

THE INNER-CHANGE

How To Get Integrated

I saw a bumper sticker once that said, “Christians are not perfect – just forgiven!” To my mind, this tells a truth and an untruth. The truth is that Christians are not perfect – most definitely. We do have a perfect record before God, called, “Justification.” We saw that in the previous chapter. But as far as living that out on a day to day basis, we are far from spiritual perfection.

The untruth is that as Christians, we’re not, “just forgiven.” We’re forgiven, but it’s not just that. We’re also changed on the inside. We’re radically transformed from living one way to living another. The instantaneous change is called, “new birth.” We now have Christ in us, we’re partakers of the divine nature, we’ve been raised from a spiritual death (Colossians 1:27; 2 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 2:1-3). We’re not “just forgiven,” we’re also changed! It’s an *inner-change*.

Don’t get me wrong – we’re not changed once for all. We’re still in the process of changing everyday to become more like Jesus. There was an instant change of position, of heart, of direction, of desires... the moment we received Jesus as our Savior. It’s called, “Regeneration.” But there’s also a gradual change going on inside us which is called, “Sanctification.” This is that incremental transformation that happens in the follower of Jesus until the day he dies and goes to be with Him. It’s at that point (the day of the final change) that is called, “Glorification.” This is where we “will be like Him” and the process will be complete.

In the meantime, “We are being transformed into His likeness with ever increasing glory which come from the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

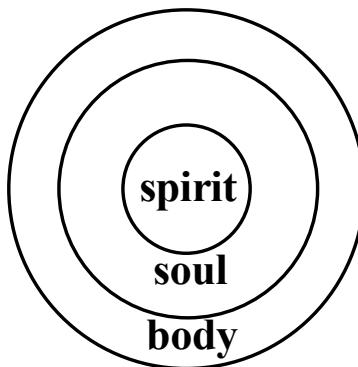
In Foundations 101 we discussed the fundamentals of this gradual change into Christ-likeness. Here we will pick up where we left off and talk about “How To Get Integrated.”

HOW TO GET INTEGRATED

Does it disturb you that living the Christian life is difficult sometimes, if not downright impossible?! Does it seem to you that you ought to be at least a little more successful at being like Jesus? Do you often feel powerless to resist sinful things - and to do Christ-like things?

This chapter of Foundations 201 addresses these topics, using Romans 5:12-6:13 as a basis for our discussion on how to be a *whole*, as well as a *holy*, Christian. If that's something that appeals to you - read on.

Let's use the term, "**INTEGRATED**" to describe our goal to be like Jesus. I know it's not a common word to use for spirituality, but follow me here. To be "integrated" means to be "coordinated or blended into a functioning or unified whole." Does that sound like something you'd like to see in your own life. In the bigger picture, that's what it means to be saved. I'm talking about our "parts" (that is - our spirit, soul and body) working *together* instead of *against* each other.



One man asked another, "Sir, are you a Christian?" He hesitated and then replied, "Yes – in spots." Well, the goal of this paper is to help you become a Christian throughout your being – to become a "spotless" Christian (so to speak)!

Before we can begin to understand being "integrated," we have to look back to our *Disintegration*, and then trace the Jesus-made path toward *Integration*.

Romans 5:12-21 is key to understanding how we became so *dis-integrated* to begin with. Read the passage in its entirety. Here are some highlights...

“...just as sin entered the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin... death came to all men because all sinned... just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness (Jesus’ death on the cross) was justification that brings life for all men. ... just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous...”

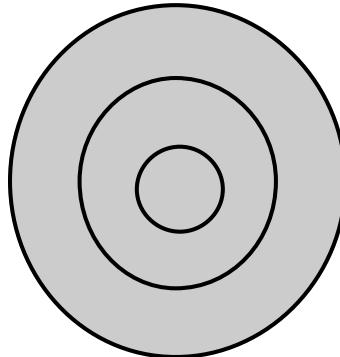
This passage is an enormous blessing, but a bit challenging to understand at first. The terms and diagrams that I'm using here are probably going to be new to you, but, as my elementary school teacher used to say, “Students, put your thinking caps on!” You might have to go over it a couple of times to get the gist of my thinking on this. But I believe, if you will put the effort into this, it'll yield spiritual benefits.

Let's begin at the beginning, and go all the way back to the first man. We're going to call him the “First Adam” in order to introduce Jesus as, “The Last Adam.” The first thing we should note is that the First Adam began as a totally “together” person. He was totally *integrated* in the beginning. None of him was working against the rest of him. He had no opposition from his own being. The only opposition he had was from the *outside* of him (i.e. the devil). His spirit, soul, and body all worked in cooperation with each other. His soul (mind, emotion, and will) and his body were complete assets to his life. His “spirit was willing,” and his flesh wasn't weak!

Note that in the diagram, Adam's “parts” all cooperate within him. There is no conflict between his spirit, soul, and body (notice that the “fill” in each concentric circle is the same). His spirit was saturated with God, his soul (mind, emotion, and will) was submitted to God (and cooperating with his spirit), and his body was subject to God, following the lead of his spirit and soul.

**The First
Adam was
totally
TOGETHER
("integrated")**

First Adam



The First Adam FELL APART

(he became *dis-integrated*)

Then there came a day that Adam got "converted!" (and I don't mean in a good way. I guess it was more of a "confusion" than a "conversion." He changed his mind about God and his faith died (that is, he doubted God and believed a lie!).

Immediately his "parts" quit working together. His spirit became vacant. He became *dis-integrated*. He lost coordination of the whole. He lost his wholeness. With his spirit vacated, his soul and body became *renegade*. As a result, his parts were invaded by Satan and thus became instruments of *unrighteousness* (Romans 6:13).

In the following diagram, his "center" is empty because he kicked God out of his spirit. There is now confusion in the soul and body as a result of sin. When we pushed God out of the core of our lives, the rest of our being "fell apart." Since then we've been plagued with spiritual confusion, psychological dysfunction (the Greek word for soul is 'psuche') and physical malfunction. In other words, we're messed up!

Fallen Man



The real bad news is that everybody born since then was born into the same state into which Adam fell - that's the message of Romans 5:12-21. Each of us were born (the first time) with a deserted spirit, a dysfunctional soul, and a dying body! That's why we need to be "born-again!"

This is where the Good News comes in...

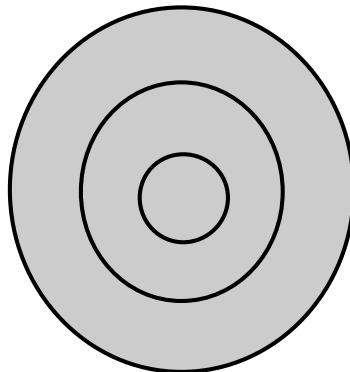
Adam is called, "The First Adam" and Christ is, "The Last Adam" (I Corinthians 15:45). This is because Jesus lived in the same state as Adam did before he fell into sin. Like Adam, Jesus had un-fallen human nature. He was *totally integrated* - all His "parts" worked together, as did Adam's before he fell.

**The Last
Adam was
totally
TOGETHER
(integrated)**

Notice that the diagram below for the "Last Adam" is identical with that of the "First Adam," with "integrity" throughout. Jesus was "altogether lovely... holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners... (He) did all things well..." He had a *saturated spirit*, a

submitted soul, and a *body subject* to the Father's will. He had no contradictions in His being, no confusion between His parts. He had "integrity" – wholeness!

Last Adam



**The Last
Adam was
also the
SECOND MAN
(integrated &
exemplary)**

In I Corinthians 15:47 Adam is called "The First Man," and Christ, "The Second Man." As the Last Adam, He played a part that won't be duplicated by anyone else. But as the *Second Man*, He was being something / someone that *is* to be duplicated. He was being what we are aiming at being, that is, "Integrated." Jesus is, "*The firstborn among many brothers,*" (Romans 8:29) which means that we who follow Him are aiming at the same kind of "Integration" which He had. He's our prototype of wholeness. We want to be like Jesus, with our "parts" integrated – our spirit full of God and in control, our soul obeying the orders God gives through our spirit, and our body acting on those orders.

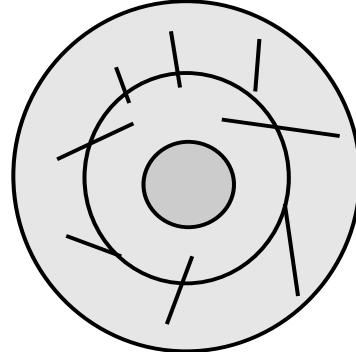
The \$100 question is: How can this ever be? How do we become *integrated* like Jesus was when on earth? How in this world can we be whole? How can we be integrated? The answer is simple, but profound.

If we hope to *integrated*, we need the "Second Man" to live in us! If we want to be whole like He was whole, we must receive Him into our spirit (that happens when we're born-again) and live in the power of the Integrated One! In order to rid ourselves of our dis-integration, we must welcome Him to reside in us, and live His righteous life through us!

Note that in the diagram below depicting the Christian, the spirit is once again full, because God lives there. Notice also that in the soul and body there is still some conflict (i.e. we still have sin nature to bother us), but there is measurably less conflict and confusion in the soul and body for the born-again person. We're not sinless, but we sin less and less.

**The Last
Adam/ The
Second Man
IS IN US!
(Living His life
through us)**

Regenerated Man



Paul summed it up:

"I've been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20).

ON TO ROMANS 6...

That is what the next section in Romans is all about (Romans 6:1-13). In it, Paul teaches us about the **DYNAMIC** of the life of Christ in our *spirit*, the **DECISION** we have to constantly make in our *soul*, and the **DISCIPLINE** we must cultivate in our *body*. Read these thirteen verses before proceeding.

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him. The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness.

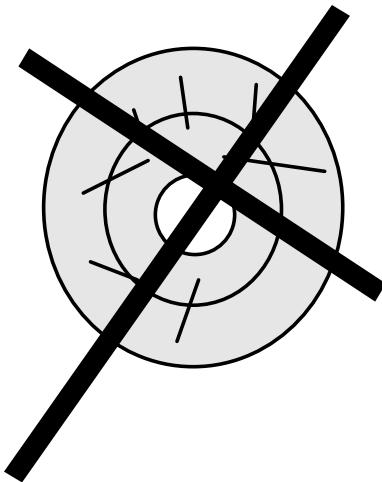
Understanding The DYNAMIC in your spirit (Romans 6:1-10)

Can you see that God offers not so much a *changed* life, as an *exchanged* one?! Salvation is not an improvement of the old, but an impartation of the new! Some people seem to join the "Old Adam Improvement Society." Christ is *not offering* a make-over or a face-lift. Becoming a follower of Jesus is not a *reformation*, but a *transformation*.

Salvation is so radical that it's illustrated by life's two most radical experiences: Birth (John 3:3-5) and death (Romans 6:1-13). The changes God makes in us are not so much due to our *trying*, but to our *dying*, and then rising again with new life and power to obey Him!

It's important to remember that we are able to change our lifestyle after receiving Jesus, not primarily because of any spiritual strength we have, but because of the power He imparts when He moves in as our "*Live-In Savior!*" It's His life in us that empowers us to change and be more like Him.

Paul speaks of the "old self". So, who's that? That's the person you *used* to be. The "new self," then is the person you are *now* since receiving Jesus into your spirit. The "old self," was crucified with Christ, you were raised to life again with Him, and became the "new self."



In the diagram above, this is you when you are receiving Jesus. This is the old you getting crucified.

For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

When Paul says that, "**the body of sin was rendered powerless**," he means that your sin nature, though still in you, is now out of a job! It's still in town but is *unemployed*. It's not extinct or annihilated, but doesn't have the authority it once had. Its power is broken. It's not *abolished*, but it is *overthrown*.

The sin nature within us is therefore defeated, but sometimes refuses to lie down! It's *unemployed*, but won't entirely *retire*. God doesn't take away our ability to sin, but He does give us the power not to. God's "divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3), but won't make us use it.

In light of what we're saying, someone once profoundly summed up living out the Christian life in this way:

**"The Christian life is the life which He lived then,
lived now by Him in you!"**

Paul also said it this way, "... your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). He's saying that our power source is in Christ, and so we needn't look elsewhere for strength to live Christianly. It's a "hidden" source of life, like the roots of a tree are hidden underground supplying the energy for fruitfulness and growth.

Making the DECISION in your soul (Romans 6:11)

Next we have to look at the DECISION which is imperative for us to make in order for this DYNAMIC to function.

Paul's words here are actually his very first command in the letter to the Romans. It is the first thing that he exhorts them to do in the letter. Up till then his epistle was all was doctrine stating what we *have* in Christ. But here he tells us what we're to *do* with what we have.

"Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Something happened in your *spirit*, which needs to be acknowledged and counted on by your *soul*. Your soul needs to cling to the truth of what happened to your spirit. Only then can your body be put back to proper use. This is what we're calling GETTING INTEGRATED! It's here that your "parts" begin cooperating, and you become more and more whole!

The story goes...

Two men were standing at a street corner arguing about a turtle they were watching. Somehow the turtle had had his head chopped off but was still running in circles. One man said he believed that the turtle was "dead," the other disagreed. Finally another man arrived and they asked for his opinion. He thought about it and eventually said, "*He's dead but he don't know it!*"

That's how many Christians are – they're *dead but don't know it!* They are not "*counting themselves dead to sin*," nor that they are "*alive to God in Christ*". When we sin, we're acting like the "old self" that we used to be. We're failing to take into account the miracle that God did in us to separate us from sin's overwhelming power.

What keeps a married person from flirting with members of the opposite sex? They remember that they are *married* - they consider it, they "count themselves married!" They may or may not feel it but they are it! Then they make a decision to believe it and act on it by resisting the temptation.

What is a soul anyway?

It's that part of you which thinks, feels, and decides. It's your *intellect, emotion, and will*. These capacities (your soul) must learn to take orders from your spirit (where Jesus lives) and give them to the body to carry out.

This is what we mean when we speak of the DECISION of the soul. Your soul's decision is where the battle for an integrated and obedient life is won or lost. You're deciding moment by moment whether or not to utilize the DYNAMIC, which was placed in your spirit.

It seems that both the spirit and the body are constantly sending orders to the soul.

***"For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want."* (Galatians 5:17)**

There's a conflict that goes on in the soul. It receives conflicting orders from the spirit and the body. The soul chooses between the *spiritual* (messages from the spirit) and the *sensual* (messages from the body). Whose orders will your soul follow?

***"... put to death the misdeeds of the body... put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature... those who belong to Christ have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires... If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* (Galatians 5:24, Colossians 3:5, Romans 8:13, Luke 9:23)**

These all speak of putting to death the orders of the body, and not with a rubber knife! We "crucify the flesh" when we make choices that destroy the goals of the sinful nature (selfishness, pride, etc.). If you want something to die you have to stop feeding it!

It is our responsibility with the Spirit's help to "put to death the misdeeds of the body." The *duty* is ours, but never forget that the *dynamic* His! Apart from Him we can do nothing. Remember - *the Christian life is the life He lived then, lived now by Him in you!*

Jesus told us to "deny" ourselves (Luke 9:23) - that is, to behave toward our "old self" as Peter behaved toward Jesus when he *denied* Him. We're to deny, disown, turn our back on the "old self" that we used to be. The first time that we denied ourselves was when we initially repented and received Jesus. We just need to keep doing what we began to do then – and do it DAILY!

Our success in the Christian life will be in direct proportion to the exercise of our "No! Muscle." We must learn how to say, "No!" to sin, and then to say, "Yes!" to God.

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age."

Titus 2:11-12

The final step in the process toward purity is to practice DISCIPLINE in our body. God has placed DYNAMIC in our spirit (the resurrection life of Christ); we learn how to make a daily DECISION in the soul to cooperate with that dynamic; and now we must get our body involved and learn to DISCIPLINE it.

Something happened in your *spirit* that the *soul* needs to acknowledge, and then the *body* needs to be put to proper use. God gave us the body for the purpose of expressing and carrying out the desires of the spirit.

Applying DISCIPLINE in your body (Romans 6:12-13)

With a vacant spirit, the body can only be used for sinful purposes. When the spirit comes alive, the body needs to learn how to follow. That following is called, DISCIPLINE.

The *spirit* tells the soul, the *soul* orders the body, and the *body* obeys... That's what we want! That's the goal of the integrated life we're shooting for!

Note Paul's references to the body:

"Don't let sin reign in your MORTAL BODY. Do not offer the PARTS OF YOUR BODY to sin as instruments of wickedness... offer the PARTS OF YOUR BODY as instruments of righteousness."

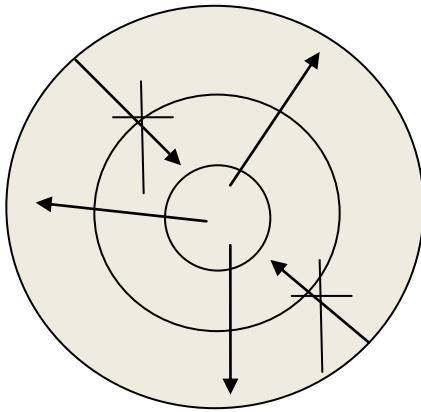
The term, "instruments" can also mean "weapons." When we yield our body to sin we are actually attacking the purposes of God. Sin is therefore sort of a *treason* - offering weapons to the enemy. Conversely, when we use our body for good, we are offering our members as weapons for God to use in the cosmic battle against the evil one.

When used properly, our body is the tool (instrument) of our spirit. When this is the case, we are moving toward the goal of *integration*! When you drop a rock in a pool, waves go OUT. Your actions originate (at least they should) in your *spirit*, move out to the *soul* (intellect, emotion, and will), and finally get passed on out to the *body* to be lived out. I think that this is part of what "*working OUT your own salvation*" means. It's getting the implications of our salvation on the OUTSIDE - from the *spirit* to the *soul* to the *body*.

Instead of the body *giving* the orders, it needs to learn to *take* them. Paul speaks of making his body his "slave" (I Corinthians 9:27). He wanted his *outer man* (body) following the orders of his *inner man* (soul and spirit), and not the other way around.

Living the Christian life is not just what we *don't* do. Living like Jesus is both - putting sinful deeds to death, AND getting righteous deeds done! We're not merely denying ourselves and keeping the orders of the body from controlling our lives. We *do* want to get some orders OUT from the spirit to the body to carry out. We want to be sure to live in such a way as to do some positive good!

Notice that in the diagram below there are BOTH - orders from the body being crucified, and orders from the spirit being obeyed and practiced.



Later in Romans, Paul speaks of offering our BODIES as "*living sacrifices*" to God (Romans 12:1). This parallels what he's said in 6:13, "*offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life*". We're a "living sacrifice" because we've not only died with Christ, but have been raised with Him. We're "living" because of the resurrection life of Jesus that God imparted to us at conversion. That's the DYNAMIC we have in our spirit! Let's use it!

Don't forget -

- The dynamic is God's part...
- The decision and the discipline are both our part...
- The decision and discipline are worthless without the dynamic that God provides...
- And the dynamic is inoperative without the decision and the discipline that we bring...
- We can't do God's part, and He won't do ours...

Lord, make us whole! Help us to be integrated again!