

# Try The Spirits

**Introduction.** A lot of people have bad misconceptions about evil or unclean spirits. They think they exist today as they did in the days of Jesus, and that they are forced upon us against our will by the devil. Of course, the Bible teaches otherwise.

John admonished us to be on guard against erroneous spirits (1 John 4:1). However, there is a type of spirit that is necessary to study and overcome. The spirit or attitude we adopt is what defines our ambition and our life. Living by His word gives us the power to overcome attitudes that are displeasing to God, and to embrace the ones that lead to eternal life (John 6:63).

## I. ***The Spirit Of Bondage***

- A. Because the Spirit has freed us from the law of sin and death, granting us new hope as well as new direction, we are obligated to live as the Spirit directs (Romans 8:14-15).
- B. We are not bondservants of fear (Hebrews 2:14-15). We have been adopted by God and have the privilege of crying, "Abba, Father." This relationship allows us to be properly led by God, and away from sin (Psalm 25:5; 143:10; Isaiah 48:16-17). This will allow us to overcome the dominion of sin (Romans 6:9, 14).

## II. ***The Spirit Of Fear***

- A. Reminders are needed by all, including Timothy. He was not to be afraid to use his gift, but was to "stir it up" (2 Timothy 1:7). Although his gift was miraculous, we can use what natural gifts we have to advance the cause of Christ (Romans 12:4-8).
- B. Anxiety and worry are the weapons Satan uses to frighten saints into complacency without zeal (cf. Acts 18:25; Colossians 4:12). Boldness, love, and self-restraint moved early Christians and caused paganism to topple before the truth of God (Acts 4:13, 31). These same qualities accomplish the same results now when fear is overcome (Isaiah 55:11).

## III. ***The Spirit Of Heaviness***

- A. Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18-19. Vs. 3 continues the thought and charts the progression from ashes, the visible evidence of grief, to the inner spirit of despair and mourning. Some of the finest biblical characters experienced discouragement.
- B. Too many Christians are deeply troubled, with persistent gloom in their hearts. The gift of God's salvation (Ephesians 1:7), our physical bless-

ings (Hebrews 13:5), and our intrinsic value to God (Matthew 10:31) should make us rejoice and be glad (1 Peter 1:8).

#### **IV. *The Spirit Of Jealousy***

- A. The man who believed his wife was cheating on him would manifest a tremendous spirit of jealousy (Numbers 5:14). Jealousy is the negative thoughts and feelings of insecurity, fear, and anxiety over an anticipated loss of something that a person values.
- B. This spirit can produce self-righteousness, anger, rage, hateful words, coveting, selfishness, suspicion, etc. (cf. Romans 12:15) It is a common sin, for the Lord spoke of it many times (Matthew 20:12; Mark 10:41; Luke 15:28-29). A person might be faithful in attendance and live a good, moral life, and yet harbor enough jealousy to condemn him.

#### **V. *The Spirit Of Perversion***

- A. In Isaiah 19:14, Egypt would be brought to its knees by God. Its leaders and wise men could not help the country, as it lies like a drunken man in his own vomit, groping and rolling around, without being able to find any way of escape.
- B. A perverse (also translated as "distortion," "dizziness," and "confusion") spirit is unstable and easily misled. Perverseness in the heart will twist or change the scriptures (2 Peter 3:16-17), and will cause eternal condemnation (Proverbs 11:3; 12:8; 15:4; 28:6). An upright man will save himself from a crooked or perverse generation (Acts 2:40).

#### **VI. *The Spirit Of Pride***

- A. Pride is insidious because it invades every facet of a person's life. It takes glory away from God, and leads inevitably to a downfall (Proverbs 16:18-19). Arrogance is the first step (Luke 15:11-13).
- B. Pride destroys a kind and caring spirit (cf. Proverbs 31:26; Luke 6:30). It is an ugly, egotistical, holier-than-thou, arrogant, superior spirit. This spirit leads to abasement (Proverbs 29:23; Luke 14:11; 18:14).

#### **VII. *The Spirit Of Truth***

- A. The only spirit that should be living in us is the spirit of truth (1 John 4:6). "Truth" is a reality which is "firm" or "certain." It means solidity, validity, faithfulness, and steadfastness. Something that is true has a quality of integrity.
- B. If we abide in the truth, it will triumph over the spirit of error. After David's sin with Bathsheba, he uttered a beautiful prayer and included a request for a right or steadfast spirit within him (Psalm 51:10-13).

This kind of spirit reacts with humble repentance, and stands strong in the face of compromise (1 Corinthians 16:13; Galatians 1:6-7).

**Conclusion.** A lot of people are worried way too much about the wrong kind of spirits. Some are "possessed" with "spirits" that will condemn them, yet they do not see the danger. Resist the urge of evil and let the spirit of truth "dwell in your richly" (Colossians 3:16). In doing so, you will gain a heavenly inheritance, and will be a blessing to God's children everywhere.