

How to Rid Yourself of Religious Spirits

How to recognize and get rid of religious spirits in your life

A family once brought a woman to our church on Steele Street and Blue Avenue in Jacksonville, Florida, who needed deliverance. We did not have deliverance teams in the church at that time; only my husband, Ardell, and I did the ministry.

This woman had come from a mental hospital in South Florida. As God is my witness, when I pulled up to the church, she was sitting in a car—and it literally was rocking. As she stepped out, the demons spoke through her.

“Kim cannot cast me out!” they shouted. “Benny Hinn cannot even cast me out! You have never met this demon!”

We took her downstairs to the basement of the church, where the woman paced back and forth, speaking in demonic voices and declaring that we had no power to cast the demon out. “You cannot cast me out!” she yelled. “I pray in tongues just like you! I quote scriptures like the Son of God!”

Then she uttered these words that I will never forget: “I am the *religious* spirit!”

“My God—religious spirit?” I thought. I had never heard of this demon.

Though her words baffled my intellect, the devil had been set up. That was the worst thing this stupid spirit could have ever done. He revealed his identity and blew his cover in the church!

At the time, my natural mind could not relate religion to a demon. As the years passed, I have reached a better understanding of this devil and how it operates. It is a major

spirit that initiates attacks against the church but does not come from occult darkness or operate through incantations, voodoo or rituals. It works boldly and upfront in the church on a daily basis.

Because of the intensity of what Ardell and I were experiencing with this woman, we began by faith to call out some of the manifestations of religion. Here are just a few of them:

- The spirit that gives offerings to be seen or looks for something in return
- The spirit that dresses up the demonic with church clothes (long dresses, veils, head coverings)
- The Scripture-quoting demon
- The spirit of condemnation
- The church-splitting demon
- The spirit that oppresses the youth and turns them from God
- The spirit of charismatic witchcraft that cloaks the anointing in men's gifts
- The spirit of false revival

The good news is, the religious spirit was cast out of that woman. And since that day years ago, we have cast out more of the same spirits than we can count. The bad news is, many believers are in the same place of ignorance about this that I once was in. They cannot relate *religion* to a "demon" or *charismatic* to "witchcraft."

The key thing to remember is that there is no power in creation that did not originate through the Creator.

Powers of darkness are merely twisted and perverted forms of the original power of our God. This is why all witches and others from the dark side use Scripture, religious books and religious symbolism when doing their dirty deeds.

A scary thing to me is that the religious spirit cloaks itself

under the guise of true spirituality in Christ. Most believers cannot discern it.

It is my prayer that this article will remove scales and veils from the eyes of God's people. The enemy is launching an inside attack against the church. He will use praise, prophecy, the gifts or even the Word of God against us. Remember this: For everything God created, the devil designed a counterfeit.

What Does the Bible Say?

✖ The Word of God has something to say about religion. In Acts 25-26, we see that Jewish religious leaders wanted Paul put to death and had petitioned the Roman authorities to have him executed. In Acts 26:4-11, as Paul defends himself before the Roman ruler Agrippa, he confirms that since the beginning of the church the enemy has been using believers to persecute one another.

He states: "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first ... that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. For this hope's sake ... I am accused by the Jews.

"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities."

One of the main ways to recognize the work of religious

spirits is this: Under the disguise of religion, they persecute the righteous and faithful.

Paul makes a clear distinction between his time growing up as a leader under the religious law and his born-again experience after he met Christ on the road to Damascus. The road to Damascus represents more than the dramatic conversion of Paul's life. It also reveals the plot of the enemy to persecute and trouble God's elect from within the church. Paul told the Galatians:

"For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:13-14).

Through his own testimony, Paul reveals that the *traditions of men* are the strongholds of religion. Jesus highlighted this as "vain" worship in Mark 7:7-8: "In vain (fruitlessly and without profit) do they worship Me, ordering and teaching [to be obeyed] as doctrines the commandments and precepts of men. You disregard and give up and ask to depart from you the commandment of God and cling to the tradition of men [keeping it carefully and faithfully]" (AMP).

Vain worship is like a person going to the gym seven days a week and working out with no results. God says vain worship produces no results. This is why many people accept defeat in God and backslide. But the Word tells us *there is no failure in Christ!* This victory can be manifested in our lives if we give high regard to the commandments of the Lord and take our attention off the traditions of men.

The traditions of men flow through *generational* religious spirits. People literally pick up religious habits that have nothing to do with the commandments of the Lord and are more faithful to them than to the Word of God.

Colossians 2:6-23 teaches on freedom from human regulations through a new birth in Christ. It warns us of man-made traditions and speaks of the cancellation of “the written code” and its regulations.

This code worked against the believer in Christ, not for him. It made people set unattainable goals that gave birth to the fruits of failure, defeat and misery. It literally opposed the abundant freedom in Christ that was meant to be.

Galatians 5:1 commands that we stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free. It adds we should not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. The Greek meanings of words Paul used are important to understanding the verse:

» “Stand fast” (*steko*): To stand firm in faith and duty; to have a constant flow that causes one to persevere.

» “Liberty” (*eleutheria*): To be blessed with generosity and independence that is bestowed upon a person as a result of the economy of God’s grace, which was not made available under the law of the Old Testament. To also have independence from religious regulation that is rooted in the legal restrictions of man. James 2:10-14 teaches on “the perfect” law of liberty in Christ: “For whosoever keeps the Law [as a] whole but stumbles and offends in one [single instance] has become guilty of [breaking] all of it. For He Who said, You shall not commit adultery, also said, You shall not kill. If you do not commit adultery but do kill, you have become guilty of transgressing the [whole] Law.

“So speak and so act as [people should] who are to be judged under the law of liberty [the moral instruction given by Christ, especially about love]. For to him who has shown no mercy the judgment [will be] merciless, but mercy [full of glad confidence] exults victoriously over judgment. What is the use (profit), my brethren, for anyone to profess to have faith if he has no [good] works [to show for it]? Can [such]

faith save [his soul]? (AMP).

» “Entangled” (*enecho*): To be held subject to or be under the control of. To struggle over or to quarrel with.

» “Yoke” (*zygos*): Something that attaches two things together. It couples things and causes them to be connected by a burden that’s hard to bear.

» “Bondage” (*douleia*): Servitude that promotes dependence upon a person, place or thing; the state of a man that prevents him from freely possessing abundant life and enjoying it.

Based on the Greek definitions, anything that causes a believer to struggle or be double-minded about something to the point that he becomes attached to a burdensome load and cannot enjoy abundant life in Christ is devilish. It is not of God. To sum it up: The spirit of religious bondage is demonic.

Many believers are stuck in ruts whereby they are not experiencing new growth in Christ. When there is new birth, it must be confirmed with new growth. With the genuine new birth, old things are cut off and pass away. Once the old is pruned, the new can grow.

If a believer continues to return to the old yoke of bondage, he will be bound by spiritually arrested development. He will not experience the level-to-level, glory-to-glory promised him in the Word.

He will be condemned to a form of godliness, which makes a person appear to be victorious in Jesus on the outside. But actually they shut down the power on the inside of them that is greater than what is coming against them in life. There is no victory in the life of the believer who succumbs to the regimens, rudiments and habits of religious forms.

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