

Being a Spiritually Minded Christian
Part Four
The Washing of Water by the Word

- *As believers we have a choice: We can be naturally minded, carnally minded, or spiritually minded.*

1 Corinthians 2:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

¹⁵But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

- *As Christians we can have a spiritual mind which is to think the thoughts of God and to see and evaluate circumstances and events from God's perspective which is both heavenly and eternal.*
- *As Christians we can have a natural mind which sees and evaluates life only from this temporal physical earthly perspective.*
- *The natural mind sees things only from the natural perspective and either does not acknowledge the existence of a spiritual realm, or does not recognize the value or the activities of the spiritual realm.*
- *As Christians we can have a carnal mind which sees and evaluates life from a purely selfish perspective seeking to satisfy the fleeting lusts of the flesh. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." (Romans 8:7).*
- *The three areas that enable us to develop into spiritually minded Christians are our relationship to the Word of God, Prayer, and Christian Fellowship.*
- *Today we are going to continue to explore how to develop into spiritually minded Christians in relationship to the Word of God—the Bible.*
- *Of the three foundational principles that enable us to develop into spiritually minded Christians, it is the Bible that grounds us in the truth and provides a spiritual compass to ensure we do not stray from being Christ-centered.*
- *Though experience validates our faith, it is the Word of God, the Bible, that establishes our faith.*
- *There are many aspects to our relationship with the Word of God, the Bible, which are essential for us to develop into spiritually minded Christians.*

- *Last week we established the reliability and the authority of the Bible. This week we are going to begin to explore how to develop a relationship with the Word of God.*
- *The Bible is the source which enables us to develop sound and balanced doctrine, so we can live godly and fruitful lives.*
- *The Bible provides us with a framework from which we can understand all truth. God's Word provides the measuring rod by which all other revelations should be tested.*
- *There is a difference between truth and a simple fact. While it is true that $2+2=4$, that does not mean it is truth. Only truth gives life and has the power to save. Jesus described Himself as "the Way, the Truth and the Life." (John 14:6).*
- *The Word of God does not simply contain the truth—it is the truth!*
- *The Bible teaches us about who God is, His character, how He interacts with mankind as a whole, and with each of us individually.*
- *The Bible reveals to us God's plan of salvation and provides us with a glimpse of what Heaven and eternity will be like with Him.*
- *The Bible teaches us how to develop an intimate and loving relationship with God.*
- *The Bible allows us to know the very thoughts of God.*
- *The Bible reveals to us the prophetic timetable of events which culminate in the establishment of His everlasting kingdom and the ultimate destruction of all sin and rebellion.*
- *The Bible reveals to us the promises of God and instructs us on how to apply them to our lives.*
- *The Bible is our instruction manual so that we can understand how we ought to live.*
- **(Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth)**
- *The Bible is also our daily bread to sustain us spiritually and to give us strength so we can live an overcoming and fruitful life.*

- *Today we are going to look at the Word of God in terms of spiritual water which cleanses, refreshes, and brings life.*
- *The Word of God is like water that cleanses and purifies us, “that He might sanctify and cleanse her (the church) with the washing of water by the word.” (Ephesians 5:26).*
- *As we spend time in the Word, the Holy Spirit cleansing and washes our hearts, our minds, and our lives.*

Isaiah 55:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater,

¹¹So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

- *The Word of God also brings refreshing and life, “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven ... So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please.”*
- *When we feel dry and far from God one of the solutions is to just begin to spend time daily reading the Bible and allowing it to soak into our hearts.*
- *If we are not reading the Bible daily or spending time contemplating what we have read, soon the joy of our salvation begins to wane and we begin to take for granted how wonderful it is to have our sins forgiven and have eternal life.*
- *However, if our relationship with the Word of God is vibrant we become spiritually minded which enables us “with joy to draw water from the wells of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:3).*
- *If we neglect the Word of God, we will soon become naturally or carnally minded. We will lose our excitement about the things of God. We will even lose interest in spiritual things all together and begin to seek worldly pursuits to try to find fulfillment and satisfaction.*

James 1:21–25 (NKJV)

²¹Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

²²But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

²⁴for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

²⁵But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

- *The Word of God reveals the true condition of our hearts and it also provides the remedy. “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness.”*
- *The natural mind fails to recognize the true nature of sin, the carnal mind fails to recognize the true cost of sin, but the spiritual mind willing seeks God’s Word to be free from sin.*
- *Spiritually minded Christians do not want to leave any remnant of the old man in their hearts or lives that would defile them and thus the exhortation, “therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness” not just “some” or “most” but “all filthiness.”*
- *When the Bible uses the words, “overflow of wickedness” it indicates how quickly little sins and hidden faults if left unchecked will result in a tsunami of destruction in our lives.*
- *The spiritually minded person is willing to look “into the perfect law of liberty and continue in it” until total freedom and victory have been realized. They continue no matter how uncomfortable or painful it may be in the short term to face their failures or how long the process takes until complete freedom is achieved. (Philippians 1:6).*
- *It may not be easy to face our failings and shortcomings, but it is more painful to ignore them and allow all the consequences of our sins to continue unabated to wreak havoc in our lives.*
- *No one feels good when they realize they have messed up, or that they have offended someone, or when they have acted foolishly. The one consolation is that we “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23).*
- *The spiritually minded Christian has the courage and boldness not to hide from their failures and sins, but to “come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” They know that the only thing that awaits them at the throne of grace is love, forgiveness, mercy, and the grace of God to overcome their sins. (Hebrews 4:16).*
- *What enables us to “lay aside” all our sins and the things that have ensnared us is being spiritually minded Christians and “receiving with meekness the implanted word.” We are not to be defensive, but simply, clearly, and humbly acknowledge our sins, failures, and mistakes so we can lay them aside.*

- *When we receive the implanted word of God with meekness it releases the power of God's Word, "which is able to save your souls." This text is not speaking about justification which is deliverance from the penalty of sin and eternal damnation in Hell. It is speaking about sanctification which is freedom from the power of sin, so we can live fruitful and joyful lives for the glory of God.*
- *Some Christians read the Bible but are not changed, because they fail to obey the Word and put it into action in their lives, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only."*
- *It is easy to fall into the trap of reading the Bible, but then "deceiving yourselves" by failing to recognize that we are not applying the truths found in God's Word to our own lives. We may not even recognize the areas in our lives where God's truth needs to be applied.*
- *The naturally minded Christian can be deceived by thinking they are applying the Word of God to their lives when in fact they have just becoming religious. When we apply the Word of God to our lives it produces repentance, faith, and transformation, so we become more and more like Jesus.*
- *The natural man, when confronted with failure, makes excuses for not living up to the standard in God's Word by saying, "I am just human," while the spiritually minded Christian says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13).*
- *The carnally minded Christian can be deceived by thinking what the Bible says doesn't apply to them, it's only for others.*
- *The spiritually minded Christian seeks the face of God and His grace so they can truly put the principles of His Word into action and become a "doer of the word" and a "true worshipper who worships the Father in spirit and truth." (John 4:23).*
- *The spiritually minded Christian seeks to please God and delights in God's Word, because it instructs him how to accomplish what God is asking.*
- *Carnally or naturally minded Christians fail to overcome their character flaws and continue to live with the same struggles and problems throughout their entire lives. Character flaws become stronger with time, not weaker.*
- *A spiritually minded Christian continues to grow and change and step by step becomes more and more like Jesus.*

- *James next turned to an Old Testament analogy to help us understand the principles he was teaching. “For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”*
- *To recognize the Old Testament analogy that James is directing us to, we must understand that the word “mirror” does not refer to a modern day mirror made of glass with a reflective coating, but “a piece of highly polished metal used to reflect an image.”*
- *James was referring to the laver that was located in the outer court of the Tabernacle.*

Exodus 30:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸“You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it,

¹⁹for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it.

Picture of the laver.

Picture of the laver as it was placed in the outer court.

- *Here’s an interesting fact about the construction of the laver. Scripture tells us that it was made of bronze and it also tells us the source of the bronze. “He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.” (Exodus 38:8).*
- *The women made a freewill offering of their bronze mirrors so they could be melted down to construct the laver. In James’ analogy of the Word of God, the mirror refers to the laver in which the priests washed their hands and feet.*

Exodus 40:30–32 (NKJV)

³⁰He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing;

³¹and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet with water from it.

³²Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

- *The bronze laver stood in the middle of the outer court of the tabernacle. Before the priests could enter into the tabernacle building itself they had to wash their hands and feet at the laver.*

- *As well, before the priest could minister at the bronze altar to burn the sacrifices they had to walk past the altar and approach the laver and wash their hands and feet.*
- *The hands are symbolic of the things we have done and the feet are symbolic of how we have lived—our walk with the Lord. Our service to God is only acceptable when our hands and feet are clean.*
- *Each believer is to be a priest before God, but our service before Him is only acceptable when we are spiritually minded—when our hands and our feet have been cleansed by the Word.*
- *The laver and the water it contains represent two aspects of the Word of God.*
- *The bronze mirrors from which the laver was constructed represent the truth of the Word of God which reveals the true condition of our heart.*
- *When one approaches a mirror one is able to see one's own reflection. Similarly, when we approach the Word of God and look into it, it reveals everything about us—the good, the bad, and the ugly.*
- *Bronze itself is symbolic of judgment. The Word of God is truth, so that we can know good from evil and right from wrong. Just as the laver was made of bronze which is strong and rigid, the truths of God's Word do not vary or change with time. They are eternal.*
- *The source of the bronze, the mirrors of the women, shows that the Word of God is not only truth, but as we look into it, it clearly reveals and reflects the condition of our own hearts and lives.*
- *The laver was not meant for condemnation, but for sanctification. The laver contained water which was the remedy to deal with the dirt that had accumulated on the priests' hands and feet. Not only would the water cleanse, but as the priests washed their hands and feet it would refresh. The water represents the life giving aspect of God's Word.*
- *God does not reveal the problem without also providing the solution.*
- *God does not reveal our sins and failures in order to condemn us, but to forgive, cleanse, and free us.*
- *The laver revealed the need for cleansing and the water provided the method by which the priests could be cleansed.*
- *The laver was a physical place of self-reflection. God's Word is a spiritual place of self-reflection.*

- *God's Word reveals not only where we have failed, but it also provides the remedy by which we can be cleansed and restored.*
- *“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.” The naturally minded Christian sees “his natural face” in the mirror of God's Word, the true condition of his heart, but fails to respond. He soon forgets what God has shown him and continues on his way unchanged.*
- *“But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” This verse contrasts the previous verse. The previous verse described a naturally minded person, while this verse describes a spiritually minded person.*
- *The spiritually minded Christian does not causally read the Bible, but “looks into the perfect law of liberty.” The Greek word for “look” used here means, “to stoop to a thing in order to look at it; to look at with head bowed forward; to look into with the body bent; to stoop and look into.” It is a metaphor meaning “to look carefully into, inspect curiously.”*
- *The words “but he who looks into the perfect law of liberty” wonderfully describes the posture that the priests took when they approached the laver, so they could draw water out in order to wash their hands and feet with water.*
- *When we approach the Word of God we must humble ourselves and “stoop down with our heads bowed,” because only with a humble and submitted heart will we be able to “look into the Word.”*
- *If we come to the Word of God with an air of self-righteousness and simply intellectual curiosity, not recognizing our great needs, we will fail to understand what it is truly saying and what God wants to reveal to us about ourselves.*
- *Not only does the spiritually minded Christian humble himself and stoop down at the laver of God's Word, he remains there patiently until the work in his heart is accomplished, “and continues in it.”*
- *Because the spiritually minded Christian humbles himself and submits to the authority of God's Word he is fully impacted by what God has shown him and he continues on until he experiences the full victory, freedom, and joy that “the perfect law of liberty” is offering, because he “is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”*

- *The Greek word translated “continues” means “to remain beside, to continue always near” and never turning away no matter what it shows us about the condition of our hearts. The word “continues” speaks about having an unbroken closeness and fellowship with the Word of God.*
- *The naturally minded Christian attempts to be good in their own strength, the carnally minded Christian does not even try to be good, but the spiritually minded Christian realizes their source of goodness is only by the grace of God. They always remain close to and dependent on the Word of God for both strength and direction.*
- *Verse 22 exhorted us to “be doers of the word” and verse 25 describes spiritually minded Christians as “doers of the work.”*
- *To be “doers of the word” means we need to first get into the Word and dig deeply to mine those hidden treasures and nuggets that God wants to impart to us so we can understand His will.*
- *Once we have spent time in His Word, then we can begin to apply those truths to our daily lives and become “doers of the work.”*
- *The natural minded Christian will forget what he sees in the laver, the carnal minded Christian will refuse to even go up to the laver and look in, but the spiritually minded Christian will be brave enough to look deeply into the laver. He will be confident in God’s love and he will remain at the laver until the water of the Word has cleansed and transformed him.*
- *The laver is a place where there is no condemnation, only forgiveness and cleansing. However, if we refuse to spend time at the laver and judge ourselves, then God as our loving Father will have to judge and chasten us, not in order to condemn us, but to correct us. “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” (1 Corinthians 11:31-32).*
- *The life story of King Solomon is one that is both tragic and puzzling. One of the most puzzling events occurred early on in Solomon’s reign.*

1 Kings 3:1–15 (NKJV)

¹Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh’s daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall all around Jerusalem.

²Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days.

³And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.

⁴Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask! What shall I give you?”

⁶And Solomon said: “You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

⁷Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

⁸And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted.

⁹Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?”

¹⁰The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.

¹¹Then God said to him: “Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice,

¹²behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.

¹³And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.

¹⁴So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

¹⁵Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

- *As this portion of Scripture begins, it starts with a wonderful description of Solomon, “And Solomon loved the LORD.”*
- *However, there are a couple of unsettling and troubling points revealed about Solomon in this passage, “Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh’s daughter” and “he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.”*
- *How could Solomon who loved the Lord so much have married Pharaoh’s daughter, since the Word of God clearly warns, “Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.” (Deuteronomy 7:3–4).*

- *As we study Solomon's life we see that since he failed to heed God's warning, the consequences detailed in Scripture are exactly what occurred. "For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David" and "Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David." (1 Kings 11:4, 6).*
- *Throughout Solomon's life he married many foreign wives, which resulted in this once wise king, who at one time had loved the Lord, becoming an idol worshipper.*
- *What is even more puzzling is that when Solomon received the dream from the Lord, God did not correct him, warn him, or even mention to him that it was wrong for him to have married Pharaoh's daughter. Instead, God simply asked him what he desired to receive from God, "the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?""*
- *Solomon's response to God's request pleased God, because first of all he recognized he was young and that he lacked wisdom and understanding. "Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in."*
- *The dream that God gave Solomon also brought him to the realization that he required wisdom if he was to faithfully govern the people of Israel. "And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"*
- *So why didn't God directly address Solomon and warn him of the wrong direction he had taken through his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter?*
- *God's Word already gave clear instructions and warnings regarding all the things that Solomon faced therefore God pointed back to His Word, "So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." (vs 14)*
- *God had given Solomon and all of Israel one of the most precious things possible, the Word of God, and it contained everything he needed to know to walk in victory and freedom.*
- *God even gave Solomon a special measure of wisdom by which he could study the Word of God and understand it, but Solomon still had to choose to read, study, and obey God's Word.*

- *There was one portion of the Law that was specifically directed to the person who would be king. Through this very precious passage of Scripture, if the king would follow it, it would guarantee that neither the king nor his kingdom would go astray. Instead, the king and his kingdom would flourish in God's purposes.*

Deuteronomy 17:14–20 (NKJV)

¹⁴“When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,’

¹⁵you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.

¹⁶But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall not return that way again.’

¹⁷Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

¹⁸“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.

¹⁹And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,

²⁰that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

- *Solomon would have known this passage of Scripture very well since it was directed specifically to him as the king of Israel.*
- *Solomon was to actually sit down and write out the entire Book of the Law. Every word that was in the Word of God Solomon was to write down, so he would be intimately conversant with it. “Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.”*
- *The king’s relationship to the Word of God was not supposed to end with him simply having written it out. He was always to keep it with him, to read it every day of his life, to learn from it, and obey it. “And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes.”*
- *God didn’t need to correct Solomon about his failings in the dream, because He had already spoken to him about this very thing in His Word!*

- *Solomon simply had to choose whether to obey God’s Word and begin to perform the most important task that a king of Israel could do: write out the Law, always keep the Law at his side, and obey the Law.*
- *Because Solomon failed to put the Word of God first in his life he did everything the Law warned him against: he entered into multiple marriages, marriages to foreign women, made an alliance with Egypt, and amassed wealth because he had become covetous.*
- *Solomon’s greatest failure was that he never developed a deep personal relationship with the Word of God himself, but had only a second hand relationship with the Law through his father David, “Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David.”*
- *Even David’s failure with Bathsheba was fundamentally the result of neglecting times of deep fellowship with God through His Word daily. It is impossible for a Christian who is in a close relationship with God through His Word to consistently operate in the carnally mind.*
- *In the story of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man pleaded with Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his brothers of what awaited them if they did not repent. Abraham’s response is very telling. “Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”” (Luke 16:29-31).*
- *If we as believers will stay at the laver of God’s Word we will never go astray.*
- *God speaks to us primarily through His Word. The Holy Spirit uses His Word to keep us Christ-centered.*
- *Through God’s Word, the Holy Spirit will give us insights into God’s will and transform us into the image of Jesus. “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” (Psalm 19:7).*
- *When Christians complain against God because they themselves made destructive choices, it is not because God did not warn them, but because they failed to heed and to honour the Word of God in their lives.*

Psalm 139:23–24 (ESV)

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!

²⁴And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

- *For us to have a heart that is right before God and without offence is as simple as going to God's Word and asking the Holy Spirit to reveal anything that needs to be dealt with in our lives.*
- *Next week we will continue to study how to become spiritually minded Christians through our relationship with the Word of God.*