

(Think of a friend with whom to share this question.)

*What's the difference between my soul and my spirit?*

For human beings, we generally consider the soul and spirit as the same thing. Angels, on the other hand, are spirits but not souls. Animals, plants and all lower living things have an animating force we call the soul. The soul gives initiating direction to the body. It is the non-physical life giving principle of the physical body. A simple soul that is not also a spirit dies with the body.

A spirit, by its very nature, cannot die. God made us humans unique with qualities of both animals and angels; soul and spirit. As spirit driven earthlings we cannot cease to exist. A spirit has no parts so it cannot be taken apart or destroyed. Without parts it lives without space and without sequential time. A spirit is timeless.

Our human spirit/soul has properties that a simple animal soul does not have. Among these are an enhanced intelligence, free will, immortality and the ability to know God. Spirit has to do with personhood. Soul has to do with physical life. We are both.

What do we mean when we say a soul is needed to animate a body? If a team of scientists could put together all the exact minerals in exactly the right way to construct a cat it would still be a lifeless body. A living cat or even a living microbe is a mystery beyond the scope of human engineering. Remember that cloning and similar shenanigans begin with already living cells.

Any soul has a kind of psycho-kinesthetic or mind-over-matter function. When my soul decides to move my finger it produces a non-physical stimulus in the physical brain which in turn activates an electro-chemical chain reaction to my finger muscles. Without such a soul connection a body has no life. In like manner, without a body a simple soul would have no existence. A soul is created by God for the body. Even a human spirit/soul after death is lonesome for its body as it awaits the resurrection.

The human soul, being also a spirit, has an eternal destination in God's plan. Baptism re-creates the soul to a yet higher life form that is better fit for our fulfillment in God's kingdom.

Soul and spirit are mysterious concepts we can only begin to understand. Human language is imprecise and can only give us a foggy view of ultimate reality. The full reality of our being and of our destiny is beyond explanation or imagination. We rely on what God has revealed and we know that what we do see is only a shadow of the wonders of life.