

4 THE INNER MAN

Ephesians 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

The majority of us live on an outer level, conditioned and governed largely by external factors and awareness. This is normal and natural, and therefore not wrong in itself. But these verses point to another level of life referred to as the 'inner man'. Here is a dimension of being that is far more than meets the eye, like the nine tenths of an iceberg below the waterline we never see. Few are those who are acquainted with living life on this level; fewer still those who know enough about it to seek and find it. Indeed, 'inner man' people are few and far between.

Attempts to achieve some semblance of inner control or peace through human means other than the Holy Spirit are limited and partial at best. Techniques can be designed to produce desired effects without necessarily getting the source right. Thus one may experience some of the benefits of an inner calm intermittently, and yet never be a holistic inner person in the way God intends. Only the God of the whole person, who can make sinful man whole, can do that for us. The first step in the right direction is not to look inward within our finite self, but to look upward to the infinite God. Morbid introspection can never lift us out of the dark and dry well of our sinful selves. We need first to be regenerated as a new creation, a new man in Christ. But having been made new, we need to nurture and build up the inner man after Christ. This strengthening and renewing of the inner man has to be done by His Spirit, not our own striving.

If we are God's temple, the inner man is like the inner court. Apart from the Spirit, the 'most holy place' is empty or missing. We may have an outward form, but devoid of inward power. In the spiritual formation of the inner man, the key is the personal presence and power of God mediated through His Word and His Spirit. As we go on in life, there is the inexorable wasting away of the outward man as it heads towards physical death. Yet for the believer, there is the counter-acting trend in the continual renewing of the inward man as he keeps walking with the Lord. What John the Baptist said of Jesus, that *"He must increase but I must decrease"* (John 3:30), becomes our ongoing experience. This is what will outlast and outweigh all that we experience now externally, and which will remain eternally. Here is why we have a reason not to lose heart even in the face of outward weakness and decline. We can say with the psalmist: *"my flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever"* (Psalms 73:26). Take stock spiritually to ensure that the nurturing of your inner man is not neglected.