

**CONSCIENCE, MORALITY AND THE  
SPIRITUAL LIFE  
CMS-017 AND 018:  
MORALITY, REGENERATION AND  
THINKING**

Today we begin our quest to understand the 5 Moral Foundations and to be able to identify them in our thinking process, and to ultimately recognize the contradiction of "Moral Living" and the Spiritual Life. We will begin with a study of the development of the 5 Moral Foundations - how they came to be identified and the cultural context in which their study has been undertaken.

Then, we will look at a short review of Regeneration - the source of our Spiritual Life.

Finally, we will introduce the Thinking Process, which we will develop in greater detail next week.

First, Jonathan Haidt's brief description (edited) of the 5 Moral Foundations:

1) Harm/care, related to our ability to feel (and dislike) the pain of others. This foundation underlies virtues of kindness, gentleness, and nurturance.

2) Fairness/reciprocity, related to reciprocal altruism. This foundation generates ideas of justice, rights, and autonomy.

3) Ingroup/loyalty, related to virtues of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the group. It is active anytime people feel that it's "one for all, and all for one."

4) Authority/respect. This foundation underlies virtues of leadership and followership, including deference to legitimate authority and respect for traditions.

5) Purity/sanctity, shaped by the psychology of disgust and contamination. This foundation underlies religious notions of striving to live in an elevated, less carnal, more noble way. It underlies the widespread idea that the body is a temple which can be desecrated by immoral activities and contaminants (an idea not unique to religious traditions).

## FROM HAIDT - WHEN MORALITY OPPOSES JUSTICE:

Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) founded the modern field of moral psychology.

He did so by proposing a grand theory that unified moral psychology as the study of the progressive development of the individual's understanding of justice.

Building on the work of Piaget, Kohlberg proposed that moral development in all cultures is driven forward by the process of role-taking: as children get more practice at taking each others' perspectives, they learn to transcend their own position and appreciate when and why an action, practice, or custom is fair or unfair.

Children may be blinded by their need for approval (Kohlberg's stage 3) or by the overbearing pronouncements of authority figures (stage 4), but if given enough practice and exposure to democratic institutions they will, in adolescence, reach the post-conventional level of moral reasoning (stage 5), at which actions and cultural practices can be critiqued based on the degree to which they instantiate justice.

Kohlberg's theory was famously criticized by Carol Gilligan (1982), who proposed an alternative foundation for ethics: care.

Gilligan thought that women, more than men, based their moral judgments and actions on concerns about their obligations to care for, protect, and nurture those to whom they are connected, particularly those who are vulnerable (Gilligan and Wiggins, 1987).

Kohlberg and most other moral psychologists ultimately conceded that justice and care were two separate foundations of morality.

Despite disagreements about which foundation was more important, or whether one could be derived from the other, nearly everyone in moral psychology was united behind a central axiom: morality is about protecting individuals.

Justice and care both mattered only insofar as they protected individuals.

Practices that do not protect or help individuals were seen as mere social conventions at best, and as moral affronts at worst.



Turiel, a student of Kohlberg, codified this individual-centered view of morality when he defined the moral domain as: prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other. Moral prescriptions are not relative to the social context, nor are they defined by it. Correspondingly, children's moral judgments are not derived directly from social institutional systems but from features inherent to social relationships—including experiences involving harm to persons, violations of rights, and conflicts of competing claims. (Turiel, 1983, p. 3)

When the moral domain is limited by definition to two foundations (harm/ welfare/care, and justice/rights/fairness), then social justice is clearly the extension of morality out to the societal level.

The programs and laws that social justice activists endorse aim to maximize the welfare and rights of individuals, particularly those whom the activists believe do not receive equal treatment or full justice in their society.

If social justice is just morality writ large, it follows that opposition to these programs must be based on concerns other than moral concerns.

Social justice research is therefore in part the search for the non-moral motivations—such as selfishness, existential fear, or blind prejudice—of those who oppose social justice, primarily political conservatives.

For example, one of the leading approaches to the study of political attitudes states that political conservatism is a form of motivated social cognition: people embrace conservatism in part "because it serves to reduce fear, anxiety, and uncertainty; to avoid change, disruption, and ambiguity, and to explain, order, and justify inequality among groups and individuals" (Jost et al., 2003, p. 340).

This view of conservatives is so widespread among justice researchers that it sometimes leads to open expressions of self-righteousness and contempt.

At a recent conference on justice research, for example, a well-known researcher began her talk by stating categorically that affirmative action was the morally and practically correct policy.

She then asked why many people oppose it.

She dismissed the reasons conservatives sometimes give (mere theta waves) and then enumerated the self-serving mechanisms that gave rise to their delusions.

For this speaker, affirmative action embodies justice and care, end of story.

In her moral worldview, that's all there is.

It is interesting to note that the leading theories in moral psychology were shaped by the social and moral tumult of the 1960s and 1970s, and that most of the leading figures were embedded in two of the most politically liberal communities in the United States: Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Berkeley, California. Those who have studied morality from a more anthropological or historical perspective, however, have generally found a much broader morality which cannot be supported by only two foundations.

Take, for example, the Old Testament, the Koran, Confucius, or almost any ethnography of a non-Western society. Issues of loyalty to the group, respect for one's elders, self-restraint, and the regulation of bodily processes (e.g., rules about food, sex, and menstruation) are highly elaborated in most human societies.

Are these concerns just manifestations of an immature "conventional" morality (Kohlberg's stages 3 and 4)?

Are they mere social conventions (a la Turiel), to be distinguished from the "real" individual-centered morality of harm/welfare/care and justice/rights/ fairness?

Richard Shweder (1990) has long argued that the individual-centered moralities of Kohlberg and Turiel reflect just one of three widespread moral "ethics," each based on a different ontological (of or relating to essence or the nature of being) presupposition.

In the "ethic of autonomy" the moral world is assumed to be made up exclusively of individual human beings, and the purpose of moral regulation is to "protect the zone of discretionary choice of 'individuals' and to promote the exercise of individual will in the pursuit of personal preferences" (Shweder et al., 1997, p.138).

Rights, justice, fairness, and freedom are moral goods because they help to maximize the autonomy of individuals, and to protect individuals from harms perpetrated by authorities and by other individuals.



The "ethic of community," in contrast, has a different ontological foundation.

It sees the world not as a collection of individuals but as a collection of institutions, families, tribes, guilds or other groups.

The purpose of moral regulation is to "protect the moral integrity of the various stations or roles that constitute a 'society' or a 'community,' where a 'society' or 'community' is conceived of as a corporate entity with an identity, standing, history, and reputation of its own" (Shweder et al., 1997, p.138)

Key virtues in this ethic are duty, respect, loyalty, and interdependence.

Finally, the "ethic of divinity" is based on the ontological presupposition that God or gods exist, and that the moral world is composed of souls housed in bodies. (See Bloom, 2004, for evidence that this presupposition is the natural, default assumption of our species.)

Each soul is a bit of God, or at least a gift from God, and so the purpose of moral regulation is to "protect the soul, the spirit, the spiritual aspects of the human agent and 'nature' from degradation" (Shweder et al., 1997, p. 138).

If the body is a temple housing divinity within, then people should not be free to use their bodies in any way they please; rather, moral regulations should help people to control themselves and avoid sin and spiritual pollution in matters related to sexuality, food, and religious law more generally.

From Shweder's perspective it is clear that social justice is the ethic of autonomy writ large, but the two other ethics—community and divinity—are at work in most cultures and in many Western subcultures. Political conservatism is often defined by its strong valuation of institutions and its concern that ideologies of “liberation” often destroy the very structures that make society and well-being possible (Muller, 1997).

Most conservatives (with the exception of some economic conservatives) therefore embrace the ethic of community and are morally opposed to the extreme individual freedom promoted by a pure ethic of autonomy—and by most social justice activists. Conservative groups that are religious (such as the American "religious right") share this embrace of institutions and traditions embodied in the ethic of community, and then add in a passionate concern for the ethic of divinity; they see "secular humanism" as an organized effort to encourage people to live in an ungodly way, each person choosing her own goals and values based on what feels good or right to her alone.

So when the electorate fails to embrace liberal policies and candidates, when a nation fails to rally around social justice concerns, it is at least plausible that there are moral motivations at work—motivations that liberals may not recognize as moral at all.

If conservative morality goes far beyond justice, then it may often happen that moral emotions and intuitions that are not related to justice can oppose moral emotions and intuitions that are.

Cultures vary in the degree to which they construct, value, and teach virtues based on the five intuitive foundations.

The five foundations are:

1. Harm/Care
2. Fairness/Reciprocity
3. Ingroup/Loyalty
4. Authority/Respect
5. Purity

(1) Harm/care. The long history of mammalian evolution has shaped maternal brains to be sensitive to signs of suffering in one's own offspring. In many primate species, particularly humans, this sensitivity has extended beyond the mother-child relationship so that all normally developed individuals dislike seeing suffering in others, and have the potential to feel the emotion of compassion in response. (Compassion is not inevitable; it can be turned off by many forces, including the other four systems described below.)



Because people have a sensitivity to cruelty and harm (analogous to the negative sensations caused by taste buds for bitterness), they feel approval toward those who prevent or relieve harm, and this approval is culturally codified in virtues such as kindness and compassion, and also in corresponding vices such as cruelty and aggression.

Cultures vary in how much they value and emphasize these virtues and vices relative to others described below.

(2) Fairness/reciprocity. The long history of alliance formation and cooperation among unrelated individuals in many primate species has led to the evolution of a suite of emotions that motivate reciprocal altruism, including anger, guilt, and gratitude (Trivers, 1971). Because people feel these emotions when they observe or engage in reciprocal interactions, all cultures have developed virtues related to fairness and justice.

These virtues can, of course, be overridden by moral concerns from the other four systems, and by the many self-serving biases that lead to errors of social perception.

In some but not all cultures, participation in reciprocal interactions and role-taking (plus many other historical and economic factors) have led to the elaboration and valuation of individual rights and equality (in much the way that Kohlberg said).

Most traditional cultures, however, do not have highly developed notions of individual rights, nor do most cultures appear to value or seek to create equality among all adult members, or even among all adult male members.

(See Boehm, 1999, on how rare egalitarian societies are, and on how hard people in such societies must work to suppress their natural proclivities toward hierarchy.)

Fairness is an excellent candidate for a universal (though variably applied) value, but equality of outcome or status is not.

### (3) Ingroup/loyalty.

The long history of living in kin-based groups of a few dozen individuals (for humans as well as other primate species) has led to special social-cognitive abilities backed up by strong social emotions related to recognizing, trusting, and cooperating with members of one's co-residing ingroup while being wary and distrustful of members of other groups.

Because people value their ingroups, they also value those who sacrifice for the ingroup, and they despise those who betray or fail to come to the aid of the ingroup, particularly in times of conflict.

Most cultures therefore have constructed virtues such as loyalty, patriotism, and heroism (usually a masculine virtue expressed in defense of the group).

From this point of view, it is hard to see why diversity should be celebrated and increased, while rituals that strengthen group solidarity (such as a pledge of allegiance to the national flag) should be challenged in court.

According to ingroup-based moralities, dissent is not patriotic (as some American bumper-stickers suggest); rather, criticizing one's ingroup while it is engaged in an armed conflict with another group is betrayal or even treason.

#### (4) Authority/respect.

The long history of living in hierarchically-structured ingroups, where dominant males and females get certain perquisites but are also expected to provide certain protections or services, has shaped human (and chimpanzee, and to a lesser extent bonobo) brains to help them flexibly navigate in hierarchical communities.



Dominance in other primate species relies heavily on physical force and fear, but in human communities the picture is more nuanced, relying largely on prestige and voluntary deference (Henrich and Gil-White, 2001). People often feel respect, awe, and admiration toward legitimate authorities, and many cultures have constructed virtues related to good leadership, which is often thought to involve magnanimity, fatherliness, and wisdom.

Bad leaders are despotic, exploitative, or inept. Conversely, many societies value virtues related to subordination: respect, duty, and obedience. From this point of view, bumper stickers that urge people to "question authority" and protests that involve civil disobedience are not heroic, they are antisocial.

(5) Purity/sanctity. Against the long background of primate evolution, the human transition to a heavily meat-based diet occurred quite recently (1–3 million years ago; see Leakey, 1994).

The move to meat, which may have included scavenging carcasses, coincided with the rapid growth of the human frontal cortex, and these two changes (meat eating and cortical growth) appear to have given humans—and only humans—the emotion of disgust (see Rozin et al., 2000).

Disgust appears to function as a guardian of the body in all cultures, responding to elicitors that are biologically or culturally linked to disease transmission (feces, vomit, rotting corpses, and animals whose habits associate them with such vectors). However, in most human societies disgust has become a social emotion as well, attached at a minimum to those whose appearance (deformity, obesity, or diseased state), or occupation (the lowest castes in caste-based societies are usually involved in disposing of excrement or corpses) makes people feel queasy.

In many cultures, disgust goes beyond such contaminant-related issues and supports a set of virtues and vices linked to bodily activities in general, and religious activities in particular.

Those who seem ruled by carnal passions (lust, gluttony, greed, and anger) are seen as debased, impure, and less than human, while those who live so that the soul is in charge of the body (chaste, spiritually minded, pious) are seen as elevated and sanctified (Haidt, 2006; Rozin et al., 1999)

From this point of view, a philosophy that says "if it feels good, do it" is the philosophy of the devil.

We will look at these Moral Foundations in greater detail later, but now we need to see how these Moral Foundations relate to what we know about the Human Happiness Motivators and the Appraisal Process. We will begin with a review of the Human Thinking Process; but first I want to reintroduce some of the doctrine of Regeneration to establish that we are "different" from Unbelieving Humans and, therefore, are not "locked" into Morality, as well as establish the underpinnings of God's alternative to Morality and how we can live "above" Morality, which entails learning the difference.

- In our study of Phase I of the Christian Life, Salvation, we saw that there are 3 Stages to the Human side of the Regeneration Process:
  - Regeneration has 3 Human aspects:
    - Recognition
    - Repentance
    - Reliance

# What are these 3 aspects:

- Recognition (in Salvation)
  - Recognizing the Convincing of the Holy Spirit
- Repentance
  - Changing the mind
- Reliance
  - Total trust



- Recognition (noun)
  - a learning process that relates a perception of something new to knowledge already possessed.
  - Theological definition: The point at which the unbeliever is “convinced” by the Holy Spirit that he is unable to meet God’s Standard, and requires Christ, who is able, as his Substitute.
- And when He [the Comforter] is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:8)*

- Recognition (3 Potential Arenas)
  - 1. An awareness of an absence of a relationship with God.
  - 2. Conviction of sins: an awareness of particular wrongs done against God and/or others.
  - 3. Conviction of God's Perfection: a sense of one's complete inability to meet the standard of God's Righteousness and one's consequent need of the new birth (John 3:3).

- Repentance:
- Metanoeo -  
    Meta = change; and Noeo = thinking.
- To change your thinking, or as we would say - change your mind.

- Repentance:
- In the NT there are 150 declarations that the lost are to depend ONLY on believing or Faith.
- Yet millions of Legalistic Christians(?), attempt to coerce those whom God calls into their box, by requiring some religious activity to stamp the process of salvation “legitimate” in their eyes.
- Their legalistic religionism negates the Grace of God, and deny untold numbers their salvation.

- Repentance:
- There are 150 salvation statements with “faith” or “believe”, but without “repentance”.
- When the true meaning of repentance is known, metanoeo - change your thinking, it is obvious that repentance is a part of the believing process, and a direct result of the Recognition process.
- When one recognizes that nothing BUT Christ will do, we are forced to "change our mind."

- Reliance: n.
- 1. The act of relying or the state of being reliant.
- 2. The faith, confidence, or trust felt by one who relies; dependence.
- Rely: tr.v.,
- 1. To be dependent for support, help, or supply: relies on her parents for tuition.
- 2. To place or have faith or confidence: relied on them to tell him the truth.
- [from Latin religāre, to bind fast : re-, re- + ligāre, to bind.]

- Reliance:
- *"Why call ye me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46);*
- *"Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).*
- Many a Faith PLUS Works Legalist will quote this verse to convince the unbeliever that he needs to "repent of their sins", but as usual, the context destroys their false premise...

*In the words of our Lord Himself, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.'*

● *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity' [Matt. 7:21-23].*

Note that "wonderful works" from the human perspective are called "iniquity" by the Lord!

● *No works of any kind are allowed. Ephesians 2:8-9, For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that [salvation] not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*



*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. Romans 10:1-3*

- Some are saved by '*coming to a knowledge of the truth about God's Righteousness*', so that if we do not have that knowledge, we cannot be saved.
- Note well, Paul does not pray that they would give up their personal sins to be saved, as is commonly presented today!

- *'Blessed are the poor in spirit'* [Matt. 5:3]. But, you see, people who believe that they can put themselves right in the sight of God by their works are NOT poor in spirit.
- They are proud of spirit, as the Apostle was before his conversion, as our Lord depicted the Pharisees.
- *'What you need,'* they hear, just as those today who are told they must repent of their sins, is not poverty of spirit but self-confidence, a belief in yourself, a belief that you can make yourself good enough for God to save you.
- Set out to be saved by “Faith Plus Anything”, and this is the opposite of being 'poor in spirit'.

- And then, of course, our Lord put it like this in a terrible phrase in Luke 16:15: *'Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knows your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.'*

- If you have any doubt that the failure to be saved comes from a lack of cleaning up your life, look at this great mound of righteousness that the Pharisees had built up:

*'That is what I have done. Look at my deeds, look at my good life, look what I have sacrificed, look AT MY righteousness.'*

- And our Lord's comment upon it is that it is nothing but *'abomination in the sight of God'*.
- *'All our righteousnesses,'* says Isaiah, *'are as filthy rags'* [Isaiah. 64:6].
- Our best deeds are unworthy.
- Anyone who relies on his goodness and his righteousness has completely misunderstood the whole of the biblical teaching.
- They have “sinned” - missed the objective, “because they believe not in me”

- *'They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.'*
- If they had known what God really demands they would never have been foolish enough to go about to try to establish their own righteousness.
- And then, because they thought they were satisfying God, they did not listen to the demands of God's righteousness.
- The last people to believe the gospel, and to be saved, are always those who think that they can save themselves.

- Our Lord looked at the Pharisees, who were good, moral, godly, religious people, and said this terrible thing,
- *'The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you'* [Matt. 21:31].
- It is true now as it has always been true.
- There is no greater sin than the sin of the Pharisee, the sin of self-righteousness.
- It is, of everything, the thing that most blinds a man to the truth of the gospel.

- The majority of Christians witness as if the gospel puts a premium on sin, but it does not.
- What the gospel does is to show the horrible, terrible danger of self-reliance, self-justification, self-righteousness.
- *'The publicans and the harlots'* - the complete outsiders, the most "sinful" in society- actually did go into the kingdom before the others.
- Why?
- Because they were more ready to admit their need; they were more ready to acknowledge their own utter helplessness and hopelessness.

- Regeneration
- When you see that there is no other way, and you gladly and willingly yield yourself to the truth, Relying on His Provision.
- That is Reliance, coming from the Recognition of your own insufficiency, and Repentance, the change of mind regarding your life and eternal life.
- When you Rely, God Regenerates!
- 1 Cor. 15:45—“The first man Adam became a living soul. The last man Adam became a life-giving spirit.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”



- "It is the greatest wonder in the entire universe that human beings could be begotten of God" (Witness Lee) —that is, regenerated with the divine life of God.
- Yet over the centuries of Christian history the precious, vital significance of regeneration has been neglected and gradually lost.
- Instead, some have come to view regeneration as simply a "new beginning," a fresh start in one's Christian life.
- Others regard regeneration as the point in time when a decision is made to leave one's old manner of living, turn over a new leaf, and begin to follow the moral, Christian path.

- Even *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language—Third Edition* defines regenerate as follows: “To reform spiritually or morally; to undergo spiritual conversion or rebirth; reform.”
- It defines regeneration as “spiritual or moral revival or rebirth.” Sadly, these definitions are shallow at best, not only failing to convey this precious truth, but also helping to obscure it. (regenerated.net)

- Regeneration (by Witness Lee)
- “Regeneration is a rebirth which brings in a new life. It is absolutely a matter of life, not a matter of doing.
- Regeneration is simply to have life other than the life we already have.
- We have already received the human life from our parents; now we need to receive the divine life from God.
- Hence, regeneration means to have the divine life of God in addition to the human life which we already possess.
- Therefore, regeneration requires another birth in order to possess another life...

- Regeneration (by Witness Lee)
- “To be regenerated, to be born again, does not mean to adjust or correct ourselves.
- It means to have the life of God, just as to be born of our parents means to have the life of our parents.
- To be regenerated is to be born of God (John 1:13), and to be born of God is to have the life of God, that is, the eternal life (3:15-16).”

- Regeneration
- The only explicit mention of the new birth is found in Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus (3:121).
- In reply to Nicodemus' questions, Jesus told him, I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again (v. 3).
- Nicodemus' reply, How can a man be born when he is old? Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mothers womb to be born! (v. 4), indicates that he understood Jesus comment on a human, physical level.
- Nicodemus' misunderstanding gave Jesus opportunity to clarify what He meant.
- He was speaking of the need for a new spiritual birth rather than a second physical birth (vv. 68).

- The misunderstanding and its resulting clarification are reflected in a wordplay in verse 3 (repeated in v. 7).
- The Greek word translated “again”, may mean either “again” or from “above”.
- Although Nicodemus understood it to mean again, leading him to conclude that Jesus was speaking of a second physical birth, Jesus reply in verses 68 shows that He referred to the need for a spiritual birth, a birth from above.
- This new birth was not to be the result of any human action (cf. v. 6), but is the work of the Holy Spirit (v. 8).

- Supernatural insemination by the Spirit of God is required to bring about this new spiritual birth within an individual.
- It did not consist in merely greater insight or understanding but in a complete new creation of the individual (cf. 2 Cor.
- It is of the utmost importance that we have a clear understanding of this vital doctrine.
- By regeneration we are admitted into the kingdom of God.
- There is no other way of becoming a Christian but by being born from above.

- This, then, is the reason I have reviewed Regeneration -- it is the door of entrance into Christian discipleship.
- He who does not enter here, does not enter at all.
- Regeneration is the impartation of a new and divine life; a new creation; the production of a new being.
- It is not that the "Morality" of the Inherited Human Nature From Adam is altered, reformed, or even reinvigorated, but a new birth from above.
- This is the teaching of such passages as John 3:37;5:21;Eph.2:1, 10; 2Cor.5:17.



- As an organic member of God's family, a believer's regeneration is as permanent, as eternal as God's own life.
- God's life is both eternal and indissoluble.
- Therefore, *"having been regenerated, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible"* (1 Peter 1:23), we enjoy a relationship with God which is equally eternal and indissoluble.
- In the human realm, no matter how naughty or unwilling a child may be, he is still his parents' child.
- No decision either by the parents or the child could ever dissolve the relationship which they share, for a relationship in life supersedes any based on conduct or will.

- If this is true of the human life, how much more secure is the birth relationship between the eternal God and His beloved children.
- This truth cannot be overemphasized.
- If we understand regeneration to be merely a spiritual conversion or a moral revival, the security of our salvation as well as the enjoyment of our Christian life will fluctuate and be easily shaken.
- Instead, thankfully, our regeneration is based on and secured by God's eternal life within us.

●“Unless...[we] see the meaning of this birth relationship with God, progress in the Christian life will be slow and uncertain. Many persons seem to think that they remain Christians while they are not consciously disobeying God’s commands, but should they do something that they consider wrong, they think that they have fallen from grace and have lost Eternal Life. Could Christians but remember that the life they receive at regeneration is Uncreated Life—God’s Life that can never change, and that He calls them His own children, they would cease to permit their fluctuating emotions to determine their standing before God.” - Mary McDonough

- A new governing power comes into the regenerate mans life by which he is enabled to become holy in experience:
- *Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17).*
- There is no substitute for the new birth: *Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (Gal. 6:15).*

- The absolute necessity is clearly stated by our Lord: whatever is born of the flesh, must be born again of the Spirit (John 3:37).
- By nature man is born dead in sin (Eph. 2:1); the new birth imparts to him new life - the life of God, so that henceforth he is as those that are alive from the dead; he has passed out of death into life (John 5:24).

- In regeneration we are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).
- We have put on the new man, which after God is created in holiness and righteousness (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).
- Christ now lives in the believer (Gal. 2:20).
- Gods seed (“genes”) now abides in him (1 John 3:9).
- So that henceforth the believer is possessed of a new nature (Gal. 5:17).

- It is altogether and absolutely the work of God.
- Practically speaking, we have no more to do with our second birth, than we had to do with our first birth.
- The Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent in our regeneration.
- For this reason it is called the renewing of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5).
- We are born of the Spirit (John 3:5).
- We receive the Divine Nature (God's Genetics!!!!)
- *gennaō (with anōhen, Jn. 3:3, 7), meaning 'to beget' or 'give birth to', is used in Jn. 1:13; 3:3–8; 1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18.*

- The receiving of the divine nature means that the individual has truly been born of God.
- God has become his legitimate genetic Father and he is the Father's legitimate genetic son.
- This is a change so radical and so complete that there is thus achieved a passing from one order of being into another.
- Eventually in this great change the Adamic nature infusing every cell of the fleshly body will be dismissed and the identity as a separate entity will represent nothing less than the stupendous fact of being a son of God and a rightful member in the family and household of God.



- John's writings on the mysteries of the eternal divine life stress very much the divine birth (3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18; John 1:12-13), which is our regeneration (John 3:3, 5).
- It is the greatest wonder in the entire universe that human beings could be begotten of God and sinners could be made children of God!
- Through such an amazing divine birth we have received the divine life, which is the eternal life (1:2), as the divine seed sown into our being (3:9).

- The New Creature will have become precisely what his new position in glory requires him to be.
- The significance which is achieved by a birth from above—an insemination by the Holy Spirit— actually now experienced by all who are saved, is too often and for want of due consideration almost wholly misapprehended.
- The typical concept that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is an indefinite influence for good in the individual's present life is far below the concept set forth in the New Testament.

- Instead it teaches that Believers are a new and eternal order of being created with an indestructible family relationship to the Creator of all things.
- The fact of the new birth, whether comprehended or not, is the basic and distinguishing feature of the Christian.
- The life of God which is eternal, and which therefore Christ is, has been imparted as definitely as the breath of natural life was breathed by God into Adam at the first creation.

- At least eighty-five New Testament passages aver that a Christian is a changed person by virtue of the fact that he has received the very life of God.
- Through infinite love, the Son of God was given by the Father that sinful men should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Christ said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) and “I am come that they might have life” (John 10:10).
- So, also, “the gift of God is eternal life” (Rom. 6:23).
- That imparted life is said to be “Christ in you, the expectation of glory” (Col. 1:27).

- Regeneration is not a change of the old Adamic life, but the introduction of a new; it is the implantation of the life of the Last Adam.
- And this is by the operation of the Holy Spirit, founded upon the accomplished redemption of Christ, and in full keeping with the sovereign will or counsel of the Father.
- The moment a sinner receives the Savior by faith, he becomes the possessor of a new life, a totally new creation — and the source of that life is the Lord Jesus; he is born of God, and His child for all eternity.

- That this idea is unsound can be proved by various quotations from the New Testament.
- For example, *“The carnal mind is enmity against God.”*
- How can that which is thus spoken of ever undergo any improvement?
- The apostle goes on to say, *“It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”*
- If it cannot be subject to the law of God, how can it be improved, how can it undergo any change?
- Again, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”*
- Do what you will with flesh, and it is flesh still.

- Regeneration is what makes Christianity what it is; and, moreover, distinguishes it from every system of human religion under the sun, whether it be Romanism, or Protestantism, or any other ism whatsoever.
- Human religion gives the creature a place, more or less; it keeps the bondwoman and her son in the house; it gives man something to glory in.
- On the contrary, Christianity excludes the creature from all interference in the work of salvation- -casts out the bondwoman and her son, and gives- *all* the glory to Him in Whom alone it is due.
- — C.H. Mackintosh

Since we are "*born from above*", are a "*new creature*" (2 Corinthians 5:17: "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*"), how is this to function in our lives?

The key to this is found in this scripture:

*"but change your outward expression to one that comes from within and is representative of your inner being, by the renewing of your mind, resulting in your putting to the test what is the will of God, the good and well-pleasing and complete will, and having found that it meets specifications, place your approval upon it.*

*Rom 12:2*

And the key to this scripture is to understand the "Thinking Process":



# And now, "Thinking"









