

How 2020 Has Become a Toxic Season of the Soul

Riots.

Violence.

Pandemic.

Lockdowns.

National election.

Social media has been distressing to my spirit this year. Really, all media has been, including the few sources that might be considered trustworthy. I'll be the first to admit it's easy to dive into debates at a soul level, arguing logic that seems so obvious while being legitimately confused at how anybody else just cannot see it the same way.

Everything from masks to President Trump to racism has polarized our nation. The damage left in the wake of the raging debates has been devastating. More concerning, the church has been caught up in the exact same soul-level social battles.

When our soul leads the way in our debates and decisions, the results can be quite toxic. We've seen fear and division overcome the people of the "home of the brave." Arrogance has been masquerading as authority and recklessness as freedom.

The soul is the center of emotions and logic, and without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, arguments initiated from that level are not to be trusted. Powerful emotions with the help of seemingly obvious logic will convince people they are functioning from a place of wisdom when in truth they are reacting in fear. Faith is eliminated from the equation. Wisdom (fear) trumps faith when we don't live, breathe, pray

and walk in the Spirit.

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other” (Gal. 5:25-26, NIV).

Division Is Not Always Negative

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— 36 a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household’” (Matt. 10:34-36).

The true church will always introduce division simply because of the topics we are promoting. There is an agenda. Jesus made it clear that ecumenical unity wasn’t his goal. World peace wasn’t the focus.

We can expect division when the gospel is preached. When revival hits, people will be split like the Red Sea, with many running to the altar and many running out the back door.

Many pastors today are attempting to avoid the very necessary schisms that clearly define the remnant and the pretenders. Truth rightly presented demands decisions. In the end the final judgment will bring the greatest division of all, separating the sheep and the goats for all humanity to see.

Many Christians have attempted to apply this principle of biblical division to their own humanistic stubborn opinions. They celebrate as their pet positions cause others to get riled up and split off. They feel spiritual, but this is soul-level activity, and it is grieving to the Lord.

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of

malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another" (Eph. 4:30-32a).

Preach the Word of God, and you can often expect division.

Preach masks, politics, the Constitution and on the racial issues of the day? We as Spirit-filled, blood-bought children of the King should speak with great love and grace. Is there ever a time to strike against wicked arguments with force and precision? Absolutely. But not from our soul. This type of engagement must be led fully by the Spirit.

What Is God Saying?

Church, it's time to come up higher. In this toxic season of politics, sickness, murder and distress, we need to resist the urge to function from our soul. It's time to minister from our spirits.

We've heard all of the arguments about masks, both pro and con. We know all of the reasons people are going to vote for Trump or Biden. People are dogmatic about taking a knee or not. The memes and GIFS (Graphic Interchange Format, a compression file format for images) and posts and rants about all of these volatile issues and others have become predictable—and nauseating.

Where are those who have emerged from their closets of intercession, those who have a clear word from the Lord? Where is the tangible anointing that pierces through arguments? In this critical, historic hour, where are the true prophets?

Understand, this doesn't mean we can't discuss issues at a logical level. I'm not even saying the soul (emotions and logic) should be minimized. God gave us a soul, and He will certainly cause us to speak intelligently and even passionately on secular matters, with wisdom, love and clarity. Debates and discussions can be beneficial. The critical call, however, for every Christian, is to do so with

the mind of Christ.

The greater the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the more impacting our words will be. I would challenge you to disengage from the madness that has bewitched so much of the world and the church. Pull back. Stop functioning mostly from your soul. Don't get so excited about your logic. Be teachable. Die to your own opinions. Speak truth under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and people will be absolutely confounded.

When the truth you speak causes both people and demons to react, you know you've moved from soul-level arguments to Spirit-driven, authoritative declarations:

"They were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. In their synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, "Leave us alone! What do You have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are, the Holy One of God."

Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent and come out of him!" When the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, it came out of him.

They were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, "What is this? What new teaching is this? With authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." Immediately His fame spread everywhere throughout the region surrounding Galilee (Mark 1:22-28, MEV).

Take a Break

As I said above, it's easy to get sucked into the soul-level debates of the day. And, as I said, not all of these debates are unhealthy. However, a whole bunch of them are.

They can distract those who are supposed to be functioning in

the realm of the Spirit and cause us to fight in the flesh. If your revelations on the matters of the day aren't burning with anointing, take a break. If you aren't having dreams and visions about how to address the madness of this hour, take a break.

Seriously. Resist the urge and stop posting to Facebook. I'm not talking about the infamous month-long breaks from social media that people regularly announce. Those folks are back and active usually in less than 24 hours.

I'm talking about going deeper in God than you ever have. See the futility of your arguments. Humble yourself. Finally understand that nobody needs to hear what your soul has to say. Find your prayer closet and discover what God is yearning to reveal to our nation.

The whole world will want to hear what you have to say then.
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John Burton *has been developing and leading ministries for over 25 years and is a sought-out teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. He ministers in churches and at camps and conferences throughout the nation. John has authored 10 books, is a regular contributor to Charisma magazine, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he has planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and a school of ministry.*

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