

## The Nesses

**Suggested Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 4:12, Romans 12:2, Isaiah 6:10, Jeremiah 24:7

**The question, then, is, “How do we get changed?”**

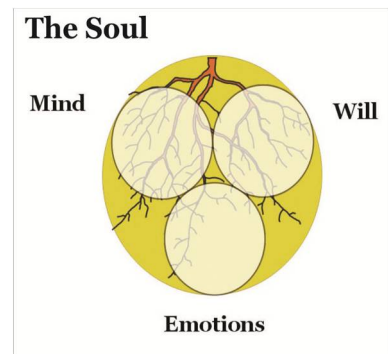
In asking the question “How do we get changed?” it is helpful to define what the “we” is. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, the Bible tells us that “we” are tripartite beings; the three parts are:

- The body
- The soul
- The spirit

**The Body**—this is your mobile home; it is everything you can pinch.

**The Soul**—this is everything that makes you a unique person; your mind, your will, and your emotions; it is your thinker, your willer, and your emotor.

**The Spirit**—this is the receptor for spirit beings; it is the place God comes to dwell when we become a Christian. The person’s spirit is also the communicator between spirit beings and the soul.



Many Christians believe the soul and the spirit to be the same thing. The Greek New Testament disagrees. Hebrews 4:12 speaks of the sword of the spirit (Jesus) dividing between the soul and the spirit, indicating they are separate and different from each other. And as discussed earlier, God’s primary target for the change of the “we” is the heart (Isaiah 6:10, Jeremiah 24:7), which is both the soul and the spirit.

What does this mean in terms of how we get changed? Romans 2:12 speaks of being transformed by the renewing of our minds. The English translation says, “And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

**νοῦς, Nous**

**The soul.  
The mind, will and emotions.  
Equivalent to the heart.**

A simple reading of this passage would indicate that if we just change our minds, the “we” will be changed and we will become like Jesus. However, this English translation of the Greek is problematic; it points in the wrong direction, focusing on the mind alone. That causes many Christians to read it as saying, “If you study enough, learn enough, memorize enough, and then know enough, your bad thinking will be changed; you will change your mind, and that will cause you to be like Jesus.” However, that is not what it says in the Greek. The word translated *mind* here in the Greek is *nous*. It normally means the soul, which includes the mind,

the will, and the emotions of a person. Often this word also means the heart—both the soul and the spirit. So the passage is really saying that our entire soul (mind, will, and emotions), and possibly our spirit as well, needs to be renewed in order for us to be transformed.

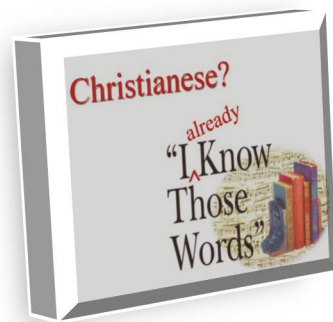
Many Christians feel that their spiritual lives are in a rut. Sometimes words, doctrines, principles, and theology keep them trapped in that rut. They keep doing the same things over and over and nothing ever changes. That isn't the heart of God; He has great plans for change in our lives. In this next section we will present some new words that will help you escape from the rut and bring new life to your Christian walk.



### Words with Life

**Suggested Reading:** John 6:63, John 14:12, John 5:19, John 6:63

Do any of you speak Christianese? When we communicate with each other, we believe they already know the meanings of all the words they use. Over the years the words have been filled up with meaning—from Sunday school, from sermons, from common usage, from experience, etc. However, my background and my experience is probably not the same as yours, and so my words and your words, both with the same label, may not mean the same thing. When we use these words we both know what we are saying, but we may not be communicating. For instance, one person might use the word *salvation* to designate the born-again experience of a Christian when God comes to dwell in a person's life. Another person might use *salvation* to mean an ongoing process that changes us into the likeness of Jesus. They are using exactly the same word, but the meaning of the word is not the same. In addition, most Christians have a standard "Christian" vocabulary, an insider set of words that is used differently by different groups of Christian people. Often the meanings of certain words we know are just wrong; they point in the wrong direction, and they point to a wrong understanding. All of these things I call Christianese.



The words we use are important. Many of the words we use come from the Bible. However, the Bible is not King James English or NIV English—the Bible is Hebrew and Greek. When the Bible is translated from Hebrew or Greek into English, the translator often puts his or her bias into the words chosen. The selection of the English word used in translation can have a profound influence on the translated meaning of the passage. I have shown you some of these instances in earlier chapters. Later I will show you some more.

Consider the words we use. Some words seem flat, two-dimensional, and devoid of life, while others seem three-dimensional, filled with life. Jesus said that the works that He did (including speaking His Father's words), we would do also, and that we would do even greater works than those because was going to the Father (John 14:12). In the same way that Jesus only spoke what the Father was speaking (John 5:19), so also our words should come from the Spirit of God. He said in John 6:63, "...the words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life." The words we

speak should also be Spirit and Life, and they will be if the Holy Spirit is speaking them through us. Our words should partake of His Life, His reality, with His power and in His timing. That changes lives.

Have you ever had this experience? Sometimes when you are sharing the good news of Jesus Christ the words don't go anywhere, they just fall to the ground and do not do the work of God. Other times they seem to hit the mark, and you see that hungry look come into the person's eyes, and they are really receptive to what God has for them. That is because sometimes we are speaking the words of God, in His timing and His power, to the person He has chosen us to speak with, and other times we miss the mark. Our timing is wrong or we are saying dead words of doctrine or the stored knowledge we have gathered over the years; good words perhaps, but not words that are Spirit and Life.

In the following section we will create some new words and fill them up with meaning. I call these words "the Nesses." The Nesses are words that encapsulate the simple things of God for our practical walk in life. They are simple, three-dimensional words that, when faithfully lived, will enable Him to bring change into our lives. The Nesses will assist you to enable Father God to do His work in you. For as Philippians 2:13 says, "It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

What are these words? I will begin with a few that I consider the primary words:

- ❖ Simpleness—the things of God are simple.
- ❖ Nothingness—God is the sole author of our faith and the only one that can bring change.
- ❖ Willingness—our part in the Christian walk.
- ❖ Puppyness—what it is to believe.
- ❖ Featheriness—what it is to rest and obey God.
- ❖ Nextness—the path for our being changed.
- ❖ Nowness—the time for the Christian walk is only in the present.
- ❖ Forgiveness—forgive everyone, everything, all of the time, right now.

**Note:** The reader will notice some overlap and repetition in some of the following eight sections. They are written to be part of this book and also to be used as "stand alone" pamphlets for limited ministry use by the reader and available on our website. On our website you will find these Nesses pamphlets as well as additional short pamphlets that we call "Other Words to Live By."

I encourage you to read the following sections (one for each new Ness) slowly. Let God fill them up with meaning for you as you meditate on them—I pray that these words will be Spirit and Life to you.

## Nesses Summary

- God's eternal purpose is that we should be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ.
- The "we" that gets changed is our soul plus our spirit; the combination is called the spiritual heart.
- We can allow God to fill up the words we speak with His Life; then they become Spirit and Life when spoken.
- The Nesses are eight simple three dimensional words which, when they are faithfully lived, allow God to bring change into our lives--changing us into the likeness of Jesus and fulfilling the eternal purpose of God.
- **Simpleness:** The things of God are simple. When the Christian walk becomes complicated, we can be sure we are missing Him and His purpose in our lives.
- **Nothingness:** Everything we do without God amounts to nothing; with Him and in Him we can do all things.
- **Willingness:** Our part in the Christian walk is to be willing for God's willing and doing. God is a gentleman and will not force His will on us; we are called to choose His kingdom and His righteousness (Jesus), and then all that He has for us is added into our lives.
- **Puppyness:** The word "believe" in the Bible has a precise focus; its object is God manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. To believe is to do Puppyness--the simple practice of resting on God and making ourselves available for His loving care.
- **Featherness:** Featherness is not hardening our hearts but instead entering into that quiet place of His presence, ceasing from our own labors, making ourselves available for the still, small voice of His Spirit, and responding like a feather in obedience, in His timing and His power.
- **Nextness:** God has a plan from before the foundations of the world to *transform* you into the likeness of His Son, Jesus, and to *restore* the you by removing the enemy from your life. That plan involves your cooperating with God in His *next most needful thing* in your life. Don't help Him out; only He knows the plan and the timing for your life.
- **Nowness:** Life in God does not take place in the past or in the future; all of our Life in God takes place in the now.
- **Forgiveness:** God's standard is that we would forgive everyone, everything, all of the time, right now. Forgiveness is not a suggestion, it is a commandment. Forgiveness is not a carwash, it is a process and takes time to complete. God will not forgive you if you do not forgive others. Forgiveness is absolutely foundational to the Christian walk and is the key to spiritual freedom in our lives.