

3 Ways You May Stifle the Spirit

Last night, I had a dream. My tarp, the one set up next to the swimming pool, was falling down. It turns out I was turning the screws the *wrong* direction. Now, the hooks were unfastening and the whole covering had too much slack and was coming undone. The evil person was now going to win.

Maybe you feel this way too: like things are coming apart. Like you are not going to win.

I gleaned an important message from my dream: when, from the Spirit, our attention departs, things fall apart. Here, we push the wrong way. We move through life by the limitations of our natural mind. We get frustrated by halted goals. We pulsate with anger because God didn't come through.

We cannot "force" something by works and at the same time believe God, not by sight. The two are as polar as opposites.

I don't want to push in the wrong direction. Do you?

Let's avoid stifling the Spirit. Here are three **main ways we stifle the Spirit**:

1. Fear.

The second we move away from love, we live in fear. Just as you can't live in Antarctica and find tropical weather, you can't live in fear and dwell easily in love. If you feel your heart consumed with worry, anxiety or the sense God is far and unavailable, return back to daddy.

Return back to the truth that: You are loved. God is with you. He will not fail you. He has done the miraculous before, and certainly, He can do it again.

2. Works.

We are trained to think: He/she who works harder, lives better; the person with the most schooling, gets the best job; practice makes perfect.

God's economy doesn't run like ours. Rest in God is often the formula to renewal in the Spirit. And, renewal in the Spirit is the currency of life, peace, joy, hope, direction, fullness and purpose. If there is no life apart from the Spirit, there's certainly death by works. We all know this: we've had moments of feeling overwhelmed, over-tired and over-it.

God honors works, when they're done by the prompting of the Spirit, otherwise, they ring empty, shallow and lifeless.

3. Attention Deficit Issues.

If we can not attend our minds to the Spirit, we will pay no attention to Him.

I know what it is to have attention problems: I look here, there and everywhere. I see a whole world at play, but at the same time – I see nothing. I see so much, but I have no focus.

The same thing happens when we let the world take center stage. We see the talking heads politicizing, we see the cars moving down the street at 65 miles an hour, we see the to-do list, we see the text messages coming in a mile/min. But, what we do not see or hear is God.

We've allowed so much to crowd in, we've crowded out the Spirit's voice, nudges, and revelations.

I am guilty of all of the above; this is why I write about it. Yet, I am also, today, choosing to renew my mind, by praying this: *Father, I have turned the wrong way. I have turned away from the Holy Spirit. Forgive me. I am going nowhere. I am spinning my wheels. I want to return back to your loving arms. I want to know the way to go: to life. Thank you for forgiving*

me, for restoring me and renewing me. Holy Spirit, fill me afresh. Amen.

With a clear heart and a ready Spirit, I am now ready to:

1. Cling to God's promises
2. Dwell on truth, life, and hope.
3. Attune my ear to listen.
4. Be attentive to the Spirit's promptings.
5. Spend time with God, before I do work on my own stuff.
6. Rest in God.
7. Expect the best from a God who loves me.
8. Ask God what to do next.
9. Give thanks.
10. Lift all glory right back to God.

What about you? Do you feel full of peace and life or are you running on empty or spinning your wheels? Why not turn back to the Spirit of life? {eo}

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