

## Kingdom Progression – Part 7

Welcome to Kingdom Progression, Part 7, March 26, 2008. We're now in the twelve part series called Kingdom Progression. We did the introduction; then we looked at Adam (both pre-fall and post-fall). We looked at ourselves as babes in Christ; then ourselves in the double-minded condition resulting in our cry, oh wretched man that I am. Then we went forward to the end—that is to the state of eternal perfection; and then backed up to the preceding stage—namely unattainable perfection while yet here on Earth. Then last week we began the real meat of the series and had a poster called Kingdom Progression. In the Kingdom Progression poster, basically what I attempted to present was the overview of our Christian walk so that we never lose sight of the overview as we're functioning in the specifics. That is to say unsaved man, dead, can do nothing for God, cannot come to God, is drawn by God as a result of God reaching down to unsaved man. And then the God Who is love saved some—that is to say regenerates our spirit which was dead; and now it becomes alive, alive unto God. We then begin to respond to the love of God by loving God which we spoke of as the same thing as loving ourselves in a spiritual sense and then that love is manifest as the fruit of the Spirit to others which serves to then begin the process of God drawing them to Himself. That was the first component out of three key components that are in the stage that we're beginning to explore—that is stage five, the Kingdom Life stage. And each aspect of what takes place in man in the saved compared to the unsaved condition is all a blood-bought change. Hence we historically know the cross of Christ is an accomplished event; but in a practical functional way, it's not an event that we suppress in the past. It's an event that we relate to through every second of our Christian experience; because every single aspect that we tap into in the spirit realm is a blood bought source of power.

Next poster. On that prior poster, it was presented in a simple way. That is to say to give an overview, you can't draw all the details. So I omitted the functional connections; between the will, the mind, the flesh, and the spirit. On this second component of three in the stage five Kingdom Life stage, I have drawn in all of these functional components. I followed this same format as I did on earlier posters in the series. Self determination in man is what led him to put self on the throne. That's what I described as the sin nature. That's the root of what the Bible calls the flesh; man functioning in self determination, as opposed to being God determined. The changes which then occur are all red because they're all blood bought. The spirit on this diagram is our spirit; but recall that our spirit is indwelled by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, being good, is in our spirit. Why? Because nothing good dwells in my flesh. So we can distinguish, but not separate, our new creation self from the Holy Spirit which indwells our spirit. The spirit, as drawn here, is the new self of Ephesians 4:24 where it tells us to put on the new self which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Simply stated, this is who we are. This is our identity; this is our new creation; this is our new self; this is how God views us, and so on. The flesh is drawn as still dark because the flesh is never improved. That's why Paul would write in Romans 7:18 that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh. The will in saved man has two pathways to take and the pathway that it takes represents the initial step in the sequence of thinking. One pathway enters the flesh with self on the throne. Then it progresses into the mind to access the things of the mind; but all viewed through the frame of reference that was initially selected of self on the throne.

The other pathway that is available to the will is to turn into the spirit. This is where the mind of Christ dwells; because we're told in I Corinthians 2:16 – but we have the mind of Christ. The Holy Spirit, Who is the Spirit of truth, bears witness of Jesus Who is the truth. But all of that takes place in the spirit realm and none of that takes place in the flesh realm. If the will goes through self on the throne, namely the flesh, then it will access the part of the mind which is yet unrenewed. These letters I've drawn in black, unchanged, because they are not renewed and nothing ever gets renewed when it's viewed through the frame of reference of self on the throne. The letters N and D of mind, I've drawn as red. This indicates the part of the mind that has been renewed according to the mind of Christ as the Holy Spirit of truth bears witness of the One Who is truth Who is to be the One in which we abide, Who's to be the source of all things in our lives and so on. Now, in fact, I've exaggerated this I believe, because my daughter, who takes my posters and converts them to PowerPoint, could not take part of a letter and make it red and make the rest of the letter black. So in yielding to that I drew the sequence in earlier stages as having the letter D red and the other three letters black. To show progression in Christian maturity, I had to make another letter red; but that makes it a 50/50 split. But I dare say in most of us, if we really had a way of analyzing our thought lives, the ratio would not be 1-to-1; it would not be 50%/50%. The ratio would probably be like 98-to-2. But I can't diagrammatically represent that on the poster and have it carry forth in a consistent way into the PowerPoint which shows up on the website. The mind is renewed, not by coming through the flesh and then renewing. The mind is renewed by turning into the spirit with Jesus as the basis and Jesus as the source of all things. The Spirit of truth then renews the mind according to Jesus Christ as it progressively converts us into Christlikeness—that is growth into Christian maturity.

But the frame of reference is taken by the initial step of the will. Our initial step will either turn this way with self on the throne or turn this way with Jesus as the object of our gaze, Jesus as the source, and Jesus as the basis of all things that flow thereafter. And when we do that, then Jesus Christ becomes the frame of reference by which we understand, by which we interpret, by which we analyze, and by which we make decisions in our minds. But if the will first accesses the flesh with self on the throne, then it never accesses the mind of Jesus Christ which is in the spirit; because self on the throne has established itself right off the bat as a filter which will filter out anything contrary to its remaining on the throne. Self on the throne will never accept the mind of Christ as the basis for understanding, interpretation, analysis and decision making. If the will first enters the spirit to access the mind of Christ, then the mind of Christ will not accept the things of the flesh—that is to say the unrenewed mind. Now these concepts are graphically shown; but by showing them this way, I hope to help us understand such Scriptures as Romans 8:4-8, where verse 4 begins – in order that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but walk according to the spirit. According to the flesh refers to the will, taking its pathway into the flesh with self on the throne; we can never fulfill anything of the law of God, meaning we can never obey God that way. That's because we can never function in the things of God with self on the throne and serving as the frame of reference for our analysis, understanding, interpretation, and decision making.

In verse 4 of Romans 8, according to the spirit, refers to the will taking the initial step into the spirit where the Holy Spirit dwells. This accesses, via the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, bearing witness of the One Who is truth, and thus, accessing the mind of Christ as the frame of reference for all understanding, interpretation, analysis, and decision making. This accesses the renewed

mind and continues the process of progressively renewing the mind into the mind of Christ. That's how we fulfill Romans 12:2 as we're progressively transformed by the renewing of the mind. Our will, as always, remains our chooser. But in a more particular sense, we are left with our will as our worshipper. The will chooses with every step, whether to begin through the frame of reference of Jesus Christ in the spirit or to begin through the frame of reference of self on the throne. Recall that it is a theologic consistent truth that God always gives man one choice with two options. He gives man one choice—God or un-God so that the relationship with God can be love and not mechanical robotic slavery. But He gives us only two options to make one choice so as to avoid complexity; so that we don't miss the simple choice by having the complexity of additional choices. So we have one choice with two options. And that is our only act of worship. We can never worship God if we take that one option called self on the throne. In other words, if we think we are going to build a church for God and we do it with all our own energies no matter how motivated and so on, somewhere in that process we are going to be receiving the glory for that. But our will has the other option to turn into the spirit with Jesus Christ as the foundation, the source, the basis of everything including the object of our constant gaze. That's part of what Paul would write about in II Corinthians 11:3 as he prayed for the Corinthians – but I'm afraid lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. The simplicity is that there are only two options and one choice: Jesus Christ or the flesh with self on the throne. The purity is that when we turn into the Spirit with Jesus Christ on the throne regarding Him as our source, our basis, our foundation, the object of our gaze, and the direction of our glory, then the Holy Spirit bears witness of Jesus Who is truth. The Holy Spirit brings glory to Jesus because that's why the Holy Spirit came. The Holy Spirit bears witness of Jesus and brings glory to Jesus and accesses, therefore, the mind of Christ and then through that process, renews our mind.

Next poster. Now we're going to briefly flash back to the stage that precedes this one. Remember the one that we're now beginning to talk about is stage five out of the series of seven, what I call the Kingdom Life stage. We're going to go back now and review the one, namely stage four that precedes it. And this is us in the post-salvation condition, but in the double-minded state. This is where we had not yet learned about the flesh and the spirit sufficiently to learn how to walk out our Christianity. In this stage we had made some progress because as babes in Christ (the initial stage) we were thinking change will automatically occur. But when we realize that change is not occurring automatically, we are not automatically becoming more Christlike. In the double-minded stage, we begin to think that we will make change occur. If it isn't occurring, then I will make it occur. We did this with a desire to please God, with a desire to honor God, a desire to obey God, and a desire to change into Christlikeness. So the desire is all good. It's the methodology that is dysfunctional. In this stage we resolve to make change occur, hence the black line from the will turning into the flesh with self on the throne is even thicker and darker than it was in the babe in Christ stage. That's because we've redoubled our efforts, we tripled our efforts. If we knew that God said thou shall not lust, we were determined not to lust. We put eight times the mental energy into not lusting because we were going to obey God. We were going to make this change occur. We were going to become Christlike. But we were doing it all through our own efforts. The will was following the well-worn path (the rut if you will) turning into the flesh, with self on the throne which is the pathway that we had habitually used through our whole lives. In other words, we were trying in this stage, to fulfill the will of God, the desire that God has put in our heart to obey Him by relying on the flesh with

self on the throne in order to accomplish the purposes of God. But Romans 8:7 tells us because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so. But we're trying to take that which is not even able to do so and use it through willpower to become the tool to change into Christlikeness. Is it any wonder that we end up saying, oh wretched man that I am because we have the desire; but the things that I want to do I don't do. The things I don't want to do, I yet do and we end up in a state of frustration. The good news, recall, is that state of frustration (oh wretched man that I am), is progress compared to the babe in Christ stage who is still thinking change will occur automatically and I don't need to do anything. At least here, you have said change is not occurring automatically and yet I desire change to occur, so ergo I will make change occur.

Notice the red pathway from the will into the spirit. It's drawn as broken; that is not a continuous line and it's drawn as very thin. That's because this pathway hardly gets used in this state of Christian maturity. Likewise turning into the spirit and then from spirit back to renew the mind, that arrow is drawn as discontinuous and as thin because that pathway hardly gets used. This stage, recall, is what fulfills Galatians 3:3 when Paul wrote to the Galatians – are you so foolish having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? In other words, everything about our spirit; it is alive to God. It is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It has access to the mind of Christ. It has been created in righteousness and true holiness in the image of God. All of those are God-caused changes. The gift of spirit life comes from God Himself. It's not something we conjure up. So having begun that way with the new creation, will you now perfect the new creation through your own efforts of self on the throne using your willpower?

Now go back to the prior poster. This is the one that's our subject for today, the one that we looked at just a bit earlier. And here's the critical difference between this poster and the prior stage of double-mindedness. In this stage the Christian has received the illumination of the battle between flesh versus spirit. He's begun to understand how the battle is fought. He now turns into the spirit by conscious and active decision-making. Heretofore, he drifted through ignorance and through habit to more or less allow the mind to set itself as opposed to setting the mind as an act of the will. But when we do that, recall, we drift to the default position of using our willpower with self on the throne. We revert to the well worn ruts of the flesh with self on the throne. But when we receive the illumination that there's another pathway that we turn into in order to obey God by accessing the power of God, then we become Christian activists. And by Christian activists, I don't mean engagement in the political process. I mean Matthew 11:12 where Jesus said – And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force. The point is this. No one drifts into the spirit realm to function in the Kingdom of Heaven. Any drifting that occurs will follow the habitual pathway of the rut into the flesh with self on the throne. Thus, only aggressive men turn in to the spirit. These aggressive men are motivated by love. But love is not sufficient because love must be accompanied by progressive knowledge. Otherwise they'll fulfill Romans 10:2 and have a zeal for God but not in accordance with knowledge. Love provides the zeal because love is a passion for oneness. The knowledge part, at least in part, relates to understanding the two realms of flesh versus spirit as the options available to the will and we're left with the option available to the will that the relationship may be love expressed and reciprocated as opposed to an authoritarian dictatorial command from on high where love is not part of the process. The knowledge also, that we add to our faith is the understanding that passivity in the Christian will

always default to the flesh. Activism is required to turn into the spirit with Jesus as the object of our gaze, Jesus as our source, Jesus as our basis before any other thought about anything is accessed or processed. That's at least part of the meaning of II Corinthians 10:5 – we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ; but you don't take each thought individually. You turn into Christ and then each thought that is contrary to Christ will be captured. But if you're living over here trying to capture thoughts in obedience to Christ, you will end up as either wretched man that I am or functioning in pride at how many thoughts you successfully captured for Jesus Christ. That way you get the glory and Christ gets none.

We don't begin with each thought and capture it. We begin as a Christian activist by using our will and obeying Hebrews 12:2 – by fixing our gaze upon Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. Fixing your gaze upon Jesus is an act of the will before any other thought to remind ourselves and meditate on and draw from about who Jesus is, what Jesus is, what Jesus has done, what Jesus is presently doing, and what Jesus will do. And then, once focused on Jesus in that way, then any thoughts contrary to that frame of reference can be easily captured after being discerned. Beginning that pattern is the step required to develop a new pattern of thinking. When that's done, then the red line drawn from the will into the spirit is not broken and thin; it becomes thicker and continuous. Whereas in the prior stage of double-mindedness, remember, it was discontinuous—that is to say broken, and thin because it was a pathway that hardly got used at all as we tried to accomplish the purposes of God and fulfill the desires of God by using self on the throne as the tool by which to implement it. Likewise the line that now goes from the spirit into the mind is drawn as continuous and thicker as this pathway now gets used more and more.

Now I'm going to illustrate all of this with one simple example. And by using that example, it will conclude today's session and segue into the next session. Luke 9:23 – And Jesus was saying to them all if anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. Today we're going to focus on the deny himself part. When in the prior stage of double-mindedness, we tried to fulfill the desires of God by turning into self on the throne as we tried to use the flesh to accomplish the desire of God to deny self. If you contemplate that, you will see that using that mechanism, you're relying on self on the throne in an attempt to deny self on the throne. But self will never deny self. Self loves being on the throne and self is not going to tolerate any behavior which will supplant self off of the throne. That's how we end up in the oh wretched man that I am state. So here is what will sound paradoxical; but hear me through. Here's the critical revelation to be gained from that sequence of thinking. To deny self ultimately means to deny that you can deny self. To deny self ultimately means to deny that you can deny self. When you receive the revelation that self can never deny self, then you're ready to progress into Christian maturity. Jesus told us to deny self and I am saying we can't deny self, so how do we reconcile that?

Well Jesus also told us other things and we're to regard the sum of His Word as truth, not Scriptures taken in isolation as truth. John 15:5 He told us – Apart from Me you can do nothing. So here is how we deny self. If you don't realize that you cannot deny self, then you will never deny self. You have to realize that you cannot. Now you're ready to turn into the spirit and throw up your hands, not in frustration but in surrender; because you've received the revelation that you cannot do that which God had told you to do. We turn into the spirit by focusing our

gaze upon Jesus. Now what happens when we do that? Well the Holy Spirit came to bear witness of Jesus. He can't bear witness of that which you refuse to gaze at. But when we fix our gaze upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, rather than fix our gaze upon ourselves in our effort to deny self, we then access the power of the Holy Spirit to function in that which He came to do. We access the power of the Holy Spirit Who came to be our helper, not the bystander, as we deny self. The Holy Spirit came to bear witness of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is in you to bring glory to Jesus. He is not in you to strengthen your willpower to function in the power of self in order to do the desires and commands of God; because that way you get the glory. Jesus gets no glory. When you turn to fix your gaze upon Jesus, the fruit of the Spirit can be produced, not the fruit of self. The fruit of self is oh wretched man that I am, who will save me from this body of sin? One of the fruits of the Spirit is self control as listed Galatians 5:22-23. This sequence is now completed by the solid red arrow that I've drawn from the spirit back over to block the pathway from the will that turns into the flesh with self on the throne. If you, through your willpower using the power of self could deny self, you would not have needed a savior. And after salvation, if you through your willpower using the power of self on the throne could obey God, you would not have needed the indwelling Holy Spirit. So self does get denied, just not in the way that you thought. It does not get denied by having your willpower conjure up sufficient mental energy by which to deny self. Self gets denied by realizing that you cannot deny self, then turning to gaze at Jesus, because Scripture tells us He's to be the object of our gaze. That then looses the Holy Spirit to become your helper, to produce His fruit, one of which is self control as the Holy Spirit reaches back and exercises self control by blocking the pathway from your will into the flesh. This way God gets the glory when your self gets controlled. By the other pathway you would get all the glory and you would be pleased as your Christian brothers and sisters bragged upon what a Christlike person you were as you exhibited self denial. This is simply the pathway of Philippians 4:13 – I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me. The Scripture doesn't say I can do all things. It doesn't say I can do all things for Him consistent with His commands. It does say I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me. All of this is what Jesus meant in John 15:5 when He said apart from Me you can do nothing.

Now recall that the session today is the second of three components that will be taken together to make up the missing link of the Kingdom Life stage—namely stage five out of seven. Last time we covered the first component; that is the overview of the whole Christian walk. Today we looked at the functional connections between will, mind, flesh, and spirit in order to learn how these things are to be carried out. And the next time we'll look at the third of the three critical components and then after that we'll take all the three components and integrate them into one poster to see how Kingdom Life is to be accessed and functioned in. But recall the poster would be overwhelming in its detail if I didn't break it down into components and have you look at the key components first and then the last poster will be simple in its presentation. So I hope that you join me next time. My time is up for today.