

A Soulish Christian

by Watchman Nee

Watchman Nee explores the concept of a soulish Christian, emphasizing the dangers of relying on natural abilities instead of the Spirit's power in living a righteous life.

Scripture: Romans 8:5, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Spiritual Maturity", "Reliance on the Spirit"

Description

Watchman Nee discusses the concept of a 'soulish Christian,' emphasizing that while the sinful nature has been crucified, the soul remains influenced by Adam's fall. He explains that the soul, which encompasses the mind, emotions, and will, can still operate under its own power, leading believers to attempt to fulfill God's requirements through their natural strength rather than the Spirit. This results in a mixture of divine and human efforts, causing spiritual immaturity. Nee warns that relying on the soul-life to express God's nature can lead to a false sense of spiritual maturity, as believers may mistakenly believe they are living righteously while still being soulish. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper reliance on the Spirit to truly embody the life of Christ.

Transcript

Why is he a soulish Christian? We have seen how the cross works and how the believers' flesh, the sinful nature, has been crucified on it. However, the life of the soul still remains. Although all sins come from the flesh, and the soul is merely directed by it and acts as its puppet, the soul is inherited from Adam, and though not fully defiled, it is unavoidably affected by Adam's fall. It is true that there is a difference between the natural being and God's life. And though the filthy flesh within a believer has died, his soul remains the power behind his living. Although the nature of sin has died, the life of the self remains. Hence, inevitably, the man is still of the soul. Now, although the sinful nature, the flesh, has died, the soul remains the power behind man's conduct. In other words, although the flesh can no longer direct the soul, the soul remains the power behind man's living. Now that God's nature has replaced the flesh, naturally, all the inclinations, desires, and proposals should be righteous and no longer filthy as they once were. However, it is still the former soul-life that is executing the proposals and desires of this new nature.

This soul-life includes the mind, the emotion, the sensations, the will, and so forth. These functions (the mind, the emotion, and so forth) are the common possessions of the natural man. Hence, for one to depend on the soul-life to execute the propositions of the spirit is to accomplish the supernatural divine goodness through natural worldly strength. To put it plainly, it is to meet God's demand with one's

self-power. At this point, on the negative side, a believer may have already overcome sin, yet on the positive side, he is still childish in practicing righteousness. There is the danger that he may fail to develop the God-given life of the Spirit which is already within him and to apply the life-power of this Spirit to execute all the dictates of the new nature. Actually, at this time, the spiritual life is still in the infant stage and is not yet mature; it is still incapable of expressing all the virtues in God's nature. This results in a believer trying by his own natural, soulish power to fulfill all the requirements God has placed upon His children. This walk and work is a mixture of the things of God and the things of man. It is to express the heavenly desire with the earthly strength! When a believer walks in such a way, he is not yet spiritual. Instead, he is soulish.

We have to realize that not all soulish experiences are evil or filthy. The flesh, insofar as the sinful nature goes, produces filthy and sinful things, but the soul is not necessarily like this. The soul-life is simply our original life, that is, the life that makes us a living creature. This life, once detached from the sinful nature, the flesh, may not always be evil in its thoughts. Many people have their original, inborn goodness, patience, love, and gentleness. These virtues come by birth. They are part of what the soul-life possesses. However, with some, these virtues are buried under the flesh and are not seen. Still some are not as blatant in the manifestation of their flesh. Their original virtues shine out a little more than others'. After a Christian has crucified his flesh, he is in danger of one thing: executing the new propositions of God's nature by the power of the soul-life. To speak plainly, this is to do good by our own strength. Such a one may be partially successful. This is exactly where he deviates. When believers find it effective to "exercise their self," they will think that they have reached spiritual maturity. They do not realize that they are doing good by the power of the soul. They may be doing good, but they are still soulish.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/watchman-nee/a-soulsh-christian/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net