



*Living Spiritually:
Are You Serious
About Walking the Talk?*

A. Samuel

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Are You Serious About Walking the Talk?

From childhood the spiritual life has had a strong appeal for me. In the 1980s, I began making notes of my personal views on spirituality, intending some day to organize them into a guide that I could use readily for my day-to-day living. The result is this booklet.

What does “living spiritually” mean to me? It simply means being as faithful as possible to the essential principles that I espouse; faithful in my actions, in my words, and in my thoughts, for all three are intrinsically related. It is synonymous with living morally and ethically.

My purpose in having this guide is to stay focused on the following objectives.

- Identify those areas in my spirituality that may need improvement
- Do good (primarily by helping those in need whenever I can)
- Give thanks continually for every good thing in my life

Personally, I have always resisted the practice of having role models; I prefer following principles, not people. For me, idealizing any human being not only seems too worshipful, too much like deification, I also believe too strongly in the innate equality of us all to ever consciously regard any person as more or less important than any other person.

Living spiritually is synonymous with living morally and ethically.

Chapter 1
Spirituality is a Choice

No one can be forced to walk a spiritual path. Civil laws and those charged with enforcing them may keep most of us from straying too far off the legal track too often, but even in shackles and under supervision around the clock, anyone who chooses to reject spiritual values can do so at will.

Although I believe that all mentally competent human beings are capable of choosing a spiritual path over a non-spiritual one, the option does not seem to be automatically recognized, it must be put before us explicitly, and we must be reminded periodically that the option exists.

Even then, many persons still seem inclined to reject that choice. The reasons are numerous and varied. The most common seem to be that spirituality is not “cool” or “glamorous” or even “intelligent” enough. Or it does not sufficiently gratify our desire to be liked, to be popular, to impress others. Or it requires too much of a sacrifice, physical, material, carnal, and otherwise.

To me, no path is more liberating than a spiritual one, simply because, when followed sincerely, that path can lead to the most effective triumph over those impulses that truly enslave the human spirit, such as greed, covetousness, willfulness, carnality, rage, hatred, or mere frustration.

No one can be forced to walk a spiritual path.

No path is more liberating than a spiritual one.

Chapter 2

Spirituality is a Mindset

Once you make a conscious decision to live spiritually, the most practical way to adhere to that decision is to develop a corresponding mindset. For we humans are primarily our minds; thus, you are more likely to adhere to what you “put your mind to,” more likely to succeed if you let your mind—your thoughts—direct your actions, than if you just proceed randomly or indifferently.

Be careful where you take your thoughts or imagination and where you allow them to take you. If you want to act or not act in a certain way, cultivate or avoid the corresponding mindset accordingly.

A spiritual person seeks to develop a mindset that avoids the following traits.

- Willful deception
- Excessive materialism
- Unrestrained self-gratification
- Insistent self-importance
- Undue self-pity

A spiritual person seeks to develop a mindset that is drawn to the following traits.

- Truth
- Goodness

Be careful where you take your thoughts or imagination and where you allow them to take you.

Chapter 3
Spirituality is a Way of Living

The most critical—and most difficult—aspect of living spiritually is actually practicing the principles in one's day-to-day, indeed moment-to-moment conduct. You can be sincere in your commitment, pure in your motives, and yet falter. The significance of that faltering depends on how often and why you falter. As the sincerity of your commitment to spiritual living grows, you should falter less and less frequently.

The following are among the most common causes of faltering.

- Circumstances beyond your control
- Circumstances you could have controlled but did not recognize
- Circumstances you could have controlled but chose not to
- Ego

For purposes of this guide, I will not directly address the first cause listed. The other three causes can be significantly overcome by applying some important Do's and Don'ts throughout your daily life.

Do's

- Treat others with consideration
- Curb your ego
- Take individual responsibility
- Live thankfully
- Choose your path appropriately
- Create a joyful environment

You can be sincere in your commitment to living spiritually, pure in your motives, and yet falter.

Don'ts

- Live self-indulgently
- Seek to dominate others
- Subvert truth
- Abet evil

Treat others with consideration: Spirituality is not about any rituals you may perform to express that spirituality or how often you perform them or who else is present when you do. It is not about what you call yourself or the name of any group with whom you choose to associate as an expression of that spirituality. You express your spirituality most meaningfully in the way you treat others.

You may have little or no control over many aspects of your day-to-day activities, such as the job you go to, the people you encounter and interact with, the community in which you live, and so on. Nonetheless, when living spiritually, you must exercise as much control as possible over how you carry out those activities; for example, how conscientiously you perform your job, how courteously and considerately you treat others, especially those who may not appear to be in a position to benefit you materially in any way.

Curb your ego: There is no bigger obstacle to spirituality than Ego. It is the force that makes us inclined to regard our own interests as more important than anyone else's and to adopt an "always be the winner" approach to interacting with others.

You express your spirituality most meaningfully in the way you treat others.

There is no bigger obstacle to spirituality than Ego.

About the Author

Anne Samuel is a semiretired educator and computer trainer. A perennial student herself, with a strong interest in diverse languages and cultures, she enjoys exploring both fictional and nonfictional worlds through her writing. Under the pseudonym M.A. Laborde she writes primarily fiction.



*The foundation
of spirituality
is humility.*

*If spirituality is
the chosen path,
Truth is the most reliable
compass for the journey.*

*To be thankful
is to be joyful.*

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