

What is a spiritual awakening?



Question: "What is a spiritual awakening?"

Answer: A spiritual awakening is, generally speaking, a newfound awareness of a spiritual reality. A spiritual awakening can be gradual or rapid, and it can mean different things to different people. An internet search of the term *spiritual awakening* leads to sites where one can find the “five stages of spiritual awakening,” “ten (or eleven) signs of spiritual awakening,” and “eight signs you may be experiencing spiritual awakening.” These signs and stages may be physical—everything from gaining or losing appetite, weight, sleep, or energy to physical sensitivity to cell phones. Or the signs can be emotional—a broken heart, changes in relationships, or excessive episodes of grief, fear, rage, or depression. Many secular references to spiritual awakening are in the context of mysticism and [New Age thinking](#) and should be approached with extreme caution. What the world calls a “spiritual awakening” could be nothing more than an open door to contact demonic spirits.

Biblically, a spiritual awakening is not a waking from spiritual sleep but a resurrection from spiritual death. All people are born in sin and are spiritually dead. [Ephesians 2:1](#) states that, before we knew Christ, we were dead in transgressions and sins. Because of the sin of Adam, which we inherited, we are all separated from God, who is Life ([Romans 5:12](#)). We cannot experience, understand, or relate to a holy and perfect God in our unregenerate state, nor can we enter His kingdom. Our need for spiritual awakening is profound: “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ” ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)). We must roused; we must be “awakened” spiritually, or, as Jesus put it, we must be “[born again](#)” or “born of the Spirit” ([John 3:3–8](#)).

The true spiritual awakening—the new birth that Jesus spoke of—occurs not by some physical, mental, or emotional process but by the power of the Holy Spirit. One who is awakened by the Holy Spirit is recreated into a completely new person ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [Titus 3:5](#); [1 Peter 1:3](#)). That new creation is characterized by a new heart that wants to please and obey God and live for Him ([2 Corinthians 5:9](#)). He has been awakened to a new reality, one that centers on the Savior who redeemed him, the Spirit who awakened him, and the kingdom of God to which he now belongs. This is the true spiritual awakening.

[John 9](#) records the story of the man born blind, whose spiritual awakening led to an acknowledgement of who Jesus is. The man’s receipt of spiritual sight was accompanied by physical sight. The man spoke of the dawning of new light in his life in simple terms: “One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” ([John 9:25](#)). He knew the truth of [Psalm 36:9](#), “With you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.”

The apostle Paul’s spiritual awakening was sudden and dramatic, when Jesus met him on the [road to Damascus](#) and changed his life forever ([Acts 9](#)). From then on, Paul’s desire was for all believers to increase in their spiritual awareness: “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened” ([Ephesians 1:18](#)). The psalmist’s prayer was also for spiritually open

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eyes: “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law” ([Psalm 119:18](#)). Our spiritual awakening begins when Jesus sheds His light upon us: “The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned” ([Matthew 4:16](#)).

The proper response to the [Light of the World](#) should be as natural as getting up in the morning: “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you” ([Isaiah 60:1](#)). When the Holy Spirit awakens us to the truth of Christ and indwells us by grace through faith, we can truly sing with John Newton,

“Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.”