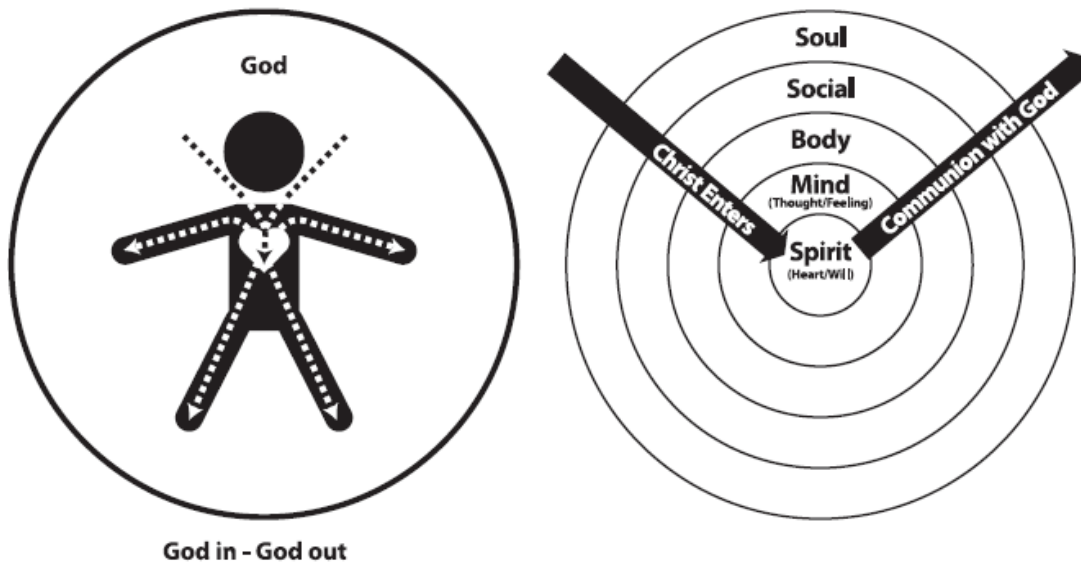


The Construct of the Soul – The Whole Person



“What is running your life at any given moment is your soul. Not external circumstances or your thoughts, or your intentions, or even your feelings, but your soul.” *Dallas Willard*

Why, are you so downcast, **O my soul**? Why so disturbed within me? *Psalms 42:5*

Bless the Lord, **O my soul**; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! *Psalms 103:1*

I speak, out of the bitterness of my **soul**. *Job 7:11*

Dallas Willard uses three different words to describe your heart. In his words, “I believe it will become clear that heart, spirit, and will (or their equivalents) are words that refer to one and the same thing, the same fundamental component of the person.”

- *Heart* refers to its position in the human being, as the center or core to which every other component of the self owes its proper functioning. *Heart* suggests location and vital function. (Luke 6:45, Matt. 15:18)
- *Will* refers to that component’s power to initiate, to create, to bring about what did not exist before. *Will* represents **the ability to choose** to live inside or outside God’s kingdom.
- *Spirit* refers to its fundamental nature as distinct and independent from physical reality. This term suggests UNBODILY personal power.

Put the three terms together and you get the full picture. At the center of your being is a spiritual reality that has the power to initiate and create—and communicate via its spiritual reality. It may be described as your *heart*, *will*, or *spirit*. It is the CEO of your human life and makes decisions each moment of the day that affect your whole person. The most fundamental choice of your CEO is the same one that originally confronted Adam and Eve: to live in an intimate, conversational, and communal relationship with God, or to **initiate** and maintain a separate existence—to choose **willingness** (life with and under submission to God) or **willfulness** (life apart from God).



For there to be a CEO, there must be a company to run. Every coach needs a team; every chief needs braves; every *heart*, the components of a whole person. Dallas proposes that there are six basic aspects of a human life.

“These together and in interplay make up ‘human nature’:

- *Thought* (images, concepts, judgments, inferences)
- *Feeling* (sensations, emotion)
- *Choice* (will, heart, spirit, decision, character, the “CEO”)
- *Body* (action, interaction with the physical world)
- *Social context* (personal and structural relations with others)
- *Soul* (the factor that integrates all of the above to form one life)

There are only five things that a human being can do - we can think, feel, choose, behave, and interact with others. The soul, as distinguished from the CEO/heart, is the invisible computer that keeps everything running and integrated into one person – wholeness.

The construct of the soul is designed so that when we operate outside the created design it has an affect on all components that make up the inner parts of each of us, and they are not separable. The heart grows faint, the spirit withers, the will weakens. The mind begins to doubt, and distorted thinking begins to overtake us. Now, we are split, the internal conflict leads to fear, anxiety, and depression. Now the body is keeping the score reflecting the inner state of fear and regret of our choices. The external manifestation occurs in the social and relational realm as the inner conflict leaks out in irritation, frustration, and anger, all working together to create the reality of the disconnection we have chosen in our now **disordered soul**. When we choose to disconnect from the source of Life and Light, the result is inner chaos and darkness, ultimately producing the devastation and destruction of disconnected relationships. This is the reality we live, and the evidence is reflected in the world around us – a world disconnected from its Creator. Understanding of the operating system of our souls is critical to understanding why we do what we do and how to do it different.