

RELIGIOUS SPIRIT OR SPIRIT OF RELIGION?

Spirit of religion is not a Biblical term, religion is mentioned Acts 26:5 James 1:26,27 This is not to glorify the enemy but to expose Him so that we know who we are fighting I make no apology if you see people in this, it's not my purpose to expose people but to expose our enemy Be not ignorant of the devil's devices 2 Corinthians 2:11

The spirit of religion is an agent of Satan assigned to prevent, change & to maintain the status quo by using religious devices A spirit of religion is a demon which seeks to substitute religious activity for the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives 2 Timothy 3:5 Simply put the religious spirit is a counterfeit of the Holy Spirit

As you go through this allow the Holy Spirit to search your hearts, to shine light on any darkness in us You would be surprised how your Christian upbringing could have brought you into bondage

1 VIEW OF GOD & THE WORD OF GOD IS DISTORTED

They view Jesus as a lamb that takes away sin but not into the lion of Judah who confronts, exposes & corrects sin They have a limited perception of Christ? Luke 19:45

In 2 Timothy 3:5 'to deny its power' means to state that something declared or believed to be true, is not true, to refuse to recognize or acknowledge to reject, as having no authority or binding force

They take the Word of God out of context to prove their religious points, using truth to deceive us, which brings death Its design is to distract us from the truth

They try to demonstrate & prove how together they are spiritually

Religious spirits are not limited to any particular denomination including Charismatic & Pentecostals?

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A religious spirit keeps us from hearing the voice of God by encouraging us to assume that we already know God's opinion/will & what He's saying. This causes us to rationalize scripture having us believe what rebukes, exhorts & correction are for other people but not for me. This delusion is the result of believing that God is like us.

The religious spirit seeks to have us serve the Lord in order to gain His approval rather than from a position of having received our approval through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore this spirit bases a relationship to God on, personal discipline rather than our dying to self for Christ.

We must be open to greater accuracy in our beliefs & understanding of the Word of God. One of the greatest delusions is we believe what we hear is accurate every time i.e. sermon. Self-help psychology has crept into the pulpit replacing the power of the Cross (Joel Osteen is an example) 2
Corinthian's 11:4

Worship is heartless it becomes a ritual. God abhors empty worship.

Many think saved only to have a religion & not relationship. Religion separates us from God. The religious spirit moves the person away from the deep things of God to only receive the milk (basics) not the meat.

They are unable to discern the work of the Spirit or to move in the Spirit realm.

Prayer is vain reputation without involving the heart. Matthew 6:7 The Lord's prayer is a memorized chant, meaning little or nothing. It's a guide to us to pray but has become a ritual. Prayer is a token gesture a reading.

Matthew 13:24-30 the enemy sows dandelion, false wheat or tares 'zizani' in the midst of real true wheat. In the early stages it is undistinguishable from the real instead bearing edible grain, it produces small dark seeds that often host poisonous fungus, it gets entangled with the 'sons of kingdom' v38 'sons of evil' the ones planted there to hinder growth of the wheat, not

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bad people but bad acts, seduced by the enemy to oppose Gods work
They appear identical & hard to distinguish The danger in rooting out the
tears is that the true harvest of wheat may be harmed

2 EMPASIS ON OUTWARD APPEARANCES

In Paul's letter to Timothy He warns that our words may appear religious
but they lack the spiritual substance of an intimate believer Avoid such
people as it's a deceptive elusion, a form of godliness 2 Timothy 3:5

It's a spirit that spends a great deal of time talking about the magnificent
things they are doing for the Lord They love the praises of others
Appearance, structure, ceremony, formula, liturgy, ritual they are more
interested in liturgy than liberty, they focus on the outward appearance The
result is that they miss the spiritual dynamics of the Church because they
focus on the carnal externals

Do those that labor Do good things or God things?

The religious appear polite, lovely, along with their smooth words, flattering
lips & deceptive tongues If you challenge them, you'll find this out

They wear a façade with a motive to control & manipulative you They rarely
carry through on anything There all talk but short on the walk Often doing
little outside of their own imaginations

Watch out for the 'but' statements or excuses for not doing what they are
supposed to do They become insensitive as they are deceived by their own
good works They focus on their natural abilities& avoid the spiritual
dynamics of serving Jesus

Matthew 23:27 they are beautiful on the outside but dead on the inside
Jesus showed the religious up The disciples didn't wash their hands
Matthew 15:1-3 focus on externals not internals Matthew 23:5 Causing
people to seek approval for who they are Matthew 23:6,7

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Discern whether its superficial, right words, right thing, right look or because they fear what others think

3 KEEPS TO THEIR TRADITIONS & FORMULAS OF THE PAST

Believe that belonging to a Church or doing religious things is what saves you from which we also get the theology of once saved always saved False assurance that doesn't include repentance is counterfeit conversion

Tradition, legalism, liturgy is assumed these rituals are pleasing to God Often there is intimidation, manipulation & control associated yet subtle

Legalism is defined as strict, literal & excessive conformity to a moral code 2 Corinthians 3:6 Religious (Pharisees) are fine, upstanding people, upright, religious, defenders of right morals, read Bible, obey the laws & do their religious duty/service They are pillars in society as they don't threaten or infiltrate their beliefs on others 1 Timothy 1:15 Replaced relationship with ritual Rarely is their flexibility as they hold onto their past achievements with great honor

Mark 7:8 they choose the traditions of men & the comfortable life It's all a façade, a dead imitation, it may look good but doesn't please God

4 THEY ARE JOYLESS ALWAYS TIRED & WORN OUT

The religious spirit replaces the inner peace of the Holy Spirit with false assurance There is no gladness Duet 28:47 it steals their joy, their strength, Nehemiah 8:10 When your strength is stolen its very difficult to stand up against the attacks of the enemy

We become focused on doing rather than being Spirit lead

The ultimate goal of the religious spirit is to cut us off from a real & vital relationship with the Lord

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Religion allures us with false promises, thinking we are spiritual but leaving us tired & burnt out When your spiritual life & ministry starts feeling stagnant, lifeless & burdensome You are deceived into thinking that the things of the Spirit are heavy, intense, so you start acting & ministering from heaviness instead of heavenliness

Flesh becomes our slave 1 Corinthians 9:27 the mind is a great servant but a terrible master If we allow our minds to rule us, a religious spirit will influence us Matthew 11:28-30 The outcome is that we become INSENSITIVE TO HEAR spiritual deafness, it wears us out mentally, spiritually, insensitive, cuts of our joy, drains away sense of presence of God You don't feel or see what others get from God & become critical Isaiah 29:10-12 in deep sleep, eyes shut, become blind, hard & numb

5 BECOME PROUD, SELF RIGHTEOUS, SELF CENTRED

Have you been around a person who projects self-righteousness or a better than you attitude? Have you meet a religious person who is insensitive to the needs of those around them?

They try to appear righteous in public They will say things in front of others that tend to exalt their social status Matthew 16:6 Leaven is to be avoided the religious spirit does not operate like the leaven in bread It does not add substance or nutritional value to the bread, it only inflates it It doesn't add to the life or power of the Church but merely feeds the very pride of man Which first caused the fall & almost all since Satan understands better than the Church , that God resists the proud & gives grace to the humble James 4:6 He knows God will not inhabit any work that is inflated with pride God will resist such a work Satan also knows that when leaven gets into the bread, its extremely difficult to remove it Pride by its very nature is the most difficult stronghold to remove or correct

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Idealism is one of the most deceptive & destructive disguises of the religious spirit. Idealism is humanism; it has the appearance of seeking only the highest standards & God's glory. In reality, it is possibly the most deadliest enemy of revelation & true grace. Idealism makes us try to take on their standards & beliefs as they are correct, boasting & camouflaging their pride, fears & insecurities. Often it will rise up as religious pride, masquerading as faith. Although they may claim to be open to more understanding, this is often a smoke screen.

The religious spirit makes us feel good spiritually, pride feels good, as it keeps all of our attention on how well we are doing & on how we stand compared to others. Not on the glory of God.

Discipline, commitment & self-sacrifice are essential qualities, but it is the motivation behind them that determines whether we are driven by a religious spirit or by love for Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

This spirit offers you things that appeal to your pride & self-worth; it tempts you to compromise. Causing you to walk in pride & not humility without acknowledging its God who empowers, anoints & calls us. It justifies wrong behavior & sin.

PERFECTIONISM, HYPROCRITICAL, JUDGEMENTAL, GOSSIPS & PERFECTIONISM ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

Perfectionism is extreme behavior or expectation, beyond the balance of being excellent. They have high expectations, often never getting started or finishing projects, because they don't measure up to their perfectionist standards.

Religious spirits are always critical of the way you do things for God. Luke 6:41,42. Webster defines a Gossip as a person who chatters or repeats idle talk & rumors especially about the private affairs of others. The religious always find plenty to gossip about. To see faults in others, the ones with the beams in their eyes. Matthew 7:3. Gossip is one of the most destructive

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weapons in Church Religious spirits hang with like-minded people, they are drawn to one another but assassinate others with their tongues 3
John 9-11

They are notoriously Hypocritical ie Judas when Mary poured the expensive perfume over Jesus. They see your faults but not their own They often accuse you of having the problems they have or they are often doing what they accuse another of doing Hypocrite are actors who did not identify themselves with their roles, play acting, disguised to fool others Isaiah 29:13

7 THEY REJECT NEW REVELATION THEY DONT EMBRACE CHANGE & ARENT TEACHABLE

Religious isn't Teachable because they think they already know it all After all they are the leader. They become offended by anyone they perceive may know more than they do There is no openness to be taught, say no to new ideas & strategies or ways to do things

Have you encountered a religious person who can't take subtle hints of correction? Prophetic revelation will increase in the last days Matthew 24:11 Acts 2:17 so will false & inflated revelations 1 Timothy 1:15 True revelation of God is an antidote for religious spirit Demons hate revelation from God, they attempt to block strategic thinking, a strong opposition to change, they instill attitudes & mindsets contrary to Gods They want God in a box

8 PERSECUTE THOSE WHO OPPOSE & EXPOSE (CUT THEM OFF)

My mother was a expert at this & she wasn't a Christian. The walls would be erected to protect her

Let's look at Paul of Tarsus the Pharisees of Pharisees he was enraged at Christians persecuting & killing them Those with a religious spirit may well try to destroy by mental means, to destroy their impact on those who are all out for God

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Word persecute is 'belah' means to wear out It implies a wearing out of the mind, to put down, to slander those who move in the Holy Spirit

9 LEADERS SEEK STATUS - THE END RESULT IS DISASTAUROUS

Do you know a leader who chases religious status, titles & positions? Have you meet a leader who was offered a position to stay on in the Church? Does leadership expect you to do things they are not prepared to do themselves? Have you meet a leader who can't perceive the spiritual dynamics of their Church?

Position seekers are looking to advance their position of influence & visibility in the Church & society so they can fulfil their purpose to be admired by men Job 32:21,22

These leaders tear down & don't build up Jeremiah 1:10 Causing confusion & eventually division There are a number of self-appointed leaders in the church today Putting those with religious spirit in a position of Leadership is a death sentence to the ministry Building gallows by giving them titles & positions that they covet Eventually this kind of ministry dies causing more damage than good As it was never birthed by the Holy Spirit

True grace imparts truth to set us free, not bind us with unreal expectations Woe to the Shepherds who feed & care for the sheep but fail to correct their flock (have a look at my teaching on 'the Greatest lack in the Church')

These types of leaders don't want to lose their power, so they hold on to the old wineskins They appear as though they are living a holy life Even accurate in prophecies & ministry gifts (often they are broad & not specific words) God doesn't take His Gifts back We have to DISCERN whether its false or of God Personally Ive found words start correct but go into the flesh

If you're in a Church where some things are not right GET OUT because you are possibility under a spirit of religion It will affect you, it reproduces after itself, leading people astray & into bondage

They major on the minors& make the minors majors

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The Prophetic is necessary in our day & God speaks through it but we need the Gift of Discernment (see teaching)

10 BRINGS DIVISION & AVOIDS CONFRONTATION

Is there anyone Christians & leaders in your life you have to walk on eggshells with? Have you been accused of being unloving because you confronted a friend because you actually genuinely cared for them?

Religious spirits don't take hints & can't handle Holy Spirit lead confrontation Their motto is decree & flee; they flee when they are exposed (that maybe making excuses) & decree how unloving & not understanding you are Because after all you are upsurging their authority You may try to gently correct them but they aren't listening The way they avoid confrontation is that they make you afraid to say anything to them, because you don't know how they'll react or overact?

True LOVE is not getting into an argument with a religious person when they are out of order, fleshly & unscriptural However tough LOVE doesn't bow to anyone but God It's a matter of praying for God's timing

They feed their take which may be distorted scripture interpretation & expect you to agree with it

The religious spirit has done more damage, than the new age movement & cults in the Church Because it seeks to divide It is a counterfeit to true love & unity within the Body of Christ In the last days this spirit will attack the very core of the Church

This spirit can wiggle its way out of almost anything that seeks to confront it, slippery in nature It hates being revealed When confronted it attempts to make the confronter feel like they are judgmental & divisive, causes relationships to be fragmented & decay in the Church Fostering religious responses to problems & situations, derailing direction all under religion

I witnessed a situation in a Church where the Pastors took sides between two groups of their congregation Making excuses & accusing the other side What did it do it spilt the Church

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11 ZEALOUS FOR THE THINGS THEY BELIEVE IN – THE GREAT DECEPTION

One of the most deceptive characteristics about the religious spirit, is that it is founded upon Zeal for God We tend to think Zeal for God is good & not evil but it depends on why they are Zealous for Him Romans 10:2

A great example as mentioned was Saul a Pharisee The Jews are incredibly committed to their cause as are the Muslims In fact, they put us Christians to same

You see regardless of how important a gift or characteristic is, that we have, if the enemy can get us to take pride in it, he will have us in his snare(trap) & will use the gift for evil Jeus had little difficulty with demons as they recognized His authority crying out for mercy But the it was the religious, zealots, pharisees that where His greatest enemy The same is true today It's the religious spirits that stop more moves of God & revivals

When the focus is on the sacrifice (works)& not the Cross the ultimate sacrifice It's a sure sign things are not as they should be

12 THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT IS TIED TO JEEZEBEL SPIRIT

Revelation 2:20,21 The Church at Thyatira was tolerating the Jezebel spirit & was given time to repent from this false religion v20 It must be exposed & confronted The religious spirit is tied to the Jezebel spirit Let's take a look why? She was the wife of King Ahab who allowed her to dictate policy & manipulate him controlling his kingdom You see Jezebel supplants itself with weak leadership Some of the characteristics of weak leaders are insecure, compromising, inconsistent, tolerate evil, people pleasers, don't confront, deceived, in a spiritual drought, copy other leaders, pretense about them & they cause friction Ahab in marriage (natural) but also spiritual he gave her full reign Jezebel controls, manipulates, seduces, intimidates & operates in spiritual witchcraft

Let me give you another example The chairman of the Elders had a wife who dictated to him what she wanted for the Church as she had no authority, she used his (backdoor)

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Where she attacks the prophetic ie John the Baptist it was King Harrods wife that got John beheaded Goal to remove the true Prophets (voice & revelation of the Church) John 7:18 motivated by the love of God alone

FREEDOM FROM THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

Prayer to Break the power of the spirit of religion (reviveandrestore.org)

To break the ties, influence, ungodly alliances known & unknown generational curses & ties (I'd suggest you use the above prayer)

This spirit must be resisted, bound, broken & cast out in Jesus Name

This is a very strong spirit so don't attempt it on your own seek support from someone who is aware of the stronghold of spirit's over lives

Also check out 'Signs of a religious spirit' by Rick Joyner the 19 manifestations of the religious spirit based on 2 Timothy 3:1-5