

itself, in the form of interrelationships between these aspects. We can say that a new birth results in a new life, and a new creation results in a new nature.

If we meld together the definitions of these four aspects, we arrive at a complex definition somewhat like the following:

Regeneration is that work of the Holy Spirit by which a human being is spiritually reborn in spirit, made spiritually alive, restored to God's image, and renewed in the moral and spiritual attributes of his nature, which renewal is manifest in his conduct by a prevailing tendency toward righteousness.

But now we must add another dimension to our study. We must ask how these great and powerful truths relate to us personally.

Regeneration is a new birth a spiritual rebirth, a being born into God's spiritual family, a becoming a spiritual child of God, a being begotten anew by the Holy Spirit. We must ask ourselves, "Have I been born again? Am I God's spiritual child? Is God my heavenly Father?"

Regeneration results in a new life, a resurrection from the dead, a spiritual coming to life. We must ask ourselves, "Do I have this new life in me? Am I spiritually alive?"

I know that I am physically alive because life functions are going on in my body, because I am aware of my physical activity and movement, because I am aware of physical appetites and drives, and because I am experiencing the physical aspects of thought, feeling, and decision-making.

Similarly, I can know that I am spiritually alive because life functions are going on in me, because I am aware of spiritual activity and movement, because I am aware of spiritual appetites and drives, and because I am experiencing spiritual thoughts, emotions, desires, intentions, and decisions. Jesus said, "The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it is coming from or where it is departing; so is everyone having been begotten of the Spirit." We can't see the wind, but we can hear its sound and experience its other effects as it gently blows across a field of grain, or rustles through the leaves of trees, or cools our faces, or carries the fleecy clouds along, or lashes the ocean waves into great foaming breakers.

So it is with spiritual life. We can't see the Holy Spirit, but we can experience His effects in our lives. New attitudes, new directions, new values, new goals, new interests, all directed toward God and the things pertaining to God -- these are some of the effects of the new birth in an individual.

Regeneration is also a new creation. It is a restoration of God's image and likeness in me. It means being restored to Godlikeness, becoming more and more conformed to the perfect image of God in Christ. It means knowing God personally, and becoming a holy person, as He is holy. We must ask ourselves: "Am I a new creature in Christ? Has the Holy Spirit begun to remake me in God's likeness? Do I have a new outlook on life, and do I see things in relation to the will and glory of God? Do I view my life in terms of spiritual realities, and in light of eternal values?"