

The background of the entire page is an abstract, textured blue surface, possibly representing water or a sky. A solid, medium-blue vertical stripe runs down the left side of the page, starting from the top and extending to the bottom. The text is overlaid on this background.

GRANT SCHOFIELD

ENGAGING YOUR SPIRIT

Discovering the
Transformational
Power of the
Human Spirit

Engaging Your Spirit

Discover the Transformative Potential of the Human Spirit

Grant Schofield

This book is for sale at <http://leanpub.com/EYS>

This version was published on 2016-08-24



Leanpub

This is a [Leanpub](#) book. Leanpub empowers authors and publishers with the Lean Publishing process. [Lean Publishing](#) is the act of publishing an in-progress ebook using lightweight tools and many iterations to get reader feedback, pivot until you have the right book and build traction once you do.

© 2013 - 2016 Grant Schofield

Contents

1. The Neglected Human Spirit	1
The Human Trinity	4
Each According to Its Kind	7
2. Foundations for Development	10
Principles	10
Work	13
Consumers versus Producers	17

1. The Neglected Human Spirit

The challenge many of us as Christians face is that we have never really been taught who and what we really are - that we are essentially spiritual beings and that the spiritual part of us is at least as significant, real and vast as any other part of us.

One of the reasons for this is that there is so little understanding of this area in mainstream Christian culture. Churches tend to fall between two extremes in their approach to the human spirit. On the one extreme there are churches that simply believe that the human “spirit” is just another word for our mind, believing that anything “spiritual” is a quaint way of talking about our psychology. At the other extreme are churches that are extremely focused on the supernatural, but this focus is on the operation of the the Holy Spirit and not the spirit of the individual. In both cases, the human spirit remains neglected and there is very little thought given as to how to intentionally develop it.

I am not saying there is no teaching in this area as clearly the Bible is full of references to our spirit, some of which are indirect such as

Eph 1:18 - that the **eyes of your heart** may be enlightened Eph 3:15,16 - to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the **inner man**, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith

And some of which are direct such as

Heb 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit
Phil 1:25 - The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

In fact many of us might have heard preaching and teaching on this - for example on the famous passage in Gal 5:22,3 about the fruits of the spirit. The problem is that we have not been taught about the reality of our

spirit. These phrases above are simply not a concrete reality to many of us.

To illustrate. I was born and raised in Africa. I grew up thinking I knew about snow. I learned about it in school, I saw movies with snow in, I had seen pictures of mountains with snow on them and people skiing, I had read books about adventures in the snow. I was very comfortable with the *idea* of snow. However, there came a time when I first visited Europe that I experienced my first European winter. This was when I had my first actual experience of snow. I can tell you candidly that I was not prepared for that experience - the reality of snow was very different to anything that I had imagined! For example I had no idea it was so wet or so cold!

This is how it is regarding our spiritual nature, or our spirit. Although we may think we know about it and have this topic covered, the actual first hand experience of the reality of our spirit can be quite different to what we might expect. Although many of us accept that we have a spiritual nature, we have never really known how to experience it, recognise it and intentionally develop it. Although our spirit is often at work in our lives, we have used a range of words like 'hunch' or 'gut instinct', or 'intuition', or even 'subconscious' to explain it away. In church we have used words like "heart" as in Rom 10:9 "confess with

your mouth ... believe with your heart". Controversial as this may be, it is actually fairly common for many people to confuse the operation of our own spirit with that of the Holy Spirit.

The Human Trinity

At this point the whole question of definitions might crop up. I can imagine someone thinking "what do we actually mean by the word spirit anyway?" This is both a fascinating and important question. At the same time I am pretty certain that if I asked twenty different people what they understood by their "spirit" I would get twenty very different answers. I can also be pretty certain that in nineteen out of twenty cases those answers would come from people who had probably never experienced the reality of their spirit or if they had, had not recognised it as such.

For the sake of this book I am going to ask that we park the question of definitions for now. Rather, I would like to propose using a framework outlined in the Bible

1 Thess 5:23 - may your spirit
and soul and body be preserved
complete, without blame at the
coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"

In this verse Paul does three things. Firstly, he outlines that there are three vitally distinct parts of our human existence; secondly, he assigns an order to them, spirit first and body last; and finally, he states that all three of these parts of us will be preserved eternally, in other words, we are not just a body or a soul or a spirit - we are (and eternally will be) a combination of all three.

All that I am going to ask based on the above framework is that we agree two things: firstly, that there are three different, unique, and distinct parts to us; and secondly that no two parts are the same. Our spirit is a different kind of thing to our soul, and our soul is a different kind of thing to our body. To help our understanding we can use the simple model below:

Body: Our body is our hardware - the physical part of us including organs, blood, bones, skin, hair, joints, cells, nerves, bio-electrical systems, brain, etc. Basically, the part of us that functions by means of the physical senses.

Soul: Our soul is invisible, it is software. It is the part of us

that thinks and feels and interprets the data coming from the body. The software depends on the hardware to run. If the hardware malfunctions, the software doesn't work. For example, if you put me under anaesthetic, then everything from my soul goes away because my physical body is anaesthetised and I am unconscious.

Spirit: The invisible part of us that is distinct and separate from both hardware and software. This part does not depend on my body (hardware) to function. An example of this is when people have been under anaesthetic, and yet they can remember everything that happened. This cannot be the soul, because the sensory machinery is off-line. Another example is babies in the womb who are able to respond to language, even though their

brains have not been physically formed.

My intention in outlining this framework is to provide a Biblical tool that can help us to pay attention to and learn to recognise the different parts of us, and separate them out so as to learn more about how we are made and how to optimise that design..

Each According to Its Kind

At this point you might be tempted to start thinking thoughts such as “how do my spirit, soul and body interact with each other?” This is actually another really great question. However, I would ask that again, for now, we park this. These kind of questions are much better dealt with once we have made some definable progress in developing our spiritual nature. For practical purposes the only important thing is to hold our agreement that spirit, soul and body are three separate natures that should not be confused. It follows logically from this that each nature needs to be developed in a way that is specific to itself. Activities that might develop our body do not necessarily develop our soul, and likewise activities that develop our soul do not necessarily develop our spirit. Our soul

enjoys certain things that our body does not and vice versa.

To give some examples. Mathematics is very beneficial to my soul, it helps me to develop my mental strength and ability. When we are actively engaged in the practice of mathematics however, this is not very exciting or rewarding for our body. The practice typically involves sitting still in one place, in a set position so that our mind can function at full capacity without any interference from our body. Another example would be physical exercise. It is well known to many gym goers that our minds find repetitive physical exercise pretty boring and non-stimulating. In the first example, our mind is receiving stimulation, but not our body, whereas in the second example it is the other way around. This is quite easy for us to understand when it comes to body and soul, however, because both spirit and soul are invisible it is more difficult to grasp this. Suffice it to say that mathematics is equally uninteresting to the spirit as it is to the body, and likewise activities that our spirits find stimulating can be very uninteresting to our soul.

The point of these examples is to get across how important it is to recognise that there are three separate areas of development and we need to pay attention to the types of things we need to do to develop each of our three natures according to how they are designed.

To return to the examples above, if we try to develop our spirit only by the practice of mathematics, we are not going to see much progress. That would be the same as thinking that by regularly exercising our body we can develop our mathematical ability. It is obvious to us that if we want to develop our body, then we need to exercise the body - we can't get fit just thinking about it - and likewise, if we want to develop our mind, then we need to exercise our mind. What is less obvious is that if we want to develop our spirit, then we need to exercise our spirit. The bottom line here is that the spirit, soul and body all need to be developed according to their kind.

In our society we spend most of our time and effort developing our soul. That is a good thing in that we recognise that in order to become strong we need to exercise and do work. It is a bad thing in that it is unbalanced because we ignore a much bigger and richer area to develop which is our spirit. This is why we experience such frustration with life.

2. Foundations for Development

We have seen that the Bible says that all human beings are made of three distinct natures and that it logically follows that each nature needs to be developed in its own way. The question now is what do we do about it? In order to answer, we will first need to take a look at some of our own foundational beliefs to see if there are beliefs or models that get in the way of us developing our potential - and by the way, this applies to any kind of potential, not just our spiritual potential. Knowing that our models are OK will help greatly in ensuring our success in this journey of developing our potential.

Principles

The first foundational belief we need to look at is our belief about principles. What is a principle? Simply put it is a law that works every time for every person without exception. An example is gravity. Whether

you believe it or not, whether you know about it or not, it works. Principles are very concrete. If you walk off the edge of a cliff, you will experience the law of gravity regardless of any beliefs you might have about it. This is the same in a spiritual endeavour - there are principles that if you violate them, you will experience the consequences, they function just as certainly as gravity.

How does this apply to our Christian walk? For many of us the way God works seems to be totally mysterious (if we are being polite) or random (if we are being candid). One of the reason things can seem this way is that very few of us have been taught just how important principles are to God. In fact the longest passage in the Bible by far (Psalm 119) is one-hundred-and-seventy-six verses dedicated entirely to the power of principles (called “ways”, “statutes”, “precepts”, “decrees” or “laws”). God has designed every aspect of existence to run according to principles. He has established a system of principles to governs the natural world (science), the human world of relationships (family, business and society), and the spiritual world (spirituality, faith and religion). These principles are grounded in his very nature

Col 1:17 - He is before all things,
and in Him all things hold to-

gether; Heb 1:3 - He .. upholds
all things by the word of His
power)

In order to intentionally develop our spirit it is important that we know without a shadow of a doubt that God is not random. He is actually so consistent that in His Word he is described as changeless (Jas 1:17 “coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow”). That means that the laws that govern the development of our spirits are not random but extremely consistent and predictable - they will work for every single person every time. It is vital we acknowledge this. Fortunately, God is not only consistent, but he is also transparent. His ways are open to all - nothing is hidden. It does not matter if you are a Christian or not, anyone can take the principles that God has established and apply them. History is full of examples of individuals and governments that have taken Christian principles and applied them to achieve great success without ever becoming Christian.

At this point we are likely to hit some internal objections. We can all remember unpleasant things that have happened to us in life, or tragic and awful things we have witnessed. Either in our present or our past, we have either secretly or openly asked “where was

God?”. And without any answer we have formed limiting beliefs, beliefs not based on reality. What I am going to ask you to do is to consider the possibility that so much of the pain and suffering in our world could be avoided if we had a better understanding of the principles our Father put in place to help us, and that if we applied ourselves to discovering and applying those principles, our world could be a vastly better place.

In summary, God is a god of principles, and he has established principles to govern all areas of existence, including the spiritual. If we want to partner with God to develop our potential, we are going to need to learn to appreciate the importance of principles in His design, and learn how to work with Him to use these to our advantage. If somewhere along the line we have picked up some limiting or untrue beliefs in this area, now would be a good time to clear the air with Him and clear up any misunderstanding that might have broken your fellowship with Him in this area.

Work

The second area where we can experience limiting beliefs is the area of work. God has generously provided principles that anyone can learn to apply to live a

fulfilled life, why then are we not doing it? Apart from a lack of understanding and application of principles, the second reason for a lack of progress has to do with attitudes and beliefs about work. Principles require work to understand and work to apply.

We live in a society and a culture today where work has mainly negative connotations. We only need to look at how our culture defines the opposite of work to see this. Rest, vacation, relaxation, recreation. Work is the opposite of these things. It is something we are not meant to enjoy. Where people do enjoy their work, it is looked at as the exception and not the norm. This is why the dream of so many of us is to get to a place where we have sufficient money that we never have to work again. We can have a life of leisure, doing what we want, free from the daily grind.

This is not just the case in the world around us, but even in many of our churches. Let's take as an example a very common theological argument about grace that if you have been a Christian for any length of time you will have come across. On the one hand, there are churches who hold that God requires holiness, and holiness requires sacrifice and effort, hard work. Christianity is about doing your duty, doing what is right, and this is done out of good character. These types of churches often slip into the mistaken belief that we can somehow earn credit with

God through working hard. On the other hand are churches that teach that God has done all the work for us and all we need to do is receive it and enjoy it. It is all by grace. What I would like you to notice is that In both cases there is the presence of a limiting belief that work is fundamentally unpleasant - to use the biblical word "toil".

The truth is that work is actually designed as a wonderful thing - a gift. It was designed fundamentally to be both enjoyable, and fulfilling. Our Father designed us to build, develop, create and discover things and to get tremendous pleasure and satisfaction from doing so. So much so that when we stop working we inevitably become unhappy. The problem is that with the fall of Adam, work came under a curse. In Gen 3:17 God said to Adam "Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life". I would encourage you earnestly, that if you still experience work as "toil", that you talk to God earnestly about this promise of His that has been given directly to you to set you free from this curse. It is part of our Christian birthright.

Gal 3:13 "Christ redeemed us
from the curse of the Law, hav-
ing become a curse for us"

When God set Humankind on the earth He said to

them both - here is a blueprint (the garden), here are some principles, go out and transform the rest of the planet according to this this blueprint. That mission still stands today. In essence what He said was “Go and enjoy the challenge and work that I have given you because it will fulfil you and make you very happy, and I will get great pleasure from your happiness”. (Gen 1:28 - God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”) What He did not say is “Here is a garden in paradise, a chaise-longue, perfect weather, and an endless supply of tasty food - relax and enjoy”. We were fundamentally designed for challenge, designed to produce and to experience an overwhelming satisfaction and fulfilment in doing that. We are not designed for a life of ease. When human beings live a life of ease, we deteriorate and the consequence is a rottenness that sets into our souls and bodies. The easy life is contrary to our DNA and our design.

In summary, it is really important for us to turn away from any limiting beliefs we have had about work, to ask God’s forgiveness, and to embrace His original design of work and to know that work is a great thing. Only then can we really lean into the work that

is involved in developing our spiritual potential and enjoy the process as much as the rewards or outcome of that process. I am absolutely not saying that it is going to be easy, or always pleasant. What I am saying is that it will be challenging, exciting, and extremely satisfying. What will be really satisfying will be when we have developed our potential to the point where we can move beyond just working on ourselves, to doing the works of God in the world for the benefit of others. We can follow Jesus' example

John 5:17 - My Father is always working, and so am I
(NLT)

Consumers versus Producers

The third area where we can experience limiting beliefs is around consumerism. The world has undergone a lot of change over the last 50 years, and one of the key areas is the emergence of consumerism. Oddly enough, this trend comes as a direct response to the problem of work. Consumerism offers us an easy life where items that make life easier and that automate work are mass produced so all we need to do is acquire them. Somebody else does the producing, we just buy what we need when we need it. The limiting belief

here is that somebody else will do the producing, it is not our job.

The consumerism mindset is so pervasive that it has unfortunately leaked into mainstream Christian culture. In a lot of churches there is no expectation of us having to “produce” anything. The producing is done by experts, and we simply consume their output. I would ask how many times you have heard a teaching on how God designed each and every one of us to work, to be successful in that work, and to contribute more into the world than we take out? Instead there seems to be an expectation that there are religious professionals who are paid to produce religious “products” (do all the work), and all we need to do is go the “store” and collect the finished products to meet our required needs. When this doesn’t work as we expect we become unhappy “customers”, angry at God, at the church, and we lose faith.

Consumerism is just simply not how God works. It is not that what we are doing is not working, it cannot work because it violates God’s principles. God’s design is not for a small group of professionals to do the producing for a much larger group of consumers. Instead he has designed each and every one of us to be a producer and called out a small group to step back and take up a support role coaching and helping the rest to be successful. Being called into fulltime

ministry truly is a step down and a sacrifice rather than an elevated position. We are all designed to take raw materials, learn some principles, and apply these to our raw materials to produce the kind of wonderful life-giving things that He made each of us to uniquely produce. That is living life to the full.

The question is, how do we eliminate any limiting beliefs in this area? Being a consumer is addictive. It requires a significant change of mindset to start thinking about the raw materials that we have and what we can produce out of them to contribute to the greater good. It requires that we stop looking for the ease of somebody else creating finished products for us. Instead, it is about developing an attitude that seeks out raw materials and looks to understand principles in order to build and develop unique products that contribute to the greater good. It is about asking God to open our eyes to the wealth of raw materials that He has given each of us to transform into the kind of products that the world around us needs. If we can learn to stop looking to others for a finished product and start working on the raw materials and principles that God has provided us then the rewards can be staggering. This is how single individuals like you and me can have an impact on the world around us that is vastly disproportionate to our abilities.

To summarise I am going to paint a picture of how

all of these factors play out in practice. I am going to paint a picture of two Christians, both living in the same city, going to the same church, and in similar stages of life. Both are equally sincere in their faith, and both are giving God everything they have. Christian number one is very happy, things just seem to work for them, they live a full life, their business prospers, their family, and their impact on the world around them is significant. Christian number two is having an awful time, in fact life seems to be going worse for them than the non-Christians around them; things just don't seem to work out for them, they are always struggling in their business and family, and barely seem to be getting by; they feel depressed, frustrated and have resigned themselves to doing their best while they wait for God to rescue them. In the first case, this person has recognised the raw materials around them, either intentionally or accidentally applied the principles of God to them, and produced an abundance. In the second case, this person has not seen the raw materials right in front of their eyes, not paid attention to principles, and has constantly looked to others to produce for them. The question I would like to ask is which one if these two people would we like to be?