

The Deeper Spiritual Life #2 'Three Classes of Man'

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and leadership in entering the Promised Land and living the deeper spiritual life.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:9

Topics: "Spiritual Maturity", "The Three Classes of Man"

Description

A.W. Tozer discusses the three classes of man as described in 1 Corinthians: the natural man, the carnal man, and the spiritual man. He emphasizes that the natural man is unregenerate and cannot comprehend spiritual truths, while the carnal man, though saved, remains immature and influenced by his lower nature. The spiritual man, in contrast, is mature and led by the Holy Spirit, embodying the deeper spiritual life that God desires for His people. Tozer warns against the dangers of spiritual stagnation, urging believers to move beyond mere salvation and into a vibrant, active faith that fully embraces God's promises. He uses the example of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan to illustrate the importance of progressing in one's spiritual life.

Transcript

Message 2 of 4 on the Deeper Spiritual Life by A.W. Tozer

January 29, 1956

"The Deeper Spiritual Life--Three Classes of Man"

In the second and third chapters of 1 Corinthians, beginning with verse thirteen, maybe verse nine would be better. As it is written, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God, for what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of God. that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them,

because they are spiritually discerned. That he that is spiritual judges all things yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord that He may instruct him, but we have the mind of Christ. And I, Brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal even as unto babes in Christ, I fed you with milk and not with meat for hitherto you are not able to bear it. Neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal.

Now, that is part of First Corinthians two and three. And this is the second in a series of talks on the deeper life. What is the deeper life and how can I enter into it? And we have as our general text that one in the Hebrews the sixth chapter, which says simply, leaving the first principles, or the principles, let us go on unto perfection.

Now, I'll be talking over the next Sunday mornings on the the deeper spiritual life. Now, there are three kinds of persons mentioned here in Paul's description, in 1 Corinthians two and three. They are the natural, the carnal and the spiritual.

The natural man simply means the unregenerate man. The man who is simply of body and intellect, and his appetites and temperament and all that is natural in the man, that every human being has that's born into the world. That's the natural man. And it said about him, that he receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.

You may test the quality of religious teaching, by the enthusiastic reception given it by unsaved men. If it is received enthusiastically, by natural men, it is not of the Spirit of God. Because Paul says plainly, that spiritual things cannot be known by unregenerate man, and that they are plain foolishness unto them. There is a type of religious teaching, which is understood by and received by and seems perfectly logical to the natural man. But that which is of the Spirit of God is not known to the natural man. He has not the faculty to receive it. Now that's here plainly.

Then in verse 15, there is what is called the spiritual man. He that is spiritual judgeth all things and he says, that I have talked to you not as under spiritual but as unto carnal. And thus he spots and describes another type of man, the spiritual man. It is the spiritual man.

First, I think I want to say a little more about the natural man. The natural man is the man who is in a state of nature. He may be in perfect health. He may have an IQ of 180. He may be as handsome as a Greek statue or if it's a woman, she may be at the top and be a perfect example of fine womanhood. Or youth, a perfect example of young American youth, we would say here. And the natural man, though he is in this space, he is in a state of nature. He's unblessed and he's out of grace.

Then there is the spiritual man. That is the Christian who is mature, and who is led and taught and controlled by the Holy Spirit, to whom the Spirit of God can speak, and who is led by the Spirit. Then there is the carnal man that Paul talks about here. The carnal man is the immature Christian. He's not a natural man in that he has been renewed by the grace of God and he's in a state of grace. But he is not spiritual. He is halfway in between. He is immature and thus carnal. And that is he's regenerated, but he is not advanced. He's retarded in his spiritual life. He is not influenced by nor led by the Holy Spirit, but is controlled by his lower nature.

Now, here we have these three. And in the Old Testament, incidentally, the spiritual man is the man that I would say, is living the deeper spiritual life. He is indwelled by, led by, taught by, influenced by, and controlled by Holy Spirit. Now in the Old Testament, we have a prototype of these three. That is, in the

story of Israel. Israel at Kadesh Barnea is a perfect example of the immature Christian, who is not advanced and will not advance, who will not go on with God though he's not unsaved. He's not in a state of nature, but in a state of grace, and is blessed and does know God as his Savior.

Now briefly, I'll not take out a lot of time, but briefly, here was the Old Testament picture that corresponding to the natural man who is not in a state of grace, was Israel in Egypt. They were in a state of bondage there. You know the story well, 400 and some years they had been in Egypt and a good part of that time, they had been in bondage to Pharaoh. Then came Moses with blood and atonement and power. And he brought the children Israel out of Egypt. And the Red Sea closed between them, and between Israel and Egypt. Now that is corresponding to the new birth, the regeneration which makes the natural man, a Christian, which takes him out of nature and puts him in a state of grace. Israel came out of Egypt and went across the river and the river, cross the sea and the sea closed behind them. And the enemy died on the shore and Israel was for the first time in 400 years a free nation, redeemed by blood and by power.

Now, there you have the Christian. He has been all his lifetime subject to bondage, bondages of various kinds, of chains and shackles and manacles have been upon his spirit, but now through the blood of the Lamb, and the power of the Spirit, he's brought out of Egypt, and the Red Sea closes after him. We used to sing, I've crossed the Red Sea of his blood and left the world behind me. And that's exactly what is happening.

Then there is the spiritual man. That's Israel in Canaan. This was God's benevolent intention, that those who had been natural men in bondage in Egypt should come out of Egypt and then go straight on an eleven day journey to the Holy Land, that land offered to Abraham by God in covenant. The Holy Land, the land of promise, Canaan variously called, and that was to be the homeland of Israel. That was to be their spiritual homeland. There, they were not only to be out of Egypt, but they were to be "in" the Holy Land. He brought them out that he might bring them in.

This is what is lost, the note that is lost in so much of our teaching, he brings us out, not that we may be out, rather he brings us out that we may be in. God saves a gangster. Not that he might tell about it once a year for the next 40 years. He saves him from being a gangster that he might become a saint. He takes him out that he might lead him in. And the further "in" the man goes, the less he will have to say about where he used to be. It is not a mark of spirituality when I talk at length about what I used to be.

Israel wanted to forget what she used to be and remember it only occasionally to thank God, but we magnify what we used to be and write books that tell the world what we use to be. Paul said those things are not even to be mentioned among the people of God. They're not even to be mentioned in conversation, what you used to be. What you used to be, God brought you out of, but he didn't bring you out to leave you in a vacuum. He brought you out that he might bring you in. And it was the will of God, that after he had brought Israel out of Egypt, he should then in eleven short days march, they tell us they could have been in the land.

The enemy could have been driven out, and they could have had the holy land of promise which God had given to them centuries before. They were not stealing it, they were occupying it as their proper possession. God who owned it, had given it to Abraham and his seed after him. But Abraham's seed had been driven out there and driven to Egypt. Now God brings them back to put them in the land, not I say, to be usurpers and take the land, but to occupy the land which was properly theirs by a gift of the one who

owned it, namely God.

So God brings us out of sin that he might bring us into the spiritual life. And he never has a vacuum in between anywhere unless you would count that short eleven days a vacuum. But it was to be a God blessed, hovered over, and Shekinah-enlightened march straight through to the Holy Land. And when they got in the land of the homeland of their spirits, back into the land from which Abraham had come centuries before Jacob, then they were to be the spiritual men, and they corresponded to the spiritual men in our study.

But now what about the carnal man? The carnal man is the immature Christian who does not go on. He's not advanced. He's retarded. He's not influenced nor controlled by the Spirit but by his lower nature. Now, when Israel came to Kadesh Barnea, after they had marched a little while in the direction of the spiritual Promised Land, they stopped at a town named sometimes called Kadesh and sometimes called Kadesh Barnea, and there in Kadesh Barnea they stopped.

And Moses said to them in effect, well, you're about to enter into the land, which is the object of your hope toward which God started to lead you when he brought you out of Egypt. They said, we're a little afraid, let us send out twelve men. So, they sent twelve men up into Canaan and those twelve men went up to examine the land and report back to see whether they could take it or not. And when they came back, all of them, they reported that it was an exceeding good land. They said they were brooks there, one of them called Eschal, brooks of water.

Well, to people in that country and that land, water was water. It was riches untold. It was more valuable than silver and gold and diamonds. And to come back and say it's an exceeding good land in which there is much water was equivalent to saying that it was Atlantis or a paradise. They found their grapes so large that they took one bunch and carried them between two men,. They found figs and those figs would be their sugar and their candy and their preserves and would be to them what you and I have by way of marmalade and jellies and candies and sodas' and all the people like their sweet tooth. They had their figs. And figs and dates meant almost all together the sweet element in their day.

Then there were pomegranates. I don't think pomegranate would be classified among the citrus fruits but it is near to it, very near to it. And of course if you've ever eaten a pomegranate, sometime go to a fruit store and ask for a pomegranate. They may have them and cut it loose, cut it through and eat this pomegranate. It is all full of seeds but it has a tart, pungent taste to it and very, very juicy. You could squeeze them and get good juice. And I don't know for sure but knowing that they grow in the sunshine and knowing where they grow and knowing how they taste, I think I'm not too far away when I say that they would literally be packed with what we now call vitamins. They would be well worth their having.

Then, there was milk and honey. And the scripture says that the milk and honey flowed. Now when it said milk and honey flowing, it literally wasn't using careless language. Why there were those great bee trees back in the state where I come from, Pennsylvania, men would find bee trees that were full of honey. They put so much honey in that they wouldn't hold and they were dribbling the honey literally dripping down. And so the great rocks where they made honey, literally dripped with honey. And there was milk abundance.

Now, that was the land so different from Egypt from whence they came only a little while before. Now ten of these men came back and advised, they said that's what the country is like. But nevertheless, we advise you do not go up into the land, because, though it is an exceeding good land with brooks of water

and grapes and figs and pomegranates and milk and honey, yet the people are large and strong and there are giants there. And their cities are great and walled up to heaven. They were excited. Walled clear up to heaven, they said, and the land eateth up its inhabitants.

Now a land that had brooks of water and grapes and figs and pomegranates and honey and milk didn't sound to me as if it was busy eating of inhabitants. And beside that, they hadn't stayed there long enough to watch the land eat up anything. They were simply frightened and filled with unbelief. And they said, We advise against going up. But stay here in the wilderness. We're out of Egypt, thank God, this labor is behind this, and we're not slaves anymore. We're in the wilderness and it isn't the best, but we'll settle for it. Rather than go up among those giants in that wonderful homeland, called Palestine.

But Caleb and Joshua, they appeared to step to the head of the line and said to Moses that we urge you to go in and pay no attention to these pessimists. We can easily take the land. They'll be bread for us. It belongs to us. Our Father, God gave it to us and gave it to Abraham, our Father, and it's ours. Let's go take it. Let's go up. They saw the rich advantages in the land. And they were unwilling to allow the large strong giants and walled cities to keep them out.

Well, now the effect on the people, it's always that way Brethren, it has been down the years. All of this modern, it isn't modern really, teaching about the church being a perfect democracy, and that there should be no leaders is just plain poppycock. And there's nothing in either Old Testament or New Testament that gives support to it. The leaders were sent out to spy out the land and the people were more or less dependent upon what the leaders said, just as you and I are dependent in this democracy upon what our leaders do in Washington to a large extent. And in the church of Christ, it's the same.

And the people, when they heard the unfavorable report of the ten men, that is, the majority report had been read. Caleb and Joshua gave a minority report but they're only two against ten. And so the people wept and fell down in front of their tent doors and wept and wished they had not come out of Egypt and said, would to God we were back in Egypt. And they pleaded the presence of their women and children. All they could see was walled cities and giants. They couldn't see grapes. And great cattle were their great udders dripping with milk and great rocks and trees, drooling sweet honey down onto the grass, couldn't see that. They couldn't see the rolling lawns and the brooks and rivers. They couldn't see that. All I could see would be the great giants and the land and forgot that God said go up now, I give it to you.

And so they said, Oh, you'll kill our poor women, you'll kill our children. This is always the unspiritual man's argument. His argument always is, I've got to think about my family. I've got a family after all brother and God wants us to be wise. And I can't push this too far. I can't become too spiritual because I got to think about my family. I can't subject my wife and children to difficulties. I can't leave burdens on them. Always pleading their wives and families, forgetting that the best heritage you can leave your family is the memory of being a good man. You forget that, sir, you forget that Mother. That if you become a spiritual woman, your family may fight you and they may burn you with hot language and scold you with sarcastic speech and they'll pose you and make you feel like an idiot. But when you're gone, they will walk quietly away wiser and sadder and will admit that the best heritage you left them was that you're a good man.

I said here two weeks ago, I can leave nothing to my family. I can leave them nothing except a few books. But if I can leave my boys, scattered all around, all of them but one in church, all of them some kind of Christians and singing in choirs and all that sort of thing around here and there among the Baptist and Presbyterian churches, all some kind of Christians except one. I don't know what they think of the old man,

but I do know this, if I can have lived so that when I'm finished, my family will have to say, he set an example that I could safely follow. And the memory of a man who lived for God in a bad world is more to me than all the riches of LaSalle Street. Then I will have left them a heritage the likes of which no rich man can leave to a son.

And if these had only known. They could have taken those wives, women and families of children of theirs up into the Holy Land within a few hours. And they would have had all that land but for forty years, they wandered in the desert, in a desert land, and those poor wives and children, that they had been so afraid they were going to get killed, if they went up into the land, the spiritual land, those same wives and children, walked on their feet for forty years, aimlessly around and around and around and around in the desert. Now circling back near to Egypt where they had been, now in a wide loop circling back close to the promised land where there should be. Back around again to Egypt where they were and then around again, in a wide loop again near to where they ought to be. Forty years until those children were grown up to middle age. And those old ladies were dead and the young were old, or at least middle age, forty years of it. Because they had whimpered and said we can't go up. It's costing us too much. We can't mistreat our families. I've got to be with my family Sunday nights and Wednesday nights and all during missionary convention. I've got to be with my family. I can't make juvenile delinquents. You won't make juvenile delinquents out of your family. The best way to save them from delinquency is to show them an example of a man who loves God uncompromisingly and who seeks to be spiritual, if it costs him his blood.

I don't know whether you saw the Alliance weekly or not some weeks ago, when there appeared an article in it, called, "They Hanged Their Prophet. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German, Lutheran who lived in the time of Hitler, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was a man of remarkable spiritual insight. And I have a certain marginal delight that people are reading him and talking about him now. He saw Hitler rise and knew what Hitler would be. And he got up to a microphone and told Germany look out for this man. And then he began to preach Jesus Christ. Preached Jesus Christ as the Savior of men, and preached what he called costly grace. He said, the grace of God will cost you everything you have. Don't try to get into heaven cheaply. The grace of God is costly because it cost Christ His blood and it costs us everything and maybe, cost us our lives.

So, they caught him and they put him in prison, oscillating him back and forth and shuttling him from one concentration camp to another and wherever he was, preaching Jesus and comforting people. He was engaged to a lovely young woman. He had a sister and I believe a father, if I recall another one or two other relatives, and they pulled their old tricks, the old totalitarian trick, they pulled in Red China and Russia, Czechoslovakia and Poland and Germany when Hitler was alive. It was this-you better buckle down to me and shut up. I've got your children. I've got your wife, I have your sweetheart, I have your Mother as a hostage and if you don't do what I ask you to do, woe be to them.

That was their technique and their trick. They said you surrender and shut up about costly grace and, and freedom and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Stop warning against Hitler and the Nazis or we'll kill your woman you're engaged to marry. We will destroy your family. A young man, still in his thirties said, my family belongs to God. And you'll never get me to surrender by threatening to kill my family. When God calls a man, he calls him to come and die! Do your worst. So they hanged him and along with at same time or near to the same time, they destroyed the woman he was to marry. They destroyed his sister I think and the father if I have it straight. For I am speaking from memory.

You say, what kind of a beast was he? He's the kind of beast John saw in heaven. The beast and the four and twenty elders fell down before the throne and said, holy, holy, holy, the Lord God Almighty. He was a man who you couldn't threaten his family. You couldn't say, I'll get your family. That's the Devil's trick. It's always been the Devil's trick. You give more than you should to the Lord's work, if you seek to become a spiritual man, you'll harm your family. That's the Devil's trick!

Well, they wandered forty years by God's judgment. God said, doubtless ye shall not come into the land. Their fear of death and their doubts and their complaining displeased God because God said you have slandered the land. And every man who stands out in the shadows and slanders the deeper spiritual life is slandering the sunshine. Every man who refuses to enter into the holy life, he is in the wilderness, slandering the homeland of the soul. So, for forty years, they wandered aimlessly about, just wandering. God was with them, kept them, didn't destroy them, He let them die one of the time. Occasionally, he would punish them. You know those stories, but I mean, he didn't destroy them as a nation.

Now, what's the meaning for us? The meaning for us is, if you're a natural man, no matter how learned, how talented, how handsome or desirable, a natural woman, no matter how beautiful, you don't know a thing about God and you don't know a thing about the spiritual life. You haven't the faculties.

If you knew a man stone deaf, sitting and there was a Mozart Symphony, on, playing, you wouldn't blame the man who was deaf because he would rather read than listen. He couldn't hear he hasn't got the faculty that can enjoy the music. Or if you were in an art gallery looking at pictures, and there was a man completely blind who cannot even see light, sitting on the bench. You wouldn't say, what's that Philistine doing sitting there? Why doesn't he get up and look at the pictures? He doesn't have the faculty look at pictures. That thing you look at in pictures is dead in him. The deaf man, that which you listen to symphonies with, it's dead.

So you my friend, no matter who you are nor how learned, how religious, if you've not been regenerated, renewed, made over, brought to life by the quickening of the Holy Ghost. You can't know God. You can't know Christ. You can't know spiritual things at all. You can only know the history of it. And all your enthusiasm for religion is an illusion. For the Holy Ghost says, you don't have the faculty to know spiritual things with.

Then what else does God say there was through this. He says that we Christians who are quickened to life who are his children, who are not in a state of nature anymore but in the state of grace, to continue without progress year after year, as some of us are doing, is to wander spiritually, wander, walking in circles instead of straight ahead, round and round and round in circles. Sometimes a little closer to Egypt than to the Holy Land, but again, a little closer to the Holy Land than to Egypt.

So, we oscillate in our circling round and round and occasionally we can look over the sea and see where we used to be as slaves. That's getting pretty close to sin. Then again, in a prayer meeting or in some revival, we get around so close, we can almost look over into the Holy Land. But we're not going in to either place. We're not going back into the whirl wheel and we're not going to push on into the spiritual life.

So around and around we go, oscillating between nearness to the old world where we came from and newness to the new world where we ought to be in our spirits. I say to continue without progress year after year, is to acquire a chronic habit. Harder to break as time passes. The best time in the world to plunge into the deeper spiritual life is when you're a young Christian. When you're young, you've got enthusiasm, and you haven't formed the habits.

For instance, suppose I was to try to learn, say Japanese. At my age, I couldn't learn Japanese. I'm positive. I could learn to read and write it. I can learn anything men can print and think you can to. But I could never speak it so as to be understood. Why? Because I've been around too long, and the muscles of my tongue, lips and mouth. That whole structure that forms words has been formed to English, the English. All the little twists and turns and slurs of English tongue, they fit my mouth. And the older I get the harder it would be for me to learn a new language. But little Joy here when they go to wherever they're going, they don't know yet, but she'll be able in a year's time to be rattling in the language of their field with perfect fluency. She'll pick it up from the other little kids around because her little mouth hasn't really learned English yet.

And the younger you are, the easier it is to learn and speak a new language. Because habits harden you and I know they're Christians, and to me, it's a very, very heavy burden. I don't say it discourages me because I refuse to be ever discouraged about anything. But I do say it gives me a heavy heart to be forced, as I do much of the time to walk among Christians here, and not only here, but all over where I go. Even old people who've wandered for forty long years in the wilderness, not going back to sin, but not going on into the holy life wandering around the nameless circle, sometimes a little warmer and it's sometimes a little cold. Sometimes a little holier and sometimes very unholy, but never going on in.

Habits has been acquired and it's hard to break and it makes it almost certain that they will live and die a spiritual failure. To me, this is a terrible thing Brethren, a terrible thing. Man decides to be a lawyer and he spends years learning to be a lawyer. And he puts out his shingle, but he finds there is something in his temperament that makes it impossible for him to make good as a lawyer. He's a failure, a complete failure. Now here he is fifty years old. He was admitted to the bar when he was thirty. He's had twenty years and he hasn't been able to make a living. He's a failure as a lawyer.

He's a businessman who buys a business and tries to operate it. He does everything he knows, but he just can't make it go. Year after year after year the ledger shows red. He's not making a profit. He borrows where he can. He has a little spurt and has hope. That spurt soon dies down. And he's back again. Finally sells out, hopelessly in debt, a failure in the business world.

Here's a teacher who trains in the schools to be a teacher, but just can't get along as a teacher. Something in the constitutional or temperamental structure that just won't allow her to get along with young people. So, after being shuttled from one place to another and out and out toward the margin, finally have to give up, go somewhere and run a stapling machine and said, I just can't teach, a failure.

I've known ministers who thought they were called to preach and they trained, studied and learned Greek and Hebrew and what have you, but they just somehow can't make the public feel they want to hear it, but are just failures.

Now, it is possible to be a Christian and yet be a failure. By that I mean, just as Israel, while in the desert wandering, they're Israelites, they're God's people. They are protected and fed, but they were failures. They weren't where God meant them to be. They were compromising, halfway between where they used to be and where they ought to be.

That describes so many of the Lord's people, live and die spiritual failures. I'm awfully glad God is good and kind. Poor failures crawl into God's arms at last and say, Father, I've made a mess of it and I just couldn't get free from the tuggings and the dominance of my flesh. I wanted to and often I wept, you know and wished I could but Father, you know, I just couldn't make it. I'm a spiritual failure. I haven't been out

doing evil things exactly. Certainly I know I haven't been where I know I could be. So here I am Father and I'm old and ready to go and I'm a failure.

You know what? Our kind gracious Heavenly Father we'll take us in, and he won't say to us, depart from me, I never knew you. Because that person has believed and does believe in Jesus Christ. That person has been renewed and the seed and root that matters is in him. Oh, but what a failure he's been all his life.

I'm ready for death and I'm ready for heaven. I wonder if that's what the man of God meant when he said, for what other foundation can a man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble. Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built upon, he shall receive reward. If any man's work shall be burn, he shall suffer loss but he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire.

I think that's what it means all right. We ought to be the kind of Christians that can live so not only to save our souls, but save all our lives. When Lot went out of Sodom, he had nothing but the garment that covered him. He got out all right. Dressed alone in the garment he had on. Thank God he got out. But how much better if he could have had a farewell at the gate with camels and donkey trains loaded with his goods. He could have gone out, head up, chin up, saying goodbye to old Sodom, been changed, transformed and he could have marched away from there with his family, heads up.

Thank God we're going to make it. But are you satisfied to make it the way have been, wandering, wandering, roaming aimlessly, when there is a place where Jesus sheds the oil of gladness on our heads, a place in all the world more sweet it is, the blood-bought mercy seat? It's the will of God that you should enter or live under the shadow of that mercy seat and go out from there and circle and come back there and always being renewed and recharged and refed back there by the mercy seat, living a separated clean, holy, sacrificial life, a life of continuous spiritual victory. Wouldn't that be better than the way we're doing? I want to talk again next Sunday morning further about the deeper spiritual life and what it means and how to enter in.

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