

## Lost (Natural) Man versus Fleshly Man versus Spiritual Man

by Rene Brown

In the scriptures, Paul the apostle speaks of three kinds of men:

- 1) First there is the Natural Man or Lost Man.
- 2) Second there is the Carnal Man or Carnal Christian
- 3) Third there is the Spiritual Man

The Natural Man is one who does not believe and trust in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for the remission of our sins. His sins have not been washed away by the blood of Jesus. He is "lost".

Eph 2:1 (RSV) "And you he made alive, when you were **dead** through the trespasses and sins"

Such a man has the same problem as Adam had following his sin in the Garden of Eden: He is separated from God. In God's vocabulary, to be separated from God is to be dead - in this case the man is spiritually dead though his body and soul are very much alive. He has no contact with God and cannot relate to God because he has not received Jesus Christ as his Savior.

This man definitely is controlled by his Adamic nature. He has no sense of spiritual things of God and cannot understand spiritual things. Even if he tries, he cannot understand them. In the gospel of John, Jesus tells us that such a man has the devil (or Satan) as his father: John 8:44 (RSV) "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires..."

Such a man may be rather moral and in the best cases, some would see him as a very good man. Some lost men can be even more moral than some believers. Some men follow Judeo-Christian ethics better than some believers. They do not lie, cheat or steal. They do not harm their neighbor; they keep the 10 commandments. They may be kind, considerate and compassionate.

Such a person may find it hard to believe that if there is a heaven, he is not going there! He knows he is "good", follows the dictates of what he sees as his ethics and morality, and feels he is quite as good as other people. It may be quite difficult to convince such a one that he needs a Savior - especially if the Christians he knows are rather not like himself but have questionable morals and ethics.

What is the problem? Such a "good" man may be comparing himself with what the scriptures call a "fleshly" man or man who is walking in the "flesh". In many cases it is difficult to tell the difference between a worldly or Fleshly Christian and a lost or Natural man.

Rom 8:5-6 (NNAS) "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace," <sup>7</sup>"because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, <sup>8</sup>and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

1Cor 2:14-15 (RSV) "The unspiritual man [natural man or lost man] does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is

not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>**The spiritual man** judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one." 1Cor 2:14-15 (NNAS) "But a **natural man** does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. <sup>15</sup>But **he who is spiritual** appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one."

1Cor 3:1-3 (NNAS) "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to **spiritual men**, but as to **men of flesh** [fleshly man], as to infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, <sup>3</sup>for **you are still fleshly** [fleshly man]. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not **fleshly** [fleshly man], and are you not walking like mere men?"

So as we look at these two men, one "natural" or "lost" and one a "fleshly" Christian, the "natural" man may look much better because he is moral and upright and the "fleshly" Christian may not be at all moral and upright. Or in many cases, they may look very much the same. We cannot tell a lost man from a believer by how they look. **But morality is not the standard which God uses.**

What is the problem with the "natural" man or "unspiritual" man? It is very simple: He still has and walks in the old Adamic Nature - the nature or characteristic or spirit that he inherited from his forefather, Adam. He has learned to dress up the man in "moral" clothes; he has learned to do "right", he has learned "moral" ways. So he looks good to the world around him. The problem is, he does not look "good" to God. When God looks at man, He only looks at one thing: What does this person believe about my Son, Jesus Christ.

John 6:28-29 (RSV) "Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered them, "**This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.**"

Unfortunately for this "moral" man, God only looks at one "work" to determine our salvation: **Do you believe in Him (Jesus) whom He has sent?** Nothing else matters. God has made only one provision that man might be saved and that is belief in, trust in, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

It is tragic that the world sees hundreds of these very moral people who do not know Jesus and do not want to know Jesus and yet are moral and upright and honest. The world is aggravated, grieved, and angry that the Christian community tells them that they are lost and will never go to heaven but the fleshly Christian who may lie, cheat and steal, be unkind and so on and yet is going to heaven! That insults the intelligence of the world who looks at the Christian community.

This is sad that the Christian church has no better reputation than this. It must hurt the heart of God that many claim Christ as Savior and **truly trust in Him** and yet do not follow after His ways.

The third type of man is the "spiritual" man who loves the Lord Jesus and desires to follow Him in every way possible. Even then he may fail frequently and have to repent over and over again. Yet, when one looks at such a one, there is no doubt that his life looks much more like Jesus than the "fleshly" Christian who is walking in the flesh. What is the difference? Both have Jesus Christ living in them. Both have believed unto salvation. Both are trusting in the Lord for eternal life.

The difference is quite simple: The “spiritual” man is allowing his godly, reborn spirit which is in association with God’s Holy Spirit to control his soul life. His spirit rules over his soul life and his soul rules over his body. His spirit is holy and righteous and complete in Christ. When it dictates the direction of life, then it follows after Christ. It does not follow after “self” life. Rather, Jesus Christ rules this life in the spirit and the spirit causes the soul life and body life to line up with the Life of Jesus Christ. This the bible calls “walking in the spirit”.

When the world looks at such a man, they know or sense he or she is a follower of Jesus Christ. His actions line up with the life of Jesus Christ. His life is given over to God; his desires are all towards God. He has followed Romans 12:1 and given his life as a living sacrifice to God. Daily he takes up his cross and follows the Lord. His self-life does not rule his life nor determine his actions. Jesus Christ rules his life!

Such a person is not interested in titles or position or acclaim or honor. They want to point people to God that God might be honored in all their life. His only desire is to do the will of the Father just like Jesus did. Over and over we see Jesus saying he did what the Father was doing; he said what the Father was saying. He did nothing of himself.

The spiritual man walks in the same way that Jesus walked with the Father. He desires that in all ways he walks as Jesus is leading him. He abides in the vine just as Jesus tells us in the gospel of John.

John 15:4-6 (RSV) "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing [nothing that the Father is interested in!!]. <sup>6</sup>If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned."

It is all about abiding and receiving our life from the vine. Then when we speak, we speak life to people. Otherwise we just bring them law and death. But when we abide in the vine, we bring life to all who hear us.

**\*\*\*\*\*End of Lesson\*\*\*\*\***