

# IMAGE BEARER

## #2 series Awaken

**Introduction:** Last week: “Are we asleep at the wheel of faith?”

**Ephesians 5:14** *This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*



*the dead,*

- Sow seeds that bear fruit
- Remove hindrances
- Position ourselves to receive
- No awakening moves without an encounter with Jesus.

### 1. The Problem

**Genesis 1:27** *So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

- Notice that we are made in the image of God.
- As God's image-bearer, we were:
  - In deep communion with our Creator
  - Given authority – animals named by Adam
  - Given responsibility to care for creation.

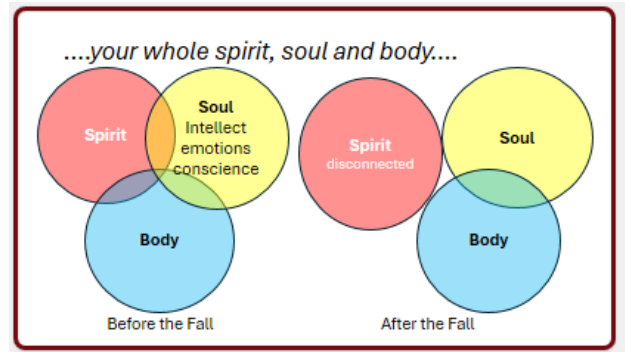
**Genesis 2:17** *... but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

- Disobedience led to death
- First spiritual, then physical.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23** *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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- Some put intellectual capacity first
- Some are driven by emotions
- Some driven by desires of the flesh
- Some who are aware of a spiritual vacuum seek it in areas that are destructive.



## 2. The Remedy

**Romans 5:17** *For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!*

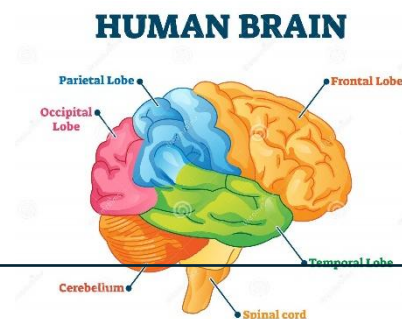
- One man – death reigned
- Those who receive (indicates there is an option)
- Can reign in LIFE
  - Through Jesus Christ.

**Hebrews 1:3** *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

- Jesus is exact representation / image of God
- Sustains all things
- Provided purification.

## 3. Encountering God

- We are wired for connection with God
  - Example: prayer and the brain.

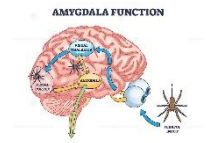


Prayer has a profound impact on the brain, influencing emotional regulation, stress reduction, and overall mental health through various neurological mechanisms.<sup>1</sup>

- MRIs show that prayer activates specific areas of the brain associated with emotional regulation, compassion, and a sense of peace.

<sup>1</sup> Dr Michelle Bengtson [savebrainwellness.com](http://savebrainwellness.com)

- There is increased activity in the frontal lobes, which are crucial for attention, concentration and decision-making.<sup>2</sup>
- Prayer is linked to neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections.<sup>3</sup>
  - It strengthens neural pathways associated with positive emotions, such as gratitude and peace.
  - It reduces activity in **amygdala**, the brain region responsible for fear and stress responses.
- Regular prayer activates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation and reducing stress,<sup>4</sup>
  - benefits such as reduced blood pressure and improved cardiovascular health.
  - also alleviates symptoms of anxiety and depression<sup>5</sup>.
- When you pray / worship / sing to the Lord, your brain lights up.
- Start with an encounter with Jesus.
- God will not jump over the human heart to get a better you, church or society.



**Matthew 5:8** *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

- Pure – no mixed motives

**John 7:37-39** *On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

- Jesus paid the price for my sin.
  - The Holy spirit restores your connection to the Father.
- Asbury outpouring – people were not interested in the seats, but went straight to the front – the place of encounter.

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<sup>2</sup> Innerlife therapy.org.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Michelle Bengtson

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<sup>5</sup> Savebrainwellness.com