can be accessed given a little time. It would be interesting to know how this happens, but to know that it does happen deepens our understanding of the complexity of the human soul, and why higher order memories are not a brain function. What was happening during the interval after we stopped trying to recall the forgotten Memory item? How did we recall it much later when we had already stopped trying to remember? Is there some little robot (note: this is just an analogy) which must go far off into the deep recesses of the soul to retrieve things from the archives, because it is not in the "current storage" part of the Memory? Is that tiny robot so small that it takes a long time to make the long journey to the archives and back? Does it need to make several trips because the information is too much to carry all at once? Did that little robot finally get back from its long trek? Of course, this is simply to illustrate how complex the soul can be, that the Memory has several components, which are short term, intermediate and archival memory. The soul does not have unlimited storage ability in current memory. So there is a rather complex method of sorting, storing, and retrieving memories. And sometimes it just takes time to retrieve something which was misplaced.

But what about when you can easily recall the name of your first dog, or the name of a childhood friend from many years ago? Those memories are more firmly ingrained in a current memory location due to their importance at some point in life. This also brings up the issue of memory related to importance. Many items are put into a current memory which is constantly being emptied, but not the things we found most important. Pet names, childhood friends, how we were hurt on the school playground, a car accident, the death of a loved one, and many other issues which were "seared" into our Memory remain in current memory all

our life. But our Memory can only handle a certain amount of those, so most things are moved off into a longer term memory, or an archival memory, or even into the trash bin.

We will discuss dreaming later, but dream information is generally put into a very short term memory, and is even dumped while sleeping unless it is so significant or startling as to be put into storage for later analysis when awake. If we even recall it after we wake up, the analysis is generally "What was that nonsense about?" Then we move on and forget it. When we discuss dreaming and how the soul works while asleep in a later chapter, we will see that the soul functions differently during sleep. A very interesting subject which requires further discussion.

Next we will explore the Conscience of the soul, which is also a sub-component of the Mind of the soul.

## **CONSCIENCE**

The Conscience and related synonyms are mentioned about 40 times in the Bible. This book is about thoughts, thinking, and beliefs, so it is important to note the Conscience is that part of the soul where beliefs associated with right and wrong are stored. What is stored there may be accurate, distorted or false, but they are the beliefs of that person nonetheless. As such the Conscience sets the parameters of acceptable thought and actions for the entire soul. The beliefs are formed over the life of the human, and they narrow the focus of the Heart's decision making process. Therefore, contrary to popular opinion, the Conscience does not automatically have correct values which line up with what God intends, since God does not directly populate the human Conscience with His truth. Rather, truth and correct beliefs must be learned, if at all, or the Conscience will become filled with that which is partially true, distorted, wrong, and even evil. It all depends on what the person has put into the Conscience along the way. A properly aligned Conscience would have Biblical values, but that is rare. Most people have a Conscience which aligns with a narrow set of rights and wrongs which can either be deeply held or easily dismissed as the occasion requires.

Therefore a Conscience is not by definition something inside all humans which knows right and wrong. And it is certainly not a function in the brain. A Conscience is developed over

time by past thoughts, teaching, experiences, and actions of the individual. The Conscience is empty when the person is born, just as the rest of the soul, so it is not filled with proper standards from birth. Rather it is developed by each individual person. Therefore a Conscience is not necessarily a proper rudder on human behavior. For most people it is merely a self-designed and easily altered guide for a few standards of right and wrong, and can be anything and everything the individual wants it to be. Sometimes it is simply a self-designed excuse for people believing they are not so bad after all, and better than many other people. But a measure of goodness based on comparison with others who are seen as worse in some way is not a properly developed Conscience.

Criminals have a Conscience. A hardened criminal can have a worthless Conscience which thinks snitching is the worst of all wrongs, and killing other humans is justified by what serves their own interests. Other criminal values can be things like avoiding certain very specific crimes which are repulsive to them personally, so maybe they look down on criminals who harm children. Or they may choose victims based on their social status, because they think rich people or people who are different than they are do not deserve what they have, which justifies taking it away. So it becomes clear that a Conscience can sometimes be turned into something which is little more than a tool for excusing bad behavior.

Likewise those who consider themselves wonderful Christians can have a distorted Conscience which is self-righteous about one's own sins while exhibiting disdain about the sins of others, walling off areas of hypocrisy where they believe they are better than others, and often for incorrect reasons. The Bible reminds us "There is no one righteous, not even one." (Romans 3:10) The only Conscience which meets the standards of God are those which align with His truth from the Word of God. And that must be learned and developed over a long period of time. God does not condone using the Conscience to condemn others for their personal failures. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3)

The Conscience is another area of the soul where the Sinful Nature interferes and inserts distortions. The Sinful Nature tempts the Heart to sin, often by excusing the act as not truly all that bad. This is a distortion of the Conscience. The Sinful Nature is constantly working to chip away little by little at the beliefs held in the Conscience. If the Heart repeatedly gives in, the Sinful Nature presents more and more temptations to erode the Conscience until the firm beliefs regarding right and wrong are reduced and even set aside.

The key point here is that no one has a perfect Conscience, but those who have studied the Bible and internalized the information into their life will have a Conscience which is more closely aligned with God's will, and therefore generally based on truth. Although no one is perfect, the Bible says a clear Conscience is a blessing to the entire soul, and desires to benefit others:

2 Timothy 1:3 "I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers."

The Conscience is subordinate to and closely tied to the Mind:

Titus 1:15 "to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted."

The Bible says there is such a thing as a "seared conscience." 1 Timothy 4:2: "Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron." Such a Conscience is no longer useful for discerning good from bad, right from wrong. This means the Conscience is more easily manipulated than we had thought. If our Conscience becomes seared or cauterized, then it cannot provide good guidance for the decision making process, and we have little or no reliable standards in life. We become adrift in the vast ocean of random thoughts and purposeless endeavors due to a lack of accurate moral conviction in the soul. Therefore we become casualties in the war against evil. But that is not what God desires for us.

However, our Conscience can be rehabilitated if we learn and apply the Word of God, filling it with the true standards of right and wrong found only in the Bible. A person can either develop a good Conscience and keep it intact, or let it erode and be corrupted. A Conscience which has been eroded can be rebuilt, although with difficulty. Overall a Conscience is what the person has made it to be, which can sometimes be nothing at all.

We now turn to the fifth and final component of the soul, the Emotion. It is an amazing gift from God which, when used properly, provides some of the highest levels of humanity we are capable of. But when abused it can be highly destructive to our humanity.

## EMOTION

The Bible never directly uses the word "emotion." That might come as a surprise, but this does not mean we do not have an Emotion in the soul, because we do have one. The Bible does refer to emotional responses, but when discussing the Emotion itself it does so indirectly, sometimes using a word mistranslated "kidneys" or "gut" which should actually be the solar plexus, an area in the middle abdomen where a strong physical reaction can occur when the Emotion is activated in a sudden and dramatic manner. The word for solar plexus is used 13 times in the Bible although it is usually mistranslated as "kidneys" or "stomach." In these instances it refers to the Emotion of the soul. At other times the Bible describes an emotional response, but does not use the word "emotion." (NOTE: When referring to the Emotion as a soul component it will be singular, since it is a single entity.)

Once again we see that the Emotion is a soul component, not a brain response. But we must distinguish the Emotion of the soul and its responses from certain brain or glandular chemical, hormonal and biological responses which have been confused with true emotion. The physical body can elicit certain types of feelings and urges which are not emotional, but might seem related. So to be as accurate as possible, because that is important, we must understand the difference between Emotion from the soul and glandular responses from the body.

Common language often refers to emotional responses and feelings as coming from the "Heart," but that is very misleading. We have already discussed the Heart of the soul, and it is the integrator and decision maker of the soul. But the Heart is not the source of emotional responses, since the Emotion is separated from the Heart by God's design for a very good reason. Also, the Emotion is not a logical or thinking advisor, and does not try to integrate the inputs from the various soul components, as the Heart does. But the Emotion can certainly drive decisions by the Heart, but not based on figuring out issues, since that function occurs in the Mind. The reason emotional responses are attributed to the Heart is that the Heart would normally authorize the Emotion to express its feelings and sentiments as an output of the soul. Therefore the Heart is the final decision maker regarding when the Emotion can send its outputs from the soul, although at times the response is too great to control.

The Emotion is that part of the soul which is generally involved in "feelings," which can be many things. Overall, the Emotion of the soul is designed by God to be the source of



responses and reactions to what is going on both inside and outside the soul. It expresses a range of such "feelings," but we should be more precise than that. The Emotion comes to the forefront of the soul for both positive and negative reasons to respond or react. These include on the positive side love, enjoyment, fun, expectation, admiration, excitement, empathy, aesthetic appreciation, celebration, and many others. On the negative side they include soul crisis, loss, mourning, hardship, sadness, anxiety, nervousness, fear, depression, and many forms of lust. These are not an exhaustive list, but makes the point that emotional responses can be wide ranging and not always positive. And some depend on the circumstances, such as laughter and crying, which can be either positive or negative depending on the reasons for each.

While the Emotion certainly expresses negative feelings, it is not the source of mental sins most often blamed on the Emotion. Anger, hatred, jealousy, revenge, and so on are not emotions, but rather are sins motivated by the Sinful Nature in association with the Emotion. This might seem like a fine point, but remember that we are discussing what the Bible says, and precision is important. So although the Emotion is involved in what most people might call "feeling sins" such as those listed above, it is the Sinful Nature which motivates them, and it is the Heart which actually executes those sins, and so these two are most responsible for such sins even though the Emotion plays a significant part. To be even more precise, the "feeling sins" are not initiated in the Emotion, but rather in the Sinful Nature, therefore they are sins and not emotional responses, although the Emotion is involved. So these types of sins have an emotional component to them, but they are not formed in the Emotion of the soul. The key to the issue is where they originate. Do they originate in the Emotion? No, they originate in the Sinful Nature, and the final decision to sin is made by the Heart, after accepting the inputs of the Sinful Nature which misuses the Emotion. Therefore the Emotion is an intermediary in the process, and is neither the instigator nor the actor. The Emotion is designed to be a responder to other components of the soul, not an originator of thoughts, beliefs, decisions, or actions. But when it aligns with the Sinful Nature, it takes part in a rebellion against the Heart and puts the soul into turmoil.

God created the Emotion to respond to the Heart of the soul when there are noble and beautiful inputs into and out from the Heart. Legitimate emotional response is not connected to the Sinful Nature. But the Sinful Nature misuses the Emotion as its primary entree into soul processes, in order to get its way in the soul. When combined as allies, this duo can be a powerful driver in the soul, but not a positive one. But the Sinful Nature can also go through the Mind, which is the devious route since it results in conniving mischief using actual

thought. Either way the Sinful Nature is trying to get through soul intermediaries to the Heart and influence the decisions made in the soul. It tries to bend the direction the soul is going. It seeks to create havoc, uncertainty, doubt, etc. It wants to exert control over the soul through intermediaries such as the Emotion and Mind. It opposes the human spirit. Philippians 3:19 "Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame." (Remember that the word the Bible uses for the Emotion is stomach or more precisely solar plexus).

Emotion does not think, or remember, or make decisions, or have a Conscience, or care about the downside effects of what it does. The Emotion simply responds with feelings, in one way or another. Often in ways which may appear random, because it cannot think as the Mind does, since the Emotion is not a thinking part of the soul. It is not rational or irrational of itself, it merely responds to information and inputs from other parts of the soul. And when the Sinful Nature is exerting control over the Emotion, the responses are illogical and detrimental to the proper function of the soul. This partnership of the Emotion with the Sinful Nature is the source of much mischief which comes from the soul, and also explains why people who lead with their Emotion instead of their Mind and Heart do not have rational thought processes. It explains why so many people cannot think at all. It explains so many of the dysfunctional things in life, especially why so many people cannot see the plain truth when it is right in front of them and completely obvious. They are not thinking about the issues involved, but rather they are emoting about them, often under the influence of the Sinful Nature.

The Emotion is supposed to be under the control of the Heart, and when functioning normally it will enhance the human experience. But when the Sinful Nature interfaces with the Emotion they jointly block rational thought. This is where so many distortions in thinking and human belief systems occurs. This is how evil enters the human Heart. Rational thought is blocked by the Emotion when it is controlled by the Sinful Nature. An Emotion which is out of control revolts against the Heart and Mind, and puts the soul into a state of dysfunction. It wants to be in charge of the soul but cannot handle authority. It cannot decide what to believe, so it does not believe anything, or flips back and forth. The Emotion mainly just interferes with belief in the soul when the Sinful Nature uses it to block logical thinking. The ability to trust God, or to even believe God exists, can be lost. When the Heart and Mind try to reason with the Emotion which is out of control, the Emotion ignores reason and goes with its "feelings." This is not a recipe for a properly functioning soul. There will be further

discussion of the Emotion related to its alliance with the Sinful Nature in later chapters, since it explains so many soul maladies and dysfunctions.

## **SINFUL NATURE**

The Sinful Nature is the add-on component of the soul which was acquired when the first humans sinned. While unbelievers have only a soul, and believers have both a soul and human spirit, all humans have this additional non-physical part of them which did not come from God. The Sinful Nature is attached to the soul, but not inside it or even an integral part of it. Since the Sinful Nature was not part of God's original design of the soul, we will discuss it separately and in detail in the next chapter.

## **SOUL COMPONENT INTERACTIONS OVERVIEW**

Now that we have discussed the individual soul components, this section will provide an overview of how those soul components interact with each other. It is important to provide an overall understanding of how the soul works, then later chapters can provide more details regarding specifics about how the various components affect thoughts and beliefs.

The Bible distinguishes among the various immaterial components of the soul, and also explains how they generally interact. For instance, the Bible clearly distinguishes between the Heart and the Mind. Psalm 26:2 says "Test me, LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind;" and Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" and Jeremiah 17:10 "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind" and Mark 12:30 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." These show how the Heart and Mind are two separate components of the soul. As previously noted, the Heart of the person is the central processor of the soul and also the decision maker. The Mind is the part of the soul which figures things out. The Mind takes sensory perceptions and information from the outside world brought in through the senses, and combines them with what is already known (memories), and engages in thinking, which results in what the Bible calls knowledge and understanding.

After the Mind produces knowledge and understanding they are given to the Heart to be acted upon. At the same time the Heart receives inputs from the other soul advisors such as the Conscience, Emotion and others, and combines the knowledge and understanding from the Mind with inputs from the other parts of the soul, and also the human spirit in the case of believers. The Sinful Nature also constantly tries to influence this process. It engages while the Mind is working on the issue, and also tries to influence the Emotion to petition the Mind and Heart to use its evil inputs based on an emotional appeal. Then the Heart exercises the free will of the person by making decisions, and forms integrated "thoughts and intentions" based on all the inputs from the component parts of the soul and spirit, and either accepting or rejecting inputs from the attached Sinful Nature. Then the Heart forms the expressions of the soul which will be presented both outward (action) and inward (new beliefs). The Heart, being the center of free will or volition, therefore makes the final decisions about any given issue after being advised by the Mind, Conscience, Emotion, Memory, and all facets of the soul's component "advisors" to the Heart. And the Sinful Nature is another advisor, being a usurper advisor attached to the soul although not inside it, and is often a very powerful and influential advisor to the Heart. And if the person is a believer, the human spirit also advises the Heart of the soul, providing inputs of a spiritual nature based on what it has learned from the Bible, if anything. But if the human spirit is empty, there will be no input from it, leaving the decision in the hands of the lesser capable soul functions often under the influence of the Sinful Nature. But when the human spirit is full of the Word of God, which is called "wisdom," the Heart will value its inputs as the best and most important to consider, even if the Heart does not always make the right decision spiritually. That is because the Sinful Nature is an ever-present force acting on the soul and in opposition to the human spirit, so it must be continually dealt with.

Therefore we see how there is continual internal soul conflict whereby the Heart is pulled in different directions, on one hand by the Sinful Nature and on the other hand by the human spirit. 1 Peter 2:11 says "abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul." Having a cunning and devious Sinful Nature which exerts its influences on the soul means we cannot stop all sinning, although we can control it to some degree when the human spirit is filled with spiritual information. That spiritual information is ammunition for the human spirit in its war against the Sinful Nature, and without spiritual learning the human spirit will be easily defeated and will not be able to exert an effective positive spiritual influence on the soul.

The Emotion is designed to provide inputs to the Heart when the situation evokes a strong response or reaction which results in "feelings" provided from the Emotion. It is not designed to think or provide "understanding" or figure things out, which are functions of the Mind. Therefore the Emotion of the soul should not get involved in most daily interactions inside the soul when decisions are being made. The Emotion is neither a logical nor illogical component, so it can only provide responses and reactions to what it sees from the other soul components, including the Sinful Nature. This is where much mischief inside the soul occurs, when the Sinful Nature enlists the Emotion as its ally to exert influence on the Mind and Heart. Therefore the Emotion is a "wild card" in the soul which can become overactive, and can exert undue influence over soul decisions. Although the Emotion is a non-rational advisor, it is capable of eliciting strong "feelings" in the soul which can be very hard to ignore. The result for a soul where the Emotion exerts too much influence will be illogical thinking, poor decision making, confusion, and eventually mental distortions. These issues will be covered in more detail later.

Before we move on, many of you have heard of something called a "subconscious" or "subconscious mind." It does not exist as a separate soul component, but rather it is an effect caused by the soul components working together while engaging in background processing. This occurs behind the scenes and without being perceived at a conscious level. The person will not know these actions are being worked on until the results are presented by the Mind as an active thought or conclusion. The soul is constantly working on several levels of processing and memory retrieval, since it is capable of doing many things at the same time, and often over a long period of time.

But there is no separate subconscious mind as a component of the soul, since it is all part of the Mind and its ability to function on multiple levels at the same time, including background processing. Additionally, those thoughts which a person is trying to suppress are pushed down into this subconscious level, where thought does not result in immediate conclusions. And on the negative side, humans can suppress the understanding of truth when they wish to avoid confronting it, since it can be pushed down into a subconscious level to avoid direct thinking about the subject. The issue is "I will think about that later." And that can be either legitimate or detrimental.

This summary of how the various soul components work together, both effectively and dysfunctionally, forms the basis for more detailed discussions about how the soul performs

under various conditions, including how distortions occur and affect thoughts, thinking and beliefs.

We will now take a more detailed look at the enemy within.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE SINFUL NATURE -- THE ENEMY WITHIN**

We have discussed how the Sinful Nature was not part of God's original creation, but was acquired as an add-on attachment to the human soul when Adam and Eve sinned. Saying it is "attached" to the soul means the Sinful Nature is much like a barnacle on the hull of a ship, or a leach on a person. It was not meant to be there. God did not create it or design it. It was a human "creation" of the man and woman when they first sinned and revolted against God. Rejecting God had enormous consequences not just for the original man and woman, but for all who would be descended from them. The long term effects of that one act of disobedience has been monumental, and will result in eternal misery for many. God held Adam directly responsible for the original sin, because Eve was deceived into it, but Adam chose deliberately with full knowledge of his actions. Therefore it was Adam who chose sin and gained a Sinful Nature for all humans, and that Sinful Nature was passed down through Adam to his offspring. It is attached to the soul of every human when they are born except for Jesus Christ, who was not conceived from a male descendant of Adam, which avoided Adam's sinful legacy from being handed down to Him since He was not from Adam, but rather was "the seed of the woman." (Genesis 3:15) That is the significance of the virgin birth, that Adam's legacy had no effect on Him.

The Sinful Nature is what tempts humans to disobey God, to revolt, to misbehave, to be arrogant, to disregard the normal functions of the soul and instead act irresponsibly. It is more instinctive and animalistic than the soul was intended to be as designed by God. And it is also the legacy of the revolt of Satan against God. When Satan sinned against God, and also the angels who joined him, each of them acquired a similar Sinful Nature at that point. So the Sinful Nature actually pre-dates humans, since it is an ancient legacy of the revolt of Satan. And Satan tempted the first humans into sin in order to pull them toward himself and away from God, therefore humans were lured through arrogance into accepting the Sinful Nature just as Satan had. The Sinful Nature is what makes all who have it sin and disobey God in all the many ways creatures do so. It is indeed the enemy within each of us.

The fact that the soul is the source of so many negatives also proves that the Sinful Nature is attached to the soul, even though not inside the soul. The Sinful Nature is that part of the soul which Satan "owns" since he was the source of its creation at the fall of man. So the Sinful Nature is how Satan's Cosmic System influences people, and this is true whether it is a believer or unbeliever. Genesis 8:21 says "every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood." This is because every person is born under the control and influence of the Sinful Nature. And as the person grows up mentally as a human being, the Sinful Nature develops faster than the soul's logical advisors, and this is especially evident during the teen years. Therefore human "mental growth" is less about brain development than soul development, since soul development is the only way to develop the logical advisors of the soul in a way which opposes the Sinful Nature's influences on the Heart of the soul. This is the battle as a person grows up to human maturity, for unbelievers as well as believers, as the human soul fights to gain logical advantages primarily in the Conscience over the Sinful Nature in order to keep the Sinful Nature under control to some degree. And illogical thinking and actions come from the soul, not from the human brain.

The Bible refers to the Sinful Nature in several ways. Although the phrase "sin nature" is sometimes found, the primary word used is "flesh," as something which was not originally part of the soul, and this is also where the phrase "fleshly desires" originated. The word "sin" in the singular and "sinful" are also used for the Sinful Nature, as well as several other terms. The following Bible verses refer to the Sinful Nature, and they are provided so the Reader can understand more about the Sinful Nature by reading through them without additional commentary. There are quite a few of them, but this is an important issue to understand since it is about the enemy of the soul. (Note: the bolded items are references to the Sinful Nature):

Romans 7:22-25

"For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but **sin** that dwells within me."

1 Cor. 3:11-15

"Whatever is done in the power of the **sin nature**, is "wood, hay, and straw" and has no lasting value."

1 Pet. 2:11



“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from **fleshly** lusts which war against the soul.”

Galatians 5:17

"For the desires of the **flesh** are against the spirit, and the desires of the spirit are against the **flesh**, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do."

Ephesians 2:3

"Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our **flesh**, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

Galatians 5:16

"But I say, walk by the spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the **flesh**."

Ephesians 4:22

"To put off your **old self**, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires"

Galatians 5:19-23

"Now the works of the **flesh** are evident..."

Romans 8:3

"For God has done what the law, weakened by the **flesh**, could not do."

John 3:6

"That which is born of the **flesh** is **flesh**, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Romans 13:14

"...make no provision for the **flesh**, to gratify its desires."

Romans 8:3

"For those who live according to the **flesh** set their minds on the things of the **flesh**, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit."

Romans 8:7-8

"For the mind that is set on the **flesh** is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the **flesh** cannot please God."

Colossians 3:9

"Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the **old self** with its practices"

2 Peter 2:18

"For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the **flesh** those who are barely escaping from those who live in error."

We can see from the above verses that the Sinful Nature is discussed often in the Bible. With the Sinful Nature attached to the soul, it influences the person in multiple ways, all negative. The term "base instincts" applies to the low level conniving, arrogant, and immoral influences which are promoted from the Sinful Nature. Its primary path is to use the Emotion of the soul to influence the Mind and Heart, since the Emotion is a non-thinking responder to the Mind and Heart. The Emotion of the soul is used because what the Sinful Nature proposes is not truth or moral or even logical. Instead, the Sinful Nature peddles instinctive gratification of lust, arrogance, and other base desires, which entices the Emotion into a relationship with it, if the Heart is not diligent in preventing such an alliance.

Therefore the Sinful Nature works primarily through a system of arrogance and lusts. The arrogance part lures the person into thinking of themselves in vastly superior terms, far above reality. Arrogance therefore becomes a primary means of rejecting that which does not come from self, since only self matters, and only self is all-knowing. The second part, the lusts, take many forms, and are not always the carnal or lascivious type as most think of them. Lusts can be carnal, but more likely, and more destructive, are the lusts for power, wealth, status, superiority over others, and even self-righteousness regarding types of sins. It may seem odd, but the Sinful Nature of each person has unique preferred sins and also non-preferred sins. Each Sinful Nature is different. This is because certain types of sins do not line up with the particular lusts the individual prefers, which the Sinful Nature has acquired along the way. It may also come as a surprise that people who look down on others for the sins they commit, because they are "less refined" than their own sins, are fulfilling a lust for superiority from the Sinful Nature. Whenever another person is regarded as a lesser human than self, the Sinful Nature is exercising its lust to be superior in its own view. This often leads to sins of the tongue against another person. James 3:6 says "The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell." The reference to "hell" refers to the Sinful Nature as being a part of Satan's domain, since he is its originator.

The various lusts motivate behaviors which are counter to the plan of God, and interfere with the normal function of the soul as God designed it. And most people have conflicting lusts since the Sinful Nature is not logical, but rather is instinctive. Recall that God did not give humans instincts to live by, but when humans sinned against God they chose instincts, which were introduced into the soul through the Sinful Nature. These lusts are what makes humans instinctive and even animalistic although God did not design humans to function that way. God designed us to think in the soul, not to live by instincts.

The Sinful Nature cannot act on its own and requires that the Heart validate its desires. At first this is not an easy task for the Sinful Nature, and treachery is required. If the Sinful Nature makes progress in getting its way, the process becomes much easier. If this continues, the Sinful Nature can even stage a successful coup against the Heart, whereby the Heart essentially becomes the hostage of the Sinful Nature. The Heart cannot shift the blame to the other parts of the soul and say "it wasn't me who did that" when it gives in to the desires of the Sinful Nature. Usually the Emotion is involved with the Sinful Nature, and the Heart finds it difficult to refuse the Emotion, because the Emotion provides the Heart with feelings such as joy and elation, which the Heart enjoys. The Sinful Nature abuses this relationship between Heart and Emotion to its advantage, and presents its lusts first to the Emotion, and in turn the Emotion presents them to the Heart in the form of enticing emotional fulfillment. These base instincts are from the Sinful Nature, but it is the Heart which must approve them to be released from the soul, therefore the Heart must first validate the inputs from the Sinful Nature/Emotion and make the final decision before any desires from the Sinful Nature are executed as a decision. But the more the Heart gives in to the desires of the Sinful Nature, the easier it is for that Sinful Nature to have its desires approved by the Heart. Over time the base desires essentially become instinctive. When this happens, the Heart becomes hardened into a position of evil as it becomes instinctively predisposed to accept the desires of the Sinful Nature as the policy of the soul. Of course, it does not need to be that way. The Heart can heed the advice of the Mind and its Conscience and reject the overtures of the Sinful Nature. And we will see that when the human spirit is filled with the Word of God, the human spirit can be the most powerful opponent of the Sinful Nature.

Therefore the Sinful Nature is the enemy within, attached to our soul, working constantly to distract, derail, pull us in the wrong directions, cause emotional reactions against right actions, and lure us into revolting against the plan God has for our life. These mental sins become both inwardly destructive and also harmful toward others, including outward expressions as sins of the tongue. For believers the relationship with the Sinful Nature ends at the point of

physical death when it is removed from us like a barnacle from the ship hull, or a leach on the skin, and it is gone from us forever. But for unbelievers it will remain part of them eternally, and will increase their torment.

Proverbs 4:22 says "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." The "guarding" refers to the attacks from the Sinful Nature, which is an illegitimate advisor to the Heart, and is the source of temptations which attempt to get the Heart to decide in favor of things the Heart knows to be wrong, or should know to be wrong. When the Heart is primarily listening to and heeding the advice of the Sinful Nature the soul is working contrary to the design of God. The Sinful Nature is the ally of Satan, and allowing it to control the soul is a particularly disastrous state for believers. It keeps the believer out of the will of God unless it is reversed.

As believers there is a constant war in our soul. It is the battle of good versus evil. Our spiritual side, the human spirit, wars against the Sinful Nature, and vice versa. In most believers, unfortunately the Sinful Nature wins on a more regular basis. It is a sad fact. But for those who seek to please God during their time on earth, they will study the Word of God and fill their human spirit with spiritual learning, and will grow in the knowledge of God. As this growth continues, the believer has greater ability to resist the Sinful Nature and to fulfill the plan of God. They will not be perfect while alive on earth, and the Sinful Nature often gains certain advantages from time to time, but the key is to keep moving forward and continue growing in the Word in order to fill the human spirit with as much knowledge of truth as possible. This provides power from the human spirit to influence the soul's Mind and Heart to follow the will of God and resist the Sinful Nature. That is the primary purpose of the life of the believer after salvation. We believers remain on earth to grow spiritually, to live out of our human spirit which influences the soul to make the right choices, and to defeat the Sinful Nature in our daily walk through life. This is what allows us to love God, appreciate our Savior Jesus Christ, and generally to live as He wants us to live. Then eternity is full of rewards for such a believer.

For unbelievers, if they are controlled by the Sinful Nature they are in a state of revolt against the natural laws which God set in place for all humans to live by and under. The unbeliever can live with their soul working rather normally, the Mind figuring things out rationally, the Heart listening to the advice of the Mind and its Conscience, the Emotion appreciating the experiences the soul enjoys, and that unbeliever can generally live a moral life, being a good

citizen, helping their fellow humans in time of need, and being an overall decent person. They are still unsaved, but their life is generally "normal" and stable to a certain degree, even though apart from God. That is the gift God has given them while they are alive, respecting their choice to refuse salvation. But after their short life is over their eternity is a very different matter, since unbelievers will retain their Sinful Nature and all its negative motivations for all eternity, as the Bible says, they will have anguish, regrets, anger, remorse, fears, weeping and all manner of negative thoughts which will make them even more miserable. The believer will have none of these. But for the unbeliever the Sinful Nature will be a secondary source of soul pain during eternity, along with the intense physical pain. Unbelievers will live eternally with the same soul they had while alive, including their Sinful Nature, but they will never have a human spirit.

And speaking of the human spirit, it is finally time to take a more detailed look at this component of the inner human which is only found in believers. It is what makes humans a spiritual being capable of interfacing with God.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **THE HUMAN SPIRIT**

The human spirit is probably the least understood component of the inner human, even though the Bible reveals many fascinating things about it. We will now discuss what it is, what it does, and why we need one. The short version is that humans cannot interact with God without it, since it makes us spiritually alive. And without it humans are spiritually dead.

The previous chapters have mostly discussed the soul, but believers have two parts to their immaterial being, both a soul and human spirit, which are separate but connected. The human spirit and soul are differentiated as two separate parts of the inner human in both the Old Testament and New Testament since there are different words for each in both original languages of the Bible (Old Testament Hebrew: *nephesh* and *ruach*, New Testament Greek: *psuche* and *pneuma*, for soul and spirit respectively). As a result of the original sin of Adam his descendants are born without a human spirit, however Jesus Christ was the exception.

A human spirit is gained at salvation, so unbelievers have only a soul without a human spirit, since the human spirit is the product of spiritual regeneration at the point of salvation. That is what regeneration means, because the human spirit was lost through the original sin by Adam and Eve, and is only regenerated or restored at salvation in their descendants. John 3:3 says: "Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." Being "born again" is the rebirth or regeneration of the human spirit at the moment of salvation. This is why salvation must be a gift from God, not something to be earned over time, since no unbeliever can please God in any way or earn anything because they lack a human spirit and therefore are not spiritual beings. And the human spirit is given all at once, not gradually over time. Only God can make humans into spiritual beings at the point of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, not as a result of anything the person does to try to earn it, since salvation cannot be earned or deserved. At the moment of belief in Christ the human spirit becomes regenerated, and that is the event which makes us a spiritual being and

locks in our eternal salvation. Forever. Once it is regenerated, the human spirit can never again be lost by sin.

The Bible makes it clear there is a difference between the soul and human spirit. Hebrews 4:12 says: "For the word of God is alive 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." 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says: "May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 8:16 says: "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." 1 Corinthians 2:14 says: "The person without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God." And Isaiah 26:9 tells us "My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you." The soul and spirit are therefore separate and distinct immaterial entities with different functions and purposes. The human spirit is not the same as the Holy Spirit indwelling and mentoring the believer, but rather it is a second portion of the immaterial life of the believer, and although it is interconnected with the soul it is entirely separate.

Therefore we understand that the soul is primarily the humanity part of the believer which enables interaction with God's creation while the human spirit is the spiritual part of the believer which enables interaction with God. "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) Spiritual truth from the Word of God is stored in the human spirit, not in the soul, and it is the Holy Spirit working within the human spirit which turns that information into a spiritual format. Growing in God's Word is not like other types of learning which results in knowledge of the universe. The truth from the Bible is actually and literally "alive and powerful" as Hebrews 4:12 says. Unlike learning math or physics or a hobby, the Word has spiritual power in and of itself, which can only be harnessed if it resides in the human spirit where the Holy Spirit indwells. 1 Corinthians 8:1 says "We know that we all possess knowledge. But knowledge puffs up while love builds up." Therefore it is learning the Word and growing by it which gives us power from God to live a life focused on God's plan for us. Growing spiritually allows us to have greater and greater fellowship with God. Only spirit can interact with Spirit, so it is our human spirit which interacts with God. However, the human spirit must use the soul to reach God, so these two parts of the inner human are required to act in unison. We must pray and worship and apply spiritual truths out from our human spirit, which in turn uses the Heart of the soul to reach God. And the Holy Spirit indwells our human spirit, not our soul, so when a believer is living the spiritual life that person is living out of their human spirit, the location of both the Holy Spirit and spiritual

truth from the Word. The human spirit filled with truth must therefore direct the soul, so that we do not live from the soul alone.

The human spirit is therefore necessary to understand spiritual information and to have interaction with God. The focal point for interaction between God and humans is the human spirit, since only spirit can interact with Spirit. God cannot interact with humans who lack a human spirit, including prayer, worship, thanksgiving, good works or any other spiritual matter since they have no spirit interface. So the most an unbeliever can have are soul thoughts about God in a general sense, but they are not spiritual thoughts, since that requires a human spirit. And they cannot understand God in any meaningful way or understand His spiritual truth, because as 1 Corinthians 2:14 says "The person without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the spirit." Unbelievers have no human spirit, and are not spiritual beings, only soulish ones. As such they can have no interaction with God. If unbelievers never believe in Christ as their Savior, they never gain a human spirit (except for those who die as children and those with very low mental function, who are given a human spirit at the point of death due to lack of opportunity for salvation -- God is fair). That is why unbelievers cannot ever have interaction with God, either while alive on earth or during eternity. They can only interact with what God has created in the Universe by using their soul. If they want to become a spiritual being, they must first accept the salvation offered by God through belief in Jesus Christ, at which point God gives that person a human spirit. Note that it is a belief which saves us, which is the subject of this book. Beliefs are powerful things.

So how do the soul and human spirit interact? How and where do they connect? Once again the Bible provides the answers. We have seen that Hebrews 4:12 says: "For the word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to *dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow.*" The "joints and marrow" reference is instructive regarding how the two are separate but work together, and also how they are designed. I have not seen anyone adequately explain what this means, so we must proceed as the verse says, to look at the joints and marrow, and how they are designed and interact.

It is quite fascinating to look at this analogy and how it relates to the inner human design of the soul and human spirit. Note the word order in the verse above is "soul and spirit, joints and marrow" setting up the analogy with the soul analogous to the joints, and the human



spirit analogous to the marrow. The specific sections of the body in view are the hip and shoulder joints, which are the major joints of the body which affect mobility. The structure of both the shoulder and hip joints show that the bones involved, which are the femur (upper leg) and humerus (upper arm) bones, have marrow housed inside them near the joint. Therefore the structure of the shoulder and hip joints and associated bones provide a picture of the human spirit inside the soul, but not part of it, since they are distinct and can be divided. Joint is not marrow, and marrow is not joint. One is bone and the other is a spongy blood-making tissue.

While children have active "red" bone marrow throughout the long bones of their legs and arms, adult humans have much less active red marrow inside those particular bones, concentrated at the hip and shoulder joints near the ends of the upper leg and upper arm bones. While there is also marrow inside the pelvis, sternum, and a few other locations, these are not "joints" as in this analogy. And it is the red marrow which makes the blood cells which flow throughout our bodies, giving it sustenance, delivering oxygen, and providing immune protection. The long bones such as the upper leg (femur) and upper arm (humerus) have ball-and-socket joint connections, with marrow inside the bone near the ball joint, so these are the ones in view in this Bible verse. The "dividing joints and marrow" is an analogy to how the soul and human spirit are related by design, since the verse discusses how they are separate and distinct, yet closely related.

This would indicate that the human spirit is fully contained inside the soul just like the marrow is located fully inside the joint bones. Recall that humans are born with only a soul, but not a human spirit, so there is an "empty space" where the human spirit is later inserted if the person becomes a believer and is regenerated, meaning the human spirit is put in place into a specific space designed for it inside the soul. Believers have that "empty space" filled by a regenerated human spirit which is provided at the point of salvation, which is the "new birth" or being "born again" relating to the rebirth of the human spirit, which makes the person spiritually alive and therefore capable of interacting with God. Without this analogy from the Bible we would have assumed the soul and human spirit were completely separated, and only connected at a single interface, somewhat like a dumbbell connected by a bar or two balloons tied together. Instead, the Bible shows the human spirit fully inside the soul, but still separate and distinct in a separate chamber designed to hold it.

Adam and Eve were created with both a soul and human spirit. And their souls were created as male and female as well as their bodies. Genesis 1:27 says: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." And this was before the woman Eve had been formed out from the DNA of Adam, so it is discussing the creation of the soul and human spirit. This passage in Genesis therefore refers to the inner human as the image of God, not the body, when male and female are mentioned as being created. When these two eventually sinned by eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the one forbidden tree, their human spirits are what died, but not their souls or bodies. At that point they had a soul but no human spirit, so they were "spiritually dead." As God had warned them if they ate from it "you will surely die" (Genesis 2:17), and God meant their human spirit would die, causing spiritual death, resulting in no ability to interact spiritually with God. This is what defines spiritual death, that the human spirit is dead and the person only has a soul. They remained physically alive after sinning, so it did not mean physical death. Both eventually regained their human spirits when they accepted the salvation offered to them by God through the "seed of the woman" which was the original reference to the Messiah in the Bible, who would eventually be Jesus Christ. (Genesis 3:15) Old Testament salvation was by believing the promise from God that a Messiah would be sent in the future, and after the cross salvation is by believing the Messiah Jesus Christ has been sent. Again, this shows the importance God places on beliefs.

As the first humans showed, a person can live without a human spirit since they did not immediately die physically after sinning, but a person cannot have a relationship with God without a human spirit. After they sinned the two spiritually dead humans hid from God because they had lost the ability to interact spiritually with Him. Then God offered salvation which they both accepted, and at that point their human spirits were revived. But as a result of their original sin, the descendants of Adam and Eve are born without a human spirit, and salvation is required to obtain one by regeneration. Therefore all people are born with a soul but no human spirit. The only exception was Jesus Christ who was born perfect with both a soul and a human spirit (spiritually alive) therefore He did not need salvation, which made Him qualified to be the Savior. At the moment of faith in Jesus Christ (and during the Old Testament by faith in the promised Messiah) the human spirit is revived, and from that time on the person is spiritually alive with both a soul and a human spirit forever.

Angels also have soul and spirit components. This does not refer to the bodies of angels, who are often called "spirits," which is a physical issue. Elect angels have both soul and spirit, while Satan and fallen angels have only a soul without a spirit since they lost it when they

sinned and revolted against God. The story of fallen angels and fallen humans is the same -- loss of the spiritual part of the being leading to spiritual death. This separates God's elect angels from Satan and his fallen angels, just as humans are separated by the same issue. Therefore fallen angels have no ability to have a spiritual relationship with God. Angels have the exact same soul (and spirit for elect angels) as humans, just in a different type of body. That is because mankind was created to resolve the conflict between God and Satan, and the only fair way to do it was by having the exact same immaterial components in both humans and angels, although in very different bodies.

Therefore a spiritual life is only possible through use of the human spirit, which has four main purposes:

- 1) First, it makes the person spiritually alive and therefore enables interaction with God, since only spirit can interact with Spirit. The soul cannot express spiritual thoughts apart from the human spirit. And the human spirit relies on the soul to deliver its outputs toward God.
- 2) Secondly, the human spirit enables the indwelling and mentoring of the Holy Spirit, so that He can help us understand, store, and utilize spiritual truth from the Word of God. As Romans 8:16 says: "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" which shows how the Holy Spirit interacts with our human spirit, first to mentor believers who want to learn the Word of God, and then to help that person apply the spiritual information contained in their human spirit. This builds up our faith through an understanding of God, which builds trust and love.
- 3) Thirdly, the human spirit makes spiritual information from the Word of God understandable. No person can truly and deeply understand spiritual information apart from the human spirit but "considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them." For this purpose the human spirit has its own memory designed for spiritual information only. The human soul cannot store spiritual information since it is not designed to do so. Therefore spiritual information must be stored in the human spirit (where the Holy Spirit also resides in us, or indwells) whereby spiritual information becomes usable in the life of the believer.
- 4) Finally, the human spirit is the source of spiritual direction to the Heart and Mind of the soul. When the human spirit is filled with spiritual information from the Word of God, it can provide direction to the soul which causes the person to live the spiritual life God wants us to live. Not perfectly, just greatly enhanced because the human spirit gets its power from the Word and from the Holy Spirit.

As mentioned, the human spirit cannot directly interface with God or the outside world, but must go through the Heart and Mind of the soul. The spiritual information in the human spirit can be accessed by the Mind and used by the Heart, and that is the interface between soul and spirit, namely that the Heart and Mind of the soul access the spiritual information which resides in the human spirit and apply it to provide a life of spiritual impact. Which brings up the point that the human spirit has sub-components just as the soul does. The human spirit has a Mind as well, which processes the spiritual information received into the human spirit and stores it in the Memory of the human spirit. So the human spirit's Mind and Memory are necessary to process and store spiritual information inside the human spirit, which is aided by the Holy Spirit who indwells the human spirit. While the human spirit is focused on the spiritual, the human soul is the center of human life and interfaces with the material world. Therefore the believer can interface with God because the soul is supported by the human spirit. This is important to understand, that the human spirit must be present in order for God to recognize the right of a soul to interact spiritually with Him.

We have discussed how the soul is the location of the central processor for the person, called the "Heart" in the Bible, which pulls together inputs from the entire soul and then interfaces with the outside material world, and with God when backed by the human spirit. The soul of the believer is also the instrument of applying spiritual information contained in the human spirit toward both God and the material world, therefore spiritual information flows out from the human spirit through the soul's Heart. When the human spirit controls the outputs from the Heart to a maximum degree it is called "living out from the human spirit" which is the highest level of spirituality. At that point the believer's soul and spirit work in unison, and this working relationship becomes more powerful and effective as the believer grows spiritually, building up the storage of spiritual truths inside the spirit which then flows out through the soul. And that storage of spiritual information in the human spirit is not in a simple form, but rather the human spirit guided by the Holy Spirit manufactures a complex interconnected web out of the spiritual information it receives, combining simple concepts with more advanced principles, which builds up faith as a person matures spiritually. This is what the Bible means when it says the Word of God is "alive and powerful."

This further shows how spiritual thoughts originate in the human spirit and flow out of the soul through the Heart toward God and people, and spiritual learning flows back into the human spirit through the Heart and Mind. The Heart decides whether to allow information to enter the soul and human spirit, and can either accept or reject it, so the Heart acts as the gatekeeper of information for both the soul and human spirit. In all of this the Heart is not

just passing everything through, but rather the Heart decides what gets through. If the Heart is distorted by accepting advice from the other soul components when they are in revolt against spiritual truth, the human spirit will not receive inputs of spiritual information and will become malnourished and will not function properly. It will also be prevented from getting spiritual information out through the Heart. The result is a dysfunctional spiritual life because the human spirit is shut down by the Heart. This is called "hardness of heart" in the Bible.

The human spirit of the believer is empty at salvation when it is regenerated, and also in the believer who has never grown spiritually. If the soul goes to the human spirit for spiritual information but finds little or nothing there since it is empty or nearly so, there can be little or no spiritual expression by the Heart. This is why studying the Word of God is so crucial, because it is the basis of spiritual growth and puts information into the human spirit which can be accessed and used by the soul, and also by the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 2:2 says "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." Salvation gives us eternal life, but then filling up the human spirit with Bible truth is required to give us spiritual power with which to think and form beliefs consistent with the Word of God. Only then can our spirit-soul processes function in alignment with God's plan for our lives. But if the believer is focused on living under the power of their soul, and is not using their human spirit, the spiritual processes inside the believer are severely restricted, and both the human spirit and Holy Spirit are effectively ignored by the soul.

Spiritual information must be stored and structurally assembled inside the human spirit with the mentoring of the Holy Spirit in order to have the power God designed His Word to have in us. The Holy Spirit turns information learned from studying the Bible into a spiritually powerful form which is then usable to empower the spiritual life. But this does not occur all at once, and requires a long term commitment to the study of the Word of God. For new believers who know very little spiritual information at first, there is not much that can be applied to the life. But as the believer grows spiritually -- assuming the believer actually wants to grow -- the human spirit becomes filled up with the knowledge of the Word of God, which itself is called "alive and powerful" in Hebrews 4:12. Initial spiritual growth results in a basic level of spirituality for that believer, beginning to fulfill God's plan, and a basic level of glorification of God through Jesus Christ. Feeding more and more spiritual information into the human spirit is the only means of increasing this faith to advanced levels, providing for a spiritual impact which works under testing and pressure. Not perfectly, and not all at once. It takes time and persistence in learning the Word, which is our spiritual food for spiritual

energy. Therefore believers must grow up spiritually by building up spiritual information inside the human spirit. The process is slow and requires continual learning and applying of God's Word to the life, first small issues and tests, then becoming real faith as the believer reaches higher and higher levels of spiritual maturity. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians who had not grown spiritually after he had started them on the right course "I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready." (1 Corinthians 3:2) Spiritual information must be built up like a wall -- brick upon brick.

The mentoring ministry of the Holy Spirit, who resides in the human spirit of the believer, enables the learning, storage, and use of that spiritual information inside the human spirit, providing spiritual power in the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit helps us by ensuring we can understand the spiritual information we learn by putting it into a usable form inside the human spirit where it is stored, categorized, and turned into an interlocking web of spiritual truth which becomes increasingly usable in our lives. But if the believer ignores spiritual growth, the Holy Spirit is said to be "grieved," as the Bible says "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." (Ephesians 4:30) The Holy Spirit does not impart power directly to the believer, but rather helps the believer learn spiritual truth and grow in grace and knowledge, which then provides power from the human spirit. This enables the believer to put to use the power of the Word from the human spirit through the soul, all with the help of the Holy Spirit. As the believer matures spiritually, the human spirit becomes the dominant influencer of the inner human, and that believer starts living life out from the human spirit rather than merely out of the soul as unbelievers live. It is therefore the spiritual information stored in the human spirit which enables the believer to live the spiritual life which pleases God and allows us to live according to God's Word, resulting in eternal rewards as well. Without maximum spiritual information in the human spirit the believer attempts to live the spiritual life out of the soul rather than the human spirit, which fails to please God. The soul is not spiritual without the backing of a human spirit, and the human spirit cannot function without the Word of God inside it.

Soul Memory can store facts about God and His plan, but that is not spiritual information since it is only in the soul, therefore it is purely informational. Only the human spirit stores spiritual information which is usable in a spiritual form. That is because the Holy Spirit works within the human spirit, where He indwells, to make the Word of God into spiritual understanding and wisdom. The more advanced the understanding of spiritual information, the greater the spiritual power. There is a difference between simply knowing something from the Bible in the soul and truly understanding and believing it in the human spirit, where it has

spiritual power with the help of the Holy Spirit. A believer can recite a Bible verse such as 1 Peter 3:9 " Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing" but then not be able to truly apply that verse to their life because it only resides in the soul, and is not embedded as spiritual information inside the human spirit. But when Bible information is stored in the human spirit by continual learning from the Word of God and built into a matrix of advanced spiritual understanding, then slowly over time the believer will gain spiritual maturity and spiritual strength as the human spirit becomes filled up with wisdom. This is spiritual growth, the build-up of spiritual information into a spiritual form and format which becomes more and more an integral part of the life of that believer. Hebrews 6:19 says about the human spirit filled with the Word of God: "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain." The human spirit is the "inner sanctuary" comparing the layout of the Temple of Israel, whereby the human spirit is analogous to the Holy of Holies which housed the presence of God. So the soul of the believer is like the outer areas of the Temple where interaction with the outside world occurred, and the human spirit is like the Holy of Holies where personal interaction and communion with God occurred.

The unbeliever seeks to understand the world from a soulish viewpoint but comes up empty in many ways since the unbeliever is totally incapable of understanding God or spiritual truths from the Bible, which is where real truth is obtained. Life has no meaning since the true meaning of life is based on spiritual principles and having a relationship with God.

Unbelievers generally live on worldly Cosmic System thinking under the influence of the Sinful Nature since they cannot understand or use spiritual information. The exception is that God has set up a system of divine laws for all mankind to live under, which includes family, marriage, work, law and order, and general freedom to live life, and the unbeliever can enjoy these gifts from God to all mankind if they accept what God has established, even though it is not spiritual truth to them. But many nations which are primarily filled with unbelievers reject God's system in favor of Satan's Cosmic System, overthrowing God's divine laws in favor of Satan's chaos. It is no coincidence that in such places people live hard lives at a basic level of subsistence.

Having no human spirit makes unbelievers especially vulnerable to the influences of the Sinful Nature. Unbelievers can often be moral and humble and have loving relationships and accomplish great things in their lives, and give lots of money to charity, but none of it impresses God in any way. They cannot interface with God -- who is Spirit -- since the component God originally gave humans to interface with Him is missing in them. They are

spiritually dead to God. They require salvation and activation of a human spirit before God will have anything to do with them, or take notice of anything they do which is moral, nice, useful, helpful, and on and on. God has provided a way for them to escape from their spiritual death, but they have refused it. Therefore God cannot help them if they will not simply believe and accept the only Savior. Anyone who rejects God's free gift of salvation has by default accepted the alternative, and they never gain the human spirit, which is required to have an interface with God, during life or eternity, in any way, shape or form.

We will next discuss beliefs. Beliefs are developed from our thoughts, and set the policies for the soul. Our beliefs drive the interpretation of what our senses feed into our soul, and also what we will think in response to those inputs from the outside world. Thoughts and beliefs. They define the real human.



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **THOUGHTS, THINKING & BELIEFS**

This book is about thoughts, thinking, and beliefs, and we started by discussing the inner human and how it is designed and functions in order to form the basis for a deeper understanding of the subject. Now we are at the point where we can discuss what thoughts and thinking are, and how thoughts and thinking become beliefs. Thinking does not necessarily result in beliefs. And thoughts are not always thinking, and thinking does not necessarily result in cogent thoughts. But what does all this mean, and why do we care so much about beliefs?

Beliefs are acceptance of the validity of someone, something, or some concept. When a person forms a belief, it sets a policy which guides the soul's future thinking. Therefore beliefs set boundaries for future decisions about the world around us, spiritual issues, and anything which becomes important to us. Beliefs drive and motivate people to action. And belief is what God requires of humans if they are to have eternal salvation. That issue alone makes beliefs the most important issue in life, because it determines our eternal status. By comparison nothing else comes close.

We need to first examine how beliefs are formed. Then we will see how most lower level beliefs are driven by the higher level beliefs, called core beliefs. After that is understood, we will look at the issue of internal soul distortions as related to beliefs. We are getting into some very weighty territory, so let us start by examining how humans know anything at all, how they learn, and therefore how core beliefs are developed. That could require a separate book, so we will only summarize the issues here.

People generally learn information in one of four basic ways: 1) by empirical sensory information (sight, smell, taste, sound, feel, etc.), 2) by memorizing and mimicking, 3) by accepting information as it is provided by others (called "faith"), and 4) by concluding

something on one's own based on comparison, research, experimentation or rational reasoning (developing new information). There are variations of each, and we are not trying to be all inclusive. We will look at each of these basic methods of learning, and how they affect beliefs.

Most human learning comes through empirical data, and the senses provide that empirical data regarding the things seen, heard, felt, tasted, and smelled. Therefore most of the data and information which enters the soul comes in empirically through the senses and the brain. But the senses teach very little about what is behind the things sensed. For instance, were the things around us created by God or was it all just an accident of nature? The senses cannot provide an answer. They just show us what is around us. Although the senses provide most of the brain-to-soul inputs, and set expectations about what will be encountered, they generally do not form core beliefs, they simply provide sensory data which allows us to interact physically with the universe. Knowing not to put one's hand into a fire is important information, but not a core belief, just pain avoidance and self-preservation.

When it comes to the type of learning which has the most impact on core beliefs, the majority comes from accepting information presented by others, namely by faith. Faith is not limited to religion, not even close to it. Schools are a faith-based method of learning, with an occasional lab for demonstrations to the senses. Faith is accepting the authority of another to convey information as related to learning. The ultimate authority is the Bible, but also schools, books, friends, internet sites, media, and other sources of information are also faith-based learning when the information is accepted. Even random conversations with strangers who have no facts can be faith-based learning if the information is accepted as true, and this happens regularly. When it comes to believing information by faith, the hazard is in the accuracy, or lack thereof, of the messenger. Often faith-based learning is contradictory, with one person saying one thing and another saying the opposite, so choices must be made. Whether true or false, or a mixture of the two, humans accept most of what leads to their core beliefs during their lifetime by faith, however most do not realize the degree to which they relied on faith to come to their present state of core beliefs.

Developing new information on one's own is the rarest type of learning. It is determining "truth" by using rational thinking or inductive reasoning. Of course, the results are not always actually "true," which is the hazard of this type of learning process. This type of thinking is only possible after the soul has learned many things through empirical data and has accepted

by faith many things which were taught. It is what Albert Einstein and other great thinkers were famous for doing. Then one must ask why that information is accurate, and Einstein was often inaccurate as was later learned. Humans learn very little by rationalism, which requires deep thought about a subject and drawing new conclusions which have not been previously learned. Regarding proof of one's own rational thought conclusions, that can be difficult. Although rational and inductive thought sounds very scientific, it is also how people come to irrational conclusions which are actually mysticism or other types of false opinions.

Therefore humans develop core beliefs in different ways, but mainly through faith. Those core beliefs may be true, partially true, or false, usually based on the source of the information, and whether it was accurate or not. For those who form a core belief based on the Bible and being a believer, they may use the Bible as their ultimate source of truth when it comes to core beliefs. So also people who believe in other religions rely on whatever their source documents contain. Those who reject religion tend to gravitate toward an eclectic belief system which has some other source of meaning other than God or a god. For some it is family, work, making money, friendships, helping others, hobbies and interests, pleasure seeking, or a mix of some or all of these. Most people try to find some meaning in life, some reason for their existence. But some think only about self, which leads to distorted beliefs about one's own importance relative to others. Because the Bible is the ultimate source of truth, if it is rejected everything else becomes an attempt to find some level of "what works" as their truth and meaning in life apart from God. Although it is an inaccurate approach, it is the one used most often by humans.

We have seen how core beliefs are firmly held views about important things which in turn drive how we think about the world, God, the divine order on earth, and anything important to us. This is where the human soul and spirit come into play. As noted previously, the human soul is imparted at birth, but is empty of information. If the person eventually becomes a believer, the human spirit is regenerated at that point, and it is also empty and requires filling. Information taken into the soul is processed and stored, then the person uses it to form core beliefs over time based on what they have learned mixed with individual biases and preferences. This in turn drives how a person perceives the world and all subsequent information they receive, and also what they care about. These core beliefs are usually in categories, with each person having a set of beliefs about values, God, relationships, politics, society, and practically everything of interest in life. These build up norms and standards in the Conscience of the soul, which are then used to evaluate and judge things to be good or bad, moral or immoral. And a Conscience can be either correct or incorrect depending on what is

put into it, and can allow a person to disregard the truth if not properly developed with accurate information.

Beliefs related to most issues are centered in the Heart of the soul, except that the human spirit contains Biblical spiritual beliefs. For non-spiritual beliefs the entire soul is involved in developing them, especially core beliefs, then they ultimately reside in the Heart. And the human spirit develops spiritual beliefs with assistance from the soul. The Mind figures things out within certain parameters using those underlying beliefs and assumptions built up in the soul to that point. The outputs (conclusions, knowledge and understandings) of the Mind are not always correct, logical, or make sense in view of the facts of the universe, they just make sense in view of the filters, biases, etc. which have been established inside the individual soul. Therefore this "logical" component of the soul can be entirely illogical, and the beliefs which come from the Mind and its thinking process can also be illogical and wrong. And incorrect beliefs can be more easily "hardened" into the soul, creating inflexibility since they do not align with truth or reality, which creates internal conflict.

Consider teenagers for a moment. They learn and accept many things prior to their teen years, but when they reach their teens they start to question many issues, and also to question the sources of information, especially from their parents. They seek to find a belief system which will establish them as adults, sometimes when they are not prepared to do so. At this point rebellion in the soul can upset fragile beliefs, but they are not necessarily replaced right away. Or if they are, the process is often not logical or well considered. This is a critical stage for a human, and some never recover from such a destruction of logical beliefs. But some just need time to sort it all out, and maybe a few hard knocks to wake them up. If they can learn Bible truths early and stick with them through these teen years, they are most likely to make it through with minimal damage. If not, the results are more random.

There are two general methods of corroborating what we have learned and believe to be true, and both are established by God. There is common sense, which lines up with what the universe reveals to us, and there is absolute truth, which is revealed by God in the Bible. God designed the universe to reveal to people the proper way to live, even for unbelievers. The universe provides feedback loops to encourage and discourage certain types of behaviors, shows what works over and over again, and what does not work. Some things have good outcomes, and some things bad outcomes. Responsible behavior, hard work, fair play, and good manners are generally rewarded, and irresponsibility in these areas is generally

punished. Of course there are random outcomes and unfairness, but generally people learn that certain types of behaviors repeat with certain types of outcomes. Then there is the truth from the Word of God, and that is absolute truth. Believers have faith in God that the Bible is truth, and that is part of our belief system. If we grow in the Word the Holy Spirit provides a spiritual feedback loop which demonstrates to us that our faith was correctly placed in the Word, and our faith is justified to us over time. Therefore common sense and the Word of God both serve to keep us in line with reality and truth, if we choose to center our belief systems on them.

However, the origin of the universe and many things related to God are not provable because God does not want them to be provable, since He requires us to live by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7) Non-creationists believe in the unbelievable, making enormous leaps of faith across great chasms to come to conclusions which are entirely unsupported, yet they claim that science is on their side. It is often a fanatical core belief for them, because they fear the alternative if they are wrong. However they change their unproven theories constantly, basing core beliefs on a set of ever changing theories which are unprovable. Additionally, the lines between scientific proof and computer models have become blurred in order to declare something scientifically proven, when the outcome of models is by definition not proof, but is based on variable assumptions fed into the models by fallible and biased humans using limited information. If the researcher knew enough to fully feed a model, then the model would not be needed since the issue would be self-proving.

People who reject God and the Bible must by definition accept something else to believe in. Once they reject God they can easily accept irrational theories regarding how the material universe started with nothing, then developed from nothing into something, then that something became what the universe is now. By any definition that is a succession of miracles, making such a belief system a religion. So unbelievers do believe in miracles after all, since the probability of this happening has been calculated as being zero. Literally zero over infinity. Such theories require an unbeliever to have far more faith than Christians who believe in God and believe the Bible that Jesus Christ is the only Savior.

Unbelievers cannot prove the alternative theories they accept which form their core beliefs so they must accept most of them by faith, yet they seek to deny this and call it science. Therefore science is a god to them, and the primary statement of their faith is that given enough time anything is possible. That faith of unbelievers can be very strong, and they can

believe things which are unbelievable, and do so with no proof whatsoever even though many of them insist proof is required to believe anything. Oddly, this does not dissuade most of them from their belief systems, even though the truth from God's Word is much easier to believe since it makes much more sense. The universe itself is testimony to the existence of God and to what the Bible reveals, and these things support our faith. Therefore the faith of believers is far more logical than the faith of unbelievers. Our corroborating evidence is revealed in the universe, and also in the results we see from God working through believers, which also supports what the Bible reveals. Romans 8:16 says "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." Our faith is not blind, but the faith of unbelievers in what they believe is truly blind and even foolishness.

Recall how the soul components interact like a committee to "figure out" or "ponder" an issue brought in by the senses, or by a question internal to the soul. That is the thinking process, which consists of thoughts searching for a conclusion. We have seen how the Mind of the soul is the overall engine of thinking, and thoughts are the sub-components of thinking. Generally speaking, a thought is formed, which is considered by the thinking process, and a circular process of thoughts and thinking occurs until conclusions are reached, which are eventually presented to the Heart for a decision. And that process may lead to a new belief if a conclusion can be reached on an issue which has been accepted as true.

To expand on this explanation, as the Mind tries to figure things out, it turns to its subordinates the Conscience and Memory to guide it in their specific areas of expertise during the thinking process. Existing beliefs in the Heart are used as guidelines and policies, which often sets the boundaries on the thinking process. The Mind, Conscience, and Memory may have inputs which form new thoughts and more thinking. The Emotion may become involved, and if the person is a believer, the human spirit will also be asked for input. When the Mind has a final work product about the issue, it is presented to the Heart for review and consideration. The Heart will then review the work product of the Mind and either approve it, reject it, or send it back for additional consideration. That entire process is called "thinking." The individual parts of the thinking process are called "thoughts." While the person is engaged in thinking about the issue, such thinking can be all over the place, from mere musings to scientific and mathematical evaluations. If the subject being considered requires an acceptance about an important matter, when the Heart makes a final decision on acceptability, a new belief can be formed by that acceptance.

If we believe something, it becomes part of the soul's belief system, ranked from high level core beliefs down to low level beliefs, which also corresponds to the level of importance we place on them and how easily they could be changed or ignored. The primary location for beliefs is the Heart, and if related to determining good vs. bad then also in the Conscience. But the entire soul will also be affected by a belief. If something is believed, the Mind accepts the technical aspects of it, the Conscience accepts it as consistent with its standards, the Emotion either responds favorably or does not react against it, the Memory does not have conflicting memories which would reject it, and the Heart accepts the overall concept or issue as its final decision on the matter. So it is acceptance by the Heart which turns the thoughts and thinking process into a belief, and an overall belief system is built up over time. The most important high level beliefs form the core belief system, those beliefs a person holds to most firmly. From that point on the core beliefs drive what will be believed in the future, especially regarding things which either oppose or support a major core belief. So the most powerful part of one's belief system are the core beliefs, those which we hold to tightly, deeply, and tenaciously.

Core beliefs can be many things, which depends on the individual. Religion is a major core belief, if one is accepted and believed. Most Christians make it their most significant core belief. So also for people who believe in other religions. Taking religion as an example, for those who hold one in high regard, it will usually have a strong influence on the development of new beliefs. There are, of course, those who generally accept a religion but then live as though it is unimportant, or pick and choose what parts are accepted, so there are certainly exceptions. But in general, beliefs which oppose a deeply held core religious belief will usually be quickly rejected and disbelieved. Those which support it will likely be readily accepted. This shows how core beliefs can drive what is possible to believe in the future, setting boundaries of acceptability. When something is in conflict, it would be rare to make a convincing argument which would be accepted, even if the logic is detailed and inescapable. Of course, this can work for good or bad in the life.

Most decisions by the Heart do not form new beliefs, but rather are routine decisions about many mundane issues. However, when beliefs are formed in the Heart, they sometimes replace old beliefs, although they can also be entirely new beliefs. These may be low level beliefs, which most are, or those of moderate importance, or the few higher order core beliefs. The higher the belief in the order of importance in the soul, the more strongly it influences the thinking process. The key to beliefs is that a decision by the Heart on a key or foundational issue forms a new policy for the soul to live by. Acceptance means the Heart has approved the

issue as the policy of the soul. Decisions about a belief set a precedent for future thoughts and thinking, which continues unless that belief is overturned by new thinking on the matter. Low level beliefs are more easily changed than higher level beliefs, as some of the most important high level ones become core beliefs which drive the soul's thinking process into alignment with them since they drive and motivate the person most strongly.

An example of how thoughts, thinking and beliefs go together would be helpful. We will use a fairly routine, although important, decision process related to needing a new automobile. The current one is old and showing signs of wearing out. The question is posed internally to the soul, and maybe among others, should we buy a new vehicle, and what would we buy?

The question in the soul initiates a thinking process about a new vehicle, and this process will require new data and information which the soul does not already possess. The soul then engages the brain to bring in sensory data from the available sources. Advertising, automotive reviews, cost comparisons, Uncle Frank, and other data sources provide inputs. As the data is retrieved by the brain, this data goes to the Mind, since it is what figures things out in the soul. Photos are reviewed, and reports are read about customer satisfaction. Uncle Frank's inputs are dismissed, since he drives an old beat-up land yacht. Sedan vs. SUV vs. pickup truck are considered, as are many details such as gasoline vs. electric, cost comparisons, options, and everything which goes into this complicated process. The Mind searches its subordinate Memory and Conscience. Memory rules out the brand owned decades ago where the engine quit after only 25,000 miles. For some people the Conscience may want an electric, so the Mind considers it in relation to cost, convenience, and other factors. The sensory data is turned into information in the soul, and more data and information are needed and obtained over the ensuing weeks. This process goes around and around as the Mind narrows the search for a new vehicle. Then the Mind presents the best options to the Heart for a decision. The Heart requests inputs from others involved, especially the spouse. Inputs are received and the Mind goes back to work on the changed parameters from the spouse. Further narrowing of the search occurs. The options are considered internally to the soul. The Emotion wants a red one. The spouse wants a black one. An impasse occurs. The Mind tries to find a way to break the impasse. It is discovered the red one costs more. The black one becomes more attractive to both. The semi-final product is sent to the Heart. Costs are reviewed again. A black SUV of a specific brand with certain options under a maximum price ceiling becomes the decision. It is available at the local dealer. The vehicle purchase is made.



All this should seem like a fairly reasonable process. But which parts were the thoughts, thinking, and beliefs?

A thought occurred about purchasing a new vehicle based on sensory inputs from the existing aging vehicle. This started a thinking process about buying a new vehicle. This would become a serious issue due to its cost and long term commitment. The Mind took charge of the process, since it is the logical soul component which figures things out, and the deep thinker of the soul which coordinates the entire process with other soul components, especially with the Heart. There were numerous variables, some of them in conflict. Cost conflicted with desired options, so cost-benefit analyses needed to be performed. Color choice must be coordinated between at least two people in this example. A long process of reviewing the variables and accumulating data occurs during the thinking stage. New thoughts are introduced along the way. Maybe an electric car, hybrid, body styles, and other potential choices are considered. Thoughts and thinking go hand in hand, as one begets the other in a circular process. Thoughts are about specific issues, and thinking is the process of considering all the thoughts, which also forms new thoughts which might include interim conclusions on some of the issues. Along the way low level beliefs are formed by the Heart as it supervises and reviews progress. One might be that the budget must not exceed a certain amount. That becomes a belief which forms a parameter. Parameters limit options and set boundaries. Eventually the circle of thoughts, thinking, new thoughts, and rethinking yields more firm interim conclusions, ultimately leading to a semi-final conclusion, which is still just a thought, although a high level one, until it is accepted. The revised conclusion is accepted by the Heart as a final decision on the matter. Acceptance of that final thought by a decision turns it into a belief regarding what is best for the family. So that is finally put to rest. On to the next issue. The two kids are nearing college age. Oh no! Should we really have bought that new vehicle? And on it goes in the soul, which never gets a rest from thoughts, thinking, and decisions about what to believe.

Granted, this is a description of how lower and mid-level beliefs are used when thoughts and thinking occur regarding an important, but not life altering, issue. Our higher level core beliefs, which are life altering due to their impact, are generally developed over a longer time and usually with more introspective consideration, and were not in view in this illustration. But sometimes a person can come to a dramatic shift in high level core beliefs in a short time.

Salvation belief is an example of a dramatic shift in core beliefs, and the most important one a person can make. An unbeliever can hear the gospel message about how Jesus Christ died for the sins of all people, which is taken into the Mind of the soul and becomes a thought about salvation by faith in Christ. If it is not immediately rejected, usually due to an existing and conflicting belief system, the Mind will begin a thinking process to determine if it should be accepted. That process can be rather short or occur over a long period of time, as the issue is thought about at certain times, maybe when someone close to them dies. But there is a difference with the gospel. The Holy Spirit becomes involved and helps the unbeliever with the thought and thinking process by making the salvation message clear, bringing them to the point of belief, or no belief. With the help of the Holy Spirit a person hears enough correct gospel information to be able to understand the issues related to salvation, and is able to make this important decision in an intensified way. But the free will of the individual inside the Heart must decide, so the Holy Spirit does not interfere with that, but instead makes the information understandable. Internal soul resistance can be intense. Previous beliefs can get in the way, such as believing that being a good person is enough to save a person, or inability to conceive that an afterlife exists, or many other beliefs which distract or conflict from the main issue. The Emotion may see this as a threat to living a lust-based life, which it rather enjoys. Thoughts and beliefs about many other issues may interfere. So the person must make a decision about salvation, whether to accept it (belief) or reject it outright, or by delay, saying "I'll think about that later." And failure to make a decision is itself a decision. If salvation by faith in Christ is never accepted, then it is rejected by default, and the consequences are the same as an outright rejection.

The Bible makes the issue clear that a single belief, the belief in Jesus Christ as Savior, provides eternal salvation. Not thoughts about Him, and not thinking about Him. But rather belief in Him. This is the single most important issue where thoughts and thinking must be turned into a belief. Belief is acceptance, while thoughts and thinking can simply be musings about the issue with no real conclusion or acceptance. Thoughts about salvation do not save a person. Thinking about how Jesus Christ was a real person who did some good deeds long ago and was executed on a cross does not save a person. Only a belief, which is acceptance, that Jesus Christ is one's Savior, can be used by the Holy Spirit to lock in eternal salvation. Thoughts and thinking about Jesus Christ must result in a decision to believe in Christ as Savior to make salvation a reality. It is the belief which saves, not the thoughts or thinking process. It is our beliefs which matter. For every human who ever exists, this one decision about a single belief is the most important one they will make in life.

Salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is the only way God can offer eternal life to any human. It is a free gift from God, because He did all the work, and He offers it to all humans since we are helpless to save ourselves. But it must be accepted, meaning believed, since belief is acceptance. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31) "For it is by grace you are saved through faith." (Ephesians 2:8) Believing is faith, which is acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior. At the moment of belief the human spirit becomes regenerated, and that is the event which makes us a spiritual being and locks in our eternal salvation. Forever.

We can see that salvation by faith alone is not as simple as it might seem. God requires that we accept Him through the salvation work of Jesus Christ. He has made it the only way. Each person must make this decision, and that single belief or lack of belief will determine the eternal status of every human who ever lives.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **VARIABILITY OF BELIEFS**

The Reader has certainly noticed that beliefs among humans are very different, even though most people are looking at the same relative information, generally speaking. So how can humans draw vastly different conclusions, and form deeply held beliefs which can be polar opposites? And how can so many people believe the unbelievable? There are, of course, answers from the Bible.

It is not possible to cover all the variables and permutations of belief systems, therefore the discussions and examples will almost always have exceptions. Some people do the complete opposite of what most would do when forming beliefs, and some will set aside portions of an overall belief system easily when it is convenient. And some people say they believe one thing and do the opposite. So belief systems can be all over the map, and wildly different from one person to the next. Due to the "irrationality factor" involved, overall generalities will be explained, but belief systems cannot be forced into a mold. Everyone is different, and no two people have the exact same belief system. Even those belief systems which have well defined top level core beliefs will have numerous sub-levels of beliefs which can differ. Christianity has numerous denominations with alternate sub-beliefs, and individual believers sometimes disagree with certain core teachings from the Bible. Therefore, having a core belief does not mean a person will comply with the entire belief system as outlined from top to bottom. We see that the variability of beliefs among humans is wide-ranging and often unpredictable.

Part of this is due to the various ways people arrive at their belief systems, which can often be random and undisciplined. Given the importance of beliefs aligning with reality, that would seem to be a bad idea. And it is. Beliefs can either align with reality and truth, or try to defy them, or fall somewhere in between. Belief systems are best developed during childhood, and then re-tested after the person begins thinking as an adult. But children now grow up learning from multiple sources, more than ever existed previously, since technology has greatly expanded those sources. And schools may be less focused on teaching the basics and

how the world really works, as opposed to indoctrination about how teachers want the world to work. Peer-to-peer social media has also made thought and belief transfer among children much easier, so it is harder to control the quality of the inputs, or to correct them. Parental teaching must now compete with more conflicting data, inputs, and information than ever before. Therefore confusion among children has become intensified. All too often children arrive at beliefs by random information from non-trustworthy sources, unless they grow up with a few core beliefs which keep them on the right track, such as a foundation in Christian principles. And there is a right track, and there are wrong tracks, as defined by truth and reality vs. untruth and unreality. The world tries to deny this and restate the premise as there is no truth, so reality is what anyone thinks it is. But the world also has a way a reinserting reality into the equation in the form of hard-knocks.

Because there is a distinction between truth and untruth, reality and unreality, many beliefs are untrue and/or not based on reality. A few examples would be useful, just for illustration to make a point. Think of the ancient world where the earth was believed to be flat. Idolatry was also widespread, whereby most people worshiped statues made by human hands. Human sacrifice was sometimes used to please the gods, because they believed that would bring rain or some other form of enhanced material gain. Now idolatry is more sophisticated, but still based on falsehood. Many forms of magic and superstitions have been believed, and still are. There have been many forms of mysticism throughout history, which are generally beliefs in the powers of an outside force, but not from the true God. Numerous false religions have existed and still exist, with many followers. What about the healing powers of radon gas, tobacco, voodoo, and snake oil? Alien abductions and crop circles, anyone? Going faster than the speed of light could make time go backward? Dragons or the Lochness Monster? The Blarney Stone? Vampires, ghosts, zombies? Tachyon particles and warp drives for Star Trek fans. Of course, some of these are not actual beliefs but rather exaggerated stories, or fiction, even though untrue. Some are harmful and others are harmless, so the point is simply to illustrate untrue beliefs, not to comment on their effects on a person. Sometimes an untrue belief is just having fun or using the imagination, so as long as they do not become high level beliefs they have little effect. The fact is many beliefs held by people are patently untrue, and often bizarre. People will take an unsupported theory or rumor and believe it far easier than many truths. The reasons are wide-ranging, but the effect on people can be real if it gets in the way of believing the truth. And this is the real problem, when untrue beliefs stand in the way of believing truth and facing reality when it is important. Therefore some false beliefs can lead to a miserable life and even a miserable eternity.

Most things which humans think of and believe as true, right, or personally pleasing are relatively unimportant, and do not become part of a set of core beliefs, even though they may be believed. For instance, if someone believes chocolate ice cream is better than vanilla ice cream, then that is a matter of personal preference which does not generally affect others, either in a positive or negative way. One might think preferences among pickup trucks is also something irrelevant, but to some it is akin to a religious choice, so to them it is more than a choice among equally useful options. To bystanders, personal preferences are merely choices from equally useful alternatives, but beware that they can be a deeply held belief to some. Showing preference of some product over another is still a belief, and it is that person's choice to make. However, the point is that a belief system is what the individual decides it should be, and the components are very personal, even if the belief system is foolish, detrimental, silly, ridiculous, shortsighted, or just plain wrong. There are many such beliefs out there, often based on low evidence inputs, hunches and intuition, and are therefore highly variable in quality. But not all are important. Sometimes a belief is just a way to set up a personal identity. After all, a person is defined by their beliefs.

However, some beliefs matter a lot. If a believer does not think the belief system of an unbeliever will lead to eternal condemnation for that unbeliever, leading them into a miserable eternity, that believer does not believe the Bible is correct about the existence of Hell and the eventual Lake of Fire. This would be a failure of the core beliefs of such a believer, at least in that area. Such a belief would provide no motivation to seek to change the beliefs of the unbeliever, since it would apparently not matter. But what is the consequence of an inaccurate belief system? Sometimes we just get less than we had expected. Other times we avoid a core duty of being a believer. For the unbeliever, their belief system has eternal repercussions. Beliefs matter when they drive motivations and actions in key areas of life, and cause people to avoid taking action to prevent eternal misery.

We may care about the belief system of others for several reasons. If they are close to us, we want them to be happy and successful, and we may think they can achieve such things if they believe as we do. Or we may come into conflict with others, or be affected by their decisions, and we do not like what they believe because it is opposed to our beliefs. We care if someone chooses to be law abiding vs. a criminal. So if a person believes they deserve to have your property more than you do, and act on that belief, that brings about direct conflict and violates the right to own property. Then we care about their beliefs. Christians want to affect the belief system of those who do not believe as they do, because they want all people to have eternal salvation and live a life which glorifies God. On the other hand, those who believe in

radical causes may want to suppress the rights of others who just want to live as they choose. There are many reasons why the various belief systems in the world cause friction and disagreement. And that is the ultimate issue with belief systems, namely that it results in polarization. Beliefs separate people. They drive people apart. Jesus said "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Mathew 10:34) Meaning the truth will divide people based on their beliefs.

Please do not misunderstand, polarization can be good or bad. We should not alter or violate our core belief system based on pleasing others who simply disagree, but rather our most important beliefs should be based on pleasing God, with the interests of others in mind when possible and compatible. Being unified and in harmony with evil people and accepting their evil activities as just as legitimate as the truth from God's Word is not a positive approach to the incorrect belief systems of others. Toleration is one thing, but actual acceptance joins with them in their beliefs. It will not be a surprise that if two people disagree about their core beliefs then there is a lack of harmony, and even friction between them, leading to polarization. Core beliefs are very powerful things. They can motivate enormous effort to change the beliefs of others, sometimes even to the point of believing they should be eliminated from society if they fail to change, as with certain lawless groups. And if the belief system is criminal, terroristic, and otherwise harmful to innocent people, it becomes necessary to isolate them, and the Bible supports that view. During a time of intense polarization in society, asking "Can't we all just get along?" is not a valid question unless a person is willing to give up core beliefs. Then what is left? An empty shell. A person without core beliefs lacks substance and purpose.

Along those lines, one of the least understood issues in human life is why different people can look at the same information, conditions or circumstances and draw opposite conclusions. Some look at the expanse of the universe and the clouds and how the human body works and know instinctively that God created these. Others look at the same things and conclude there is no God and believe the universe occurred from random chance, starting with nothing, and became something amazingly beautiful without a Designer. People look at social and political information and often migrate to polar opposite views, each strongly held. The examples are endless, but how do different people have such divergent views on the same subject when looking at the same relative information? Let us proceed to unravel that issue in more detail.

Core belief systems, the ones we really care about, can be very generally separated into two overall categories. The first category can be called something like true, reality-based, correct, good, accurate, or a number of other positive adjectives. The second category can be called unreality-based, untrue, wrong, bad, immoral, indecent, criminal, inaccurate, and evil, among others. We could add a third which would be indifference about everything, but that is not much of a belief system, but rather the avoidance of beliefs.

But who gets to decide right and wrong beliefs? Is it all relative?

If we humans were animals and there was no God then survival of the fittest and "anything goes" would be the rule. Moral judgments would not be possible, and would be a joke. Nothing would be out-of-bounds, criminal, or immoral. Nothing would be right or wrong. In such a world survival would be the number one rule, and also the only rule, so the belief system would be self-benefit, regardless of who loses out or gets harmed. In essence, there would be no principles to live by since they assume there is a difference between right and wrong, good and evil, compassion and intolerance. Without God there would therefore be no principles of right and wrong, only self-benefit at any and all cost to others. Others do not matter, only self matters. Eat or be eaten. Kill or be killed. Those are "principles" of animals, and also humans who act like animals. But wait, evolutionists believe humans are animals, so let us briefly examine what they would say about this issue.

This is where evolutionists reveal their true self. They are survivalists, and have no belief system apart from what an animal has, which is self-preservation. Darwin is their primary prophet, so survival of the fittest is the highest belief system they can muster, and they treat it as a secular religion. By the way, evolutionists disregard Darwin's original title of his book, which was "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life." Interesting. Who was Darwin's "favoured" (or favored) race anyway? And we suppose the "others" did not matter, so in Darwin's view the weaker races needed to be eliminated so a stronger, fitter species (or race) could go on and take the place of what came before. Does this sound like someone who should be revered for stating that all "weaker" creatures and people should be eliminated by natural selection? But alas, the evolutionists show they have no sense of anything moral or decent or good or of a higher purpose. Evolutionists only have a god called "Time" which grinds up the current species at the expense of the future. Their primary doctrinal statement is that "Given enough Time anything can happen." That is illogical. But the god "Time" overcomes logic. And the



future will yield -- only more grinding up of the next set of species, including humans. In this view people are animals, so they have no moral purpose in life except to be used to enhance future, stronger life-forms. But no other purpose. The endless tedium and boredom of evolution and its striving toward no purpose other than enhanced survival of future expendable creatures and people is a pitiable process. And an evil one. In the midst of this incessant tedium, self-destruction by weak people would be the only possible noble outcome, however even that is considered to be a weak thought which serves no purpose. The evolutionists do not believe in the soul, so killing off those "human animals" who are weaker is a moral imperative. It is what their god "Time" demands as a sacrifice. A human sacrifice.

Which by contrast, brings us back to God and His beliefs. And His love. God gives purpose to human life, and imparts high goals and moral achievements into the picture. The point is that God is the source of belief systems which have meaning and purpose, morals and nobility of character, and good which opposes evil. Apart from Him there would be only one belief system, which is not a belief, but rather the only available option -- survival. But the Bible declares there is truth, and also that there is non-truth and/or lies, and that there is right and wrong. Philippians 4:8 says "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Note the emphasis on thinking. And this verse makes the phrase "it's all relative" entirely false. "It" is not all relative. There is truth, and there are lies. John 8:44 says "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." Pretty clear. And a mixture of partial truth and some lies is also a lie. People can sort them out to a degree if they are honest and willing, and especially believers can sort out truth from lies to a larger degree if they understand the Bible, since the Bible is the standard for absolute truth. Unbelievers can sort out truths about basic things in life, which is why God gave humans logic and a divine order for mankind to live under, and it is available for all. But unbelievers do not have access to absolute truth since it is only discerned by the human spirit using information from the Word of God, and they have neither a human spirit nor spiritual access to the Word.

The fact that human history is filled with fighting wrong with right, even if imprecisely, shows a fairly universal belief system regarding the existence of right and wrong, good and evil, and an overall belief that humans are not animals. And what is the Bible except God's revelation of right and wrong, good and evil, and proper beliefs? The fact that the Bible has

"commandments" shows that God has a fairly strong attitude about the subject of right and wrong, otherwise He would have given us the "Ten Suggestions" and made a more persuasive attempt to gain the favor of humans. Instead, God provided humans with an overall belief system as outlined in His Word. As you might suspect, those beliefs which do not align with what God has provided in the Bible are said to be wrong, incorrect, and even evil. It seems that God is fairly adamant about His set of norms and standards for humans, and that He has a belief system which humans must align with, rather than vice versa. The reason is that those provide happiness for now and eternity. But as we look around we quickly find that beliefs among humans are quite variable, and often do not line up with what God has revealed. In fact, humans try over and over to act as if God does not have the right to decide what is right and what is wrong.

So the answer to our question "Who gets to decide?" which beliefs are correct vs. incorrect, then it is certainly God. And He gets to decide for all people, including those who do not believe in Him. Believers usually try to make decisions which align with God and His plan. We fail regularly, of course, and are forgiven for it, but we look forward to more than mere survival of the fittest, but rather to a life with meaning and purpose, followed by an endless eternal life with God and our Savior because of love, first from Him to us, then from us back to Him. And it is love which ultimately separates God and His plan from a godless evolution-based belief system and its lack of any useful purpose. A belief system based on love is what separates true meaning from emptiness. And by the way, the only religion based on a loving God is Christianity. The only one.

So we now come to the questions most of you have been wondering about: Why do people have such different beliefs? How can various people adamantly hold to polar opposite views, even if they have been presented with the same general set of facts? Why cannot education by facts and logic lead people to form the same general set of thoughts, conclusions and beliefs? But of course, it does not work that way. This will not surprise you, but you want to know why it is true. Only the Bible reveals that to us, so we will now drill down even further and explore and describe what the Bible says about variations in human thoughts and beliefs.

Having recently discussed the Sinful Nature, you likely already suspect it is somehow involved. You are correct. At the core of the issue of variable belief systems is the internal battle in the soul, which pulls people in two directions and affects their thoughts, thinking, and beliefs. It is this internal battle between the soul components, those which God created, and the

acquired Sinful Nature which humans created, which causes such large variations in belief systems among humans. And this is a key point, that the most important issue which affects how core beliefs are formed and maintained is about the level of influence the Sinful Nature exerts on the soul, and the degree to which the Emotion is allied with that Sinful Nature. When irrational and illogical beliefs are the overall theme in a person's life, there is a powerful influence from the Sinful Nature strongly allied with the Emotion influencing that person. That is because two non-rational actors got together and tried to come up with a rational thought and belief, but failed miserably. It cannot be overstated how much the Sinful Nature/Emotion alliance negatively affects the thoughts, thinking, and beliefs of humans. This is the number one distorter of the soul, and therefore the biggest cause of polar opposite beliefs in the world, now and ever. Of course, we are not discussing an occasional odd belief, since there are many reasons for those. But irrational and illogical core belief systems are caused by the Sinful Nature/Emotion alliance which has a lock on the soul, and leads to hardness of soul and intense polarization due to the inability of such a person to see reality or the truth no matter how self-evident and convincing the facts are.

A person gets into such a condition by making wrong decisions, one after another. Rejection of God and His Word is a primary cause, but not the only one. People who reject God must approach life using their Heart and Mind to understand what God has designed into the universe as proper thinking and beliefs based on what seems to work out well. There is a cause-and-effect system built into God's design. Unbelievers can live a stable life based on work, family, friends, and interests, and form beliefs which line up with proper functioning of those. Morality, fair play, loyalty, and many issues are self-evident in the universe God has created, so all can live by them as part of their belief system. But if the laws God designed into the universe are rejected, this is when the Sinful Nature/Emotion alliance starts to take over and develop alternate, and therefore incorrect, thinking and beliefs based on unreality. This usually starts out rather slowly, but builds into a hardened soul over time if it is not controlled. At that point irrationality becomes the norm in some areas of life, even though the person may have pockets of rationality such as their work life, as we have previously discussed. Even believers can get into the Sinful Nature/Emotion alliance when they take an emotional approach to life and to understanding God, rather than a thinking one. The Bible emphasizes using the Heart and Mind in association with the human spirit as the basis for understanding God and the universe He created. Emotion must only come in after these primary soul players have first built a basis of understanding and wisdom, which leads to loving God. At that point the Emotion can fulfill its true role to appreciate, rather than lead the soul and react.

Still you ask, why do so many people reject the truth when it is clearly and plainly right in front of them? After all, reality is obvious, is it not? The answer is that people who allow their Sinful Nature to take control of their Emotion on a regular basis will have a soul where the Heart is not in control, and therefore the Mind is suppressed from logical thinking. Instead, their Sinful Nature/Emotion alliance controls their soul and does the pseudo-thinking for the entire soul, and the Heart and Mind take a back seat. That means logic and rational thought is overcome by emotional feelings linked with beliefs based on premises which do not align with the truth and reality God has put in place. This is one of the most important issues to understand from this book, since this one issue divides and polarizes humans more than any other single issue.

This is why people can be so diametrically opposed in thinking, why they cannot see what you see so clearly, why people think in ways which do not appear to be real thoughts, and why there is such a political and social divide separating people from each other. These are baffling to most people, and for good reason. Such thoughts and actions do not make sense. They are illogical and irrational. A rational person would want to align themselves with reality and truth, which are ultimately from God. But the seeds of revolt against God from the Sinful Nature assures that many people will reject the truth, whether it is the truth about God or the truth about social or political issues. This polarizes people into two general camps, those who are willing to look at the truth and give it an objective consideration, and those for whom truth is what they "feel" it is, regardless of reality. It is the Sinful Nature/Emotion alliance which makes feeling one's way through life into a belief system based not on thoughts, but on instincts, hunches, intuition, and other non-thinking approaches. This alliance is not logical, it is reactive. And since the Mind is suppressed by this alliance, the Conscience is also suppressed because it is subordinate to the Mind. That is why thoughts the Conscience formerly rejected now become acceptable. Of course, this is not an all-or-nothing issue, but rather a matter of degree. For some it will be a little, and for others a lot more. So this is the reason polarization is so rampant, because so many people have ceased thinking their way through life, and have substituted feeling their way along in a random manner, avoiding reality as they go.

Most belief-based disagreements, those where the facts are generally not in question, come from this bipolar set of vantage points, which ultimately have their roots in the Sinful Nature, the enemy within. This is not a new issue. It is the story of human existence. The only perfect human to exist after Adam and Eve was put to death for His thoughts and beliefs. Many wars have been fought over beliefs. The belief systems of dictators have squashed individual liberty

around the world. The Sinful Nature causes serious distortions in thinking since it is not logical, but rather it is instinctive and deviant. And recall that God did not give humans instincts to live by, but humans chose to add base instincts when they sinned. The more a person gives in to these base instincts, the more illogical and deviant the thinking becomes. And even animalistic, as we have seen. It seeks to control the entire soul, and tries to distort or block belief in the truth. Some people control it better than others, but all are subject to its influence. Where there is illogical thought, the Sinful Nature is doing its work unhindered by the truth. And when power is added to the equation, the corruption of thought is greatly enhanced.

Now that we have examined the basics of variability of beliefs, we will continue to explain what the Bible reveals about what happens to the soul when truth is rejected, how humans deal with the unreality they create in their belief systems, why polarization of beliefs is so harmful to societies and nations, and other related subjects. We will also explore issues such as dreaming, dementia and Alzheimer's. Much more to discuss about thoughts, thinking, and beliefs.

Next, we explore what most of the people around us actually believe.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **WHAT DO MOST HUMANS BELIEVE?**

It might seem that billions of humans might have a very large number of different major belief systems, meaning those which can drive an intense level of commitment. However, there are surprisingly few. And most primary belief systems center around self, family, religion, and causes. The majority of people who have ever lived have utilized a very basic set of core beliefs, and do not think much about higher level issues. In other words, the answer to the question which has been posed regarding what most humans believe is: "the basics." Therefore most people who ever live will have done so under a system of beliefs focused on living a simple life at a rather low level of thinking and expectations, and therefore apart from God and His plan.

Then there are the higher order belief systems which go beyond the basic level of thoughts and beliefs. And it is not simply a matter of education levels, but rather is more about motivation to understand what life is about, and mainly comes down to a religion for most. So when we refer to people engaging in higher order thoughts and beliefs it does not refer to the outcomes, but rather to the complexity of the thinking and believing processes involved. Therefore the mental processes can be complex correct ones, or they can be complex yet flawed, or even complex and evil. So higher order does not automatically mean they are good, accurate, or related to truth. It just means they are more complex. We will expand on this shortly.

The belief systems with the strongest influence over those who hold them center on religion, institutions, family, and self. If a person becomes a Christian, that is a higher order belief system. So also with false religions, which are complex yet not based on truth. There are also higher order belief systems based on supporting causes which a person believes in deeply, whether focused on children or animals or the environment or whatever. Those seeking power often have political belief systems, which are also complex. And anyone motivated to try to understand and achieve at a higher plane, whether from good or bad motivation, has higher order thoughts and beliefs. Again, that does not imply good or bad, just complex. We will discuss how those who are most motivated to achieve higher level thoughts and beliefs are

the ones who cause most of the good and bad in the world. Thoughts and beliefs are powerful things because they result in an intensified form of motivation.

Now that we have that overview in mind, let us now take a look at the various forms of beliefs systems starting with the most basic and working up to the higher level ones.

The most common belief system throughout history has been the belief in both self and one's family, which means a person is motivated to support self and family by working to earn a living, marriage and raising children, and generally living a life focused primarily on these issues. This belief system is an approach to life which has shown to enable survival and provide at least some level of stability and basic happiness. Due to the curse put on the earth after the fall of humans in the Garden of Eden, humans are required to work hard and fight the cursed earth for survival. The earth became unfriendly in many ways, and earning a living to care for family took most of one's efforts. The remaining time was often spent doing chores and caring for family, plus trying to relax and avoid physical or mental exertion. The next work day will come around soon. This requirement to toil and struggle to survive is the lot of most people around the world, leading them to think and believe at a fairly basic level. It is survival level living, thinking, and believing, which works well enough for most people. This is the level where most people live. However, if someone takes this approach but also becomes a Christian or pursues another religion, the mixture of the simple life with complex beliefs about religion puts them into the higher order level of beliefs. Religion is a complex belief system.

One might ask why people do not strive to think more complex thoughts and have higher order beliefs. The first answer is many of them live on the lower rung of societies where they struggle just to survive. Life is a daily grind to feed, clothe, and shelter their family, with little time or funds remaining. This daily grind uses most of the time, energy, and resources they have available, with very little left over. Others are just content to have basic beliefs to avoid complexity in the life. Many reject religious beliefs, or are merely a joiner but not a practitioner. Whatever their motivation, most people find that a simple life is either more enjoyable or all they can handle due to the constraints of resources and time.

The Bible says God has given the basics of life, including food, drink, family, work, and other basics, as a gift to all humans, including unbelievers. Ecclesiastes 5:18: "This is what I have

observed to be good: that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot. <sup>19</sup> Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God. <sup>20</sup> They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart." Ecclesiastes 3:12: "I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live." And Psalm 145:9 says "The Lord is good to all; his compassion is over all that he has made." God gives these basic gifts to unbelievers, who will have only their time on earth to be somewhat happy. Having a family, work, the essentials of life, and being a good citizen can enable them to lead a rather normal and contented life. But then eternity is a different matter.

Some people prefer living at a basic level where they think in basic and repeatable ways, and purposely avoid dealing with complexity. This low level approach to thoughts and beliefs is stability for many people, even if they have leisure time available, unlike those who simply struggle to survive. Complex thoughts and beliefs require more complex coping systems to overcome the issues they bring with them. And higher level thoughts require extra effort, which they do not wish to expend. Remember, this simple level of belief system does not apply to believers, since Bible beliefs are the highest level belief system, even if one lives rather simply.

Many people live a simple lust-based life and avoid higher order thinking and beliefs, whereby their primary thoughts are about pursuing satisfaction of lusts, which does not require much thought, but does require lots of "hunter-gatherer" time spent looking for prey. These people avoid deep thoughts in favor of the endless pursuit of pleasure. And not all lusts are carnal, but rather many are based on self-righteousness. For example, people often gain satisfaction by looking down on the carnal lust people, and this builds up their self-esteem by comparison, but without raising oneself at all. So living a lust-based life can be a means of avoiding the complexities of higher order thoughts and beliefs. This form of avoidance is appealing to many who want to live simply yet not be tied to the order God ordained for humans.

Other types of beliefs focus on elevating self far above all others. In rush-hour traffic it is the person who weaves in and out nearly taking off everyone's bumper. They see the universe revolving around them. For others, drugs can induce a belief of invincibility and superhuman powers. And politicians believe laws do not apply to them. Taxing authorities believe your



money actually belongs to them, and only let you keep some of it out of generosity. We could go on and on about beliefs related to self-superiority. It is one of the strongest belief systems among people. And it is based on an unrealistic and therefore false view of one's own importance.

There are also plenty of criminals around who live life using a low level belief system. What do they believe? Criminals live the lust-based life and add a strong dose of "survival of the fittest" which enables them to believe whatever they do is beneficial to themselves, so it is justifiable. The victims were too weak anyway, so they do not matter, so at least Darwin would approve. Criminals live on animalistic instincts. Recall our discussion of how the original sin created the Sinful Nature, which brought animalistic instincts into the human soul. That is where criminals get their belief system. At that level of thoughts and beliefs anything can be deemed acceptable if it benefits self. Criminals believe everything should belong to them, since no one else is deserving of it. In this way criminals and politicians are very much alike.

Therefore many people are content to live at a basic level of thought and belief, which avoids complexity in the life. That is happiness to them, or at least it works for them in some way. But this is no excuse for refusing to think about God and the eternal future, since the most important beliefs in life revolve around these issues.

Let us pause and explain that these belief systems can be mixed and matched, with a person holding to some or all of several different types. Belief systems cannot be put into exact molds. They often are like a buffet rather than a single course meal. So these descriptions are general illustrations for the purpose of explanation, and are not meant to be specific cookie-cutter recipes about belief systems. And there are many sub-categories of belief systems, but we are merely trying to give examples of what belief systems are most prevalent among humans. The Reader is fully capable of filling in the gaps based on personal experiences.

Then there are those who try to live a life based on higher level thoughts and beliefs. Christians are certainly in this category, but also many others. And just because they are considered higher level beliefs does not make all of them correct belief systems. At the higher levels people engage in mentally stimulating interests which expand their belief system, and develop a more complex set of beliefs, which can be right or wrong, or even nonsense.

Remember, when we say people engage in higher order thoughts and beliefs it does not refer to the outcomes, but rather to the complexity of the thinking and believing processes involved, whether for good or bad, truth or falsehood. After all, nonsense can be more complex than the truth if someone works hard enough at developing it.

Higher level belief systems have key beliefs called "ideology" which dominate in the soul, and are the most deeply held components of one's beliefs. These are some of the most troublesome beliefs with which to deal if they are false. And if a person starts with an ideology which is false, there is little hope for having a belief system which aligns with either reality or truth. Ideology is a type of belief which takes over the entire belief system so that every other belief is first filtered by and through that single core ideology. The key is whether that ideology is correct or false. We believe the ideology of the Christian Bible is true, so to the believer it is what drives every other subset belief. We believe our belief system is both true and aligns with reality, because God created both truth and reality. In our view, belief systems which do not align with the Bible are flawed to whatever degree they are in conflict. Those who reject Biblical theology, such as all other religions, develop ideologies and use them as their basis for thought and beliefs, to various degrees of accuracy. Ideologies are powerful and persistent drivers of human action. When ideologies are based on reality to a large degree they can be constructive, but when they are aligned with anything else they become destructive. Even Satan has an ideology focused on opposing God and avoiding his ultimate fate of being cast into the Lake of Fire forever. That ideology has been the basis for much human suffering.

Now that we have discussed the variety of belief systems, from simple to complex, we will next look at some of the distractions involved in forming belief systems, and why people succumb to them.

In ancient times it was easier to avoid complexity in life, since there were far fewer distractions available. But technology and other issues have changed that. As life became more complicated, people used methods of avoidance, for example Stoicism in ancient Rome, but today it is mainly just Distractionism. Technology causes most of the complexity, but also enables Distractionism to the point where people can avoid deeper level thinking as much and often as they wish. Entertainment, internet cruising, games, communicating nonsense with numerous imaginary friends, and so on can expend all the available time so that thinking is not required. The less time spent in thinking, the more thinking becomes feared. And so the

cycle of Distractionism repeats, over and over. In fact, Distractionism is the number one impediment to a useful belief system in the world today. The reason is that it avoids reality, which can often be unpleasant. Nothing wrong with using technology to enhance the life, or to play mindless games occasionally, but it is a matter of degree. If technology is used to consistently avoid thinking and higher order beliefs, especially about God, then it has turned into Distractionism.

Additionally, social pressures keep some from rising above peers to avoid appearing snobbish, which would lead to rejection by their group. This often happens among friends and co-workers where there is a strong opposition to class differences. A person engaged in skilled labor might not want to be viewed as someone who loves to read classic literature and listen to opera, because they would be ridiculed as going above their station in life, even though it is a ridiculous belief held by co-workers. But social pressure complicates life, so it is easier to stay within expected boundaries. Many children do not develop their potential because they do not want to rise above the expected standards of their peer group, so they dumb-down their life to the level of their friends.

The list of reasons people use to avoid higher order thoughts and beliefs is long, but the point is they exist, and they do affect the belief systems of people. Therefore some choose to have a low level belief system because it suits them better for some reason or another. Again, we do not put believers or anyone who practices other religions in this group, because these are higher order belief systems. A person can live a simple life but have higher order beliefs. This is not a commentary on lifestyles, but rather on beliefs.

Some belief systems are formed using the group-think method, which has become very popular. And some people believe what others tell them they should believe, which is a loose form of group-thinking without a defined group. This is belief by popularity of ideas. People look around and determine subjectively what others believe, or say they believe, and then accept them as true. Some believe in whatever is most popular on social media. Often the person joins a group and accepts the beliefs of that group. Which belief does my social media group support? Which one will not get me banned or canceled from a media site or group? That approach leads to decisions on beliefs based on fear of rejection, and one's own belief system is formed by group consensus. This form of belief by popularity is very powerful, with very high pressure for conformance. Their mantra is "Believe as I do or get out of our group." Social ostracism forces conformance and congruence of thought and belief. This is often

called "group-think" but takes many forms, often subtle, and usually is enforced by expulsion from the group for lack of conformity. We can see that this is a powerful belief system, but the beliefs themselves are often fungible and imprecise. This requires continual confirmations of the currently acceptable beliefs of the group and causes its followers to live in constant fear of rejection.

Some develop their belief system based on a "party line" of political or institutional beliefs. This belief system tends to drive the entire thought process, regardless of logic or rationality. Whatever lines up with the party line is immediately accepted without scrutiny, debate, inspection, or thought of any kind. The "Party" cannot be wrong, and it is the center of all beliefs for such a person. If it sounds like a religion, that is correct, because it is a secular one. Logic, science, and Biblical truth cannot penetrate the darkness of a party line belief system. In many ways it is less objective than the checkout aisle magazine source of beliefs. But those involved are content to believe what they are told to believe by those higher up the political chain of command. The Reader may wonder if this is really a "belief system" at all since it is so flexible in believing whatever the political or institutional apparatus says to believe. But a belief system does not need to be based on anything real, true, or factual. It only needs to have control over the thinking of the individual inside the system. And it does.

As a short side trip, we mentioned above the "checkout aisle magazine source of beliefs" in passing, but it warrants further explanation. As we wait in line to buy our groceries, we can see the magazine covers telling us about the mixed-up and miserable lives of celebrities and other famous people. The supposition is that these people have it all, so they should be happy. But they are not. If you have ever pondered why these magazines sell, and who might read such things, it is all about making the average person feel better about their own life by comparison. If a person with simple beliefs sees how people who "have it all" can be such sad examples of humanity, it makes them feel better by comparison. So as long as people have someone to look down on, they have some measure of self-esteem. This would be a belief system based on looking down on others by comparison, and elevating self without having to do anything. Just an observation.

Then there is the "science based" approach to forming a belief system. One might think this would be a reasonable approach, and it can be as a part of one's belief system if the science is accurate. Science is important and we embrace its advancements in many fields which have made our lives better. But science must be put into the proper perspective. It depends

completely on the facts and assumptions which are used to determine the "scientific" outcome. Most of what is called scientific has at least some projection using unknown or partially known variables. The phrase "garbage in-garbage out" was invented by scientists. A large part of what is called science these days is actually modeling, which is used to predict outcomes, such as future weather, performance of a vehicle being designed, and so on. Real modeling relies on having very few unknowns and very limited variables, otherwise it can be inaccurate, and sometimes grossly inaccurate. The process is dependent on people who must input facts, conditions and assumptions, who must use conjecture sparingly, and the variables must be highly controlled. Therefore when someone says they rely on the science, we need to first know that they used highly accurate data and sufficiently controlled the important variables. One variable is time, and the farther out the model projects the possible outcomes, the less accurate it will be. Therefore science can only explain a tiny bit of everything in the universe. That is why we trust what the Bible says, because God is the Designer of the universe. True science simply tries to understand what God has designed, without undue speculation.

Belief systems are also formed based on supporting causes or trying to improve the world. People want to help underprivileged children or animals or whatever, which of course can be helpful when correctly targeted and implemented. But causes can be destructive when they are radical and implemented by force. Regarding radical causes, some people look for a purpose in life apart from God, trying to create a reason for their own existence. They want to save something or help with something. Not a problem until it consumes that person to the exclusion of clear thinking and normal life functions. For ideas and concepts which do not align with truth, these can become a fanatical pursuit of changing the world into something which cannot happen. These are misguided, and ultimately destructive to self and others. Radical environmentalism is one of the more popular examples, but there are many others. People reject the truth and then are surprised to find they have no meaning or purpose in life. So they seek a cause to make their life meaningful. And they focus on it in a self-destructive way. There is a way to support a cause which makes improvements, but there is also a way to use it to try to avoid the reality of missing out on the true meaning and purpose of life.

Another method of forming a belief system is that everything is equally acceptable, that "all roads lead to Rome," meaning all beliefs are equal. Being neutral in all situations is the goal, which is not the definition of the perfect human. To them, nothing is worth taking a position to defend as right or wrong. In reality, having no opinion is the same as having no belief

system. Yet some people believe that having no opinion will prevent criticism. The opposite is true. People without firm beliefs are empty shells without conviction or purpose.

These are just a few examples of some of the more widespread and popular forms of belief systems, the distractions involved in forming them, and how they can be mixed and matched, and pieces added or subtracted. But there is only one form of correct thoughts and beliefs, as outlined in the Bible. No one fulfills this perfectly, except for Jesus Christ. Christians have the opportunity to have correct thoughts and beliefs to the highest degree, but there are many levels of achievement among them. First we must choose to accept salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. Then after we choose salvation, we are required to grow spiritually by learning the Word of God. This is the highest level thought and belief system by far, since it is from God. So for the believer, the standard is the pursuit of correct thoughts and beliefs by studying, learning, and applying the truth from God's Word from our human spirit. We will expand on this one and only correct belief system later.

There are additional types of belief systems, but the purpose of this chapter is merely to provide some examples of the most popular ones, not to list or explain all of them. And to reiterate, a person can have several types of belief systems melded into one overall system of beliefs, whether compartmentalized or integrated, mutually supportive or randomly chaotic. Or nonsensical. For believers, we can have multiple belief systems in harmonious agreement, if they all align with the truth from the Word of God. And not everything is right or wrong, since some things are merely personal choices. But it is the core beliefs which drive most people, if they have any. For those who do not, they just muddle through life trying to avoid thinking too much or taking a firm position on anything.

But let us pause for a moment and examine our purpose here. Most people are generally just trying to make their way through life, to survive and also have some degree of comfort and happiness. Whether they live at a low level of thoughts and beliefs, or something viewed as higher level, is not the point. The issue is whether their thoughts and beliefs are in alignment with the truth, or an alternative route based on something else. And there can only be one truly correct way, and it is found through the Bible. And if a belief system does not lead to eternal life, what good is it?

For those believers who focus on their spiritual life after salvation, their belief system will be based on the Word of God and doing what God wishes them to do. This type of belief system becomes more narrowly focused on truth. Of course, there are various degrees of success in this path, and differences of opinion. But for those believers who neglect or even reject their spiritual growth, they will live generally as the unbelievers live, with mixed-up thoughts and beliefs, even though they are saved.

For unbelievers, having rejected God and His gracious offer of salvation, they must find alternate paths in a search for happiness. We have discussed that God has provided work, marriage and family for unbelievers as a basic form of belief system, in which they can have some level of success and happiness while alive. Some are content in this and live that life, while others seek "meaning" in life, since they do not have God to give them meaning, purpose and fulfillment. This can result in crusading for causes to make one's life count for something, often based on helping other people, animals, the earth, or something which they see as a worthy cause. Nothing wrong with that, except that it can distract from thinking about God and eternity.

This is where people form alternate belief systems designed to make them believe they are better, more advanced, or superior people. They compare themselves to others, and especially those who believe and trust in God. In this way they gain a perceived sense of heightened self-esteem by declaring others to be inferior. This is a powerful motivator, especially in more advanced, or at least wealthier, societies since working less and retiring earlier is possible. This often becomes a secular salvation by comparison approach, not of eternal salvation but a temporal salvation from guilt and despair over having no real purpose in life. The only true sense of purpose, and the only belief system which has meaning, is the one which lines up with the plan of God. That is, salvation, and living a spiritual life as outlined in the Word of God, thinking and believing as God has instructed us, living by the only source of truth, and having a meaningful life.

But for now, take a look around at the world, and you will see many bad examples of what people view as higher order belief systems. There are those who set themselves up as elite members of the keepers of the truth as they view it, although they oppose Biblical truth. Politicians are often a good example of bad beliefs. Power is their primary belief system, but only for themselves, not for the general population. Criminals and politicians are a lot alike, with some wonderful exceptions. But power lust brings in the "criminal animalistic instincts"

we discussed when talking about what criminals believe. Giving in to the powerful lusts of the Sinful Nature and combining it with an out of control Emotion plus adding political power is a bad combination in politics. Truth is whatever they say it is, but they lie without apology, while truly believing their own lies. This is not a new thing, but it has become pervasive lately as the world has degenerated. Once again we see how higher order beliefs, although complex, can be destructive. And the world suffers as a result.

We will now take a closer look at why people reject truth.



## **CHAPTER 11**

### **ACCEPTANCE & REJECTION OF TRUTH**

What is it about humans which causes them to resist truth, and reject correct thinking processes? God designed a primary and logical pathway for thinking which involves the various logical components of the soul advising the soul's Heart, which forms conclusions and decisions then sends out expressions from the soul. Recall that the Heart is not the Emotion as is often erroneously stated, but rather the thinking engine of the soul which interfaces with the outside world and with God. The logical advisors to the Heart are the Mind, Conscience, Memory, and for the believer it also includes the human spirit which processes and stores spiritual information. God is the source of logic, and He has given it to humans as a gift. But there is a lifelong battle in the soul of each person over which advisors the Heart will listen to when making decisions, whether it will be the logical advisors or the Sinful Nature backed by an out-of-control Emotion, which are an illogical duo. The logical advisors are normally aligned in opposition to the Sinful Nature, with its sinful tendencies and lust patterns, which seeks to gain the upper hand as an illicit advisor to the Heart.

The issue of truth rejection or acceptance plays a major role in human thoughts and beliefs. While there can be many reasons for occasionally rejecting truth, there are two overarching factors which cause persistent truth rejection, namely, existing core beliefs which do not align with truth, and distortions in the thinking processes. When a person has distorted existing core beliefs, new thoughts and beliefs which oppose them are difficult to accept unless existing beliefs are first rejected or set aside. People therefore will reject truth and reality mostly because they have previously formed core beliefs based on falsehoods which are the antithesis of truth, and once they become firmly established are hard to change. And it is the core beliefs which are most important among all beliefs since they determine what will be accepted as true in the future, since a comparison is made with existing beliefs, and especially core beliefs, when new information is being considered. Core beliefs strongly influence how a person views the world, spiritual issues, other people, and so on. Therefore changing incorrect core beliefs often takes a personal crisis or disaster. As previously noted, beliefs are powerful things. The second main factor which affects truth acceptance is distortion of the thinking

processes. We have discussed how the Sinful Nature is the primary culprit here. Internal soul distortions make it difficult for a person to think clearly, especially since arrogance and emotion become involved when there are strong soul distortions generated by the Sinful Nature. Attempts to convey reality and truth to such a person will be met with resistance due to their inability to think clearly and rationally. We will expand further on this issue over the next several chapters, and also look at the mechanisms people use to deflect and avoid truth and reality.

When people allow their Emotion to join the Sinful Nature in a revolt against the soul's Heart, alternate pathways in the soul are formed which by-pass the logical advisors as the source of logic and truth. This usually starts slowly and builds over time. Under such conditions the Heart's ability to come to logical conclusions become degraded due to overwhelming influence from the Emotion and the Sinful Nature, so the expressions of the soul increasingly come from the Sinful Nature-Emotion alliance instead of from the Heart and Mind. One result is arrogance, which is the biggest blinder of people. It is a destructive sinful attitude which is a direct product of the Sinful Nature-Emotion alliance. And Satan's Cosmic System constantly promotes distortions and lies, feeding this alliance. The result is rejection of truth in favor of Cosmic System lies, and the longer this continues, the more locked-in it becomes so that the person eventually lives in a state of unreality.

There are many lesser reasons such as misunderstandings and indifference, but our discussion relates to persistent and intentional refusal to accept that which is true. And our definition of truth for this discussion is both that which is fundamentally and clearly true or reality in a general sense, and also truth from the Word of God. Of course we recognize there are gray areas, but that is not a matter of truth and reality vs. lies and unreality, which is what we are discussing here. We do not live in a perfect world, but there is truth, and there is reality.

Humans have many forms of ideology which oppose truth. Secular higher order beliefs have grown dramatically during the past few decades. Many believe their politics, social beliefs, or cause are the highest form of human enlightenment of thoughts and beliefs, although they may have no basis in truth for those beliefs when they oppose truth and reality. Such people look down on Christians for believing in God and believing in what the Bible reveals. To them, they have evolved way beyond the need for God. They either deny God or say He cannot impose rules on them. They believe in themselves as a god who can control their own destiny.

When an ideology is accepted it is powerful and persistent in its drive toward the goals of that belief system. Good or bad, moral or immoral, constructive or destructive, ideology will drive behavior in compelling ways. But attempting to avoid God has never been a strategy for long term happiness. That is because alternate beliefs which deny or avoid truth and reality cannot make sense of one's life, or understand what God has designed.

The involvement of Emotion along with strong lusts yields an arrogance of life which can make a person believe anything, especially about themselves. Arrogance is the biggest blinder of people, and it is a product of the Sinful Nature-Emotion alliance. Look at Satan, who told himself he could "be like the most high God" and really believed it, and tried to overthrow God. Put into perspective the human politicians, economists, social reformers, and endless lines of arrogant self-important people promoting causes in opposition to actual truth, and you can see that when it comes to combining the Sinful Nature with Emotion, anything and everything in the realm of beliefs, no matter how outrageous, becomes possible. And lies from such people are more likely to be accepted as true by the masses of people than the Bible. But why? Once again, combining the distortions of the Sinful Nature with the non-thinking Emotion will inevitably lead to the inability to accept the truth of either reality or God's Word due to the blinding effects of arrogance. And when truth and reality are rejected, all that remains is varying forms of untruth and lies. Unreality and lies will be accepted as true by someone, somewhere, and often by a lot of people everywhere. Again, just take a look around at the state of the world. When a maximum number of people in a society reject truth, all that is left for them to believe is the lies.

More recently a new form of thought and beliefs has emerged which has spread like wildfire, and is based on building up self as having a more "progressive" form of beliefs, then showing hatred for those seen as lesser humans for holding to traditional beliefs. People who see themselves as advanced humans due to progressiveness of their thoughts and beliefs hate the non-progressives. Then super-progressed people hate those who have only semi-progressed in beliefs. And on it goes. Such people view themselves as thinking higher order thoughts and having higher order beliefs, but they actually engage in a very ancient practice of low level, and often criminal, thoughts and beliefs. This practice started with the fall of Satan and his demons, who set themselves up in opposition to the truth based on Satan's lie. The lie is how Satan got his start, as he is called "a liar from the beginning." (John 8:44) The current form takes pieces of self-righteousness mixed with pieces of pseudo-science mixed with pieces of half-truths and outright lies, all under the oversight of emotionalism linked with the Sinful Nature, and calls it progressive thought and beliefs. The absurdity is apparent to all others,

but to the progressive initiants all they can see is superiority of self as an advanced life-form. In other words, a lie.

We have seen how the enemy of reality in thought and beliefs is the Emotion aligned with the Sinful Nature, over-ruling the Mind and Heart to suppress thought and beliefs related to reality and truth. The result is what we have today, a society of people who hate and lie and deceive and manipulate to get what they want, at the expense of innocent others, all due to the misguided self-delusion that they have progressed beyond formerly acceptable, but now outdated, beliefs. They set one group against another to create strife and discord. Into this discord they exert themselves as power brokers and power seekers, in order to gain control over others they see as inferior. In this society and under this set of thoughts and beliefs there is no truth and nothing honorable. Only hatred, self-promotion, greed, power lust, and lies. And Bible truth is one of the things such people hate most strongly. In contrast the Bible emphasizes love as the basis for thinking, making Christianity the only belief system based on love.

Other methods of denying and rejecting truth involve falling into Cosmic System fallacy traps. These can include the fallacy that all opinions have equal value, so that the opinion of every person must be valued. That assumes there is no truth. The truth is what must be valued, not opinions. Of course, people who believe what is false should be encouraged to see why the truth is better. That is why the gospel needs to be the first message to such people since it is the starting place for all truth. But opinions either line up with truth or they do not. Opinions which are opposed to the truth are lies, and should be treated as such.

There is also a method of denying truth which says that if someone who is generally on the side of truth fails in some way, then all their beliefs are wrong. This is the "hypocrisy" fallacy of denying truth, whereby someone is labeled a hypocrite and therefore everything they say is unworthy of one's attention. This is often used on Christians, who are all sinners, but are often labeled hypocrites for being believers yet continue to sin. All believers sin, and are forgiven, so this fallacy focuses on a non-issue to distort and deny truth, especially the gospel of salvation.

Then there is the related fallacy of "same-same," which says that for every lie there is someone on the side of truth who has at some point been associated with something which appears to

be, or even actually is, false or untrue. This fallacy states that lies and truth cannot be sorted out since they are all mixed together, and since they cannot be perfectly sorted out, nothing can be viewed as reality or truth. God rejects relative comparisons as the method of separating truth from lies. Truth is truth, and lies are lies. Using distorted comparisons is an effort to confuse humans into relative thinking, and make them think everything is just same-same, meaning no right or wrong. This is one of Satan's most powerful tactics, and we see continually how so many fall into the "same-same" trap and are confused into thinking that the truth cannot be sorted out from lies, making right and wrong, and truth and reality, all irrelevant.

Then of course there is the "it's all relative" fallacy whereby people seek to deny there is any truth at all, and therefore no right or wrong, so no one can declare anything unacceptable. Under this fallacy everything is relative, and no belief system is superior to any other. But the Bible declares there is truth, and also that there is non-truth and/or lies, and that there is right and wrong. Philippians 4:8 says "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Note the emphasis on thinking. And this verse makes the phrase "it's all relative" entirely false. "It" is not all relative. There is truth, and there are lies.

There are others, but these serve to illustrate various methods of denying, disregarding, and distorting the truth. It is worth repeating John 8:44 which says "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

We have discussed how the soul's Emotion can revolt and take the side of the Sinful Nature, aligning in opposition to the logical advisors, making bad decisions more difficult to avoid. This leads to feeling and reacting one's way through life rather than thinking one's way through. We will continue to expand on this important point because it is key to understanding most human dysfunctions in thoughts and beliefs. The Emotion does not think, so it merely responds or reacts to either the Heart backed by the logical advisors or else to the Sinful Nature. The Emotion was designed by God to respond in pleasure to the Heart in alignment with the logical advisors of the soul, however the Emotion can also misalign with the Sinful Nature. This makes the Emotion the wild card of the soul, sometimes aligning with

the logical advisors, and sometimes aligning with the Sinful Nature. When the Emotion become the near permanent ally of the Sinful Nature, the two combine to overwhelm the Heart and essentially stage a coup, taking over the thinking process and making it illogical in the affected areas. And since the Sinful Nature is the ally of Satan, the person becomes allied with Satan's Cosmic System which at its core is a system of lies and illogic, and is opposed to God and truth.

This is how the Emotion can create instability inside the soul when allied with the Sinful Nature, and if severe enough it can result in overall mental instability and eventually mental illness. The Emotion of the soul is meant to respond to what the Heart concludes, not to advise it, so the Emotion is not one of the logical advisors to the Heart. When the logical advisors are set aside in favor of the Sinful Nature which has gained the alliance of the Emotion, logic and truth become victims, and lies can be easily accepted. This most often happens as a result of seeking continuous pleasure at the expense of responsible behavior, which trains the Emotion to revolt and support the Sinful Nature. As pleasure and "fun" become the main goals in life, responsible actions can take a back seat, at least in some areas of life, or maybe in broad areas. And since unbelievers have no human spirit, the Sinful Nature's influence is harder to avoid and therefore can more easily become the dominant influence on their Heart.

When the Heart of the soul is taken over by the Sinful Nature backed by the Emotion, the logical advisors of the soul, including the human spirit for the believer, are mostly shut off from influencing the Heart, while the Sinful Nature and Emotion take control of the soul. This locks in a cycle of arrogance in the soul, which grows like a cancer if not stopped. Over time even the logical advisors become corrupted, as the Mind and Conscience take on distorted patterns and lose their logic and good standards. At that point, rejection of truth is not only possible, but rather becomes locked-in as the norm. This can be isolated to certain areas of life, or it can be broad-based, so it does not mean they cannot properly apply what they have learned about specific subject areas like math, engineering, sports, welding, teaching or such since that information can be applied apart from emotional interference if the person chooses to do so.

Therefore the Sinful Nature aligned with the Emotion sets up roadblocks to truth. The primary logical advisors of the Heart are by-passed, and the soul must use alternate pathways to form its expressions to the outside world. These "alternate pathways" explain why such

divergent views are not only possible, but entirely "logical" to the person firmly holding illogical views. The Sinful Nature teamed up with the wild card Emotion becomes the primary alternate pathway for expressions, and one of the main keys to understanding the issue of truth reception vs. rejection. And at this point the Heart has already been trained to be a compliant slave instead of being in charge of the soul, as it succumbs to arrogance, making it a dictator instead of a soul leader. Therefore the Sinful Nature and Emotion end up doing the "pseudo thinking" for the person. In reality it is not thought at all, but rather Cosmic System emotional expression from a soul under the dictatorial control of the Sinful Nature supported by a fluttering Emotion, which results in a soul consumed by arrogance which is unable to think logically or see the truth.

Trying to change the Mind of someone locked into this condition using facts and logic is futile, since facts and logic must go through the logical advisors to the Heart, which have been bypassed. The distorter of the soul, the Sinful Nature allied with the Emotion, attempt to block logic in the Mind. The Emotion exhibits reactions instead of normal responses. The human spirit is also shut down as the Heart refuses to process spiritual information into and out from it. This is the meaning of "hardness of Heart" in the Bible, since the Heart is hardened off as the primary mechanism of logical integrated decision making as God designed it to be. "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts." (Ephesians 4:18) Hardness of the Heart is a Bible analogy showing a loss of logical thinking processes, whereby the Heart of the soul is barely able to pump a logical information flow through the soul. Logic in the Mind and good decision making by the Heart are blocked, thinking processes grind to a halt, and the Sinful Nature-Emotion alliance takes over.

When a person gets into this hardened status in the soul, the Emotion can block the ability to believe even what the person would like to believe. The Mind would normally look at truth and see it as worth believing, but the Emotion comes in and blocks acceptance. It substitutes an arrogant reaction for thoughts in the Mind, and the Heart is also stopped from making good decisions. And a reaction is not a thought or belief, simply a rejection, somewhat like a two year old child who only seems to know the word "NO!" This happens to believers who start out on the right path in their spiritual life but then stray from it. Maybe just a little at first, or maybe a strong reaction due to some shock like the death of a loved one. When spiritual thoughts arise they are immediately rejected by the Emotion. As the cycle continues, this reaction becomes more firmly set, and eventually no spiritual belief is even possible. Even if that person wants to turn the issue around and get back to living a spiritual life, it is

very difficult due to the Emotion reacting against any attempt to do so, and the arrogance which has taken hold in the soul. So also with unbelievers who get into an emotional reaction state. As they get older they may begin to think about their own death, and would like to explore salvation by faith in Christ. But their Emotion is too firmly entrenched in an arrogant reaction state, which prevents the person from being able to consider the salvation message. This is why early consideration of the gospel message is important, before the soul becomes hardened.

Although totally illogical, Cosmic System lies make sense to someone who has a soul controlled by the Sinful Nature-Emotion lock on the soul. This often results in a dual personality, sometimes mild or sometimes resulting in neurosis or psychosis. So a person under hardness of Heart generally does not reject all truth from all sources, but typically chooses certain areas of life as a focus where they turn off their rational lie detector. Therefore this status is not necessarily all or nothing, so it can either be isolated to certain subject areas or it can be widespread. There can be pockets of logic if the person has built up strong standards in certain areas, but the soul is still able to easily reject truth in the affected areas. If this continues long enough it usually will become broad-based, often with some specific areas of interest becoming all-consuming with an associated passionate approach to illogical expression. This is also where mental gymnastics come into play, using irrational tools such as denial, dissociation, compartmentalization, and self-delusion instead of logic to enable the person to believe the unbelievable.

The Emotion backed by the Sinful Nature prevents rational thinking, while at the same time enabling illogical mental gymnastics, even among people who pride themselves as being superior in "knowledge." But their knowledge is ultimately arrogant foolishness. The Emotion cannot think so it becomes a domineering queen which reigns over a dysfunctional soul directed by the queen's Rasputin in the form of the Sinful Nature. The Heart can only think and make good decisions by integrating the inputs from the various logical advisors such as the Conscience, Memory, and so on, but when it is by-passed by the Sinful Nature allied with the out of control Emotion, the person literally cannot think clearly about certain subjects, but can only emote within the cosmic system jumble of pseudo information and lies. The combined Sinful Nature and Emotion end up doing the "pseudo thinking" for the person. But in reality it is not thought at all, but rather pure Cosmic System emotional expression from an arrogant soul which is out of control and under the near-total influence of the Sinful Nature. Because of this, humans are capable of the most heinous thought distortions



imaginable, even if they are still capable of being logical in certain specific areas, such as their working life.

The person who emotes their way through life will especially reject the truth when it comes to issues which relate to God and other important information which Satan opposes, and that is another key to why truth is rejected. Satan tries to interfere with people seeing God as the source of truth, but what is less understood, Satan also interferes with important areas of life which God has ordained for an orderly society under which people can make decisions about God and His plan. These areas include nations, politics, economics, the media and many other issues since Satan wants to distort them and entice individuals and groups of people to join Satan's side while opposing God's plan and His rules for nations, society, authority, human interactions, and so on. Politics often becomes an all-consuming passion for illogical expression since it is an area which Satan tries desperately to influence, since it is associated with power, and Satan constantly seeks to influence those with power. Therefore Satan especially focuses on gaining advantages at certain strategic areas of life where power exists, such as politics and the media, since they are some of the most efficient and effective ways for Satan to broadcast lies into the general population. Satan is the "father of lies" and Satan's Cosmic System is fueled by lies. So the primary areas of truth rejection often begin with God and spiritual truths, and are followed by other areas where Satan has specific interests in influencing the course of history by breaking down the orderly functioning of societies.

Remember why this matters to Satan, that he is highly focused on changing the outcome of his sentence to the Lake of Fire. Satan has few remaining options, so he tries to affect the outcome of human history in an attempt to prevent God's prophecies from coming to pass, trying desperately to show God to be a liar just like Satan, therefore no better than Satan. Satan's blasphemous plan may not look like a rational one, but he has already failed at all his primary plans, so at this point distortion of truth is one of his few remaining options to somehow attempt to prove God is unfair or a liar. That is why the world is so full of lies, because Satan is entirely focused on destroying truth wherever it exists, especially among believers who seek the truth of the Word, but also among unbelievers in areas where Satan can influence the future course of history to his presumed advantage. Therefore Satan directs his lies toward the human race as he attempts to alter his decreed outcome. Most people of the world are inside Satan's Cosmic System, and are therefore influenced by that system to promote Satan's lies, even though they would be shocked to understand that issue.

And when this combines with the internal influences from the soul with a hardened Heart under the control of the Sinful Nature and backed by the out of control Emotion people can gravitate toward a lie no matter how convincing the truth may be. Nothing can be proven to a person under such circumstances. Logic is replaced by whatever feels right. The Sinful Nature takes over to determine what is "right" so that wrong easily becomes right to that person as the Conscience becomes distorted. If the soul is out of control, dominated by the Sinful Nature in alliance with the Emotion, they look arrogantly at the truth and call it a lie, and look at a lie and call it the truth. The longer they do so, the easier it becomes. The soul develops untruthful ruts into which the next thoughts fall and ride along uninterrupted by rational thinking. This is the ultimate answer to why different people look at the same information, conditions or circumstances and draw opposite conclusions. It is the answer to why people reject the truth in favor of the lie. It is the answer to why the Cosmic System is so popular among people. It is also the answer to why so many people will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire apart from God. Namely, that a hardened Heart under the control of the Sinful Nature backed by the out of control Emotion causes people to gravitate toward a lie no matter how convincing the truth may be.

This brings us to a central point about how salvation is accepted, and also how truth is acquired from the Bible. God requires both to be by faith, and only by faith. Faith is belief. Recall that is what this book is about. Faith accepts from God what we do not deserve, including salvation and our spiritual life. Faith believes that God, as the source of the Bible and salvation, is worth believing, that He is trustworthy, and that He tells the truth. Faith is the only method authorized by God for acquiring spiritual information, and avoids merit and works by the recipient. Faith is the only fair way for God to provide salvation, and also spiritual information afterward, otherwise smarter people would have all the advantages. God specifically excluded salvation by the senses, by deep thinking using rationalism, or any form of proof since these are based on merit and individual effort. God made salvation fair to all by basing it on faith in Jesus Christ, not by intellectual effort, because some people are smarter, grasp issues quicker, see more clearly what others do not see, and can prove things using intelligence-based methods easier than others. Using such merit-based processes as a means for salvation would be patently unfair, since some would have inherent advantages over others. Therefore only the smartest and deepest thinkers would be saved. God rejects such unfairness.

Instead, salvation is by faith only, and the message of salvation can be easily understood by anyone who is willing to listen and consider it. God does not allow His plan for salvation to be proven, and therefore requires that it must be accepted only by faith. The faith of the person,

which is belief, is apart from any work or merit. Therefore humans can take no credit for any part of salvation, leaving all the credit to Jesus Christ the Savior. He did the work. He gets the credit and glory. And therefore salvation is a free gift from God. Humans must first think that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ the only Savior, and then must believe it to be saved.

Beliefs come from thoughts, so thoughts and thinking precede beliefs. We think it, then we believe it or reject it. Our life is about choices, for or against God, for or against truth. Without that belief, everything else is simply muddling through life in a manner which ultimately has no meaning beyond death.

OK, that was intense. It is time to have some fun. Let's discuss dreaming.

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **SLEEP & DREAMING**

What is dreaming all about? Where does it occur? Why is it so odd, and disconnected from the reality of our waking life? Glad you asked, because it is a very interesting and even fun subject. And although dreaming is somewhat related to our thoughts and beliefs, there are some odd twists and turns. But why is dreaming so different than being awake? Science cannot figure out the sleep and dreaming issue, although they have tried very hard to do so. That is because science does not believe in a human soul, and dreaming occurs in the soul. Therefore dreaming helps to further reveal the presence of a soul in humans, for those willing to see it.

The Reader knows from experience that dreams often include many distortions of reality. Some truly bizarre. Memories may not be accurately recalled, even though we know the reality very well when awake. Time may be distorted, with the dreamer at a previous point in their life, or in the future. Things we know very well do not seem to prevent us from dreaming about a very odd set of opposite and unrealistic circumstances presented during the dream. Scary things happen but we cannot yell or run away. We go from one place to another without transportation. Things and people randomly appear and disappear. People we knew who have died appear and may even speak. We do odd, hazardous, and bizarre things which we would never do in real life. We go out in public stark naked and think it is OK and assume no one will notice or care. We try to perform tasks which are easy for us, but we cannot. Silly and ridiculous situations presented in the dream are taken seriously. Absurdities abound. We get caught in do-loops. The laws of physics are suspended. We hardly recognize the person who is posing as us in our own dreams. What is going on inside our soul?

Humans are not animals as we have discussed, but let us start with how animals dream, which is very different than humans. Animals can have "brain dreams" because they have no soul, but only about instinctive activities such as running, climbing and other muscle memory activities. But since humans have almost no instincts except for a few in newborns, we cannot

dream from the brain. In fact, the human brain is basically shut down during sleep, but can be aroused in case of emergencies. For humans, dreaming is a soul activity, even though it seems like the soul has missing pieces. In fact, it does have missing pieces during sleep and dreaming. Actually, parts of the soul go offline during sleep, but not the entire soul all at once. That is why dreams can be so bizarre and contain scenarios which confuse us, since the entire soul is not available during sleep. So dreams often contain sequences which are foreign to our waking thoughts and beliefs, because parts of it are offline at various points during sleep. The first conclusion we reach is, once again, dreaming is a soul activity, not a brain activity.

The soul requires a form of rest just as the body does, although for somewhat different reasons. The soul does not become tired, but it does need to reorient its resources and perform maintenance and storage tasks. These tasks can include sorting out and storing the recent memories, analyzing information it received during the past day, and sometimes just having some fun by inventing and trying out new thoughts. Dreaming allows individual components of the soul to operate under a reduced set of rules, which are less restrictive than waking rules where the soul must get through the day in an orderly and sometimes boring way. Dreaming is, among other things, a soul vacation. It is artistic. It is escapism, an escape from toil and repetitive boredom. If that means dreaming is about doing something different, then that is an understatement.

Therefore dreaming results when individual soul components begin exerting some flexibility to operate without full supervision from "The Boss." That "Boss" is the Heart of the soul, the primary component of the soul which shuts down during the majority of sleep. We have already discussed the Heart as the integrating engine of the soul, since it brings together all the various inputs from the various advisory parts of the soul, makes sense of the inputs and then decides what to think and believe (determines thoughts and beliefs). The Heart is the part of the soul which is in charge. It makes the decisions and sends out the orders. It is the controller of the soul. But when it shuts down to rest and do maintenance actions, the various other parts of the soul have some vacation time. There is no one to tell them what to do. YIPPEE! No one is in charge! So like the old adage says: "When the cat's away the mice will play." And play they do, as the various soul components do what they please, but still within a somewhat reasonable limit -- that is, if you call dreaming about public nudity "within reasonable limits."

Therefore the answer to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter regarding why dreams can be so bizarre is that when we sleep certain parts of the soul shut down, or at least go into a power saving mode where they doze off, sometimes taking turns. And sometimes more than one soul component goes offline at the same time. This is why REM sleep dreams can be so different than dreams just before we wake in the morning. Different parts of the soul are offline at different points of the sleep cycle.

Now for some examples to explain the previous assertions. The soul essentially rotates which soul components are allowed to go into power saving "Eco" mode. At one point it will be the Memory, or at least portions of it. Sometimes the short term Memory is down, then other times longer term Memory, and other times archival Memory is down. This is why our memories during dreaming can be so far off from reality. Soul components go into a "power saving" mode during sleep, including Memory which does not function as well during sleep. In our dreams we may remember that we are in a certain job, but that might have been years ago. But that does not stop us from dreaming about being in that job at the present time, but it may be mixed with later memories, such as being married. Then people who are now dead appear. So dreaming memories are not always aligned with the correct timeline of our life. And this disorientation to time is a major factor regarding why dreams can be so odd.

To further explore this issue, for Memory to work accurately it must also relate to time, which is not a direct Memory function, although it does use association of like memories to relate to time. Time and location orientation are in the Mind, so when the Mind is in Eco mode, the Memory may have difficulty knowing where memories fit in the timeline of our life, unless the associations between certain memories is very strong. Therefore during sleep we can be at many different times and locations which occurred during our life, or at no time or location we have ever experienced. Reality becomes distorted because accurate time and location are not available to the Memory at all times during sleep, since the Mind goes in and out of resting mode. If the Mind does not supply accurate time and location data, the Memory will invent it. This makes for some very odd dreams about time and location. And often we do not remember very important information at some times during sleep as certain parts of the soul become unavailable for interaction. Couple all this with a Heart which is generally shut down during sleep, and it can be quite a circus act as the various parts of the soul invent alternate realities.

The primary reason for sleep is the physical side of the human, especially the brain, which needs to rest and recharge. The brain goes into various levels of power saving "Eco" modes during sleep, but can be aroused by noise or physical contact such as shaking. But it is not the same as being truly unconscious, where waking is difficult or even impossible. Being unconscious is not sleep, and dreaming while unconscious probably does not occur, or maybe rarely based on the level of unconsciousness, which are not all the same. During sleep the brain shuts off most of its sensory inputs, although for safety reasons we are designed to wake up under conditions of unexpected noise, physical contact, smells, etc.

Awareness of self is in the soul, and there are various levels of thought awareness, including alert, resting, diminished (drowsy or impaired), sleep, and unconscious (totally unaware). Since the soul cannot get to the outside universe except through the brain (until eternity where a different form of body will exist), the soul is highly dependent on the brain for awareness. Those things which affect the brain affect soul awareness, including sleep.

As mentioned earlier, we know that animals can dream. Well, sort of. But not as humans do. Animals dream in repetitive motion and instinctive ways from their sensory center, which is in the brain, and mainly as muscle memory. They run away from danger, or chase other animals. They dream instinctive actions. But human dreams are not based on instincts or repetitive motion. God designed both animal and human brains to shut off most major muscle motion while sleeping to prevent harm. If we bolt upright, we are awake when it occurs.

On the issue of dreaming and repetitive motion, I am an avid golfer, but my dreams never allow me to actually swing a golf club. I often must wait for what seems like hours in my dream (time is distorted in dreams) to tee off as one event after another prevents proceeding, only to be foiled by sudden darkness. Why? Because my soul does not know how to swing a golf club, so it cleverly avoids the subject. It does not want to try because it would fail. The soul cannot swing a golf club, but the brain can. It is the same with any complex repetitive motion sport. The dream may include having done the action, but it does not include doing the action, not in any detail, at least. If the brain were doing the dreaming, then all dreams would be repetitive motion and sensory only, just as with animals. It would not be the complex scenarios humans dream about which cannot happen in real life. The brain has never seen unreality through the senses since everything is real, although some things are

misinterpreted. But the human soul can invent some seriously outlandish scenarios when the Heart is shut down and not in charge of the soul.

And so that explains the public nudity thingy. But only men admit to it. Women seem to have issues about the subject. So did Adam and Eve in the Garden dream about public nudity? Trick question.

We mentioned several chapters ago that there is no subconscious mind in the soul as a separate component. That is true, although the shutting down of various components, sometimes taking turns, acts like a subconscious as it is generally defined which is "existing in the mind but not available at the conscious level." That definition is OK to define the concept that such things occur, but there is no separate subconscious mind. Dreaming is somewhat related to this issue, whereby the various soul components express what they are working on without the Heart coordinating their inputs, although they go through the Mind as thoughts which are not fully vetted. But since the Mind is not always active during sleep, the other components must either wait or invent an outrageous set of bizarre circumstances to fill in the blanks. That is why dreams are so odd, because the thoughts are simply thrown out randomly without coordination or full processing, otherwise most would be discarded as non-compliant with good thinking processes. The Mind is capable of working on multiple tasks at the same time, and many of them are done in the background, but during sleep these background thoughts can escape without being properly processed. This background processing in the Mind is what some would call a subconscious, but it is actually just background processing inside the Mind.

Although different than dreaming, a human soul can become disoriented to reality during waking time in much the same way as in dreaming. The Heart can be subverted, corrupted, or may abdicate its responsibilities while awake. Other soul components may abdicate their responsibilities. The soul can become dysfunctional. We will discuss these issues next.



## **CHAPTER 13**

### **MENTAL ILLNESS & MALADIES**

Those who lose control of their mental processes have our empathy. It is a terrible thing for the person involved, and also for those who care about that person. The reason we will discuss them here is that they are mostly soul dysfunctions, not brain problems. This chapter will cover some of the issues related to mental illness and associated maladies, and why they occur.

However, this chapter will only try to deal with what the Bible says about the subject, and will not attempt to cover the issues in any detail, which would require another book. Having said that, the books which have been written on the subject mainly approach the issues from the viewpoint of a dysfunctional brain, not as soul issues. That is a sad reality regarding the lack of useful information on this important subject, because most such issues occur in the soul.

A well-known Pastor from the 1800's, C.H. Spurgeon, said of this issue:

"The mind can descend far lower than the body, for in it there are bottomless pits. The flesh can bear only a certain number of wounds and no more, but the soul can bleed in ten thousand ways, and die over and over again."

The soul can become distorted and think and believe things which do not align with reality, as noted in previous chapters. Our purpose here is to discuss such issues in view of what the Bible reveals about distortions of the human soul. We have mentioned that most of these mental distortions are soul issues, and since most psychologists and psychiatrists do not believe in a soul, their remedies can only treat a few related symptoms. While this may often be necessary and useful, it deals with shutting off the soul from the brain using chemical inhibitors. This is not a criticism of such drugs, but our study seeks to understand the root causes and issues rather than assume there is simply a chemical imbalance, which is usually

incorrect. While there are exceptions, it is usually the soul which becomes distorted, not the chemicals in the brain. So it is the soul which leads to most mental maladies.

There are various forms of mental distortions, maladies, and illnesses which can cause the person to be unable to control their own thought processes. And that is the key, loss of control over the soul due to internal battles for control. These include but are not limited to schizophrenia, bipolar, paranoia, stress disorder, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorders, dissociation from reality, distortions of thought, incorrect or inappropriate mental processes, projection of weaknesses to others, inability to concentrate or stay with a certain train of thought, emotional overtaking of the soul, highs and lows, inability to control outbursts of anger, anxiety, panics, phobias, addictions, self-destructive thoughts, hatred, fear, envy, dread, low self-esteem, emptiness, zero-state, criminal tendencies, lack of drive, low initiative, give-up-itis, destructive lusts, and so on. Some of these are present at a low level in most people, although generally occasional and controllable. When severe enough and continuous they can be called mental illness. Overall the various distortions cover a wide array of inability to control one's own thoughts within the soul. We will now cover this subject in greater detail, and later will discuss the solutions found in the Bible. And the Bible is the only source of true soul and spirit healing through rehabilitation of thought processes.

If mental distortions remain for long durations they can become set patterns. The soul seeks patterns of behavior, usually for repetitive actions and thinking processes to make life easier. This is a natural tendency in both the soul and brain. But these repetitive patterns can become distorted and unrealistic. They can turn into counter-productive thoughts and a mental Coriolis Effect as the soul spins out of control. Deep ruts of incorrect mental processes are created. At that point the person begins to lose control of the thoughts in the soul, and if it continues the soul will become uncontrollable in either specific areas or possibly in broad areas. Instead of internal control by the Heart, an outside force seems to have taken control of the soul. And to some degree, that is true. But what is it?

That outside force is actually an inside force which is attached to the soul, and is what we have discussed previously as the Sinful Nature. It was not given to us by God, but was acquired by the original sin in the Garden of Eden. Therefore the Sinful Nature is the legacy of that original sin by our ancestors, passed down to all of us. It is not simply a tempter to sin inside of us, but rather the primary distorter of the soul and the source of almost all mental distortions, maladies and illnesses, with some exceptions. Although some mental illnesses

can be related to specific physical abnormalities and diseases, these make up only a small portion of the total. This is counter to psychology and psychiatry which seeks to resolve what they see as physical issues and chemical imbalances, since they do not generally believe there is a soul. Mental distortions appear to these practitioners to be brain misperceptions, misunderstandings, and misinformed choices, so psychiatry attempts to reason with the person and inform them of reality as they see it. But reasoning with a person controlled by the Emotion/Sinful Nature alliance to such an intense degree is attempting to reason with the unreasonable. The Mind may understand and even agree, but it is no longer primarily in charge of advising the Heart of the proper things to think and believe, or the proper actions to take. So even if the Mind becomes convinced, it will often be overruled. Instead, the Sinful Nature has taken control of the soul and is aligned with the non-thinking part of the soul, the Emotion, to drive a feeling-based approach to life rather than a thinking and believing approach. And God requires a thinking and believing approach to our spiritual life, not an emotional one. Even if the person is a believer, they may be unable to believe anything they once believed about God.

For instance, schizophrenia and bipolar are a result of an internal battle for control of the soul, on one side by the Heart supported by a rational Mind, and on the other side by the Emotion aligned with the Sinful Nature. The person can alternate between what they logically understand and what they feel. Reasoning with such a person can have a positive effect, but only until they allow the feeling side to take over again. During the early stages the Heart and Mind can maintain control for periods of time, but the Emotion/Sinful Nature alliance will battle to regain control. As this happens the person goes back and forth between a thinking approach to life and a feeling approach backed by the distorter of the soul. The feeling side has a strong arrogance factor due to the influences of the Sinful Nature, which is the source of this sin. If the cycle is not broken the person becomes more and more unstable and less able to control the Emotion/Sinful Nature alliance.

When the Sinful Nature and Emotion rule the soul, it will decline into a distorted state. The Emotion exerts its influences and pushes the Heart out of the way while the Sinful Nature engages in what it does best -- distortion and chaos, along with emotional swings. The by-product is arrogance in the soul, starting out slowly, but building over time. Since the Heart is meant to be the controller of the soul, and the Mind is designed to think logically, the overthrow of the Heart and Mind by the Emotion/Sinful Nature alliance short-circuits the rational thought processes which had existed, leaving the soul vulnerable to the non-rational, non-thinking Emotion/Sinful Nature usurpers. This is what creates a manic-depressive state,

when the Emotion alternately controls the soul in a high state and then cannot maintain such control of the soul, resulting in a low state as the Emotion pulls back removing emotional involvement, while the Heart remains neutralized by the Sinful Nature. This alternating state between a soul controlled by Emotion, which is a non-logical component, and the Emotion losing control resulting in a vacuum while the Heart remains offline, creates a yo-yo effect in the soul. Panic attacks can occur in between during the vacuum periods since there is no one in charge of the soul, so it literally cannot think or emote. Even if the Heart can intermittently regain some level of control, such stabilization becomes harder to achieve and shorter in duration the longer this whip-saw process continues. Eventually the Heart becomes severely hardened with arrogance and can no longer escape the grips of the Sinful Nature, so the cycle gets deeper and deeper, and the options fewer and fewer. Thinking and believing rationally becomes more and more difficult.

Such distortion begins with mild unreality and soul absurdities, but in later stages becomes illogical chaos. The person may remain generally functional, or become mentally incapacitated, or something in between, but they are in a state of unreality to either a small or great extent. Therefore the answer to why people can think in such a distorted manner is that when the Emotion is aligned with the Sinful Nature, and these two have created a pattern of over-ruling the Mind and Heart, it eventually becomes a set pattern of arrogance which the person may be unable to break, even if they desire to do so. Thinking becomes distorted as the logical components of the soul are pushed aside in favor of an emotional approach to the outside world. At the same time the Sinful Nature exerts greater control over the soul, creating chaos and non-linear thought processes guided by arrogance, meaning the inability to think clearly. The Sinful Nature stages a coup against the Heart, becoming an evil dictator which rules as an illogical and arrogant tyrant, robbing the soul of any hope of peace or happiness.

Young people can get into this distorted soul cycle during their teen years, and it is important that it be stopped as soon as possible. This can be very difficult. Discipline early on can help to stop the cycle of arrogance by which the Sinful Nature gains control. It is not just rebellion against authority, rather it is rebellion against their own Heart, substituting emotional soul expression combined with arrogance in place of logical thinking. If it is not stopped at an early point, it will become much harder to do so later. The cycle can often require some sort of hard jolt from life to shake the person out of their state of arrogant unreality.

The revolt by the Emotion/Sinful Nature alliance in the soul leads to irrationality and causes other serious issues for the person, as the mental state will inevitably deteriorate over time. The resulting mental instability leads to locked-in arrogance which rejects many types of authority, and promotes other mental sins such as hatred, jealousy and envy which cause a severe narrowing of mental tolerance and a near total inability to accept any form of truth in the areas of Sinful Nature-Emotion dominance. When this truth denial becomes non-selective it turns into a neurosis or psychosis, but most people do not reach that level of generalized truth rejection. Some areas usually remain fact-based due to long held beliefs which cannot be ignored, and these can remain islands of rationality in a sea of irrationality. But even so, a mental tsunami from the Sinful Nature-Emotion alliance can wipe out even such islands of rationality, especially when mental sins are intense and all-consuming.

In a broad spectrum takeover of the soul by the Sinful Nature backed by the Emotion, the Sinful Nature causes patterns of mental sins to come to the forefront which combine into a group of sins to further blind the person to the truth. These mental sins can overwhelm the soul and cause a shutdown of the Heart, at least in certain areas of life. The person then lives on the lusts of the Sinful Nature. These lusts are not always the carnal type, but rather power, monetary, superiority, and many other lusts which become possible. Generally, the mixture of lusts and sins distort the world view. Smug arrogance of superiority based on Cosmic System self-centeredness and self-absorption are the means of self-esteem, which is a house of cards. Cosmic System devices such as self-delusion, self-absorption, transference, and denial reject the logical deliberations of the soul, and result in a soul which is out of control and unable to process information in a logical manner, except of course in narrow areas of mechanical skills and rote memory application to a job or hobby. The mental sin combo of arrogance, envy, jealousy, and hatred rejects truth and authority other than one's own. Such people live on lies as their basis for a world view, and truth is a casualty. Isaiah 59:4 says of them: "no one pleads a case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments, they utter lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil. <sup>5</sup> They hatch the eggs of vipers and spin a spider's web. Whoever eats their eggs will die, and when one is broken, an adder is hatched."

A soul rift occurs when the person has slid so far down into reliance on the Sinful Nature that the soul cannot function normally. The soul rift consists of the Sinful Nature breaking the normal relationships of the Heart, Mind and Emotion. This relationship is a delicate dance whereby these three engage in a mutually beneficial interaction with the Heart in control, the Mind doing all the heavy lifting of thinking and figuring things out, and the Emotion just appreciating the whole process when things go well, or being disappointed when they do not

go well. In this relationship the Emotion is the wild card, and can be a disrupter. When the Sinful Nature interferes in soul processes, it first attacks the Emotion by enticing it into an illicit soul relationship, resulting in an upset of the delicate balance in the soul by causing the Emotion to become unhappy with what is going on. The issues do not need to be rational or reasonable. The Emotion just does not like something, and it causes soul upset. The Emotion ceases to enjoy the subordinate role of appreciation of what the rest of the soul does. It starts to think "Hey, what am I -- a potted plant?" and at that point the Emotion, at the encouragement of the Sinful Nature, revolts against the authority of the Heart. The Heart fights back and exerts its authority, and there is discordance in the soul. The Emotion becomes unhappy and seeks gratification apart from the Heart. That gratification can take the form of self-righteousness or hedonism or anything in between, or maybe both at the same time. The "both at the same time" thing is one method where the soul can become confused and out of sync with reality. An alternate reality is then created. The Mind is confused by all of this illogic and seeks to perform some form of mental gymnastics whereby it can remain neutral. But in the end all three become engaged in a dysfunctional relationship. If this is not stopped, it is all downhill from there.

It is at this point where the person begins to lose touch with reality. The former interactions inside the soul become strained and discordant. A deep sense of unhappiness ensues. Further attempts to stop the unhappiness result only in greater unhappiness and use of more emotional stimulation. The soul becomes hopelessly confused and depressed. Eventually panic attacks occur as the soul cannot decide what or how to think at certain points. The soul becomes less and less able to make sense of the reality around it. Concentration becomes more difficult. The person feels a loss of control, but does not understand it. The inputs from the senses are seen as distractions from internal attempts to solve the problems of the dysfunctional relationships among the Heart, Mind, and Emotion. At the same time, the standards of the Conscience eventually erode. The soul descends into chaos as normal soul functions are degraded to a greater and greater extent. The soul sinks deeper and deeper into unhappiness and unreality, as the mental defense mechanisms fail. It is at this point that depression becomes the norm. The soul can no longer function "normally." Chaos in the soul continues the slide into oblivion. The best that can happen at this point is a lack of unhappiness, not happiness. But even that comes rarely.

Mental distortions, maladies, disruptions, contortions, or whatever they might be called run a continuum from mild to severe. For convenience we will generally just refer to them as mental distortions. On the mild side they disrupt us from thinking the way we want to think.

Everyone has these issues to some degree, so this is not unusual. We want to trust God but we have doubts based on emotion. We want to think normally but compulsions come onto the scene and interfere. We want to believe the Bible but our minds can only think of things which appear to counter it. We can only see what is in the world, not what the Bible reveals. There is a war inside us over control of our thoughts. What is going on? Why can't we just think what we want to think, and believe what we want to believe? Why can't we simply decide to switch away from the Sinful Nature back to the Heart and Mind processes we formerly used and start thinking normally again? Of course, it does not work that way. Once the Sinful Nature has control it is difficult to wrestle that control away from it because everything is a swirl of confusing inputs and undigested outputs mixed with uncontrolled emotions, all of which interferes with re-starting normal thinking.

When the soul gets out of control as described above the result is chaos in the soul. That is soul damage. And the damage is real, because the soul is real. It is not just something which can be fixed by a quick reset. It requires effort and a right approach. Only information from the Bible can begin to repair the soul, if it can be accepted and internalized into the human spirit. Otherwise the mental drift will continue and will intensify. The Word of God is alive and powerful, and can eventually overcome the Sinful Nature distortions of the soul and break its influence. But it is hard, and takes time and persistence. That is what God requires of us, namely continuous positive decisions toward Him and His plan. Day by day. That is how the soul is rehabilitated. And if medication helps calm the soul to allow study of the Word, then that is a good and proper use for them. But the real solution is soul rehabilitation by getting the Heart and Mind back in control, putting the Emotion back into its rightful place, and suppression of the Sinful Nature.

So how do these mental distortions start? By now you know the answer, which is that the Sinful Nature is the culprit. But why does this Sinful Nature cause such mental distortions and inability to control one's own thoughts? For those answers we must dig even deeper.

We have seen how the primary target of the Sinful Nature is the Emotion, which is a non-thinking part of the soul. The Sinful Nature is an adversary to the Heart and Mind, constantly attempting to stage a coup against them. It seeks control, and is not satisfied to stay in the background simply tempting to sin. That is far too mundane a task, as far as it is concerned. It wants to rule, to be in charge, to command the soul. And this is where the true mischief lies, the desire of the Sinful Nature to usurp the Heart and Mind and take control of the soul.

Because the Heart of the soul is the decision maker, there is a lifelong battle in the soul of each person over which advisors will have more influence over the soul's Heart. On the one hand the "logical advisors" to the Heart, including the Mind, Conscience, Memory, and also for believers the human spirit, should be the best advisors on a regular basis. These logical advisors should be positioned to oppose the Sinful Nature, with its sinful tendencies and lust patterns, which is continually seeking to gain the upper hand as an illicit advisor to the Heart. But on the other hand, the soul's Emotion can take the side of the Sinful Nature and make bad decisions more difficult to avoid. The Emotion does not think, so it merely responds to either the Heart backed by the logical advisors, or else to the Sinful Nature. The Emotion was designed by God to respond to the Heart in alignment with the logical advisors of the soul. But a life of bad decisions will lead to the Emotion becoming allied with the Sinful Nature.

But the Sinful Nature does not have the ability nor inclination to properly rule the soul. It takes the Emotion hostage, a Stockholm Syndrome sets in, then they become allies. Like any dictator, the Sinful Nature simply wants power. It wants to rule and command others to obey. That is how it gets its jollies. But in its ineptness it fails miserably. Oddly it does not care, as long as it rules the soul, even if it harms its host, or destroys it. That is just how things go. As Milton suggested in his book "Paradise Lost" some would rather rule in Hell than be a servant in Heaven, although that itself is an absurdity. But the Sinful Nature does not care about absurdity. The Sinful Nature is a tyrant, a demagogue, a dictator, a ruthless taskmaster, and any other tyrannical word which can be mustered. Control is its goal. And it will stop at nothing to get it. A person may give in to it little by little. A minor sin here, and bigger ones there, some self-righteousness over here, drifting away from core beliefs related to God, and before long the Sinful Nature has some initial control. Not all that much at first, but it is very patient. Repeat the process and it gains more control, and more and more. And the Sinful Nature learns as it matures, picking up lust patterns and areas of weakness to certain sins, some more than others. If this process continues the Sinful Nature eventually controls the Emotion and can take charge of the soul, and the Heart no longer makes all the decisions, but rather the decisions become a matter of habit, of compulsion, and of necessity, as the Heart yields its authority to the Sinful Nature and becomes darkened. That is how the Sinful Nature gets control of the soul. "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come on you like a thief, and scarcity like an armed man." (Proverbs 6:10-11)



If the Emotion becomes the nearly permanent ally of the Sinful Nature, and the two combine to overwhelm the Heart and essentially stage a coup, they disrupt and take over the thought processes. This is how the Emotion can create instability inside the soul when allied with the Sinful Nature, and if severe enough it can result in overall mental instability. Continuous sinning most often results when the logical advisors are ignored by the Heart in favor of the Sinful Nature which has gained the alliance of the Emotion. For believers the human spirit is shut off from influencing the Heart, while the Sinful Nature and Emotion run the soul. Once this occurs, the logical advisors can become corrupted over time as the Mind and Conscience take on distorted patterns and cease to be logical. In such a case the Emotion becomes what is referred to in the Bible as a "prostitute" of the soul, seeking the illegitimate company of the Sinful Nature rather than the legitimate company of the Heart. And since the Sinful Nature is the ally of Satan, the person becomes allied with Satan's Cosmic System, which is opposition to God. And that can be true for believers as well as unbelievers.

For many this soul corruption is revealed as rebellion against legitimate authority and general poor decisions, leading to an unstable life, which can be mild or severe. As it progresses it can result in wide mood swings, increased rebellion against all forms of authority, self-destructive tendencies, and other forms of disruptive and dysfunctional behavior. If left to continue there can be panic attacks as the person attempts to think but comes up empty, since the logical advisors of the soul are at times shut off, creating what the Bible calls a vacuum in the soul. (Ephesians 4:17) The person literally cannot think clearly since neither the Sinful Nature nor the Emotion are logical or rational, but are in control of the soul, while the logical advisors are shut off from influencing the Heart. Therefore the inputs which get through to the Heart are from the non-thinking sources, and the person's soul gets more and more out of control, and increasingly dysfunctional. Depression, neurosis, psychosis and any of the forms of mental instability and self-destructive behavior become possible at that point.

This explains why different people can have such divergent views on the same subject when presented with the same information. Some people look at life from the viewpoint of the soul under the control of the Heart accepting the advice of the logical advisors inside the soul and the human spirit for the believer, and other people look at life from the viewpoint of the Heart under the control of the Sinful Nature backed by Emotion which are out of control, relegating the logical advisors of the soul to a position of low regard. These two viewpoints are 180 degrees out of phase. In this latter state the Heart will essentially be bypassed by the combined Sinful Nature and Emotion, which end up doing the "pseudo thinking" for the person. But in reality it is not thought at all, but rather pure Cosmic System emotional

expression from a soul which is out of control and under the near-total influence of the Sinful Nature. This is the meaning of "hardness of Heart" used many places in the Bible. "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts." (Ephesians 4:18)

For believers, when the Sinful Nature gets out of control to an excessive degree their human spirit is shut off and all types of sins can become possible. The unchecked Sinful Nature is the source of great evil in the world, including evil dictators who are used by Satan, and the ultimate expression of this will be the future Antichrist during the Tribulation. For unbelievers, when the Sinful Nature is allowed to control the soul to a near total degree it can open the unbeliever's soul to extreme soul distortions, and even demon possession, which although a rare condition it will certainly be true of the Antichrist. However, no believer can be demon possessed, only influenced by Satan's Cosmic System through the Sinful Nature. For a believer the Sinful Nature's influence can become very strong if allowed to gain maximum control in the life, and then the believer will live a life of mental distortion and sin. All of this is because the Sinful Nature is part of Satan's realm, since he was the original source of it. Romans 5:12 says "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned."

But we do not need to allow the Sinful Nature to gain control of our soul, and we also do not need the Sinful Nature to maintain control of our soul if it has already taken over. We will discuss solutions next. There is a knight in shining armor which can come to the rescue. And it has access to the keys which can unlock the armory containing a sharp sword and a large shield which can help defend against and even defeat the Sinful Nature. But the person involved must resolve to change from reliance on the Emotion/Sinful Nature to relying on spiritual solutions, and breaking that lock on the soul can be very difficult. However a solution is possible.

## **CHAPTER 14**

### **SOLUTIONS TO MENTAL MALADIES & DYSFUNCTIONS**

This chapter does not peddle false hope, so to begin with, although there are solutions they can be very hard, and the worse the problem, the more difficult the recovery. Discouragement would be the natural course at this point, but God always provides an opening for those who are hopeless. There is a recovery process outlined in the Bible, and recovery is possible. So what does the Bible say about recovery from mental illness, maladies and distortions?

The Bible outlines a war in the soul which leads to mental dysfunction. If the Sinful Nature is not resisted and controlled, it will become the dominant force in the life of a person, both unbelievers and believers. The issue is not just sin, because no one is immune from it, and God forgives our transgressions. But rather it is about a coup in the soul whereby the Sinful Nature takes over the soul and replaces the Heart as the leader of the soul. And the process for this takeover entails changing thoughts and beliefs to align with Cosmic System thinking, which the Sinful Nature uses to gain advantages and leverage in the soul. So the key point here is that the Sinful Nature does not merely try to tempt us to sin, but more importantly it tempts us to reject the plan of God entirely, as well as reality and truth in general. Whatever reality and truth support, the Sinful Nature seeks the opposite. Occasional sin does not destroy the spiritual life as long as we continue to get back on track. But rejection of the plan of God will inevitably turn control of our soul over to the Sinful Nature if it is not reversed. The longer this continues, the more hardened the soul becomes, and the more difficult recovery becomes.

When people have gone down the wrong road for a long time, a hard dose of reality is often required to get their attention. It is one of the most effective ways to break the hold of the Sinful Nature, at least for a short while, and give the person an opportunity to change the course of their life. Arrogance must be broken down, and emotionalism must be suppressed, so reality and truth can get through in the form of real thinking in the Heart. If these opportunities are wasted, the likelihood of recovery grows dimmer.

For unbelievers who have no human spirit, the road to recovery must begin with salvation, which is believing in Jesus Christ as Savior. There is no other useful starting point for real solutions. But even this simple act of faith becomes much more difficult with the Sinful Nature in control of the soul, since it opposes anything related to God by distorting thoughts and thinking processes by inserting arrogance and emotionalism. For believers, the war is between the component which supports God's Plan (the human spirit) and the component which opposes God's Plan (the Sinful Nature). Those believers who have gone down the path of giving control of the soul over to the Sinful Nature must take the road to recovery by using the power from the Word of God, not by internal power. Therefore the believer is required by God to resist the Sinful Nature and feed the human spirit with the Word of God which is "alive and powerful" in order to understand and implement the spiritual life after salvation. Helpful drugs should not be rejected in this battle, since they can help quiet the soul and allow occasional windows of opportunity to accept God's plan to rehabilitate the inner human. This is a long and arduous process, and setbacks will abound. But it is the only long term solution. Taking the Word of God into the human spirit is like charging a battery which has been depleted, at first there is a total drain, then some energy which lasts only a short while, then the charge eventually has more and more power. It is a long process, not a quick fix.

Constant study and use of the Word of God which fills the human spirit with spiritual information forms a spiritual sword and shield against the Sinful Nature. Ephesians 10:6-18 says:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

During the initial stages of spiritual growth the believer does not have enough understanding of the Bible to have a strong faith, so must instead rely on promises from the Bible to provide

strength in times of testing and difficulty. The Bible contains many such promises, which are short phrases emphasizing the faithfulness and love of God toward the believer. An example of such a verse of promise is Isaiah 40:31 "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." The Bible is full of short and succinct verses which the believer can cling to during times of trouble, hardship, grief and distress. These are to some extent spiritual crutches for the growing believer until they have built up spiritual confidence once they understand in depth the Bible and as a result know God as an intimate friend, not as a far-off benefactor. Growth in the Word strengthens our faith, and the Bible tells us "we live by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

The Sinful Nature resides in every human, as we have noted. The Bible declares "there is none righteous, not even one." (Romans 3:10) We all are sinful because we have the Sinful Nature which trips us up from time to time. But beyond just sin, the Sinful Nature is also a distorting influence which negatively affects the ability to think clearly and logically. It is ultimately the source of all mental distortions. Therefore the key to avoiding mental distortions is control of the Sinful Nature. It wants to have its own way and direct the person into self-destructive patterns. It does not care about the harm it will do. It is a twisted and demented tyrant, and it must be resisted. And that resistance comes from the human spirit filled with the Word of God, the source of spiritual strength for the believer. We cannot will our way to spiritual advance. God has provided the Word of God as the spiritual power which can resist the Sinful Nature. Therefore the best way to resist mental distortions is to study and assimilate the Word of God from the time of salvation onward. For believers the human spirit is filled up with spiritual truths if that believer takes in spiritual food regularly under the teaching ministry of a Pastor who is well trained in the Bible. Parental discipline and hard knocks along the way also help keep the development of the Sinful Nature under some control, enabling the person to function in society. For those who start late in life trying to gain spiritual power, they are at the disadvantage of having to overcome a Sinful Nature which is already in control of the soul. At first the task seems hopeless and setbacks are numerous. But it is the only way. And it is possible because God provides a way of escape.

This is why the Bible says discipline is required to teach children proper behavior early on. Discipline is not simply teaching good behavior, it also knocks back the Sinful Nature's influence and the arrogance which goes along with it. If not done early and along the way, catching up later in life becomes more difficult, since the Sinful Nature will gain certain advantages in the war inside the soul. And remember, we are not merely discussing the

avoidance of sin as the means of battling the Sinful Nature, but rather we are discussing the proactive approach of suppression of the Sinful Nature and its arrogance as a means of keeping it under control for a lifetime. The antidote to the Sinful Nature is a soul filled with Biblical wisdom, which in turn provides appreciation for God, and eventually love for Him. Arrogance is the enemy of the soul, as it opens the way for the Sinful Nature to use the Emotion to attack the Heart and Mind. Of course, all humans fail and there are none who do things perfectly. God knows that we are weak. He knows we will fail. God forgives us. It is a matter of fighting against an internal enemy which seeks to take over the soul and implement a system of chaos inside the soul in order to distract and keep humans from thinking about God. This may seem simply self-destructive and not particularly a good plan for the Sinful Nature. That is correct, because the Sinful Nature does not care about such things. To it, destruction is equally effective as convincing. Countering God's plan occurs either way. The Sinful Nature is not a logical advisor to the soul. It is an illogical tyrant. It must be resisted and pushed back into a tiny hole with a lock on it, with a sign which says "Do Not Feed The Sinful Nature." Remember, it is the enemy within.

Although unbelievers have no salvation, they can still develop their soul's logical advisors into overall conformity with God's divine laws for every human, including such things as respect for parents, family values, monogamous marriage, hard work, playing fair, helping neighbors, and so on. An unbeliever can be outwardly very moral in actions, and appear to be not much different than many believers due to God's divine laws which encourage general decency among all people. This is a matter of promoting a stable society where all are free to choose for or against God. Therefore these divine laws are meant for the entire human race, unbelievers as well as believers. But it is more difficult for unbelievers to deal with mental dysfunctions since they have no human spirit. Salvation activates the human spirit for the unbeliever, then spiritual growth develops the human spirit, which provides the ultimate in human "mental development," which is in reality soul (and human spirit) spiritual development. Therefore unbelievers must first change their mind about God and accept Jesus Christ as Savior, at which point they will gain a human spirit. From there they can rebuild soul stability.

So it was left to God to provide a way of escape for sinful humans, and that escape starts with salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. That is eternal salvation, but it is not total deliverance from the ongoing effects of our own Sinful Nature which continues to reside in us while we are alive. Our Sinful Nature is the source of all disruption and distortion in the soul. We cannot expunge it, but we can fight it. And fight we must. And that is the second part, which as we

have discussed, is fighting the Sinful Nature by God's Word inside of our human spirit. Then the human spirit influences the Mind and Heart to restore logical order in the soul, giving the soul stability.

Believers are twice born, and therefore twice have an empty vessel to fill up, first the soul at physical birth, and later the human spirit at spiritual rebirth. At the birth of any baby it is a blank slate in the soul. The five senses get to work quickly and start to develop pattern recognition, and the soul begins to put in place the basis of thinking. An empty soul cannot think, therefore the baby starts as a pure empiricist, meaning their learning is sensory based. They do not have rationalization skills or the ability to accept things by faith until they first understand some basics about how the world works and can accomplish some rudimentary bonding. Over time the ability to have basic thoughts will become possible, then learning by both faith and also rational thinking can begin. Then beliefs will be formed.

In a similar way, the second birth is regeneration of the human spirit, which is much like being a baby all over again. A spiritual baby. Jesus said we must be "born again" to have eternal life. The newly "reborn" believer has a new empty vessel to begin to fill up, so it can form new spiritual thoughts and beliefs. That is exactly what must happen for the believer after salvation, namely to fill up the human spirit with spiritual information. Otherwise the human spirit is as non-functional as the soul of a newborn baby. And unless the believer begins to learn from the Word of God, the only source of spiritual learning, that believer will never have any thoughts above the level of a newborn spiritual baby. That is the equivalent of living the spiritual life in the goo-goo-da-da stage, which does not glorify God or the Lord Jesus Christ. And it also does not resist mental dysfunctions.

After salvation God generally leaves believers on earth to develop the human spirit which is empty at the second birth. That enables the person to eventually grow spiritually, to learn to appreciate and love and glorify God and our Savior Jesus Christ. That is how believers fulfill the requirements of the Bible for living the kind of life it describes -- a spiritual one. The power to live a spiritual life is not out of the soul, but rather out of the human spirit. The soul can never accomplish what the Bible requires of believers because it is not a spiritual entity, even though it is an immaterial entity. We are not here to try to live out a soul-based existence -- that is what unbelievers do. We are here for a spiritual purpose, not a soulish purpose. And the only way to develop our human spirit which is blank at our rebirth in Christ is through learning the Word of God.

However, most believers fail to fulfill their spiritual requirements. They leave their human spirit in a status of being a newborn. Although they may have some mild appreciation that they are saved, they are still spiritual babies for their entire life. As Paul told the Corinthians, who had not grown spiritually and lived just as they had prior to their salvation: "Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. <sup>3</sup> You are still worldly." (1 Corinthians 3:1-3) The human spirit requires constant feeding from the Word of God to function properly, starting with the basics, and then moving on to advanced spiritual understanding. Without that constant intake of spiritual food, the human spirit is empty or close to it, so the Holy Spirit has little to use to empower the spiritual life of the believer. Those who exercise their human spirit and feed it spiritual truth will grow in spiritual strength and provide the Holy Spirit with what He requires to empower the believer to have impact for the Lord.

With the consistent intake of spiritual food, the human spirit stores up information the Holy Spirit can use to empower an effective spiritual life of the believer. We are in the midst of spiritual warfare with the forces of darkness, and we must be armed to fight the spiritual battles. As the human spirit is exercised and trained in spiritual truth from the Word, the believer will grow in spiritual strength and have impact for the Lord in this spiritual warfare. It is a sad reality that most believers do not adequately utilize their human spirit. Over time the person will develop mental dysfunctions as a result of neglecting the growth of their human spirit.

When the believer builds up the human spirit with the Word of God, the Plan of God starts to become the number one priority in life, as learning and applying the Word becomes much more important than the mundane things of everyday life. Circumstances gradually become less and less the source of our happiness. The desire to please God by knowing and applying His Word through the human spirit, the only spiritual part of the human, is what our spiritual life is all about. A real relationship with God unfolds through the human spirit, so that circumstances of life and problems fade as we have inner peace through understanding and comprehension of the Word, which provides a happiness in the inner human spirit and blessing from God as a result.



The human spirit filled with the Word of God is able to generally control the lusts of the Sinful Nature, and directs the soul to fulfill the will of God for us. That is the spiritual life -- living out of the human spirit, which directs the soul to properly interface with the outside world and with God on the basis of the Word of God. At this point "the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) This means the person has a quiet soul with the Sinful Nature generally under control and living out from the human spirit. And a quiet soul is not possible when the Sinful Nature is in control of the soul.

Colossians 3:16 says "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom." And where does the "word of Christ" dwell in us if not in our human spirit? Then the human spirit becomes better able to control the thoughts and intents of the Heart, to focus the Mind on figuring out life's issues with the Word of God as its frame of reference and standard for what is right and wrong. Now we are discussing changing beliefs. The actions of the believer follow the directions of the human spirit through the soul, and all based on God's Word. This is how we change our behavior. We build up spiritual information in the human spirit and that in turn allows the human spirit to exert greater influence over both the Sinful Nature and the entire soul. We are strengthened by the Word of God in our human spirit, which in turn changes our beliefs and drives our decisions and actions as the human spirit directs the soul. Power for our lives is through the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit is instrumental in helping us learn the Word of God if we study it. The power is in the Word, the Word which has been put into our human spirit by the mentoring of the Holy Spirit, and only then do we live a spiritual life with impact.

Believers may understand at a surface level that God will provide for them, but if they merely believe that from very limited input from a nearly empty human spirit providing input to their soul it will not have any staying power. It is only what we believe from the human spirit based on deeper levels of understanding of God's Word which provides deep faith and power. And this provides opportunity for the Holy Spirit to help us apply that spiritual information more effectively. As that spiritual structure in the human spirit is built up, the faith and spiritual dynamics of the believer increases. When the Word of God fills the human spirit and becomes the primary advisor to the Heart, these two become aligned to enable the Heart to have a consistent divine viewpoint which expresses God's Word in the majority of what the believer thinks, says, and does. That is a Heart which pleases God because it is controlled by the human spirit filled with Bible wisdom.

The only spiritual part of a human is the human spirit. It must develop the ability to function by growing just as the soul grew by continuous learning from the point of birth onward. When did anyone shut down their soul and refuse to take in any more sensory information, or learning? The human spirit must continuously "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18) Otherwise it is not making spiritual progress. In fact, the neglected human spirit goes backward and shrivels, losing any spiritual advances which had been previously made. Mental maladies are the result. The growth of the human spirit must be the lifelong mission of the believer, because we are required to grow up spiritually after our rebirth. 1 Peter 2:2 says "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." Growing up spiritually is ultimately why we remain on earth after salvation, because it gives us the means of glorifying God.

Therefore the only way to counter and overcome the Sinful Nature-Emotion lock on the soul is through a very intensive study and application of the Word of God. But this is very difficult due to the deeply rooted reactions which will come from the Emotion, and the resistance from the Sinful Nature which has taken over control of the soul. Once it has gained control, it is difficult to depose. But this is the only rehabilitation process. It is hard and takes a very long time. Results will be spotty at first, and setbacks will abound. But it is the only road back. And with God and His Word it is possible.

## **CHAPTER 15**

### **DEMENTIA, ALZHEIMER'S, & OTHER INTERFACE ISSUES**

Loss of memory and decline in overall mental faculties afflicts many people as they grow older, with devastating consequences to the individual and loved ones. But what happens to the real person, the inner human, during this process? Does the soul Memory also decline?

In such cases the issues are physical and therefore based in the brain, so the soul remains basically unchanged, although the interfaces between brain and soul are diminished. These issues result from diseases, syndromes, and also trauma, so all are not equal. Recall we discussed previously how the interface between brain and soul is like a wireless connectivity, because the brain is physical and the soul is immaterial. So the connection starts out as electrical in the brain and is converted into immaterial in a system only God could design, which is why science cannot understand or locate it. The soul relies on the brain to take in and transmit sensory data so it can understand and communicate with the outside world. These dysfunctions affect the brain side of the equation but not the soul side. But why is the person confused about functions inside the soul, such as memories related to humanity? If they are still there, why can't they be used internally to the soul even if they cannot get out through the brain?

The answer is that the soul is not designed to function isolated from a body, either during the natural lifetime or during eternity. If the brain is damaged or diminished as with Alzheimer's, Dementia, or trauma the soul may not be as capable of communicating with itself about self-awareness status and internal functions such as memories. The soul can only operate correctly from inside a support structure which is working as required, meaning a physical body while living on earth, or in an eternal body later. The soul is not a closed loop system, meaning it cannot send or receive finalized information inside of itself without outward communication capability outside of itself. Which means that without support from the brain, or a new body during eternity, the soul cannot express itself. And when the brain is

diminished, the overall process of brain to soul and back to brain information flow is diminished.

Therefore the person who has diminished mental functions has reduced ability to develop new thoughts internal to the soul. The level to which this occurs depends on the degree of impairment, so it is not all or nothing. But if the brain is fully unconscious, the individual involved cannot communicate at all to self regarding the internal status of the soul, even though the soul has remained unchanged. So to the extent the soul intake through the brain has been diminished, that soul has a reduced ability to form new information internally beyond the capabilities of what the brain can accommodate. Because these types of diseases and syndromes shut off the soul to some degree, the soul becomes increasingly isolated, but otherwise the same person is inside even if they act differently.

The point here is that although the brain is diminished, the soul status will remain generally static until death, when the soul departs and is placed into a new body, first into a temporary one until their resurrection occurs, and later into a final body at the resurrection. For Church Age believers, the final resurrection is called the Rapture of the Church. Therefore, after death the believer's soul and human spirit are taken to Heaven where they are placed into a temporary body, and soul functions and memories become available again at that moment. However, the memories stop at the point new information could no longer effectively be taken into the soul while still alive. For unbelievers, there is also a new body after death, and it is designed for their eternal state, which is much different. They will also have memories, but will only serve to feed their regrets of failure to do the one thing required of them to be saved.

The important issue to understand is that the soul of the loved one who is a believer remains fully functional and unchanged inside the body and will be set free at the point of death and placement into a new body, with memories intact. It should therefore be comforting to know that this condition is only temporary, that the soul of the person remains unchanged, and after death will be the same person with soul memories intact. Then all involved can pick up where they left off.

In a similar way, those who are born with issues which restrict mental development may not be able to fully develop the soul due to limitations in brain capabilities. In such instances, the brain cannot provide the soul with certain types of high level data in the required format to

develop soul capabilities to think in more complex ways, whether in limited areas or broad-based. In other instances the soul can become more fully developed, but the brain cannot export the results to the outside world due to limitations on the outbound part of the brain. The person is forced to live a more sensory life, and more out of the brain with less soul involvement, which means less soul control over their actions. This may result in the Emotion exerting more control than the logical soul components so that logical thought may be difficult. Often the brain and soul fight each other due to mismatches in capabilities, and when the person sees others around them demonstrate far superior capabilities, frustration can result. There are many variations, so this is just to explain that brain to soul, and soul back to brain interface issues can cause soul isolation or inability to perform in some areas.

If the impact is severe enough so that the soul cannot make informed decisions about God, He does not require them to believe in Christ as Savior for salvation, and it is automatically provided by a gracious, merciful, and fair God. And since the soul itself is not limited, it will be set free during eternity.

## **CHAPTER 16**

### **EVIL & OUTSIDE INFLUENCES ON THOUGHTS & BELIEFS**

We have seen how the Sinful Nature seeks to gain control of the soul, and how it negatively affects people who do not adequately resist it. Let us now look at this internal enemy from the viewpoint of evil, since the Sinful Nature is an embedded agent of evil inside every person which affects thoughts and beliefs in a negative way, which is why controlling it is so important. Then we will also look at outside evil influences on thoughts and beliefs.

The word "evil" is commonly used to describe a depraved person who engages in vile actions, such as a cruel and oppressive dictator, a mass murderer, a satanic cult leader, or some similarly very disagreeable person who engages in wanton and heinous misdeeds. Therefore these people and the acts they commit are both referred to as being evil in common usage. While all of this may be true, that view of evil is too narrow to align with God's view. The Bible defines evil as being much more complex, inclusive and pervasive than common usage would suggest. So what exactly is evil and how does it affect our thoughts and beliefs?

Evil at its core is about opposition to God and His plan. The Bible includes thoughts and beliefs within the category of evil, as well as actions, therefore all can be evil. It helps to understand the subject of evil by describing those creatures, both angelic and human, the Bible calls evil. Evil is mentioned very early in the Bible in Genesis when Adam and the woman were in the Garden of Eden, but evil began way before that, long before there were humans. As one might suspect, it began with Satan, an outside influencer on thoughts and beliefs. Let us therefore start with examining Satan since he is the originator of evil. Satan is defined as inherently and totally evil because Satan has set himself up in direct opposition to God, opposing all that God is, does, and stands for. In his original sin Satan said "I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:14) and he therefore said God is not my God, so I can set myself up as His equal. God sees such opposition as evil since He does not lightly accept such arrogant affronts to His sovereignty. Therefore, when a created creature acts in opposition to God, that act is evil, and when one thinks and acts consistently in opposition to God, that

person or creature is actually evil. The fall of Satan at his original sin was an act of evil, and in fact it was the very first evil which ever occurred. It was evil because it was a revolt against God, and this is the first clue in defining evil, that the most basic form of evil is opposition to God.

Genesis 8:21 says “every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood.” This is because every person is born in need of salvation, and the Sinful Nature also gains a foothold in the soul's thinking very early in life. We can begin to see that evil is generated in us from our Sinful Nature as soon as we are able to start thinking and forming beliefs. Rejection of salvation is a form of evil since it is calling God a liar, which is opposition to God. And by rejecting salvation unbelievers are saying that the Bible is a lie, and that Jesus Christ is not the Savior. In fact, the primary tool of those who promote evil is lies, beginning with Satan, and now also his minions who get into positions of power to effect the spread of evil through societies. We can see that evil is indeed far more inclusive and pervasive than most would think.

Adam and Eve chose evil when they sinned in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:9 says “The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Genesis 2:17 adds “but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” This shows how humans gravitated to evil from the very beginning in defiance of God's will. They first rejected the prohibited tree, then their thoughts were influenced by Satan to be interested in exploring it, then the woman tested it to see if touching it caused any downside effects, and when it did not, she believed it was possible to disobey God by eating from it and not pay for it. She was deceived and wrong, but then Adam joined her, fully understanding what he was doing.

But what does it mean Adam and Eve understood evil after eating the forbidden fruit? Creatures invented evil by rejecting God, first Satan, and then Adam and Eve created it for humans. We see that the original sin by Satan was the first act of evil since it was a revolt against God. So also the first sin by humans led the previously righteous man and woman to commit an act of evil, which was also rebellion against God. The man and woman had not known sin or evil before they revolted against God, but they learned about both at the same time. When the Bible says they now knew evil it means they had gained a Sinful Nature as an attachment to the soul, which started the process of feeding evil thoughts into their souls.

And this is why the subject of evil is relevant to this book, because the Sinful Nature entered the picture by an act of both sin (disobedience) and evil (opposition to God) by the original humans, and from that time on evil thoughts became possible due to the influence of the Sinful Nature. And they chose for all humans, who would inherit the Sinful Nature and all its negative effects on thoughts and beliefs.

This gaining of a Sinful Nature by the original humans was a loss of status which also took them into a condition of being evil, having taken the side of Satan even though it was by deceit. At this point their thoughts and beliefs included evil. Romans 6:12 says "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires." The word "sin" here refers more generally to Sinful Nature influences on the soul, not a single sin by itself. The first humans had fallen from perfection into a status of being unacceptable to God, therefore unsaved. In this condition of sin mixed with evil they were hopeless to find a solution on their own. But God provided a way of salvation, and the two believed in the promised Messiah and were saved. But they did not lose their knowledge of evil since it was now part of their souls due to the Sinful Nature they acquired at the point of their fall.

For the descendants of Adam and Eve, the Sinful Nature became attached to the soul at birth. After salvation the believer still has a Sinful Nature but can partially overcome it, with various degrees of success. Believers are no longer inherently evil after salvation, but they can still think and believe and act in evil ways and/or do evil things when they align with Satan's Cosmic System in opposition to God. Lust often leads to evil as 2 Timothy 2:22 says: "Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 1 Timothy 6:10 says: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." The lust for money can lead to doing evil to gain it, often in a way which does significant harm to others. Evil actions are usually a pattern involving lust and scheming, not normally an isolated sin. People who live by their lusts are called evil, since evil thinking becomes a pattern of evil action which harms others. We see that evil always begins with evil thoughts, which lead to evil beliefs, which can lead to evil actions.

There are also evil institutions, not just creatures. Nations can be evil. Some of them oppose God by suppressing the gospel of salvation and Bible teaching, and others use their power to consistently harm the innocent as a pattern of action. There are many evil nations, and for different reasons. Some wage war to take what belongs to other nations and groups of people.



Some wrongly take away the freedom of innocent people inside the nation, or persecute certain segments of the population. Others sponsor or support terrorism, which is intended to deny freedom and impose an alternate system of acting and thinking. Some impose evil institutions by force, such as false religions, or socialism which takes by force what belongs to some and gives it to others. Laws can be evil, especially those which attempt to suppress freedom to worship and evangelize. All evil nations have one thing in common, they suppress freedom and take away the basic human rights God has put in place which allow each person to make choices for or against God's plan of salvation and spiritual growth. And since at its very core evil opposes God and His plan, and Satan's plan is only evil, evil tries to prevent humans from having the freedom to make choices for or against God. Because of this, God's system of divine laws diffuses power among numerous nations in order to limit Satan's ability to control humans by evil.

Many different types of institutions, organizations and groups can become evil when they promote agendas which oppose God, His plan, or His divine laws in one form or another. It does not take much of an imagination to see that the world is full of evil institutions such as certain political parties, some news media, specific internet social media sites, and other organizations which oppose God and/or His believers, trying to distort and suppress the truth. Their primary tool is lies, which they use to deceive many into blindly following their false narratives which lead down a road of evil intentions into self-destruction and national degeneracy. This should not be surprising since Satan rules this world, and he and his Cosmic System are both pure evil. Satan is the author of chaos, and the history of mankind is one of mostly evil nations with very occasional exceptions. But even within those exceptions evil will still find its way into the fabric of society to some degree. Evil is not always glaring, but is often subtle. And evil never gives up trying to break down the divine order which God has put in place to enable freedom to choose for or against God and His plan. God promotes free will and the right to choose, but evil opposes both.

The Reader understands by looking around at the state of the world that thoughts and beliefs are in turmoil. While there is more to discuss on this sad fact, what has been described so far should begin to bring some clarity to the issue. The interaction between thoughts, beliefs, the Sinful Nature, its alliance with the Emotion, and evil influences combine to drive the majority of people into a state where their thoughts and beliefs are hard-wired to oppose God.

Let us pause and recall why this discussion is important. This book is about thoughts and beliefs. The downfall of human thoughts and beliefs started with Satan, whose own thoughts and beliefs strayed from serving God to serving self. Then as a result of his thoughts and beliefs, Satan acted on them and revolted against God. When humans were created, Satan focused on getting them to revolt against God just as he had. And they did. Then humans picked up the theme of evil and which they promoted by lies and force. Thoughts and beliefs are powerful things. They can drive good or evil.

## **CHAPTER 17**

### **FALSE MENTAL COPING DEVICES**

Humans can be very inventive when it comes to avoiding the truth, especially when it is about themselves. This includes using mental coping devices in an attempt to cover for their own shortcomings and mental dysfunctions. Some of them are used simply to get by. Others are used as defense mechanisms to build up one's own self-esteem, often at the expense of others. Some coping mechanisms are used to avoid thinking about much of anything. Regardless of the reason, these false coping devices are aimed at avoiding reality and truth.

To this end, humans have invented false devices and strategies to avoid reality and also elevate themselves in their own view. Most such devices are designed to evade truth, transfer blame, switch the subject, distract from the issues, and escape from their own bad decisions. To accomplish this, most people use distraction, denial, displacement, and dissociation to cope with their mental maladies and perceived shortcomings. These range from relatively harmless to very harmful. But they are all attempts to overcome internal friction and pressure in the soul. It is not our purpose to define all of them, just to provide enough basic information to enable the discussion regarding what the Bible says about people who avoid and/or distort the truth by using false mental coping devices.

Distraction is one such mental coping device, which attempts to avoid issues by trying not to think about them. It engages in activities which occupy time and mental processes while avoiding the issues which require attention. Of course, enjoying some amount of distraction is useful and relaxing, but we are discussing endless distraction, which becomes Distractionism. So when someone does this to avoid being alone with their own thinking because their inner self is empty of useful thoughts, or full of negative thoughts, this endless Distractionism creates issues which can cascade into more harmful mental devices. We have discussed how Distractionism is being enabled by technology, allowing people to engage in it to levels never before possible. Technology has enabled the ability to pursue nearly endless distractions by texting, video games, music, and other technologies which can be taken

anywhere, allowing a person to try to avoid thinking about the reality of their life. In their proper places such technologies are very useful and make us more productive, but when used purely for long term endless distraction from life itself they become a means of avoiding reality and thinking. Then when someone is finally required to face reality it can be daunting, so it may be treated as though it also was just a game, or just another form of distraction which has no ultimate purpose or meaning. Life becomes less meaningful when soul thinking is turned off by endless distractions. Time is simply passed by, not embraced and used wisely, therefore time becomes something to be avoided as if it were not a scarce commodity with a very certain end. The future seems irrelevant and just another thing which will need to be avoided when it arrives. And thinking about one's own death is the ultimate thought which must be avoided, usually by denial, or unrealistic expectations about the time remaining. In all of this, Distractionism is about avoiding reality, and wasting the time we have remaining. One must wonder how many people will avoid seeking God because they were able to avoid the realities of their life which should have driven them to look to Him for answers, including for salvation. That is the ultimate reality which must not be avoided. And by the way, there will be no distractions for unbelievers during eternity. Reality will be unavoidable.

Denial is another mental coping device which tries to pretend something did not happen, is not happening, or will not happen, and uses repression or suppression of thinking to avoid reality. This coping device shuts off the Mind from figuring out the reality of the situation. Ultimately, denial is lying to oneself, and seeks to avoid reality and truth by saying something is not real or true. Therefore the person in denial does not want to know the truth and seeks to avoid it by suppression of thinking. Children often practice denial because they have little or no control over what happens to them, so this can be a useful short term tool for them. When bad things happen, they deny it is real. This can be a means of getting through a situation until they have some level of control and can deal with the issues. But when adults use denial to avoid reality they are rejecting actual problem solving devices provided by God through His Word. The most disastrous form of denial is refusal to address the issue of one's eventual death. This results in the person denying that God exists, and/or denying that Jesus Christ is the only Savior. They suppress thinking about death and God as a means of coping. But using denial as a coping device to avoid the reality and truth about death, about God, and about His salvation offer to humans will lead to a miserable life after death. Once again we see how reality is not avoidable during eternity.

Dissociation can also be used as a mental coping device whereby the person shows disconnection with reality, purposed confusion of facts and memories, lack of interest or

caring for others, and an overall detachment from reality. And displacement can be used to shift blame to others, engage in over-reaction, create polarization and compartmentalization of people, split hairs, allow for no gray areas in life, provide no room for others to make mistakes, use of faulty comparisons of people to self by looking down on them (dehumanizing people, checkout magazine life comparisons). There are other false mental coping devices and variations of those discussed above, but again, it is not our purpose to cover them in detail, but rather to set up the discussion of what the Bible says about the inner human as related to false mental coping devices which are used to try to avoid reality and truth.

But why would someone want to avoid truth and reality?

Good question. The answer starts with what we have already discussed about the inner workings of the soul. Normal soul function occurs when the Heart is in control of the entire soul, the Mind is properly performing its "figuring out" role and also controlling the Conscience and Memory, the Emotion is responding to the generally correct functions of the Heart and Mind, and the Sinful Nature is kept in check in a relative sense. Occasional sinning and performing actions which do not perfectly align with God's Will do not derail the soul. All humans are sinful, saved or unsaved. God does not seek to punish us every time we go astray, but wants us to turn to Him. God is a loving and merciful God. His Son took the punishment we deserved, therefore God can and does forgive His believers. We must not labor under a sense of guilt for our past sins, because they have been paid for and taken away. But we must seek to please God now and in the future, even though no one can do so perfectly. And controlling the Sinful Nature is important to having a healthy soul, which is the point here, because the Sinful Nature is the source of soul distortions.

When a person alters the way their soul is supposed to operate, the soul becomes distorted and various levels of instability set in. The soul ceases to function in a logical and stable manner because some portions of the soul exert undue influence. In fact, a revolt inside the soul occurs. And the primary offender as we have discussed is the Emotion in consort with the Sinful Nature. The Emotion cannot revolt against the authority of the Heart apart from the backing of the Sinful Nature. And this is where false coping devices come into play, as they are used to distort the soul's normal thought processes. Therefore the ultimate culprit is the Sinful Nature which causes soul distortions and most mental illnesses.

Over time the result of a soul out of control is obsessions and compulsions, inability to control unrealistic thoughts, beliefs changed to conform with Sinful Nature dictates, and generally a tormented soul. The soul becomes divided against itself. This is where the saying "he is of two minds" applies. It is usually a long slow slide into this level of soul distortion, and likewise it is a long process to get out. And the way out is to transform one's thinking to conform with the Biblical view of proper thoughts and beliefs.

Rejection of truth is not usually a matter of intelligence (IQ). Intelligent and highly educated people have the ability to believe untruths just as easily as anyone else, possibly more so when their soul is out of control under the influence of the Sinful Nature allied with the Emotion, which results in an arrogance of intellect for them. A person who is less educated may not know as many facts about the world around them, but they can accept the truth when properly presented if their soul is functioning under humility. The propensity for rejecting truth and therefore accepting untruths is primarily a matter of how the person's soul is functioning, not a matter of education or intellect. And humility, which is the opposite of arrogance, plays a key role in truth acceptance. But humility becomes less possible for someone controlled by the Sinful Nature/Emotion alliance, because arrogance is a primary result.

Truth can also be rejected for other reasons. Some people simply do not care about spiritual issues, so they ignore them. Ignoring is rejecting. This is a simpler form of rejection of the truth based on distraction due to a focus on the details of life. People focus on their job, family and other things and do not stop to think about their eternal future, or they think there is no eternal future to think about. Some have a simple form of relative righteousness, and think they are better than many other people they see around them so if there is a God He would favor them over those they see as morally inferior. Of course that is not true. It is why so many conversations in life attempt to compare oneself with others, putting down others to build oneself up in their own eyes, and in the eyes of others. In another vein, it is also why wealth is said to make salvation more difficult, since wealthy people think they have all they need without God so they may ignore spiritual issues. These rejections of truth are more a matter of lack of interest or caring, but the end result is the same.

The human spirit plays an important role in accepting Biblical truth. As 1 Corinthians 2:14 says: "The person without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness." And Romans 8:16 says: "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." For humans to interact with God they need a

human spirit, otherwise God cannot interact with them, and they cannot understand God or His spiritual truth. And higher levels of spiritual truth require a human spirit filled with basic levels of spiritual truth. Truth is built on truth. Proverbs 1:7 says: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Humility, acceptance of God's authority, acceptance of the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God, and an understanding of basic truths becomes the basis of understanding higher level truths. God is the author of logic and truth, and has given these as gifts to mankind. Rejection of truth in one's belief system is therefore rejection of God and His plan, and the only alternative is a belief system based on fallacies, falsehoods, and lies.

## **CHAPTER 18**

### **GOING PAST THE "REALITY STOPS" OF NORMAL BELIEFS**

The Bible outlines the standards of normal beliefs. They are called "normal" because these beliefs align with how God designed the universe and humans, and how they should operate and function normally. Therefore the Bible has definitions of normality embedded in it, and they fit with everything He has designed. Since God is the Designer, He gets to decide what is reality, and therefore what is "normal" and "abnormal." That means humans cannot change them no matter how hard they may try.

Since God has defined normality and abnormality, He also put "reality stops" in place on normality, past which abnormality is unleashed. Humans periodically try to change the rules God has put in place, resulting in confusion, chaotic beliefs and mental dysfunction. For instance, God made male and female humans. Each one is a factual reality stop (excepting rare biological anomalies of birth). A male is a reality. A female is a reality. When certain humans decide there is no such thing as male and female, they attempt to create new rules or standards for a new status, or maybe no rules at all. Since the male and female design is a reality stop on normality put in place by God which must not be passed, once that reality stop is passed there can be no logic or reason past that point. To further explain, once the male and female issue is knocked down as a reality stop then anything and everything past that point is possible, since there is no remaining logical or rational way to sort out what is right and wrong on the abnormality side. Males can then play in female sports leagues without accounting for the physical differences. Males can use female bathrooms and changing rooms. Males can do anything formerly restricted to females and vice versa. There is no allowance for citing "unfairness" because once the reality stops which God put in place are bypassed and removed, there is no way to sort out what is right or wrong, fair or unfair, on the other side of reality. It is only by returning to normality and reality that logic and reason can be restored. So this is the first issue with reality stops, that there is no logic on the issue once reality is bypassed.



Humans who pass the reality stops God has put in place cannot reconcile what they believe with traditional human beliefs and the universe at large. That creates a discontinuity of beliefs which also creates internal stress and friction in the soul. Such people will try desperately to gain the approval of others for their belief system and resulting behavior. They demand changes in law to force other humans to not only accept their beliefs and actions, but go far beyond that to demanding acceptance of their status as being "normal." They attempt to reset the reality stops which God has put in place by resetting the beliefs of others to align with their own beliefs which go beyond reality, and thus they attempt to create a new normal beyond God's reality stops. This has failed over and over again, even though some societies have attempted forced acceptance of new unreality stops, but they cannot remain in place due to their incongruence with God's design and logic.

To reiterate a previously discussed issue, God is logical. He invented logic. Logic aligns with who He is, what He is, and what He has designed and created. The universe He created was completely logical and orderly in its original perfect form, although created beings, both angels and humans, distorted it with rebellion and sin. The issue here is that when humans try to pass the reality stops which God has put in place, the result is illogical and cannot be made logical or reasonable. This also means the beliefs beyond the reality stops cannot make sense or be normal. As an aside, beyond the reality stops there is also no possibility of any true happiness. Humans who live beyond the reality stops God has put in place cannot find it. That is why they look to abnormal beliefs and activities as alternatives to happiness, which they cannot achieve.

There are many other examples of humans trying to bypass the reality stops of normality of beliefs. These always result in internal friction and dysfunction. Beliefs only make sense, and are only logical, when the boundaries of normality are left in place and respected as reality stops on beliefs and resulting behaviors. Humans have tried over the entirety of history to change the reality stops put in place by God. The first was when original humans ate from the prohibited Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which was the only reality stop put in place for them. Once that reality stop of human sinlessness was bypassed, God had to change the earth to account for the fallen state of humans, so He put in place many more reality stops on normality. Humans cannot repeat the original fall into sinfulness, because we already gained the Sinful Nature through the original humans. But the new reality stops set boundaries which, when bypassed, set into motion self-imposed misery due to incoherent belief systems based on unreality.

This brings us back to the subject of mental illness and maladies. When humans attempt to live beyond the reality stops which God has put in place they are living their life primarily through their Sinful Nature aligned with the Emotion, so there is always a dysfunction in the soul which leads to internal stress and friction of beliefs. The Mind and Heart cannot reconcile these discontinuities inside the soul, so internal chaos reigns. Although this can manifest itself in many forms as discussed previously, the resultant discontinuity inside the soul results in illogical thinking and behavior, and also unhappiness due to living beyond the reality stops which God has put in place.

## **CHAPTER 19**

### **TAKING THE MIDDLE GROUND**

It is a popular view to look at the available options for belief systems and say "I will just take the middle ground" trying to be a centrist. On the surface it seems good to be in the middle and not take firm or "extreme" positions. But remember, truth is an extreme position. So this middle ground approach is often a form of expressing a half-baked belief system, or no belief system at all. The person may actually have beliefs, but maybe not. There is a time and place to hold your tongue and express no beliefs, but on the other hand to never express beliefs is a form of cowardice. And to actually have no specific and firm beliefs is a real problem, especially for believers. We are required to have firm beliefs in truth as revealed in the Bible.

Taking a position to not rock the boat, to be agreeable and non-confrontational on important matters, and taking fluctuating positions countering what was previously expressed to others, is a sign of fluid beliefs. Fluid beliefs are not actually beliefs, but rather are random musings aimed at just getting along. Such fluid beliefs are a failure to have anchoring principles on important issues. Believing something at one moment and then taking the opposite position shortly afterward, and doing it routinely, is a failure to hold firmly to important belief systems. As stated, God requires us to hold firm beliefs based in truth. We are saved by a belief in Jesus Christ. We must live by firm beliefs in what the Scriptures reveal. To deny the fundamental beliefs revealed in the Bible is a spiritual failure, at least at that moment in time. Recovery is possible and important, but the more we deny the truth the less we will believe it. Spiritual failure and loss of firm beliefs go hand in hand. Beliefs on fundamental issues matter. There is truth, and there is non-truth. Taking the middle ground on Biblical truths is not a virtue.

Agnostics take the approach that if something is uncertain then they cannot know if it is true. This belief system is one which takes the middle road to nowhere. Atheists are at least honest that they reject something completely, and refuse to believe it. But Agnostics go around saying they are not sure of this and that, trying to appear above it all, so they wring their

hands and are swayed by every wind which blows. The Agnostic belief system is therefore a lack of firm beliefs in things which are important, where the big issues are ignored because they are just too hard to deal with. But the design of the universe screams out God's name. The Bible says "The fool says in his heart there is no God." Even Satan believes in God. He is still going into eternal condemnation, but he certainly believes in God without any question. But believing in God will not save anyone. It is believing in Jesus Christ as Savior which saves each person, and the lack of such belief condemns all who hold to it throughout their life on earth. But being an Agnostic is living without beliefs, which means living without form or substance.

The evil Cosmic System opposes believers who take firm positions defending truth. It cannot allow truth to exist unopposed. It cannot allow it to be expressed, or even believed. And it is not enough to simply oppose outward expressions, but rather it seeks to suppress and eliminate any and all forms of belief systems which are counter to the evil Cosmic System. Cosmic System beliefs are unsupportable, illogical, foolish, and do not work in the real world. That is why such beliefs must be defended so vigorously and loudly, by shouting and belittling others and using distortions and lies in place of truth. They have no logic or basis in reality. Opposition by truth cannot be allowed. Truth is everything they are not. It is right and good and moral and virtuous and logical. The Cosmic System is none of those. Their first defense is to attack the person instead of the truth itself. The person must be socially destroyed. The person must be shunned. The person must be ridiculed. The person must be removed because the truth cannot be.

The point here is that important belief systems based on the truth require defending. They will be attacked. There will be ridicule and social pressure. But when truth is involved, giving up one's belief system just to get along will only result in a diminishing of that person's human spirit and a corresponding ascendancy in the power of the Sinful Nature which will exert more and more control over the soul, resulting in that person being taken out of the fight for truth.

## **CHAPTER 20**

### **THE CRIMINAL MIND**

When it comes to some of most dysfunctional issues related to thoughts, thinking, and beliefs, hardened criminals are at the top of the list. Heinous and brutal acts committed by criminals do not align with what most people would think a human is possible of doing. But we see the results regularly, with severe impact on the lives of innocent people and families. Why?

The hardened criminal is at the end of the trail which we have already discussed. When the Sinful Nature and Emotion are allied, the result will be dysfunctional thinking on a scale from slight to hardened. At the hardened end of that scale we find criminals who will stop at almost nothing to satisfy the lusts of their Sinful Nature. Lusts vary from person to person, so not all criminals are alike. And we not discussing here those who have made mistakes, or committed a few petty crimes. But for all hardened criminals, harming others is not only what must be done to achieve their goals, but it is actually something they enjoy doing. It provides exhilaration to relieve the boredom of their meaningless life. It is just another drug, but with perceived personal rewards. Criminals are the highest achievement of Darwinian evolution because they shed inhibitions in favor of survival at the expense of others. Those who are in their way, or rivals, or can provide something they do not have, are just weak and need to make room for the "more evolved," namely the Darwinian criminals.

Is hardened criminality a mental dysfunction, or mental illness? If one defines the Sinful Nature/Emotion alliance taken to its illogical extremes as mental dysfunction, and we do, then it is mental dysfunction. But it is not truly mental "illness" since it has resulted from repeated bad decisions, not brain damage, usually over a long period of time. But in non-technical terms and common vernacular for mental illness, all hardened criminals are "mentally ill" in the sense of not using normal thinking processes, because they all use Darwinian instinctive behavior instead of logical and rational thinking. But such mental dysfunction, as we would define it, is not a legitimate defense for criminal actions. The criminal's decisions are still decisions, but are based on turning over near-complete control to

their Sinful Nature. Arrogance, the chief output of the Sinful Nature, is taken to the extreme and self-image becomes highly distorted. At this point thoughts are instinctive and actions are animalistic. Recall that God did not create humans with instincts, or as animals. But humans can change themselves into both given enough distorted thinking over time, because it unleashes extreme arrogance from the Sinful Nature. There are many reasons, and some criminals may start with getting a raw deal in life, as they see it. But excuses are not acceptable when it comes to destroying the lives of innocent victims and families. Every criminal made themselves into one. Developing a criminal mind is a process made up of bad thoughts, thinking, decisions, and beliefs, which leads to the extremes of mental dysfunction.

And when power is added to the equation, the slide into criminal thinking and behavior is hastened. This is how dictators and other malevolent rulers throughout history have gained power and destroyed the lives of so many people under their rule. These people are also hardened criminals, and use the power of their office to take away the rights and freedoms of individuals. A good example is King Herod, when he heard from the Magi that Jesus had been born and would someday be called a King, Herod told the Magi to return and tell him where Jesus was located, but they did not. Matthew 2:16 says: "When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.

Herod died miserably within a short time and was succeeded by his son, who was also named Herod. His son was also a criminal ruler who refused to release the Apostle Paul from prison when he had the opportunity. Both had a very good chance to understand salvation. Both refused it.

Speaking of eternity, what is the status of the inner self during the Eternal State, and how will it function differently than during our natural life on earth? Let us look at these issues now.

## **CHAPTER 21**

### **THE INNER SELF DURING ETERNITY**

In eternity we believers will be the same person we were while living, but we will be perfectly righteous since our Sinful Nature will be gone. We will be true humans, with our same soul and human spirit, but transformed into spiritual beings, whereby our human spirit will drive our soul as the dominant part of our eternal inner human. Therefore both soul and human spirit will remain, but the human spirit will have priority because we can only interact with God as spirit. Therefore our human spirit and soul will be in full harmony during eternity, so there will be no more inner power struggles or disagreements. We will also have a much more powerful eternal body, with a very high IQ.

Unbelievers will have a very different status. They never had a human spirit, and will not have one during eternity. That is why they can never cross over, or be forgiven after death, or work off their lack of righteousness after they die. They will retain their Sinful Nature and will be tormented by it. They will be separated from God, and will be very unhappy. They will have a lowly body which feels pain. It was their choice to make, and they chose wrong. This should motivate us to do something about that while there is time.

But what will we believers do during eternity? Will our inner human work as it did on earth? The answer is we will do things a lot like people did on earth while alive, except the focus will turn to serving and worshiping Jesus Christ. All who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior will be in this new Eternal State regardless of their spiritual life after salvation. But believers will not turn into angels. We will not play harps while sitting on clouds. We will not all be equal. Our eternal status will differ greatly based on the thoughts and beliefs we held during our time on earth.

More specifically, the existing Heaven will be combined into a "new heavens and new earth" and the existing universe will be destroyed. There will be a New Jerusalem as the throne-

room of the Trinity, which will be a very large cube shaped structure with pearl gates and streets and walls like gold and diamonds. The original Tree of Life will be inside the New Jerusalem. The Trinity will dwell with believers forever inside this new universe, and Jesus Christ will rule over this societal structure. Those who were spiritual winners will have higher level leadership roles supporting the leadership of the Lord. The society will be designed to support the eternal worship of Jesus Christ the Savior and the entire Trinity. There will be assigned tasks and work in this societal structure. It will also be a very social eternal society, with plenty of personal interaction, since structure and social interaction is important for the happiness of humans even in eternity. We will have variations in rewards based on ranking by spiritual success during our life on earth, so eternity will include varying degrees of happiness based on rewards, although all will have basic happiness. We will eat and drink. The new earth will be a paradise. There will be no darkness, as the light of God will be everywhere at all times. All will have a resurrection body like Jesus Christ gained at His resurrection. We will be able to travel throughout the new universe and explore and use it for our pleasure. It will be a wonderful place for all, but spiritual winner believers will have much more of everything than those who failed to fulfill their spiritual life while on earth.

This is only a tiny glimpse of what God has in store for all of us who believed in Jesus Christ while living on earth. God has something wonderful and exciting for believers in the Eternal State, and we will never be unhappy, bored, or otherwise uncomfortable. But there will be differences in levels of happiness based on how well we fulfilled our spiritual life while believers on earth. And it will be mainly based on what we thought and believed while we were alive.

Now back to the reality of life on earth, and the current state of thoughts, thinking, and beliefs.



## **CHAPTER 22**

### **THE WORLD TODAY -- A CRISIS OF BELIEFS**

Look around at what most people think and believe. Depressing, certainly. Polarizations based on beliefs abound. Belief systems are generally very shallow, mixed with those which are based on total unreality. Fanatical beliefs about singular issues based on false information dominate the human condition, and cause personal mental instability which has also spread to the world at large. Group-thinking on social media offers instant support for a wide variety of beliefs based on untruth and unreality. People are looking for "meaning" but look everywhere but to God, so they find none and become more frustrated. As a result, many go even deeper into single-issue fanatical views in search of meaning in their life. And so the cycle continues downward. This pitiable search for that which is beyond them, and will ultimately elude them, has led to a crisis of beliefs which occurs periodically in human history, often just before great catastrophe. That is how God eventually gets the attention of those nations which have thinking and belief systems which have strayed far from the truth.

It does not take much effort to find polar opposite views among those around you. The surprise is not that it exists, but rather the extent to which it has infiltrated human life at the most basic and even insignificant levels. This is apparent everywhere we turn. Each one believes the other is outrageously wrong, leading to polarization. The difference now as opposed to the past is the degree to which social media can provide support for unreality of beliefs, and expand its impact exponentially. And everything is seen and interpreted through the dark and distorted prism of politics.

So where will this all lead? How does it get sorted out? Or can it be?

Once again, look at the beliefs which currently consume people. So-called "progressive" beliefs are readily accepted rather than reality and truth, often more out of fear of cancellation from social media than actual belief. People pursue politics for the purpose of power, not for

service. Power is used for the purpose of self-promotion of the incompetent. Truth and reality is rejected to create new belief systems based on the so-called "new realities," but that would require that God had given up and gone away. Money is used for the purpose of creating the illusion of importance in society, and a false sense of meaning in life. Lust consumes people, which is the true opioid of the masses. Justice systems support the criminal, as lawful people are called criminals, so the innocent are deemed guilty while criminals are praised. Criminal politicians have risen to the top in governments worldwide. Meanwhile, belief systems based on Bible truth have dwindled and are being persecuted. Christian beliefs are now being called intolerant and even criminal, and portions of the Bible are called hate literature. All of this madness is based on belief systems focused on the Sinful Nature and self-promotion, supported by the evil Cosmic System. The world is turned upside down by distorted beliefs.

Why has this happened? Where is this all headed?

When the majority of individuals in a nation think in such distorted patterns, that nation is headed for disaster. The majority have their Emotion aligned with the Sinful Nature to a significant degree, so they think in distorted patterns, if you call that thinking. When a maximum number of people in a society have gone this way, the effect on that society will be intensified. Add the technology to expand the effects, and a critical mass of false belief systems will take over. And when the whole world has gone that way, the results are what we see today. Chaos of thoughts, thinking, and beliefs.

People are living on their Emotion, which cannot think, in alliance with the Sinful Nature, the instrument of lust and sin for humans. The Mind and Heart are set aside as the leadership of the soul, leading to living by feelings and lust. This eventually becomes a set pattern which the person may be unable to break, even if they desire to do so. The more this condition persists, the more the duo of Emotion and Sinful Nature take control, and the harder it is to think logically. When this condition dominates the nation and the world, attacks on truth, reason and logic start coming from all directions. Unbelievers who are looking for meaning in their otherwise empty lives become angry at not finding any. They blame those who seem happy and have firm beliefs, therefore Christianity becomes their main target. It is blamed for interfering with their own empty search for happiness, and requiring them to think about their eventual death and the eternity beyond it. But any life apart from God is an empty one, because God's plan for humans has no useful alternative.

When people choose alternatives to God's design of the universe, they either invent beliefs based on falsehood or join an existing false belief system. They look for belief systems which will align with their predispositions, whether tending toward hedonism or self-righteousness. Both are lust-based systems. Some others just drop out, preferring not to think about much at all, trying to avoid belief systems. They may try to escape from thinking, so they simply sit in front of a technology device as much as possible, using it to distract from thought, passing the time with as little real thinking as possible, and trying not to believe in anything or anyone. This approach has become a primary method of avoiding thoughts and beliefs, because technology has enabled such a state of being. Others use drugs or alcohol. Many join a cause, trying to find meaning through a belief system based on saving something or helping with something. Some become social climbers, and others focus on making money to the exclusion of all else in life. Others become fanatics, highly focused on a singular belief issue. People go in all types of directions seeking meaning in life, or trying to avoid life, which means avoiding their own thoughts by various forms of distraction. But once people reject the truth, or simply avoid the truth, they have rejected the only real meaning and purpose in life. Any belief system which denies, rejects or avoids the truth is doomed to unhappiness and failure.

That is the status of the world today. Chaos rules because there are no longer enough people focused on thoughts and beliefs based on truth or reality. Anarchy knocks at the door. Throughout history there have always been pockets of people where truth has been held in high esteem, even though most of the world did not do so. Pockets of truth have held the world together, but have dwindled and are fading fast. The world has embraced false beliefs, distractionism, and evil. The results are obvious. There is chaos of thoughts and beliefs, which has led to chaos of actions. The world has rejected truth, because truth scares them to death.

But there is a solution....

## **CHAPTER 23**

### **RIGHT BELIEFS, RIGHT THOUGHTS**

At the beginning of this book we postulated that the Bible is the ultimate self-help book. When it comes to real solutions involving the inner human, it is the only useful self-help book, because it is truth. John 8:31 says "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." It is the Word of God which can rehabilitate our soul by filling our human spirit with truth, which will then drive our soul functions and keep the Sinful Nature generally under control. No human has a perfect belief system from top to bottom. But there are divine standards designed to guide us through our life, and especially our spiritual life.

This book has pointed out many false assumptions about how humans think and form beliefs. We now see that all of it occurs in the soul, not in the brain. We discussed how the brain is a gateway between the soul and the outside world, enabling the soul to interface with the universe. Let us also recall what we discussed about the issue of truth in beliefs, that all people think their own beliefs are "true," or at least "working" for them. By definition, people only believe what they think is true or close enough by their standards. And our core beliefs center on those things we believe are both true and most important in our lives. So we asked ourselves whether truth is what each person thinks it is, or is there one true belief system? And if the latter, who gets to decide what is right or wrong, true or false, acceptable or unacceptable? There can be no other answer except "God gets to decide." The only other choice is "No one" and humans cannot live with that answer. But they try. And they fail. And what belief system does God endorse? We Christians believe it is our faith, based on what the Bible says, because it was written by 35 people in 66 books over about 1500 years yet provides a coordinated and consistent story, reveals a loving and merciful God who offers salvation by grace through belief in Jesus Christ as Savior, explains the universe, gives us answers to our fundamental questions about life, describes what a spiritual life should be, and provides other answers to deep questions which shows us it is true. And it works. No other belief system reveals anything close to that, or has its power. Does that make us narrow minded to accept one single belief system? Not if it is truth. But others believe their opposing belief systems

are true, or something like it. We believe they are wrong about that. Does it bother us that not everyone believes what we believe? Only because we want them to have eternal salvation, but we defend their right to choose. So we do not apologize for believing that the Bible is the truth. For us, it is our core belief system and therefore it drives our thoughts and beliefs at all levels. Imperfectly, of course. We are human. And forgiven. And we can also hold other subordinate beliefs as long as they are not in significant conflict.

God does not have a dynamic and fluid belief system. He only offers salvation through one specific method based on the sacrifice of His Son. Any other attempt by any other method will be rejected. God made the most basic and necessary issue of our lifetime, which is our salvation or lack thereof, a matter of what we believe. The Bible says "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31) Note that it is not thoughts which save us, but a single and very specific belief. It does not mean we merely believe that Jesus existed as a real historical person. That is not specific enough. It is the salvation work of Jesus Christ which is the key, the belief that He is our Savior, which when believed is the moment we are eternally saved. Thoughts are not beliefs until they are accepted as true. Thoughts can be all over the map, some as works in progress, others half-baked, others rejected immediately after thinking them, others occur in dreams where belief is somewhat suspended, others are various forms of whatever crosses through the soul, often whizzing by and then gone forever. But it is the acceptance of thoughts as true which turns them into beliefs. If a thought which is accepted replaces a previous thought which was opposite, then the belief has changed to the new belief. Thoughts form beliefs only when the thought is accepted as true. And one single specific belief provides eternal salvation. There will be a lot of nice people who spend eternity in misery. A very sad fact, but an exclamation point on the importance of thoughts and beliefs, because one specific belief, or lack thereof, will determine the eternal future of each and every person who ever lives.

Note that God made salvation a matter of beliefs. Some might say, how can something so simple as a belief result in eternal salvation? I assume none of you would ask that, having read to this point. We have seen how powerful beliefs are, and how they are the truest reflection of the inner human. Belief is acceptance. Belief is commitment. Belief is trust in the one providing the information. Beliefs are not "something simple." God chose belief in Jesus Christ as Savior as the only way of salvation because it is acceptance, commitment, and trust, which is what God requires of a person to become one of His own. Therefore God did not make salvation a matter of being "good" to some relative degree, but rather a matter of what the individual believes. That is the ultimate reason for this book. God requires humans

to believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior in order to accept the free gift of salvation which God has offered. God did the work, and Jesus Christ made the sacrifice. Humans must simply believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior, in their soul as we have learned, to accept the free gift, the most difficult thing God ever did, which was sacrificing His only Son for all of us. Any other route is closed off since it would be a matter of who deserves salvation, which changes it from a free gift to an earned payment for services rendered. And what do we have to offer God that He needs from us anyway? Nothing.

Those who reject salvation by faith through grace will never gain a human spirit, which is required to interact and live with God. There is no incremental earning of a human spirit. It cannot be achieved by being good enough, or by working hard enough, because the soul alone cannot please God or interact with Him. It requires the human spirit as a partner which can interact with and please God. When the two parts of the inner human work in tandem, God hears and provides His divine favor. If there is only a soul, God waits for the belief to occur. No human after the Fall of Adam and Eve can ever deserve anything from God. But all humans are given the opportunity to accept the free gift of salvation simply by what they believe. Thoughts and beliefs. That is what this book is about because it is what God requires of us to fulfill His will.

As we conclude, there is such a thing as right core beliefs. God gave us the Bible to define them and to show us how we can develop them. Since our core beliefs drive the important thoughts and thinking we engage in, and the decisions we make, having correct core beliefs is critical if we are going to align with God's will and with reality. In the final analysis, these are the same. Truth always comes back to the Bible, even when it is rejected. The Bible separates right from wrong, truth from lies, tells us why these truths are the correct ones, and why all opposing belief systems are therefore wrong and opposed by God. God is not arbitrary about what He believes and what He requires of us, but He can only support that which is right and true because He designed us and the universe. Our soul and human spirit were designed to function on truth. When we function on anything else there will be distortions. It is like putting diesel fuel into a gasoline car and saying "all fuel is just fuel, so all is acceptable." The truth is beneficial to the inner human, and everything else does some degree of harm if it is believed.

After salvation God makes our life about believing the Bible as His truth, and to use it as our source of knowing, understanding, and loving Him. Depressing as the current status of the

world may be, it is not an excuse for believers in Jesus Christ to join in the escapism, distractions, and participate in pretending that all beliefs are equally acceptable. They are not. The reason is that God does not find them equally acceptable. He gets to decide. His Word tells us what He believes. As believers we must align our thoughts and beliefs with His.

If the soul becomes damaged the road back is long and hard, but there is at least a narrow road back. It is akin to recovery from a serious disease which has decimated the body. The decimated soul can be rehabilitated, but there is only one answer, and the Bible provides the solution. The soul can only be rehabilitated by the Word of God. The damage was done by believing falsehoods and lies. Only truth can repair and undo the damage. And truth only comes from God, which He has revealed to us in the Bible. Learning the Bible, the Word of God, is the only means of rehabilitation. Not at a casual level, but by a deep understanding and belief in what it reveals. It is spiritual food, nourishment for the soul. Truth heals and reforms the soul so it can function normally again. Therefore all proper, correct, accurate, noble, and worthy beliefs are rooted and grounded in what God has told us, and that is revealed in the Bible. It must therefore be the guide for our beliefs. And what we believe will drive our thinking, and then our actions. The process of recovery is full of setbacks and pain. But how could it be otherwise, since the slide into the abyss was a long and involved process of slow destruction. Such damage cannot be overcome in a short time, or without pain and setbacks.

Growing in God's Word is not like other types of learning which results in knowledge of the universe. The truth from the Bible is actually and literally "alive and powerful" as Hebrews 4:12 says. Unlike learning math or physics or a hobby, the Word has spiritual power in and of itself, and it can be harnessed if it is taken into the human spirit. 1 Corinthians 8:1 says "We know that we all possess knowledge. But knowledge puffs up while love builds up." The Word of God is the source of love, unlike all other religions. It is learning the Word and growing by it which gives us power from God to live a life focused on God's plan for us. Therefore, growing spiritually allows us to have greater and greater fellowship with God. So we see that growing up spiritually is the primary task required of the new believer. Growth inside any family requires food and learning from teaching. God has provided spiritual food in the form of principles written in the Bible which must be taught by a Pastor who is well trained in understanding the Bible, which is the Word of God and the "mind of Christ." Intake of the Word of God becomes the primary means of spiritual growth in the family in order to meet our spiritual obligations. 2 Peter 1:3-10 says: "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and

goodness... 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Bible explains the need to keep the Heart and Mind focused on God's Word to avoid the distractions of the Sinful Nature. Because the following passage from Proverbs describes this so clearly, it is included in its entirety without comment:

Proverbs Chapter 2:

2 "Making your ear attentive to wisdom, and inclining your heart to understanding;  
3 yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding,  
4 if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,  
5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.  
6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;  
7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity,  
8 guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.  
9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path;  
10 for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;  
11 discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you,  
12 delivering you from the way of evil."

These verses from Proverbs show how the Heart and Mind when functioning properly under a belief system based on spiritual information housed in the human spirit will yield knowledge, understanding and spiritual wisdom. When this happens the Bible says the person has a good Heart and a sound Mind.

God gave us free will to choose, primarily for or against Him and His plan, but also for most other things in life. If humans did not have truly free will, they would be merely puppets and their choices would not be true ones, and therefore they could not appreciate and love God. That is why humans have truly free will, because God wanted us to be able to make uncoerced decisions and therefore be capable of having spiritual interaction with Him which was genuine, and individually chosen. However, it is this free will which changed the entire course of human history and led to all the distortions covered in this book.



This brings us to the answer to the question "What should we think and believe?" The answer is: "truth." God wants us to believe what He has told us because it is the truth, which is only found in the Bible. When we reject what God says is truth, we look for substitutes. The substitutes are various forms of untruth, from living on emotion to believing in a religious system other than that found in the Bible. However, most humans just want to avoid thinking and believing very much at all. Apart from the Biblical view of what our thoughts and beliefs should be, there is no other useful source or authority.

The reason this spiritual growth is necessary is because God requires us to make constant positive decisions in favor of Him, to continually go to Him and seek His grace. Therefore we must learn what He requires of us. Over time the believer can reduce destructive mental thoughts such as arrogance, anger, envy, hatred, jealousy, and a long list which can creep into the soul. The believer must grow and leave the newborn status behind, then proceed through adolescence, and become a spiritual adult. The believer glorifies Jesus Christ as he grows in the knowledge of God's Word. This growth can only be accomplished by learning what God has told us through the Bible. Humans were designed by God to think and form beliefs. God did not design us to function on a belief system which is based on false information, half-truths, or lies. Humans have a soul which requires information to function, to think, to form and hold beliefs. But those beliefs can be right or wrong, truth or lie, good or bad. We were designed to function on the belief system revealed in the Bible, which is truth, because it is the Word of God -- His truth.

The inner human will live forever. Our thoughts and beliefs will determine our happiness both on earth and for all eternity. That makes them very powerful things. Thoughts and beliefs have eternal implications. Choose them wisely.

**THERE IS NO END**

**WHAT YOU THINK & BELIEVE NOW  
WILL MATTER FOR ALL ETERNITY**

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