

TARGETS

Where the Body of Christ is Under
Attack and How To Fight back



Introduction to Targets: SPIRITUALITY ~ *How the church is being assaulted with unbelief*

- What is “Christian Spirituality?”

Christian Spirituality is the manner of life a Jesus follower lives as they embrace both the fundamental tenants of Christian truth (Word of God) while intentionally living in God’s presence, grace and love (Spirit of God) as they live their daily lives in today’s world.
It is transformational.
It is theology in action.

- **Spirituality** used to have a fairly narrow meaning. This was way back when “religion” wasn’t a negative, but a positive thing. Traditionally, spirituality referred to the religious process of re-formation which aims to recover our original connection with God through His Spirit. The fruit was that we become more like Christ in the way we live our lives today.
- **Over the past 40 years, spirituality has evolved...** to describe a much broader understanding. In modern times the term spirituality was incorporated by other religious traditions and broadened to refer to a wider range of experience. Modern usages tend to refer to an exclusively subjective experience of something that lies within, not without, often completely separate from an organized church.
- **This shift is not arbitrary...** but an organized strategy of the enemy to slowly dilute the depth of our commitment to who and what we believe!

- What does it mean to “believe in” something or someone?

- **R.C. Sproul** talks about three aspects of biblical faith the Protestant Reformers felt were essential in understanding *saving faith*:
 - The first is the Latin term **notitia**: “believing in the data” or the information. It’s an intellectual awareness. You can’t have faith in nothing; there has to be content to the faith.
 - It matters profoundly what you believe. What if I believed that the devil was God? That wouldn’t save me. I must believe the right information.
 - The second aspect of faith is what they call **assensus**, or intellectual assent. I must be persuaded of the truthfulness of the content.
 - According to James, even if I am aware of the work of Jesus—convinced intellectually that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died on the cross for my sins, and that he rose from the dead—I would at that point qualify to be a demon. The demons recognize Jesus, and the devil himself knows the truth of Christ, but he doesn’t have saving faith.

KING OF THE WORLD

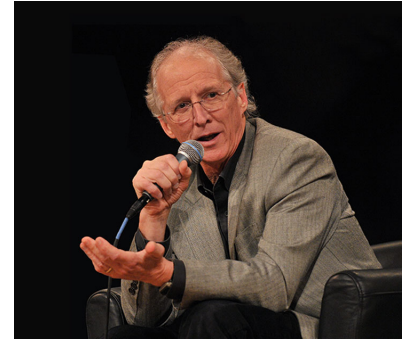
Natalie Grant

Just a whisper of your voice
can tame the seas
So who am I to try to take the
lead
Still I run ahead and think I'm
strong enough
When you're the one who
made me from the dust

When did I forget that you've
always been the king of the
world?
I try to take life back right out
of the hands of the king of the
world
How could I make you so
small
When you're the one who
holds it all
When did I forget that you've
always been the king of the
world

- The final term is **fiducia**, referring to a fiduciary commitment by which I put my life in the lap of Jesus. I trust him and him alone for my salvation.
 - That is the crucial element, and it includes the intellectual and the mental. But it goes beyond it to the heart and to the will so that the whole person is caught up in this experience we call faith.

- **“Believing in Jesus is not just** embracing the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, but *delighting* in that fact, *embracing* that fact, and making Christ the *treasure* and the Lord of your life by surrendering to him. In other words, “belief” is seeing him for who he really is, seeing him as infinitely valuable as the Son of God. It’s not just acknowledging the fact that he is the Son but also seeing him as infinitely precious and valuable.” ~ John Piper



Pastor, John Piper

- How does the enemy assault our belief in Jesus?

- **There’s nothing new under the sun!**

- **The “talking snake” in Genesis 3...**¹ The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”² “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied.³ “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”⁴ “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman.⁵ “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”⁶ The woman was convinced. (Gen. 3:1–6 NLT-SE)
- **The first temptation of Christ...**¹ Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,² where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry.³ Then the devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God... (Luke. 4:1–3 NLT-SE)

- **Temptation in the Bible**

- **Our thoughts...** I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (2 Cor. 11:3 ESV)
- **In our weakness...**¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil.² For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.³ During that time the devil came and said to him... (Matt. 4:1–3 NLT-SE)
- **In our marriages...** (Husbands and wives) Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won’t be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Cor. 7:5 NLT-SE)
- **In our faith...**⁴ Even while we were with you, we warned you that troubles would soon come—and they did, as you well know.⁵ That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent Timothy to find out whether your faith was still strong. I was afraid that the tempter had gotten the best of you and that our work had been useless. (1 Th. 3:4–5 NLT-SE)
- **Regarding our integrity...** Then Peter said, “Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. (Acts. 5:3 NLT-SE)

- **In our faithfulness...** The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. (John. 13:2 NIV)

- **“This is how we fight our battles...”**

- **FOCUS** ~ Keeping our eyes fixed on the one who has our heart

¹² I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. ¹³ No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. (Phil. 3:12–14 NLT-SE)

¹ As for us, we have all of these great witnesses who encircle us like clouds. So we must let go of every wound that has pierced us and the sin we so easily fall into. Then we will be able to run life's marathon raced with passion and determination, for the path has been already marked out before us. ² We look away from the natural realm and **we fasten our gaze onto Jesus**, who birthed faith within us and who leads us forward into faith's perfection. (Hebrews 12:1-2 TPT)



A facial reconstruction of what Jesus may have looked like created by forensic anthropologist Richard Neave.

- The four areas of personal and corporate devotion that Evangel embraces are:

- **Worship...** Setting our affections on the man, Christ Jesus.
- **Prayer...** Intentionally communicating with Jesus.
- **Giving...** “This is how much God loved the world: He gave...” (John. 3:16 MESSAGE)
- **Growing...** Becoming more and more like Jesus in word and deed.

- **INTENTIONALITY** ~ “Nobody ever went uphill by accident.”

- **John Maxwell**, the leadership training guru says, “If you really want to be transformed, you have to live an intentional life. Most people don't lead their life, they accept their life.”
- God's design for relationship with Him is always “uphill.” **In order to move forward in relationship with Him, we need to be intentional.** “Nobody ever went uphill by accident.” There is no such thing as accidental spiritual growth. When we coast, for whatever reason, we open ourselves up to temptation from the enemy. The area where he will target us most is what we believe about God, ourselves, and each other. Maxwell says, “The best part about going uphill is...the scenery is really good!”

- **TRUST** ~ We place our lives in His hands, knowing that God not only *understands* us but has *designed* us to understand him. This trust in God transcends, yet includes what we know about Him. The result of our trusting in His is the transformation Paul wrote about in Romans 12:1-2.

- ¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Rom. 12:1–2 NLT-SE)

- **OBEDIENCE** ~ This is how you develop “rhythm” in a relationship
 - When you’re in a rhythm of obedience in your relationship with God, it’s much easier to sense when the enemy is tempting you to be disobedient.
 - Every time David fell away from God in disobedience, because he was a “man after God’s own heart,” his great desire was to get back into the rhythm of relationship he had with God in obedience.

- **Targets:** Where the Body of Christ is Under Attack and What To Do About It
 - **Time** ~ The enemy is stealing our time
 - **Spirituality** ~ How the church is being assaulted with unbelief
 - **Family** ~ The key to ruining everything, everywhere, for everyone
 - **Emotions** ~ How fear and stress are burning out believers
 - **Health** ~ How our bodies have been targeted for destruction
 - **Mission** ~ The enemy has a terrible plan for your life
 - **Truth** ~ The shifting sand our world is set upon
 - **Money** ~ The remedy for a “purse with holes”
 - **Morality** ~ Following Jesus in a world with no boundaries
 - **Marriage** ~ The attack on your marriage is real