

**MATTHEW'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT:
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR
TRANSCENDING THE FALSE SELF AND REALIZING THE TRUE SELF**

Transforming initiatives

When properly practiced, spiritual disciplines are not only "transforming initiatives" on the horizontal plane of existence (Stassen's emphasis), but also "transforming initiatives" on the vertical plane of existence, the connection between human and divine.

Spiritual warfare

Spiritual disciplines liberate us from the *sarx*. The *sarx* ("flesh") refers to an orientation of life focused on one's own self or ego with a concurrent lack of concern for others. The apostle Paul sees a war between the Spirit and the flesh.

Gal. 5: 16-23. ¹⁶ Live by the Spirit (*pneuma*), I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh (*sarx*).

¹⁷ For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law.

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

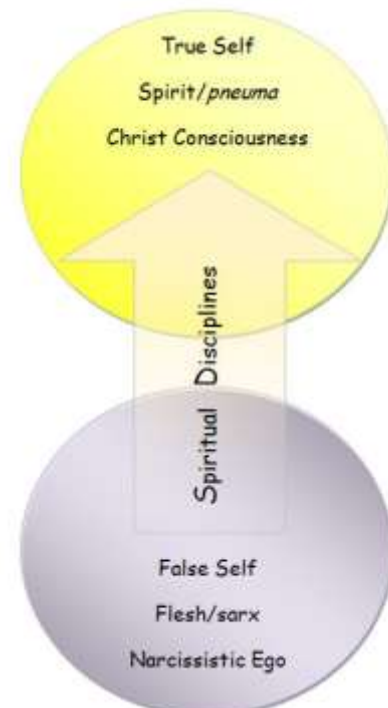
²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control (NRSV).

The flesh (*sarx*)

To live by the flesh shuts out everyone else. It is narcissistic. Greek mythology, Narcissus was a young man who fell in love with his own reflection.

What I have described as the *sarx* is called the *ego* by transpersonal psychology.¹ The *ego* has a deeply ingrained need to remain separate and superior to others. Jesus encourages us to transcend the ego (False Self) and become united to God (True Self).

Mark 8:35. For those who want to save their life [False Self or Narcissistic Ego] will lose it [True Self or Image of God], and those



¹ When I use the term "ego," I'm not using the term in the psychological sense of that organizing aspect of identity or the psyche, but to the self-centered, self-promoting, and self-defensive self—the False Self. For more on the importance of ego-transcendence and non-attachment, see my sermons, "Purgation: Sin as Alienation from God and Distortion of the Divine Image," "Purgation: SIN as Power and Attachment," "Illumination: Relinquish & Realize, Transcend & Transform," and "Illumination: Growing in Christlikeness" at www.mcswichita.net.

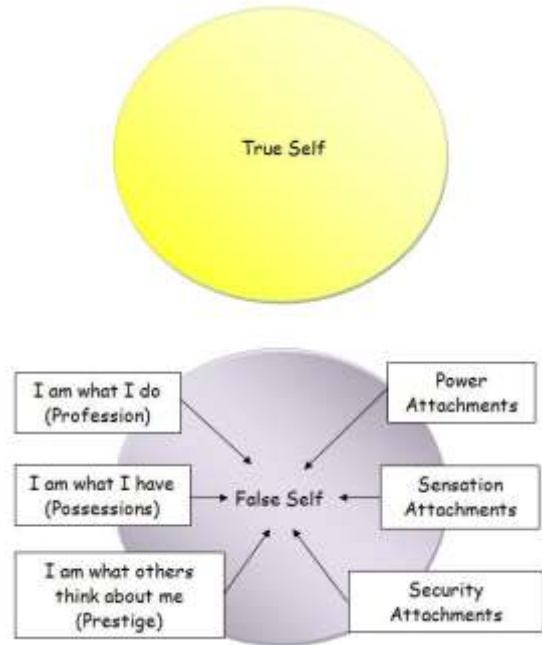
who lose their life [False Self] for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it [True Self or Image of God].

The Spirit (pneuma)

The Spirit is the *ego-less self*. It is you in the power of the Spirit with the mind of Christ. Transpersonal psychologists call this the Absolute Self. It is union with God. Paul calls this the mind of Christ or *Christ consciousness*.

1 Cor. 2:15-16. ¹⁵ Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. ¹⁶ "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

The point is spiritual disciplines, if practiced with right intent, enables a person to overcome the false-self-system (right), *transcending the ego* to realize the True Self. Through spiritual disciplines we learn non-attachment to the False self system and in the process we become empowered to practice righteousness ("restorative and delivering justice").



		<p>Seven Spiritual Disciplines of MCS</p> <p>Spiritual disciplines help us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To transcend the False Self or narcissistic ego • To realize our True Self or Christ Consciousness
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