

# 7 Ways You Know You're Listening to Holy Spirit and Not a Religious Spirit

"Yet many of the rulers also believed in Him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43).

When Jesus revolutionized His nation with the gospel of the kingdom, He was continually questioned and criticized for His visionary initiatives and unorthodox methods. The Pharisees were the politically correct referees who sought to silence His voice and penalize any advancement of His message.

Knowing that their power and influence were losing ground, their religious mindsets could not comprehend or celebrate the very truths that could set them free from their own man-made bondage.

It is just like the accuser of the brethren to threaten and attack anyone who exposes his lies and demonstrates the true nature of our heavenly Father. Our spiritual adversary seeks to use control, fear and condemnation in order to keep us trapped in our flesh and disconnected from the life-giving power of God's Spirit.

This religious spirit is still active today, speaking into the ears of many unsuspecting believers, trying to block any kingdom advancement and fresh expression of the Holy Spirit. Preying on our fears and self-doubts, this demonic influence will stop at nothing to keep us bound to religious systems and the expectations of man.

This spirit is manifesting again today, not only in our national politics, but in many of our church pulpits and

social media platforms. This counterfeit authority is still speaking, trying to draw us away from all that the Father is accomplishing in this hour. The enemy resists any true work of the Spirit and subverts any attempts at bringing the supernatural realities of heaven to earth.

It is the Holy Spirit who we must recognize and embrace if we are to partner with heaven's purposes and see radical transformation happen in our culture. It is the Holy Spirit who will lead us into truth and keep us on the path to victory. It is His voice that we can trust to rightly discern the Father's activities and discern the enemy's schemes.

"But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own authority. But He will speak whatever He hears, and He will tell you things that are to come" (John 16:13).

The first step in getting free of any religious spirit is to recognize its presence and purpose. If we understand the redeeming nature of the Father's heart and His highest purposes for our lives, we can rightly discern which voice to listen to in order to open wide the gates for the King of glory to come in.

Prayerfully consider these comparisons and see if you recognize any pattern in your own life:

1. The religious spirit is like an older brother who follows you around, criticizing your every move and whispering endless doubts that cause you to shrink back in fear. The Holy Spirit is like a loving father who is always two steps ahead, taking your hand and gently leading you on a path of discovery.
2. The religious spirit gets bent out of shape when the rules aren't followed. The Holy Spirit gets excited when creative expression imagines the possibilities.
3. The religious spirit berates you for missing the mark.

The Holy Spirit inspires you to aim higher next time.

4. The religious spirit tells you to “stay in the lines!”  
The Holy Spirit tells you to “go explore!”
5. The religious spirit wants credit. The Holy Spirit celebrates others.
6. The religious spirit debates everything you do. The Holy Spirit dares you to climb higher.
7. The religious spirit is a task master that is never satisfied with your efforts and always asking for more.  
The Holy Spirit is your greatest cheerleader, drawing out the best in you, even when you make mistakes.

Your journey is meant to be one of freedom, joy and a never-ending sense of wonder and awe. Even through the trials, setbacks and personal weaknesses, the Holy Spirit always sees a way through and will empower you to keep moving.

Your destiny is ahead of you, not behind you. It's not about “adding up,” but jumping in! It's redemption, not religion, that brings life to the dead and wholeness to the broken.

As we determine to follow Jesus' example and listen to the Holy Spirit instead of a politically correct religious spirit, we can be assured of fulfilling the Father's purpose.

In the end, it's not whether or not we get it “right.” It's about who we travel with and discovering the endless possibilities of heaven inside of us that the flesh can never reach.

“So then, beloved ones, the flesh has no claims on us at all, and we have no further obligation to live in obedience to it. For when you live controlled by the flesh, you are about to die. But if the life of the Spirit puts to death the corrupt ways of the flesh, we then taste his abundant life. The mature children of God are those who are moved by the impulses of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 8:12-14, TPT). {eoa}

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