

Back To Basics

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SPECIAL ISSUE: MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER

Johnie Edwards

Paul declared, “But now are they many members, yet but one body” (1 Cor. 12:20). It seems that a lot of folks do not have a good understanding of what being a member of the church is all about. It is the aim of this special issue to help us gain a better understanding of being a member.

1) **MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED.** Some do not seem to realize that membership in the Lord’s church is required. Paul made it clear to the Ephesians that “Christ is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). Well, just what is the body? Listen to an inspired definition of the body: “for his body’s sake, which is the church” (Col. 1:24). If the church is the body, and Christ is the saviour of the body, doesn’t it sound like membership in the body is essential? The Bible teaches that the church consists of the saved, since “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). Are you a member?

2) **FLOATING MEMBERS.** Some members just want to float around among churches; not being members of any particular church, but claiming to be members of the universal church. There are some real prob-

lems with this disposition. After the apostle Paul had obeyed the gospel and “come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples” (Acts 9:26). Since the Lord’s church is only organized on a local level, with “elders in every church” (Acts 14:23), to be able to work in the church, one needs to be a member of a local church of Christ. Some folks may choose to not be a member of a local church to avoid personal responsibilities and even discipline.

3) **MEMBERSHIP CARRIES RESPONSIBILITY.** As a member of a local church, one has many responsibilities. He has the responsibility to attend church meetings. Even some clubs require meeting attendance or you are out! As members, we are admonished, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” (Heb. 10:25). Be sure you know the word is not “assembly,” but “assembling,” which suggests a continued coming together. As a member, why would you not want to meet with others who have the same kind of values as you? Membership requires members doing their part of the work. As the physical body works together for the good of the whole body, each member must carry his part of the load (1 Cor. 12:15-18; 15:58).



THE SOWER'S SEED

Basic Sermon Starters

"HE THAT GOETH FORTH AND WEEPETH, BEARING PRECIOUS SEED, SHALL DOUBTLESS COME AGAIN WITH REJOICING, BRINGING HIS SHEAVES WITH HIM."

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Introduction

1. The Great Commission is found in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47.
2. Here are some great things about the Great Commission.

Discussion

I. ONE WITH GREAT AUTHORITY

- A. Matthew 28:18
- B. Matthew 7:29
- C. John 2:5
- D. This authority was given to Him by the Father (Eph. 1:21-23).

II. A GREAT CHARGE

- A. There is no greater charge than to "go teach" or "preach" (Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15).
- B. This is the only way men have of knowing God's will (Jn. 6:44-45).

III. A GREAT GROUP OF PEOPLE

- A. All nations (Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:47).
- B. The gospel is for all!

IV. A GREAT MESSAGE

- A. Mark 16:15
- B. Luke 24:47
- C. The gospel message of repentance and remission of sins is the greatest message.

V. A GREAT PLAN OF SALVATION

- A. Mark 16:16
- B. Belief + Baptism = Salvation

VI. A GREAT PROMISE

- A. Matthew 28:20
- B. There is no greater promise than the Lord's promise to be with us.

VII. A GREAT BEGINNING

- A. Luke 24:47
- B. The Great Commission was executed for the first time on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Conclusion

1. May we have a greater appreciation for the Great Commission.
2. Have you heard, believed, and obeyed?

Back To Basics

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ONE ANOTHER

John Isaac Edwards

Just as your physical body is composed of many members, the Lord's body (the church) is made up of members (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:13-27). A special relationship exists between members of the body of Christ. Let's look at this 'one another' relationship from two angles.

1) FROM A NEGATIVE STANDPOINT. As members one of another, there are some things we are NOT to do.

- We must NOT do wrong to one another (Acts 7:23-29).
- We must NOT be puffed up for one against another (1 Cor. 4:6).
- We must NOT go to law with one another (1 Cor. 6:1-8).
- We must NOT bite and devour one another (Gal. 5:15).
- We must NOT lie to one another (Col. 3:9).
- We must NOT speak evil of one another (Jas. 4:11).

To do any of the above would be like taking your hand and doing physical harm to another part of your body.

2) FROM A POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE. Just as there are some things we are not to do, there are some things we MUST do, as members one of another.

- We MUST love one another (Jn. 13:34-35).
- We MUST edify one another (Rom. 14:19).
- We MUST admonish one another (Rom. 15:14).
- We MUST greet one another (1 Pet. 5:14).
- We MUST care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25).
- We MUST serve one another (Gal. 5:13).
- We MUST bear one another's burdens

(Gal. 6:2).

- We MUST forbear and forgive one another (Col. 3:13).
- We MUST comfort one another (1 Th. 4:15).
- We MUST consider one another (Heb. 10:24).
- We MUST confess our faults to one another and pray for one another (Jas. 5:16).
- We MUST use hospitality toward one another (1 Pet. 4:9).

One ought to look on his brethren as his own body: "For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:29-30).

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PUT TO DEATH YOUR MEMBERS

Steve Monts

In order for a body with a deadly cancer to survive, it must put to death that cancer. One must kill the cancer, lest the cancer kill him. Sin is such in one's life (2 Tim. 2:17). If we wish to survive spiritually, we must put to death the cancer of sin. Thankfully, God has given us instruction concerning specific cancers we must seek to kill among our members.

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him..." (Col. 3:5-10).

In the list above, God deals with sins of morality. Without the correction of these sins, it does not matter how doctrinally correct and upright one may be. "As a man thinks in his heart so is he..." Thus, "keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Prov. 23:7; 4:23). Put to death...

1. *Fornication* – Sexual relations outside of lawful marriage (1 Cor. 6:9).
2. *Uncleanness* – All things physically and morally impure. Pornography, immodest dress, and dancing apply here (2 Cor. 12:21).
3. *Passion* – A feeling in which the mind suffers an addiction. Drinking, smoking,

chewing, and things that have an addictive nature must be avoided (Rom. 13:13-14).

4. *Evil Desire* – Craving or longing for that which is forbidden by God (2 Sam. 11:2). Do you long for the wrong? That is an evil desire.
5. *Covetousness* – Greedy desire to have more and/or strong attachment to current belongings (2 Ki 5:20). Anything can become your god if you covet for that item. And no man can serve two masters (Mt. 6:24). Serve God!
6. *Anger* – Unrighteous indignation. This can lead to wrath, if not put to death.
7. *Wrath* – Anger turned to fierce passion. This can lead to malice, if not stopped.
8. *Malice* – Wrath turned to evil hate. This can lead to action, if not cured (any of the next three actions in the list).
9. *Blasphemy* – Inward malice now turned outward in action by evil speaking (2 Tim. 3:2). Do you gossip and say wrong against your neighbor?
10. *Filthy Language* – Vile conversation, despicable words. Your mind is polluted to utter such (Mt. 26:74).
11. *Lying* - To speak an untruth or attempt to deceive by falsehood. White lies are still lies. If you can't say the truth, don't speak (Mt. 5:37)!

God expects us to put to death our members and not revert to our old ways of living. As members of one another, let us never seek to infect each other with this list.

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THE TONGUE AMONG OUR MEMBERS

David Eldridge

James notes, “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body... and it is set on fire by hell” (Jas. 3:6). The words we speak can be evil, but they can also be for good. Jesus states, “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Mt. 12:37). Let us consider both the sinful and the righteous words the tongue may employ.

1) **LYING TONGUE.** Our tongues should never be speaking lies. The lying tongue is something the new man, in Christ, will put away (Gal. 4:25). Solomon said, “...and he who speaks lies shall perish” (Prov. 19:9). Surely this is the case, as we read in Revelation 21:8 that, “...*all liars* shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Truly, as the old expression goes, “Honesty is the best policy!”

2) **ARGUING TONGUE.** Many seem to enjoy nothing better than a “good” argument. However, among Christians this should not be the case! Why? Because any fool can start an argument, but an honorable person will seek to stop such (Prov. 20:3). Many need to heed the words spoken by Paul to Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians 4:2: “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

3) **COMPLAINING TONGUE.** I have known many who are only happy when they have something to complain about. Paul admonished the church at Philippi, “Do *all things without complaining* and disputing” (Phil. 2:14). No one likes to hear someone complain for the sake of complaining – not even God (1 Cor. 10:10).

4) **CORRUPTING TONGUE.** In Ephesians 4:29 Paul writes, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth.” Many think this passage has reference to filthy language. Surely, filthy language is condemned and should not be used – it can be corrupting (Col. 3:8). However, corrupting speech is that which would tear or break another person down. Unfortunately, many will say things that hurt and harm others. As members one of another, let us be diligent to say those things that edify rather than tear down (2 Cor. 12:19).

5) **TRUTHFUL TONGUE.** Paul commanded, “Therefore, putting away lying, Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another” (Eph. 4:25). Let us have the determination of Solomon that our “mouth will speak truth” (Prov. 8:7).

6) **KIND TONGUE.** Some have gotten the idea that kindness is simply the absence of harshness. However, kindness is an active virtue that must be demonstrated in our speech. The apostle penned, “And be kind to one another” (Eph. 4:32). Let us show kindness as we speak to one another.

7) **TEACHING TONGUE.** There is perhaps no better thing one can employ his tongue to do than share the gospel with another. Romans 10:15 records, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!”

Are the words that you speak justifying or condemning you?

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KIND OF CHURCH MEMBERS NEEDED

Johnie Edwards

Every church could use some good members from time to time. The Bible has some things to say about the kind of members any church would like to have. Please take a look at the list and see if they would like to have you.

1) **CONSTRAINING MEMBERS.** Few members of the church do much constraining. The word “constrain” means to compel or insist. Lydia was a constraining church member. After hearing the gospel and being baptized, “she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us” (Acts 16:15). She didn’t say, “Well, I don’t guess you would want to come to my house, would you?” She compelled or insisted that they come. When it comes to hospitality, we often have to constrain people. Peter urged, “Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Pet. 4:9). Are you a constraining member?

2) **CARING MEMBERS.** So few seem to really care. David penned a sad state when he said, “I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul” (Ps. 142:4). One reason there is so much strife among a lot of church members is due to a failure to do as Paul wrote the Corinthians, “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another” (1 Cor. 12:25). God cares (1 Pet. 5:7), and so must we. How much do you care?

3) **EDUCATED MEMBERS.** We must “know the truth” (Jn. 8:32). A “lack of knowledge”

caused God’s Old Testament people to be destroyed. We are admonished, “as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2). Our spiritual growth must be “in the knowledge of our Lord” (2 Pet. 3:18). We are going to have to get back to basic Bible study to be able to “rightly divide the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Uneducated members become an easy prey to be led astray (Acts 20:28-32). Do you need to brush up on your education?

4) **RICH MEMBERS.** There is a great demand that members be rich toward God. The application of Jesus’ parable in Luke 12 concerning the rich man’s ground and the building of greater barns was about “covetousness.” God called this man a “fool,” and then said, “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Lk. 12:21). Every member of the church must be rich in good works as Paul charged, “That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim. 6:18). Are you a rich member?

5) **UNCOMPROMISING MEMBERS.** The church is in dire need of members with backbone, who are not afraid to take a stand and who refuse to be “moved away from the hope of the gospel” (Col. 1:23). Paul stated that we need to, “be able to withstand...and having done all, to stand” (Eph. 6:13). Moses can teach us a good lesson about compromise. When “Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you,” Moses responded, “Our cattle also shall go with

us; there shall not a hoof be left behind” (Ex. 10:24-26). That-a-way, Moses! When false brethren tried to bring the Galatians into circumcision-bondage, their response was, “To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal. 2:4-5). Do you have the courage to stand?

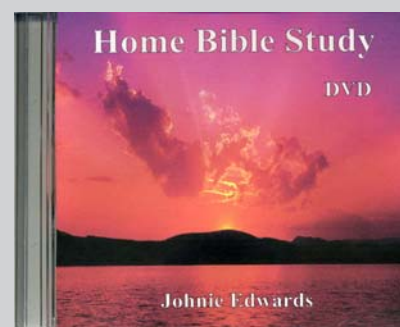
6) FAITHFUL AND ABLE MEMBERS. Church members who have these dual qualities are hard to come by. The kind of people who are to be doing the preaching and teaching are those who are “faithful and able” (2 Tim. 2:2). To be “faithful” is to be steadfast, loyal, and true. Paul, perhaps said it best: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). To be “able” is to possess the skills necessary to effectively teach the word of God in a simple, straight-forward manner. Those not possessing these qualities have no business in the pulpit or classroom!

7) LIBERAL MEMBERS. There are just not enough generous members in most churches. We need to be liberal with our time and money in serving God and others. While many members are tight-fisted when it comes to giving money into the Lord’s treasury, the Bible teaches, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Few have learned that “God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7). Ever notice how many blessings come to liberal members? It is like Luke recorded, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Lk. 6:38). We all would do well to memorize and practice this quotation.

8) MEMBERS MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES.

There was a time when members of the church of Christ really knew the Scriptures. I am afraid that we have lost this attribute. One reason so much error has crept in among us is because many just do not know the Scriptures. Answering those who knew so little about the resurrection, “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Mt. 22:23-32). Apollos serves as a good example. “And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus” (Acts 18:24). To be “mighty in the scriptures” is to be strong, relying on the power of the gospel. As a result of Apollos being “mighty in the scriptures,” he “mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ” (Acts 18:28). We could stand a good bunch of pulpit-preachers who are “mighty in the scriptures,” since we are hearing so few Scriptures from today’s pulpits. We just have to get back to “searching the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11); so we can “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

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SETTING MEMBERS IN THE BODY

Donnie V. Rader

Paul said, “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:28).

In this chapter, Paul parallels the church to the physical body. Just as your body has many members (parts or organs) so the body has many members (vv. 12-20). All members of your body are necessary, so it is true in the church (vv. 21-27). God established the differences in the members (vv. 28-31). That is, God set the members in the body as it pleased Him (vv. 18, 28).

There are three lessons we learn from this principle that God set the members in the body as it pleased Him.

1) WE ARE DISTINCT FROM EACH OTHER.

The physical body has many members (v. 12) with different functions (v. 17). Some members are weak while some are strong (v. 22). Some members have more honor than others (v. 23). As in the physical body, this is true in the church. We are of different races (v. 13); of different rank or social status (v. 13), and have different abilities (Rom. 12:3-8). There are different offices in the church (1 Tim. 3:1-13). We have different scruples or opinions (Rom. 14), we are going to be at different stages in our development (Heb. 5:12-14), and we may have different strengths - some weak, some strong, and some who need encouragement (1 Th. 5:14).

2) WE ARE DEPENDENT UPON EACH

OTHER. In the physical body, the hand and foot need each other (vv. 15, 21). The eyes and ears

need each other (v. 16). All members cannot be the same (v. 17). The weaker members that seem unnecessary are needed (v. 22). In the days of spiritual gifts, the one who spoke in tongues needed an interpreter (1 Cor. 14). Those who had the gift of healing would need one who discerns the spirits. Every member is needed today. Followers need leaders (Acts 20:28) and leaders need followers (Heb. 13:7, 17). We need each other for edification (Heb. 10:24-25; Eph. 5:19), as well as the prayers of others (Col. 1:3, 9-10). Each are needed, for we take care of one another (1 Cor. 12:25-26). There are no unnecessary members in the body.

3) WE ARE TO BE UNITED WITH EACH OTHER. There should be no division within the body (1 Cor. 1:10; 12:25). Just as the members of the physical body work together in harmony, each member of the Lord's body should be united. Why should we be united? We are directed by the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), we were baptized into the same body (1 Cor. 12:13), and our different abilities and gifts come from the same God (1 Cor. 12:6). While we are of different nationalities (Eph. 2:11; 3:6), we have the same heritage (Eph. 3:6) and while we are of different social classes, we are in the same body (1 Cor. 12:13).

May God help us to learn that we are distinct from each other, dependent upon each other, and to be united with each other.

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ORDER A BUNDLE FOR THE CHURCH

No SCHISM IN THE BODY

Andy Alexander

Paul wrote the Corinthian Christians concerning peace, saying, “there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another” (1 Cor. 12:25). This passage contains an analogy about the various parts of the human body that each have their special function and how they each work together in order to accomplish a given task. The hand, the foot, and the eyes all work together for a common goal, and so should the various members of the body of Christ. Each member should work with other members to accomplish the great work that Christ wants us to do.

Paul, writing in the First Corinthian letter, was beseeching the Corinthian brethren to work together in peace and harmony. “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). This peace was to be based on the gospel that he had previously revealed to them (1 Cor. 15:1-7). The opinions, teachings, and theories of men would only divide brethren and lead to confusion and eternal destruction (2 Tim. 2:15-18). The solution was to “abide in the doctrine of Christ” and “teach no other doctrine” (2 Jn. 9; 1 Tim. 1:3).

In Ephesians 4:1-3, Paul emphasizes things that need to be practiced by individual Christians to promote and maintain peace in the body of Christ. “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity

of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3). These verses show the importance of the individual Christian working to maintain peace, by watching his own attitude and actions toward his or her fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Many times, division occurs because brethren simply do not treat one another in a Christ-like way.

In Romans 14, Paul discusses maintaining the peace by keeping our own opinions and judgments to ourselves (Rom. 14:22). Many congregations have experienced problems when someone tried to bind their judgment about a particular matter on others. We must be united in matters of the faith, but in matters where God has not legislated we must learn to keep silent. Another teaching which is pertinent to this point is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, where the apostle commands, “that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.” Again, there are times when our brethren will do things that we may not choose to do, but that does not make it sinful. We have to practice self-control and allow others their right to do as they choose. We do not always have to “speak our peace” as some brethren feel they must.

“No schism in the body” starts with each and every member. Each Christian must work at maintaining the peace that God desires.

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Kid's Activity Page

Paul Adams

Memory Verse: *"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25).*

One Another

Listed below are ten passages from the book of Romans and nine descriptions of a Christian's duties toward one another. Match the description of the duty with the passage where it is found.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| ___ Be kindly affectioned | A. Romans 12:5 |
| ___ Receive | B. Romans 12:10a |
| ___ Salute | C. Romans 12:10b |
| ___ In honor preferring | D. Romans 12:16 |
| ___ Members | E. Romans 13:8 |
| ___ Of the same mind | F. Romans 14:13 |
| ___ Not Judge | G. Romans 14:19 |
| ___ Admonish | H. Romans 15:7 |
| ___ Edify | I. Romans 15:14 |
| ___ Love | J. Romans 16:16 |

***"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).***

Question: *“What does it mean to be born of water and of the Spirit?”*

Answer:

To be born of water and the Spirit is not what many think it is. I heard a preacher on television say, “To be born of the Spirit is the Spirit of God comes to live in your heart, and you are born again.” Did you ever read anything in the Bible like that answer?

Jesus told Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3). Nicodemus thought Jesus was referring to a physical birth when he asked, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (Jn. 3:4). Jesus, knowing the man did not understand what the new birth was about, stated it this way: “...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:5). There are two conditions of one birth, in order to get into the kingdom of God: water and Spirit.

To be born of the Spirit is to listen to the words of the Spirit as to how one is born again. Writing the Ephesians, Paul penned, “Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:4-5). It is as Paul told the Corinthians, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...” (1 Cor. 12:13). The words of James fit here so well: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth...” (Jas. 1:18). The parable of the sower identifies the “seed” as “the word of God” (Lk. 8:11). As Peter discusses this subject, he interjects, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Pet. 1:23). So, to be born of the Spirit is to be born of the word of God. The teaching of the word of God brings about a begettal as one is “begotten through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4:15).

What about being born of water? The word “birth” contains the idea of coming out of; when one is “buried with him by baptism into death” and is “raised up” to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). The baptism of the eunuch finds the man coming to a certain water, going down into the water, and coming up out of the water (Acts 8:36-38).

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