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Publisher's Preface to the 25th Anniversary Edition

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A PROPOSITION

HERE IS A BASIC PROPOSAL or, if you wish, the thesis of this book: Genuine and wholesome spirituality is the goal of all Christian living.

It is possible that the very simplicity of the proposition might either deceive or at the least fail to make a proper impression on the one who reads it; so let us examine its key words.

By the word *genuine* I mean biblical, for only in the Bible do we have truth that is indisputably reliable. For this reason, the Bible must be the guide and test for all of our experiences in the spiritual life, for biblical spirituality is the only genuine spirituality. The practical importance of this is simply that all experiences of the spiritual life must be tested by biblical truth, and if any experience, no matter how real it may have been, fails to pass that test, it must be discarded. Of course, this is much easier said than done, but it is the only road to genuine or biblical spirituality.

A second key word in the original proposition is the word *wholesome*. By wholesome I mean balanced. There is nothing more devastating to the practice of spiritual living than an imbalance. One of my former teachers repeatedly reminded us that an imbalance in theology was the same as doctrinal insanity. The same applies to the realm of Christian living. An unbalanced application of the doctrines related to biblical spirituality will result in an unbalanced Christian life. Too much emphasis on the mystical may obscure the practicality of spiritual living, while an overemphasis on practicality may result in a lack of vision. A constant reiteration of the need for repeated rededications could lead to a stagnant Christian life in which there is no consistent and substantial growth. An overemphasis on confession could cause unhealthy introspection, while an under-emphasis might tend to make one insensitive to sin. Balance is the key to a wholesome spiritual life.

If this is to be a book about spirituality, it is necessary at the outset to consider some general features of the word *spiritual*. The word is, of course, built on the root word for spirit and thus means "pertaining to spirit." Actually it has a rather wide range of uses, all of which are consistent with this basic idea of pertaining to spirit. (1) In one instance (Eph. 6: 12) the word spiritual is used of the demonic hosts who, as spirit beings, are distinct from human beings. (2) In another usage the Mosaic Law is characterized as being spiritual (Rom. 7:14). This reference indicates that the law was intended to have prospered the spiritual life of the Israelites to whom it was given. (3) The future resurrection body of the believer is termed a spiritual body in contrast to the natural body which he has until death (1 Cor. 15:44). The use of the word in this connection forbids defining the word only in terms of the incorporeal. The spiritual body is one

which like the Lord's after His resurrection has flesh and bones but which is of a new and different resurrection quality (Luke 24:39).

Furthermore, (4) a rather wide range of activities and relationships of the believer are called spiritual. His ministry is discharged through the exercise of spiritual gifts which are bestowed by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 12:1; 14:1). The unity of all Christians as stones in the building is designated a spiritual house by Peter who also states that believers are to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God (1 Peter 2:5). The sustenance of the children of Israel was called spiritual meat and drink, and Christ is designated the spiritual "Rock" that followed them (1 Cor. 10:3-4). The Christian expresses his praise in songs, hymns and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16). His mind is to be filled with spiritual wisdom (Col. 3:16), and his position in the heavenlies includes having been blessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).

However, a distinctive use (5) in the New Testament of the word spiritual is in connection with the believer's growth and maturing in the Christian life. A spiritual man must first of all be one who has experienced the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit giving him a new life in Christ. The Apostle Paul contrasts the spiritual man with the natural man (1 Cor. 2:14-15), who, having not the Holy Spirit, is apparently an unregenerate individual (d. Jude 19). But spirituality involves more than regeneration, and it is the purpose of this book to discuss these matters. This will of necessity involve studying certain doctrines of the Bible. Without this basis our conclusions might not lead to genuine spirituality. It will also demand consideration of certain individual responsibilities and practical problems in the out-working of biblical truth in the life in a balanced way. Too, it will be helpful to consider some contemporary mis-emphases in order to avoid the same pitfalls and in order to bring the truth into sharper focus. All of these matters should give a proper perspective on biblical spirituality.

It goes without saying (or does it?) that a subject like this one especially requires the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit if it is to be learned fruitfully. Here is an area in which the need for proper balance can be illustrated. Some seem to feel that the teaching ministry of the Spirit overrides the need for study, while others conclude the sufficient study eliminates the need for the teaching ministry of the Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in teaching the truth of God is indispensable. But the Scriptures which speak of it (John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:12) do not say that this ministry is always direct. In fact, nothing is said about the means the Spirit may use in order to teach us. It may be direct, as one quietly meditates on a passage, but it may also be through intermediate means. Some of these means are the books of men, the teachers given to the church, concordances and even English dictionaries. Ultimately, it is the Spirit who does the teaching whether He chooses to use intermediate means or not. And He must do it if we are to grasp the truth.

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

ODDLY ENOUGH, the concept of spirituality, though the subject of much preaching, writing and discussion, is seldom defined. Usually anything that approaches a definition merely describes the characteristics of spirituality, but one searches in vain for a concise definition of the concept itself. The reason for this is that the concept includes several factors, and it is not easy to weave these together into a balanced definition. Too, the only verse in the Bible that approaches a definition is rather difficult of interpretation: "He who is spiritual appraises all things" (1 Cor. 2:15). Consequently it is often avoided. Nevertheless, it is necessary to try to formulate a definition, for this is like the cornerstone which determines the shape of the entire building.

THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY

Genuine spirituality involves three factors. The first we have already mentioned-, regeneration. No one can be spiritual in the biblical sense without having first experienced the new life that is freely given to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Spirituality without regeneration is reformation.

Second, the Holy Spirit is preeminently involved in producing spirituality. This is not to say that the other Persons of the Godhead do not have a part in it, nor that the believer himself has no responsibility, nor that there are not other means of grace; but it is to affirm His major role in spirituality. The ministries of the Spirit involve teaching (John 16:12-15), guiding (Rom. 8:14), assuring (Rom. 8:16), praying (Rom. 8:26), the exercise of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7), and warring against the flesh (Gal. 5:17). All of these depend for their full manifestation on the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

To be filled with the Spirit means to be controlled by the spirit. The clue to this definition is found in Ephesians 5:18 where there is contrast *and* comparison between drunkenness and Spirit-filling. It is the comparison which gives the clue, for just as a drunken person is controlled by the liquor which he consumes, so a Spirit-filled Christian is controlled by the Spirit. As a result, he will act in a manner unnatural to him-not an erratic or abnormal manner, but one contrary to the old life. Control by the Spirit is a necessary part of spirituality.

The third factor involved in spirituality is time. If the spiritual person judges or examines or discerns all things (1 Cor. 2:15), this must involve time in order to gain knowledge and to

acquire experience for discerning all things. The *Amplified Bible* elaborates on the verse in this fashion: "He can read the meaning of everything, but no one can properly discern or appraise or get an insight into him." This could not be accomplished overnight; it is something which is true only of a mature Christian.

That word *maturity* seems to hold the key to the concept of spirituality, for Christian maturity is the growth which the Holy Spirit produces over a period of time in the believer. To be sure, the same amount of time is not required for each individual, but some time is necessary for all. It is not the time itself which produces maturity; rather, the progress made and growth achieved over time are all-important. Rate multiplied by time equals distance, so that the distance to maturity may be covered in a shorter time if the rate of growth is accelerated. And it will be accelerated if none of the control which ought to be given to the Holy Spirit is retained by self.

Here is a proposed definition of spirituality which attempts to be concise and at the same time to keep these above-discussed factors in mind. Spirituality is a grownup yet growing relation to the Holy Spirit. While this may simply be another way of saying that spirituality is Christian maturity, it tries to delineate more openly the factors of Spirit-control over a period of time. Certainly the definition satisfies the requirements of the description of a spiritual man in 1 Corinthians 2:15, for one who is experiencing a grownup relation to the Holy Spirit will be able to discern all things and at the same time will not be understood by others.

If this be a correct definition, there are certain ramifications of it which ought to be thought through.

SPIRIT-CONTROL MAY BE TOTAL OVER THE NEW CHRISTIAN'S LIFE INsofar AS HE HAS KNOWLEDGE OF THAT LIFE IN HIS NEWBORN STATE. BUT, AS HIS KNOWLEDGE INCREASES AND HIS GROWTH PROGRESSES, NEW VISTAS OF LIFE BREAK UPON HIM WHICH MUST ALSO BE CONSCIOUSLY YIELDED TO GOD'S DIRECTION.

1. A new Christian cannot be called spiritual, simply because he has not had sufficient time to grow and develop in Christian knowledge and experience. A new believer can be Spirit-controlled, but the area of control will be expanding in the normal process of Christian growth. A young Christian has not yet been confronted with many areas within the general sphere of

Christian conduct, for instance; and while he may be completely willing to let the Spirit control his life and actions, he has not yet gained the experience and maturity that come from having faced these problems and having made Spirit controlled decisions about them. When he is first saved he may not even know that there is such a person as a weaker brother, and, although he may not be unwilling to curb his liberty for the sake of that brother, he has not yet faced the doing of it, to say nothing of having guided others into right decisions about such matters. Spirit-control may be total over the new Christian's life insofar as he has knowledge of that life in his newborn state, but, as his knowledge increases and his growth progresses, new vistas of life break upon him which must also be consciously yielded to God's direction. Time to gain maturity is needed for genuine spirituality.

2. *A Christian of longer standing may not be spiritual*, not because he has had insufficient time but because during the years of his Christian life he has not allowed the Holy Spirit to control him. Whereas the new Christian may lack the time required to become spiritual, the believer of longer standing may be deficient in yieldedness. And without complete and continued control by the Spirit he cannot be spiritual. This, of course, was the burden of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, for his readers were in this exact condition.

3. *A Christian can backslide in certain areas of his life* without losing all the ground he has gained during his Christian lifetime. The flesh may control his actions during a period of backsliding, but when he comes back to the Lord he does not necessarily have to start the process of growth all over again. For example, a believer may backslide with regard to personal Bible study, but when he comes back to it he will not have forgotten everything he formerly knew. However, this principle does not apply in every area of life, for there are some aspects of living, such as fidelity in marriage, which if violated can never be fully redeemed. The sin can be forgiven, fellowship restored, but the ground lost cannot be recovered.

4. *There are stages of growth within the area of maturity*. The best illustration is that of the human being who, though in adulthood, continues to grow, develop, and mature. The spiritual man who is experiencing a grownup relation to the Holy Spirit is not stagnant in his Christian life, for he also has a *growing* relation in his walk with the Lord. In this life we never ascend to a plateau above and beyond which there is no further ground to gain. Spirituality, then, is a growing, grownup relation to the Spirit.

5. *The state of babyhood need not last long*. Let no one try to take refuge in a fraudulent kind of piety which demeans or ignores the processes of growth that have advanced him to a state of maturity which he refuses to recognize. False humility is sometimes the reason for such lack of recognition of maturity which has actually been achieved. After all, when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians those believers were about four or five years old in the faith, and he expected them

to be spiritual by that time. He makes it quite clear that although when he was with them he could not speak to them as spiritual people (for they were then babes in Christ), he fully anticipated that by the time he wrote this letter to them they would have matured to the point where he could address them as spiritual (1 Cor. 3:1-2). With the passing of only a few years, babyhood should also disappear.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality is more easily characterized than defined. And in the biblical characteristics of spirituality we have concrete tests by which one may determine whether or not he is spiritual. In fact, they are too specific for comfort! How can one know if he is spiritual? Here are the tests.

SPIRITUALITY WILL BE EVIDENT IN THE BELIEVER

In his character. If spirituality involves control by the Spirit (Eph. 5: 18), and if the Spirit has come to glorify Christ (John 16:14), then a spiritual person will manifest Christ in his character and actions. To glorify is to show, display, or manifest. The evidence that the Holy Spirit is in control of a life is not found in manifestations of the Spirit but in the display of Christ. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) is a perfect description of the character of Christ; thus, the Christian who is spiritual will display love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. These are the traits that will describe his character.

THE EVIDENCE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IN CONTROL OF A LIFE IS NOT FOUND IN MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT BUT IN THE DISPLAY OF CHRIST.

In his conduct the spiritual believer will imitate Christ. One of the wrong emphases in victorious life teachings today demeans this aspect of the truth. We are told not to imitate Christ since this involves striving which is a work of the flesh; rather, we should simply allow Christ to live out His life through us. Actually it is not necessary to choose one of these views; both are scriptural. Christ lives in me, and the life I now live I live by faith in the son of God (Gal. 2:20), but I am also exhorted to "follow in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21) and to walk as He walked (1 John 2:6). Obviously, if the Holy Spirit is allowed to produce the character of Christ in an

individual, the life that he lives will imitate Christ. One of the most rewarding studies in the Gospels is to note the details of our Lord's life which we as His followers would do well to imitate. Here are some suggestions.

In His public life and ministry the Lord always exhibited compassion (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 6:34; 8:2; Luke 7:13). His love for people was always evident (Mark 10:21; Luke 19:41). He constantly offered to help others before being asked to do so (Mark 8:7; 12:15; Luke 13:12-13; John 5:6), ministering to both their physical and spiritual needs (John 6). He sought people out in order that He might bring God's message to them (Matt. 4:18; 9:35; 15:10; Mark 4: 1; 6:2; Luke 4: 14), and His ministry blessed the hearts of His hearers (Luke 24:32). The secret of such a public ministry is found in His personal life, for our Lord knew and used the Word of God (Matt. 4), and He constantly maintained fellowship with His heavenly Father through prayer (Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 29; 11:1). These are some details of the pattern after which the spiritual Christian should mold his own life so that the glory of the Lord will shine from it. A spiritual Christian has a Christlike character and shows it in his Christlike conduct.

In his knowledge. The strong meat of the Word of God belongs to mature Christians (Heb. 5:14), and Paul expected the Corinthians after four or five years of Christian experience to be able to understand strong meat of the Word. The milk of the Word is for babes in Christ, and Paul did not scold the Corinthians for feeding on milk when they were first converted. But when their diet continued to consist only of milk, he, like the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, denounced them as defective Christians. What is meat truth? Of course, the Bible does not label passages milk or meat, so it is not always easy to answer that question. However, one subject is clearly designated meat, and that is the matter which reminded the writer to the Hebrews of the inability of his readers to understand what he was writing about. And that subject is the truth about Melchizedek and his priesthood (Heb. 5:10-11). Here is an example from the Bible itself of the meat of the Word, and it may rightly be used as a test of one's spirituality. How much do you know about Melchizedek? Or do you know any more about him now than you did a year ago? This is not an easy doctrine, admittedly, but it is a test doctrine for determining one's state of advancement in the knowledge of the Word of God which is an essential characteristic of genuine spirituality.

In his attitudes. A spiritual Christian will exhibit at least two basic attitudes throughout life. The first is an attitude of thankfulness. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). This admonition follows the command to be filled with the Spirit (v. 18) and is thereby one of the characteristics of a Spirit-filled life. It is to be an all-inclusive attitude in the life of the believer. It should apply at all

times ("always") and in all situations ("for all things"). No time and no circumstance is excepted. This means that grumbling, carping criticism, discontent, etc. will not characterize a spiritual Christian. This does not mean he can never criticize in the sense of exercising discernment (Phil. 1:9-10). But the kind of attitude that blames God for what we do not like or that is vexed with His dealing with us is not a characteristic of genuine spirituality.

The other attitude of life which characterizes the spiritual Christian is, in the words of Paul, that of "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3 KJV). This is not entirely a positional matter; that is, it does not only relate to the unity within the body of Christ which the Holy Spirit has brought about by baptizing every believer into that body (1 Cor. 12:13). It is true that we could never make such unity, but we are exhorted to endeavor to keep it. The very fact that the word *keep* is used shows that the unity has been made by the Spirit, but the very fact that there is also an exhortation shows that we must not disrupt that unity. Obviously, there is no problem about keeping unity with members of the body of Christ who have predeceased me; nor is there any difficulty in maintaining unity with those other Christians whom I do not know or with whom I have no contact. Therefore, the only sphere in which this exhortation has any relevance is the group of believers with whom I am thrown in contact. And it goes without saying that there are many practical problems in trying to keep the unity of the Spirit among believers I know-and the same is true for believers who know me! But, difficult as this may be, it is a requirement of spirituality.

It was the lack of this attitude that called forth Paul's scathing denouncing of the Corinthians (1 Cor. 3:1-7; d. 1:12-13). Disunity had developed among believers who should have been worshiping together. Actually, there were four parties in Corinth (1:12). The "Paul party" was perhaps a large group in the church who had been converted under Paul and who continued to adhere to him. But as is often the case they seemed disposed to be more Pauline than Paul was and to disparage other gifted men, all of which resulted in detracting from the glory of Christ. The "Apollos party" (Acts 18:24-28) also contained some personal converts as well as those who had been won over by Apollos' genial manner and eloquent preaching. Some may have followed him because they considered his teaching more advanced than Paul's plain gospel preaching, or they were attracted to his more cultured manner. The "Peter party" would undoubtedly have been composed of conservative Jewish believers who rallied to the hero of Pentecost. The "Christ party" was perhaps the most difficult to get along with, for those in this group prided themselves on being His followers, not any mere man's disciples. They were Gnostics before Gnosticism, and they unquestionably strutted their supposed spiritual superiority before all. This is the kind of situation, attitude, and activity that Paul unhesitatingly labeled "carnal" (1 Cor. 3:3), for it broke the unity of the Spirit.

IT IS TRUE THAT WE COULD NEVER MAKE SUCH UNITY, BUT WE ARE EXHORTED TO ENDEAVOR TO KEEP IT.

However, unity is an area in which there needs to be very carefully balanced thinking, for all division is not necessarily wrong, and all unions are not *per se* right. In the same epistle (11: 19 KJV) Paul said: "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." The noun *heretic* is used only one time in the New Testament (Titus 3:10), but the noun *heresies* is used twice (here and Gal. 5:20 where the action is condemned as a work of the flesh). The word means a willful choosing for oneself which results in a party division. Even though heresy is a work of the flesh which is often performed by a carnal Christian, it may be used for good so that those who are not involved in heresy will stand out in the churches. But heresy seems to involve the espousal of error which in turn causes the division. In such instances the heretic is to be admonished twice, then ignored (Titus 3: 11) while the part of the divided group that did not follow the error goes on demonstrating its purity of doctrine by abounding in the work of the Lord. Thus to put in balance 1 Corinthians 3:1-5 and 11: 19 we may conclude: Divisions involving heresy may be good and necessary, but divisions over personalities are carnal.

HONEST DIFFERENCES OF OPINION CAN BE EXPRESSED WITHIN THE BONDS OF THE UNITY OF CHRIST

On the other hand, some aspects of unity need to be carefully thought through. For one thing, unity does not necessarily imply bigness. The unity of the church was apparently not broken when the disciples were scattered by persecution (Acts 11:19). Unity existed between the church in Jerusalem and the church in Antioch even though they were separated geographically (Acts 11:23-23). Unity was demonstrated by many churches that participated in the collection for the saints in Judea (2 Cor. 8:1ff.). The unity of the one church in a given city in New Testament times was not violated by the fact that there were several churches meeting in houses scattered about the city. Indeed, one receives the impression from the New Testament that the Lord preferred to have many smaller congregations rather than one large group in any given place. And there seemed to be no lack of power that stemmed from lack of bigness.

Furthermore, the expression of personal preferences or use of various procedures does not necessarily violate the unity of the church. Indeed, it is in the use of a variety of spiritual gifts that the unity of the body is maintained and the progress of the body furthered (1 Cor. 12:12-

25). Paul may have preferred Silas while Barnabas desired Mark (Acts 15:39-40), but eventually Paul recognized Mark's value in the ministry (2 Tim. 4:11). Honest differences of opinion can be expressed within the bonds of the unity of the body of Christ.

The two basic attitudes of life that must characterize genuine, biblical spirituality are thankfulness at all times and in all circumstances and the maintenance of unity in that part of the body of Christ with which I live and am concerned—with all of their implications.

In his conduct. Spirituality is also demonstrated in the individual by proper conduct which is the result of the correct, discerning and mature use of knowledge (Heb. 5:13-14). We have already noticed that knowledge of the Word including meat truth is a prerequisite for spirituality, but such knowledge must be used properly in order to be spiritual. The readers of the book of Hebrews were unskillful in the word of righteousness (v. 13); that is, the word concerning uprightness in both doctrine and practice. As a result they were unable to discern between good and evil (v. 14). This should not be limited to things morally good or evil, but extended to things superior versus things inferior, things better versus things which are best. A spiritual Christian will be able to tread his way carefully through the complexities of Christian living so that he not only does that which is right and scriptural but also that which is useful and for the good of others. Notice that in the foregoing passage again time is involved in maturity or spirituality. These people had had time to exercise their spiritual senses though they had not done so. But time is required to reach this state and achieve the ability to use skillfully God's Word.

SPIRITUALITY WILL BE SEEN IN THE BELIEVER'S HOME

The easiest place in which to be spiritual is in public; the most difficult is at home. The relationships of the home are intimate and continuous, while activities and impressions made in public are intermittent and casual. This axiomatic reminder is especially necessary for Christian workers who too often can make a show of professional spirituality in public ministry while living a carnal life at home.

Let me illustrate by changing the comparison slightly. When I first began to teach I was assigned a beginning class in New Testament Greek which met every morning, Monday through Friday, at eight o'clock. During the course of an academic year under circumstances like that, one gets well acquainted with students in such a class—and they with the teacher. Now if, at the end of the year, members of that class should testify how much their teacher's life, ministry, and spiritual example had meant to them, it would mean a great deal. But, by contrast, if I go to a church on a single occasion and preach such a sermon, that means nothing

in reality. In the case of the class, they have come to know and observe me under varying circumstances of stress and joy; they have been able to observe constantly my patience (or lack of it) and my consistency. But the casual contact with a congregation affords no opportunity to assess the spirituality of the minister. The circumstances of home life afford an even better opportunity than a daily 8:00 A.M. Greek class.

Again, it is the Ephesian passage concerning the filling of the Spirit (5:18-21) which provides the biblical basis for this characteristic of spirituality. The command to be filled with the Spirit (v. 18) is followed by four coordinate phrases each of which begins with a participle. Together they constitute results or characteristics of the Spirit-filled life. The four participles are speaking, singing (v. 19), giving thanks (v. 20), and submitting (v. 21); and the last is not only the conclusion to verses 18-21 but it is also the topic sentence to that which follows beginning in verse 22. In other words, submission which is an evidence of the filling of the Spirit will be seen in the relationships of the home most vividly.

The word *submit* means to place oneself in a subordinate rank. This means distinctive things for the husband and for the wife in the home, but both are to be submissive to one another (not just the wife to the husband as is commonly thought). For the husband it involves at least three things: (1) He is to lead, for he is the head of the wife (v. 23). This does not make him a dictator, but the responsible leader of the family who not only has the privilege of making the final decision but also the responsibility. (2) He is to love his wife (v. 25). A man needs this reminder, for he by nature is prone to be less demonstrative if not less loving than a woman. (3) He is to nurture his wife (v. 29). The word translated "nourish" means to bring to maturity and is used in the New Testament only in this verse and in 6:4. The word *cherish* means to warm and is used here and in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 only in the New Testament. The point is simply that the husband is ultimately responsible for helping bring to spiritual maturity his wife and family. The contemporary tragedy is simply that usually the opposite is the case. It is too often the wife who is spiritually astute and who is forced, so to speak, to pull her husband along. Both should be spiritually keen, and it is the husband's responsibility to take the leadership in this most important matter.

THE POINT IS SIMPLY THAT THE HUSBAND IS ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE
FOR HELPING BRING TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY HIS WIFE AND FAMILY.

THE CONTEMPORARY TRAGEDY IS SIMPLY THAT USUALLY THE OPPOSITE
IS THE CASE.

The spiritual wife will be subject to the leadership of her husband (vv. 22, 24). In other words, she will not work at cross purposes with her husband's leadership in the family. This does not mean that she has no voice, for the husband is like a presiding officer over the members of the family (that word is used in 1 Tim. 3:4). Of course no one can produce spirituality in another, but it is the awesome responsibility of the husband in the family to take the initiative and provide the leadership in the spiritual life of the family. Thus the spirituality of an individual will be seen in the proper discharge of his family responsibilities.

SPIRITUALITY WILL BE SEEN IN THE BELIEVER'S CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

The other principle area in which personal spirituality will be demonstrated is the church. We have already seen that a spiritual person will try to keep the unity of the spirit in the sphere with which he is chiefly concerned-his own local church. A factious spirit is evidence of carnality.

The positive contribution a spiritual Christian will bring to the church is through the exercise of his spiritual gifts. We want to consider this entire matter in detail later, so at this point it will have to suffice simply to point out that a spiritual believer will exercise his spiritual gifts in the power of the Holy Spirit in relation to the church universal and local. The immature Christian promotes division; the mature one, unity through the use of his gifts (1 Cor. 12:25). It goes without saying, then (or does it?), that the church member who is always creating problems and who constantly demands to be catered to is not a genuinely spiritual person. But the one who is serving the Lord by promoting the welfare of the church is evincing a mature spiritual life. Accusing the brethren is the work of the devil (Rev. 12:10); caring for the brethren is the work of the Lord through His mature children.

This is genuine and wholesome spirituality. The concept is that of a mature and maturing relationship to the Holy Spirit which will be demonstrated in one's personal life, family life, and church life. This is biblical spirituality.