



False Criteria for Spirituality

A state of spirituality of the believer's soul is guaranteed by the Word of God immediately following confessing or naming your known sins to God the Father. This is the only way. Any other way is false. Any other criterion used to "determine" spirituality is false. Also, there are no "degrees" of spirituality. It is an absolute. Either God the Holy Spirit is controlling your soul 100% or your old sin nature is controlling your soul 100% resulting from committing a sin. It's all or nothing. 1 John 1:9.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9, NASB)

We are commanded in Scripture to be filled with the Spirit. This is spirituality. We are commanded in Scripture to grow spiritually. The Word of God is dogmatic on the "how" of spirituality and on the false striving for spirituality. In being dogmatic, the Word is always right and is absolute in its authority. Eph. 5:18; 2 Peter 3:18.

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:18, NASB)

"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18, NASB)

When a minister quotes the Word and is dogmatic, often that dogmatism is taken for pride. He thinks he knows it all. He is relying on his education, the letter of the matter, rather than on his heart or devotion to Christ. It is well to say that dogmatism not based on the Word is stubbornness and bullheadedness.

In the area of spirituality, there is more prejudice, more fixed notions, and a lot of preconceived ideas. We'll bump into a lot of them in this category and into pet sins and ideas. But, let's stick to God's Word and call a spade a spade and let the chips fall where they may. Are we afraid of the truth?

Spirituality by Tabooism

Spirituality by tabooism is a false idea that if a believer does not smoke, drink alcohol, play cards, go to movies, or dance, they are in a state of spirituality. Many believers today suppose themselves to be in a state of spirituality because they don't do those filthy five. One is not spiritual by outward externals, but by being filled with God the Holy Spirit (in fellowship). Some taboos are not labeled as sin in the Bible, but in principle the believer in fellowship may not indulge in them. Not doing something that is viewed by others as a taboo is not a means to spirituality. It is not what you do or don't do. It's what the Holy Spirit does that matters.

Those that are into spirituality by tabooism are very moral, self-righteous and very critical of others. They judge believers on this basis. If they smoke, they are not spiritual and if they don't smoke, then they are pretty good people. These are not a means of spirituality. The only true means of spirituality is application of 1 John 1:9 and the resultant control of the Holy Spirit.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9, NASB)

Spirituality is not morality or tabooism or adhering to a list or a code of ethics. It is a supernatural life of control of the believer's soul by God the Holy Spirit. Anything an unbeliever can give up is never a means of spirituality. However, because we walk in the Spirit we do not do certain things.



When one keeps a set of ground rules to have spirituality it is called legalism. A person who is using the taboos as a means of spirituality is always a spiritual moron, a baby, is critical, worries, gripes, complains, maligns and has a very messed up mental attitude. The cruelest Christians in the world are very often those adhering to taboos. They are very critical of anyone who does not keep their “standard” regardless of their spiritual growth. They may keep certain taboos, but they are usually victims to the “fearful five,” doubt, discouragement, moodiness, worry and fear. They are always unproductive, loud-mouth believers, with no impact and very little testimony.

Spirituality only comes from the filling of the Spirit and when He controls the soul. The believer in fellowship can now claim promises of God and learn Bible doctrine. The believed Bible doctrine in the soul applied to life’s situations and decisions while in fellowship will renew your thinking and correct your mental attitude sins as well as the overt actions which cause disgrace on the name of Christ. This produces divine good in the Christian walk.

Spirituality by Comparison or Relativity

Spirituality by comparison or relativity means the believer compares themselves to others and by subjective means determine they are more spiritual than others. This is judging others and is a mental attitude sin. 2 Cor. 10:12. See category on [Judging Others](#).

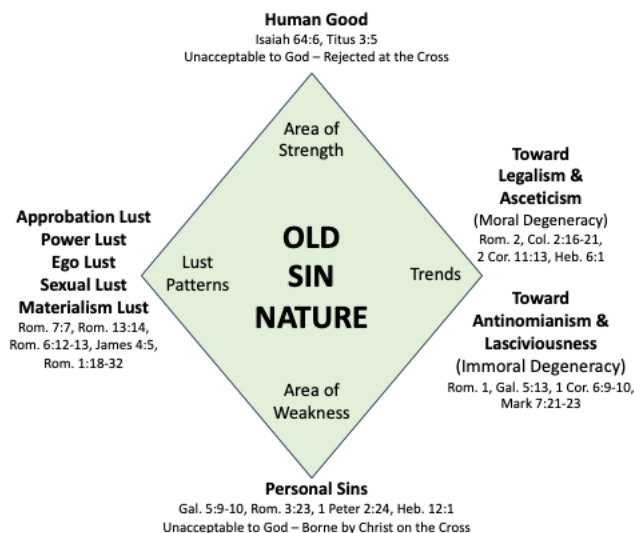
“For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.” (2 Corinthians 10:12, NASB)

These people comparing themselves with others falsely think that; “I am a better or more spiritual person because my sins are more refined than theirs.” “I have had a little pride, made a few snide remarks, lost my temper and been impatient at times, but that isn’t so bad, is it?”

This is wrong, first to compare people with people and then second to make spirituality have degrees. You are either in fellowship (spiritual) or out of fellowship (carnal). Spirituality is an absolute as is carnality. There are degrees of spiritual growth, but no degrees of spirituality!

This false attitude allows individuals to excuse or minimize their own sins. What sins are excused? The sins of nice, lovely, cultured people in the pew gossiping, cutting each other’s throats mentally and verbally? Sin is sin regardless of what we think about it. What counts is what God thinks about it. Downgrading fellow believers and criticizing them are sins that are often excused.

When you look at another believer to find fault, you soon find a crack in their armor. So when you see them with their face in the mud, it makes you feel better because you would never do such a thing! This is a misunderstanding of the makeup of the old sin nature. The old sin nature has trends, some ascetic or law-keeping and some lascivious or lawlessness. One believer out of fellowship may be a law-keeper. Another out of fellowship may be a lawless one. But both are out of fellowship. Neither pleases God. See the old sin nature diagram below.



Spirituality by Asceticism

Asceticism is extreme self-denial to demonstrate you are spiritual, like monks who have lived on lettuce leaves and yogurt and contemplated infinity. Sometimes they even try to inflict torture upon themselves like the “holy men” in India. Other examples are; the not eating of certain foods to be spiritual, the isolation monasticism, not eating meat on Friday, fasting to be spiritual, not wearing makeup to show everyone how spiritual you are, giving up food once a week and letting everybody else know about it, and even doing things to the point of self-torture to be spiritual. This is again just human works and unacceptable to God. This not spirituality! This is false spirituality.

Ghandi was supposed to have passed for a Christian because of his asceticism with his fasting for 40 days being an example. He was no more of a Christian than Buddha was. This is doing something to try to impress God. There is denial in Christianity, but it has nothing to do with being in a state of spirituality. Spirituality can only be gained by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Spirituality by Crucifying Self

Crucifying self is you trying to cancel out yourself. This is popular in many Christian circles. They say, “I am spiritual because I die to self.” This is impossible. Usually they use vocabulary such as being broken, kneeling at the foot of the cross, living an open life, pleading the blood and such. Actually, this is trying to cancel out self by trying harder or being more self-sacrificial. This is a misunderstanding of the doctrine of Retroactive Positional Truth in Romans 6. Self can’t die to self. The old sin nature cannot cancel out the old sin nature. They often talk about how exceedingly sinful we are. These people talk a lot about the devil being after them which is the height of conceit. See category on [Positional Truth](#).

When you are in fellowship, the life you want to live based on the old sin nature cannot peacefully co-exist with the controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit. So when you are in fellowship, the outcome is a life not dominated by the old sin nature.

Perhaps a believer is frustrated, discouraged, and defeated so they decide to “nail the flesh to the cross.” They may do it through trying harder, going through a system of sorrow or doing penance for sin, vowing to live as Jesus lived, all to no avail! One is spiritual only because God the Holy Spirit controls the soul of the believer. If the believer’s soul is not 100% controlled by the Holy Spirit, then they are 100% in a state of carnality and out of fellowship with God. To return to spirituality, they must cite,



name, or acknowledging their known or remembered sins to God the Father. Rom. 12:1; 1 John 1:9.

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” (Romans 12:1, NASB)

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, NASB)

Spirituality by Emotionalism or Ecstasies

Emotionalism or ecstasies is never a criterion for spirituality. One of the facets of the soul is emotions. Emotion is the appreciator of the soul, but it is never a criterion for spirituality. Ever! Many people judge whether they are in a state of spirituality by how they feel emotionally. If they feel good, they must be in a state of spirituality. If they feel rotten, everything is rotten and they must be in a state of carnality. How you feel emotionally has absolutely nothing to do with spirituality. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is the only criterion. The only way to guarantee that you are filled with God the Holy Spirit is to confess your known sins to God the Father using 1 John 1:9.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, NASB)

The criterion for spirituality is never how you feel, just as the criterion for salvation is never how you feel. You may have emotion at salvation or when spiritual but emotion is not the means, the test, or the measure for either spirituality or salvation. No two people are physically alike. This is also true in the Christian life. No two people have the same emotional reaction.

The truth is that no two of us have the same emotional pattern. Some cry at the drop of an hat, some don't. Some people are more emotional than others. There is nothing wrong with emotions if they are controlled by the facts and faith. If the facts of the Word of God are known and faith placed in those facts, then the caboose of feeling or emotions will fall into line. Some people think that the more you weep for souls, the more souls will come to know Jesus Christ. Not so. Crying has nothing to do with bringing souls to Christ. Bringing the Gospel to the unbeliever and them accepting our Lord's saving work on the Cross for their sins is the only way. Crying in the large majority of instances in the Word is attributed to the babe, carnality, weakness, and an ignorance of Bible doctrine.

Some may say; “I'm spiritual because I had an experience.” They always start out by saying, “I was real leery of this before, even against it, but you know, since I had this experience...” This is an experience conscious age. Some may think the people who have this experience are such nice people, such dedicated Christians. It's the “go get 'em God” crowd. Rah, rah, rah! They work each other up into a lather. There is emotion in Christianity. Emotion is the appreciator of the soul, but it has to be flanked by body guards. 2 Cor. 6:12-13.

“You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also.” (2 Corinthians 6:12-13, NASB)

A believer should not try to pour another believer into a mold. Some groups feel that tongues is the criterion for spirituality. Never! Tongues is emotionalism or emotional revolt at best and demon possession at the worst (in unbelievers).

Spirituality by Prayer

Spirituality by prayer is a subtle, but false means of spirituality. You can't pray for the filling of the Spirit. The Bible teaches that it is provided only by confessing sin biblically. Neither can you pray for



forgiveness and get it. It has been provided only by confessing sin biblically using 1 John 1:9. Many believers pray, “Lord, fill me” or “God control me.” God has provided only one way to gain the filling of the Spirit. It is by naming your known sins to God the Father - confession of sin biblically – only then are you forgiven of all unknown sins and automatically filled with the Holy Spirit. As you learn more Bible doctrine from the Word of God, you will learn more and more of what God says is sin.

Prayer is wonderful and is ordained of God for the believer. One does not become spiritual by praying, “O Lord help me to be spiritual, Lord do it.” Some people think they are spiritual by their volume of praying. They always let you know how much time they are spending praying and how it is such a worthy operation. They pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit. They pray to get the Holy Spirit after salvation or more of Him, or something. They pray in the flesh to look good to God. Prayer is not a means, but a result of spirituality! We do not pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Spirit only comes through biblical confession of sin. Once the sin or sins are confessed the automatic result is spirituality.

Spirituality by Yieldedness

Spirituality by yieldedness is the most common error today in the field of spirituality. How is one controlled by the Holy Spirit? By yielding, someone says and everyone lets it pass. Yieldedness does not produce spirituality! Too often we get kids up in a mountain in a tall stand of trees, high altitude, have a fire in the middle, sing some moving choruses, have some testimonies and then call for the kids to yield their lives to Christ.

What do they mean by that? Do the unsaved get saved? Usually they are instructed to pick up a bundle of twigs, sticks, or branches bound together (a fagot) and throw it into the fire. Then, they are to yield. Yieldedness is a result of the controlling of the Holy Spirit, not the means! Some Christians erroneously yield annually or semiannually by dedication, rededication, vows, formally repeating their vows, or other ways to do more for God. They say Romans 6:13 and Romans 12:1-2 form the basis for this approach.

“and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” (Romans 6:13, NASB)

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2, NASB)

What they do not understand is that anything you can do other than confession of sin whereby the believer is again filled with the Holy Spirit is not spirituality. These verses describe what the Spirit-filled believer can accomplish by relying solely on God's grace resources, not their own abilities.

Yieldedness is explained as something the believer must do. This is human works, human good. There is nothing you can do to be yielded. It is a non-meritorious operation. True yielding is actually claiming the promise of 1 John 1:9 when you confess sin biblically whereby you are restored to fellowship with God (filled with the Holy Spirit) - you are therefore yielded. When you are out of fellowship, you are unyielded! Only a faith operation puts you back in fellowship! Anything more than confession of known sins to God the Father is human works and it only muddies the waters.

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unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, NASB)

Spirituality by Keeping the Mosaic Law - the Legalist

You can always tell who these people are. You can't blink your eyes on Sunday, throw a ball or buy gas on Sunday, or go bowling after Church on Sunday night without their condemnation of your "unspiritual" activities. If they see someone bounce a tennis ball against the house, they will run over to tell you that you have violated the Sabbath. If the pastor washed his car on Sunday, some old biddy will get all shook up.

Spirituality by Rationalism

Rationalism means to reason things out. Many a believer has studied Jessie Penn-Lewis, or Watchman Nee and became an expert on victorious Christian living overnight! Then they are always trying to straighten someone out because everybody else now is a little bit stupid. You know the type.

Spirituality by Self-Discipline

Spirituality by self-discipline means that if do certain things, you will be spiritual. This is by trying harder, trying to love the brethren, congratulating myself for doing distasteful tasks, getting under a strict schedule, praying an hour a day and studying the Word another hour. Self-discipline does not produce spirituality. Self-discipline is certainly part of the believer's walk with the Lord, but it is not the means of spirituality!

When they read their Bible, they may read that they are to love all believers. They then think that since the Bible is always right, they should go and love all their neighbors. So, they go downtown and see Charlie Brown coming down the street. Instead of ignoring him like they usually do, they gush all over him and feel spiritual because they did. Or, they call up Suzy Q, who is a real deadhead and someone they have no use for and have her over for tea to gush all over her. They make themselves do it and think it is spirituality. Or, you tell your wife that you did pretty well today, you met so and so and talked nicely with him without blowing your stack. This is not spirituality.

The Bible says "Be humble," so you start to put on a nice knit dress and then remember you are supposed to be humble so you switch to an old ragged one. You shine your shoes then scuff them up to look more humble. Then you walk around stooped over instead of straight and creep around with a supposedly prayerful attitude. Therefore, when you do look up, your eyes are at half-mast. When someone yells, "Hey, what's wrong with you?" You just keep walking because as a humble person you should be a doormat. It is just part of the persecution we are asked to bear.

Some people think this is spirituality. Some think it is more spiritual to drive some old wreck of a car than a new one. Some quit shaving and don't comb their hair. They constantly say how sinful they are to get across to the next guy that really they are spiritual. This isn't humility, this is hypocrisy and legalism. They cloak their pride in false humility.

Humility is a result of spirituality not the means! When humility is a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit, it is genuine, not phony. How do you gain spirituality? Not by doing anything. It is by believing certain things, but not doing anything. What did you do to get salvation? Nothing, you believed in the work of Christ on the Cross for your sins. What do you do to be spiritual? Nothing. You use 1 John 1:9 and return to fellowship with God.

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Spirituality by Facial Expression or Body Language

This is superficial hypocrisy. A long, sad, face is not a manifestation of spirituality. Neither is a smiling face. Spirituality cannot be judged on the basis of facial expression. Spirituality is on the inside and if in fellowship there may be an outward animation. However, the outward animation is not the important factor.

Spirituality by Superficial Evaluation

This is assuming a state of spirituality based on results that you can see. For example, if a pastor of a large church with an evangelical name, it is assumed that he is in a state of spirituality. Being a pastor does not mean that he is a spiritually mature believer. He should be, but his position does not necessarily equate to spiritual maturity. He may just be a good administrator in “gimmick” theology. Also, assuming that a man is in a state of spirituality just because he can heal someone is false. Satan can heal. Satan can also heal through demon-possessed unbelievers.

Spirituality by the Second Blessing

This is the so-called area of spiritual maturity by panacea. Never! One day you’re carnal and a Christian failure, the next day you wake up and have a great experience and from then on you are a power for God. Never! The filling of the Spirit is needed whenever a believer gets out of fellowship. God's grace is not limited to two times. Believers can have numerous blessings, but not of the Pentecostal variety.

Spirituality by Psychological Variations

Many people judge whether they are in a state of spirituality by how they feel physically. They may be depressed because of a migraine headache or because of a change in hormone balance. How you feel physically has absolutely nothing to do with spirituality.

Spirituality by Faulty Deduction

Often a believer will have a genuine experience but mislabel it, misunderstand it, and fail to evaluate it. For example, one could incorrectly call the controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Baptism of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit placing the new believer permanently into union with Jesus Christ. The filling of the Spirit results when the Holy Spirit controls the soul.

Spirituality by Traditionalism

This is trying to achieve spirituality by doing things the way that have always been done. You have spirituality when you sing songs first and preach last. You have spirituality when you go through a seven-series amen, or recite the Apostles Creed. You have spirituality when you recite the Lord’s Prayer, which isn’t the Lord’s prayer at all.

All of the above false criteria for achieving a state of spirituality are spirituality by works. They are based on the false premise that you can do something to attain spirituality. You can do nothing, if you could, this would mean Christ is honoring the flesh. Spirituality is a non-meritorious operation based on the Word of God and faith in the promises, techniques, doctrines and principles revealed by God for the benefit of the human race.