

## **THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY**

### **LESSON 1**

### **What is Religiosity?**

Within the realm of religion, especially Christianity, there comes a spirit that aims to pervert the genuineness of a relationship with God. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and other religious leaders fell victim to this spirit, while even in today's time Christians must combat this same demon to prevent a similar fate. To understand this spirit one must define and inspect the doctrine of religiosity to overcome its traps.

#### **RELIGIOSITY DEFINED**

Religiosity is defined as the quality or state of being religious; religious feeling or devotion. This is the exact opposite of how God designed mankind to interact with Him. Religiosity is a feeling or a quality of being religious through action while not reflective of a relationship with God. Just as a person who is married should not have the quality, feeling, or obligation to their marriage as a state of being, but instead should be so involved in their relationship with their spouse to express devotion as a fruit of their love.

- **Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.**

**Isaiah 29:13 KJV**

- **This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.**

**Matthew 15:8 KJV**

- **Thus saith the Lord, what iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?**

**Jeremiah 2:5 KJV**

These verses express this spirit of religiosity taking root within some of the hearts of God's people for many generations. Losing the purpose of believing in God is dangerous and leads to religiosity. Mankind was created to worship God and have fellowship with Him (**Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:15-16**). Religiosity blinds participants by having the right action but without a relationship with God. The Apostle Paul describes this as having a form of godliness but denying the power of Him interacting in these people's lives (**2 Timothy 3:5**).

As the example previously mentioned, a marriage can be instituted but does not constitute a true relationship between the spouses. How many marriages are still on record but the spouses have given up on having a relationship within that marriage? This same mindset can sadly be said about some Christians and their relationship with God.

**MODERN RELIGIOSITY**

Modern religiosity is not only the religious people who hold to the acts of traditions without having a relationship with God but also those who act in the name of religion while not having the heart of God. This includes social justice and modern agendas that do not represent the kingdom of God but express the motives of individuals or groups who add the religious tag to their actions from a heart of religiosity. Having the name of Christianity while opposing its views on matters negates the very claim of the Christian faith.

The spirit of religiosity can present the façade of a relationship with God through acts of religion but the relationship may have ceased to exist long ago. Every Christian must walk with God daily through Bible study, prayer, worship, being in the house of God, and being led by the Spirit of God. Even these actions must not be from a routine of habit or obligation but from a sincere heart's desire to be intimate with God.

The religious leaders of Jesus' time mastered the art of having religious action but no relationship with God. This is evident in the promised Messiah from the Scriptures, these leaders knew backward and forwards, standing before them yet these leaders desired to eliminate Jesus Christ because He interrupted their comfort in their religion.

**JESUS' DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF RELIGIOSITY**

- Blind guides (**Matthew 15:14; 23:16,24,26**)
- Fools (**Matthew 23:17,19; Luke 11:40,52**)
- Whited sepulchers (**Matthew 23:27**)
- Serpents (**Matthew 23:33**)
- Generation of vipers (**Matthew 12:34; 23:33**)
- Hypocrites (**Matthew 6:5,16; 22:18; 23:13-14,23,25,27,29; Mark 7:6; Luke 11:44; 13:15**)
- Graves that appear not (**Luke 11:44**)
- Murderers (**Matthew 23:34-35; Luke 11:49-51; John 8:37**)
- Evil and adulterous generation (**Matthew 12:39; 16:4**)
- Transgressors of God's commandments (**Matthew 15:3; Mark 7:8-9,13; Luke 11:42**)
- Lazy (**Matthew 23:4; Luke 11:46**)
- Prideful to be seen of men (**Matthew 23:5-7; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 11:43**)
- Liars (**Matthew 23:30-31; Luke 11:48**)
- Hardhearted (**Mark 10:5**)
- Tempters (**Mark 12:15; Luke 20:23**)
- Unscriptural and without God (**Mark 12:24; Luke 16:15**)
- Complaining children (**Luke 7:32**)
- Deceivers (**Luke 11:44; 17:20-21**)
- Unholy offering givers (**Luke 21:1-4**)
- A devil/devil's children (**John 6:70; 8:44**)
- Lukewarm (**Revelation 3:14-16**)

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With this many descriptions of Jesus Christ calling out the people choosing religiosity, Christians should understand how displeasing this lifestyle is to God. Religiosity is the goal of the spiritual enemies of God.

### QUOTES ON RELIGIOSITY

“People want a God that gives and not governs. People want a God of salvation and not of stipulation. People want a God who delivers but not dictates. People want a God who provides but not prohibits. These are characteristics of religious, but sinful men.”

Pastor Ron Ralph

“You can have faith only in relation to your knowledge of God.”

Dr. Lester Sumrall

“It is hard to be led by God when you are dancing with the world.”

“No matter what you claim to be unless you live it you are not it.”

Pastor Caleb Andrews

“Flesh loves comfort and so does the spiritually broken.”

“The Word preached profits no one. The Word obeyed profits, everyone.”

“Comfort, convenience, and compromise are the unholy trinity of the world.”

Pastor Chris McMichael

“The house of God should be a house of clarity.”

“Our God is far from common so why treat the church as common?”

“You disrespect the Word but you want the Word to work in your life.”

Dr. Mark T. Barclay

Each of these quotes will be reflected in the motives and operations of the spirit of religiosity as these lessons continue. A true walk with God does not allow the world's influence to neglect the things of God or conduct acts without proper heart. Actions produced by love display true relationships.

May Christians everywhere not fall for the trap of religiosity but choose to have a genuine relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ being led by the Holy Spirit.

## THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY

### LESSON 2

### The Communist Flavor

There are dangerous demons that plague certain areas of the world. Each region or sphere of jurisdiction has its own strongholds depending on the area's culture. Each spirit or demon works to create a false sense of security, inclusion, and provision. Although this may sound like a description of the demon of Communism, the subject of these lessons is the demon of religiosity.

The religious demon mimics the demon of Communism in mandating to identify with groups, especially *ethnicities* (*race, nationality, language, religion/denomination, culture, or background*), *sexuality* (*sexual orientation, sexual preference, gender expression, and gender identity*), and *other interests* (*interest creating exclusion of others who do not share the same interest*). Those of the ethnic groups gather to distance themselves from everyone else. The sexuality group gathers to express their sexual nature without confrontation. While other interest groups gather for their favorite topics common among the group without judgment. Each of these groups creates a sense of security by keeping everyone on the same level rather than seeing any errors of these groups while simultaneously breeding a disdain for people in any of the other groups.

- **Then Peter replied I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation, he accepts those who fear him and do what is right.**

**Acts 10:34-35 NLT**

- **For God does not show favoritism.**

**Romans 2:11 NLT**

- **My fellow believers, do not practice your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of partiality [toward people – show no favoritism, no prejudice, no snobbery].**

**James 2:1 AMP**

The demon of religiosity uses the ethnic group to keep churches from fellowshiping with one another and dividing over race, language, and culture. It uses the sexuality group to participate in sexual sin while excusing it because of its Christian label. This demon uses other interest groups like connect groups or small groups creating cliches with less focus on the things of God and more focus on natural things.

### THREE METHODS OF CHANGE

This demon rewrites history, reinvents language, and implants ideas of social justice. The easiest way to change the hearts and minds of people and allow this demon to gain power is through these methods.

**Rewrite History:** Rewriting history according to the voice of the religious demon sounds like, “You don’t need to read the Old Testament, we’ve been delivered from that”. While the Bible states clearly that Christians are to give heed to all scripture.

- **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness**

**2 Timothy 3:16 KJV**

- **Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled.**

**Romans 15:4 NLT**

- **Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.**

**Matthew 24:35 KJV**

When history is rewritten the foundations are broken down to allow a new foundation to be laid of what this demon desires. God gives specific instruction to not lay the foundation again of His kingdom (**Hebrews 6:1-2**).

**Reinvent language:** Reinventing language according to the voice of the religious demon sounds like, “Let’s be relevant in our community and have a conversation as a group”. Changing the meaning of words and creating a language based on culture allows the truth to be changed with the next trend. God’s Word does not change giving us an example that truth never changes.

- **For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any many shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

**Revelation 22:18-19 KJV**

- **But he answered and said, It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

**Matthew 4:4 KJV**

- **Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.**

**Romans 1:25 KJV**

The Bible is designed to stand the test of eternity because it is the truth of God (**Isaiah 40:8, Psalm 119:89, 1 Peter 1:25**). Reinventing God’s Word or the language of what He is saying destroys the very essence of God and His plan for people to use His Word to know Him. When His language is altered the spiritual enemies win by taking away the

communication of God to His people through His Word. True Christians must stand against this demon of changing God's Word.

**Implant ideas of social justice:** Implanting ideas of social justice according to the voice of the religious demon sounds like, "That is the old way of believing". It places a need to change what is right according to a new trend or movement instead of being based on the firm foundation of the Word of God. Another form of thought is there is no truth but only different points of view. God's Word is truth and Jesus is the Truth. God does not change and neither does His truth or justice (what is right in His eyes).

- **Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

**John 14:6 KJV**

- **For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.**

**Malachi 3:6 KJV**

What God established in His Word has not changed nor should it change even with culture and society desiring to change God to fit their desires. The 10 attributes of social justice are equity, human rights, democracy and civil rights, capacity building, just institutions, enabling environments, poverty reduction, ethical practice, advocacy, and partnerships. Looking at this list one may not see the danger in these attributes but the motives behind such a scheme is to divide resources, opportunities, and privileges in society leaving room for all manner of lifestyle to be equal and protected. God does not constitute every lifestyle to be of equal rights when sin is unrepented. God removes His hand of protection and provision to those who choose sin and not to repent (**Romans 6:23, 1 John 3:4, James 4:17, Isaiah 59:2**).

- **<sup>10</sup>An employer who hires a fool or a bystander is like an archer who shoots at random. <sup>11</sup>As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness. <sup>13</sup>The lazy person claims, "There's a lion on the road! Yes, I'm sure there's a lion out there!"**

**Proverbs 26:10-11, 13 NLT**

These verses display that when a lazy person seeking distribution without working for it receives it they will go back to the old manner of life with a poverty mindset. This causes the social justice purposes to be in vain while draining those that do work. An agenda of this nature is not biblical.

- **For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:10 KJV**

- **Let the thief steal no more, but rather let him be industrious, making an honest living with his own hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need.**

**Ephesians 4:28 AMP**

Many who seek social justice agendas fall into one of a few categories: being deceived that everyone deserves equality and *everyone will succeed* forever (**Ephesians 4:28**), pushing for equality to stay in their sin and not be required to change (**Luke 13:3, James 4:17, Acts 17:30, Acts 3:19**), or looking for the easiest method to live without having to exert any efforts (**2 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:8, Proverbs 13:4**). As one can see the first category is noble, but deceived in thinking that everyone desires help to do better. Everyone may desire better but not everyone will work toward better.

Throughout the method of social justice agendas, the Word of God must be torn down to build the foundation of the false hope for the community. This method is the same lie that Communism promised to many people throughout history but has proven to destroy people as opposed to the blessings of the truth of God that build futures and eternities.

In rewriting history, reinventing language, and implanting ideas of social justice this demon of religiosity changes the behavior, thoughts, and speech of people to rely on their connection to the entity of their group rather than a relationship with God.

May Christians everywhere see these schemes of this spirit of religiosity and not fall victim to its traps.

## THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY

### LESSON 3

### A False Character

The spirit of religiosity is based on displaying a presentation while having an emptiness to the actual substance. As part of this façade, this spirit must create diversity, inclusion, and equity to gather more participants. To better understand these aspects of this spirit let's define each of these traits.

#### DIVERSITY

Diversity is defined as having or being composed of differing elements. With diversity, more people are made to feel that they are part of the elements that make up the foundation of the organization without having to change anything about themselves. This element could not be further from the truth of the Word of God.

- **For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.**  
John 13:15 KJV
- **Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.**  
1 John 2:6 NLT
- **Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and He lives in all of us.**  
Colossians 3:10-11 NLT

These verses display there is diversity within the kingdom of God, not diversity to stay the same but to come from various backgrounds to be changed into the image of Christ (**Romans 8:29**). God uses the gifting and graces within each believer to build the body of Christ, also known as the church (**Romans 12:4-5**). When diversity is presented by the spirit of religiosity, it brags of the various people gathering although deliverance and salvation rarely take place within these organizations.

#### INCLUSION

Inclusion is defined as the act or practice of including and accommodating people. With inclusion, the organization changes and molds into what the people desire while holding its own selfish motives at the center of its operations. This paints the picture of selling a false good while gathering people to support the organization. The more people are involved the more other people will gather assuming the organization is delivering on promises made.

The heart of God is to include anyone that will come to Him but they must submit to His image and to be in Jesus Christ, not personal motives.



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- **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Galatians 3:28 KJV

- **And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

Ephesians 4:32 KJV

- **Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.**

Philippians 2:3-4 NLT

Including people from all walks of life is the goal of evangelism, but not for selfish motives as in the religious leaders of Jesus' time or within the modern perverted churches. This type of activity separates the false character of a spirit of religiosity and the true followers of Jesus Christ. Those who have a walk with God will want to include others to get them to heaven not build their numbers of how many follow them.

- **A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad its fruit will be bad.**

Matthew 12:33 NLT

- **Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**

Matthew 16:6 KJV

The fruit that is among these people reflects their true motives. The leaven of religious people causes a ferment, a sourness, or corruption. This perversion corrupts life, doctrine, and heart among other things. Those who are only into gathering people are hirelings and not true leaders of God (**John 10:12-13**).

## EQUITY

Equity is defined as the monetary value of an interest, an ownership right in property, a right, claim, or interest. With equity, people feel ownership and that they have a say in what goes on in the organization while the organization takes the money, appeases the people, and fulfills its own selfish motives.

- **And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.**

Acts 8:18-20 KJV

- **For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil.**

**1 Peter 2:16 NLT**

In either one of these verses, there is no opportunity to buy into or have equity in God's kingdom with money or other objects, yet the spirit of religiosity leads to believe that when a person gives or donates that person has a right to feel ownership. Money does not buy the power of God, but a true relationship with God allows that person to be used by God. Although there may be freedom to choose what one wants, every Christian is a slave to God and His commands.

- **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.**

**Matthew 23:23 KJV**

Here the religious leaders are revealed to pay their tithe so they believe they have the right to neglect other parts of the law, but Jesus says they are leaving out the parts that matter more although it all is to be observed. The modern Christian, under this spirit, may have the opinion they can be excused from certain Christian activities due to their tithe giving, minimal church attendance, or some other reason because they rely on their equity in the kingdom. In bigger churches the leadership benefits from this type of mentality so eyes are not on what they are doing for personal pleasure or gain.

By being a living sacrifice unto God (**Romans 12:1-2**) Christians become sons and daughters of the most High God giving them an inheritance (**1 Peter 1:4**). This type of equity allows the blessing of God to be present without pride and arrogance excusing a walk with God.

### **THE MIRAGE OF PEACE AND SAFETY**

The spirit of religiosity uses diversity, inclusion, and equity for others to see as peace and safety for its followers. The peace that seems to be within this is a mirage created by the enemy and is a deception to its followers. It is only when the deception is revealed that its followers understand the judgment that awaits them. Those who stand against such diversity, inclusion, and equity are met with extreme prejudice.

May God's people be diverse in background but be new creatures in Christ, be included as the Body of Christ, and have equity through their inheritance while leaving out the perversion of the spirit of religiosity.

## THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY

### LESSON 4

### Attacks of Religiosity

As discussed in the last lesson, those who stand against the spirit of religiosity are met with attacks on different levels. The bold method of attack by this religious spirit is hard and very confrontational while the preferred method of attack is stealthy to fly under the radar until the proper time for the attack to begin. This requires Christians to understand the Word of God and be able to discern truth from lies.

- **Beloved, do not put faith in every spirit, but prove (test) the spirits to discover whether they proceed from God; for many false prophets have gone forth into the world.**

**1 John 4:1 AMP**

- **But solid food is for full-grown men, for those whose senses and mental faculties are trained by practice to discriminate and distinguish between what is morally good and noble and what is evil and contrary either to divine or human law.**

**Hebrews 5:14 AMP**

Knowing what is right and what is wrong is not solely dependent on the Word of God but likewise on the Spirit of God (also known as the Holy Spirit). When things have a form of godliness but deny His power it is still wrong in the core of the subject (**2 Timothy 3:5**). Some things can be biblical but out of timing or place, according to the Holy Spirit, still making it out of line with God. Christians must do the right thing at the right time with the right heart. Removing any of these “rights” will produce religiosity. Salvation is not based on right works but a true relationship with God. This stealthy attack of getting out of line with God is the best method the demon of religiosity has against God’s people.

#### **THE TARGETS OF ATTACK**

This demon knows that the first group to attack is the ministers who speak the truth of God. If these men buckle under insecurity they will teach an easier gospel or they will walk lightly in fear of being replaced by those who are more condoning of social views and sins.

- **You adulterers! Don’t you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.**

**James 4:4 NLT**

- **Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him.**

**1 John 2:15 AMP**

This cannot be the leaders in the army of God. Leaders within God's ranks must be bold, uncompromising, and authoritative due to the anointing of God on their lives.

- **Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong]. And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.**

2 Timothy 4:2 AMP

- **And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

Romans 12:2 KJV

These verses display that ministers of God are not called to change God to fit the world but to change the world to fit God. The spirit of religiosity desires to weaken the soldiers of God to have victory over the leaders and then the footsoldiers or congregation.

### **BOLD METHOD OF ATTACKS**

The bold methods of attacks are very confrontational and do not hide their agendas of religiosity. Those who choose this method will slander, gossip, and use guile against real men of God and God-ordained churches that preach the truth.

- **Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires.**

2 Peter 3:3 NLT

- **They told you that in the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires. These people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God's Spirit in them.**

Jude 18-19 NLT

This method includes terms such as "social justice", "woke", "cult", "hypocrites", "holier than thou", etc. These terms are descriptions of the religious organizations themselves who use some of these words against holy people to place the blame on them while attempting to take the attention off of their own religious activities. The true men of God must stand against these attacks and not compromise the truth of God.

- **If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.**

**John 15:18-19 KJV**

- **And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**

**2 Timothy 2:2-3 KJV**

The bold attacks from this demon require Christians to have confidence, boldness, and the ability to stand against all the wiles of the enemy (**Ephesians 6:11-18**). During these attacks, the kingdom of God needs soldiers, not soft people.

### **STEALTHY METHOD OF ATTACKS**

The stealthy methods of attacks are more effective in many ways to slowly move ministers, believers, and churches toward the goal of religiosity. In contrast to the forceful means of bold attacks, this method uses what is falsified as the public's desires and will benefit everyone including the church. This method uses terms such as "political correctness", "relevant", "authentic", "community", "casual", "engage", "intentional", etc. These words are used to gain compliance and display acceptance without applying the required changes the Word of God commands.

- **For certain men have crept in stealthily [gaining entrance secretly by a side door]. Their doom was predicted long ago, ungodly (impious, profane) persons, who pervert the grace (the spiritual blessing and favor) of our God into lawlessness and wantonness and immorality, and disown and deny our sole Master and Lord, Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).**

**Jude 4 AMP**

- **Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross.**

**Galatians 3:1 NLT**

- **Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.**

**Galatians 5:7 KJV**

Overcoming the stealthy methods of infiltrating God's people requires Christians to be alert and discern what spirit is driving the people around them especially those that have been deceived. Even though these methods are not as confrontational they are still attacks against having a true relationship with God. All Christians, but especially leaders, must stand against this demon to not allow the things of God to become common, routine, or legalistic. With such a wide spectrum of operations for this demon, God's people must be prepared for any scheme of the enemy. May God's people be wise and innocent (**Matthew 10:16**) to have victory!

## THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY

### LESSON 5

### The Therapeutic Goal of Religiosity

In general, the modern church has given over to the spirit of religiosity by becoming therapeutic to the attendees of the assembly. By accommodating to the desires of the public, church services of these organizations are now the feel-good injections of false hope and half-truths that do not change the people looking for the true hope and full truth of God and His Word.

The word *therapeutic* means producing a useful or favorable result or effect; having an effect on the body or the mind. Part of this demon's ability to use therapeutic methods accommodates anything the body or mind desires.

#### SOME THERAPEUTIC CHANGES

- No offense in messages (no negative aspects)
- Removing the necessity of salvation and holiness
- Fewer crosses or steeples
- Removal of communion
- Appealing to the unchurched (secular appearance and activities)
- Focus on videos, music, drama, or other arts that are secular in nature
- Adding exercise gyms, spas, locker rooms, etc.
- Adding various franchises on church property
- Removing the necessity of tithes and offerings
- Removing references to the blood of Jesus
- Marketing Jesus in a different view rather than from the Bible
- And many more...

This accommodation also includes sin while presenting a façade of Christianity. When churches take on this flavor of being therapeutic they are seeking a useful or favorable result to their motives and not to the eternal benefit of people. Although there may be an effect on the body or mind, eternity is based on the response of spiritual.

- **But the natural, nonspiritual man does not accept or welcome or admit into his heart the gifts and teachings and revelations of the Spirit of God, for they are folly (meaningless nonsense) to him; and he is incapable of knowing them [of progressively recognizing, understanding, and becoming better acquainted with them] because they are spiritually discerned and estimated and appreciated.**

**1 Corinthians 2:14 AMP**

Addressing the natural side of a congregation will help in some situations. Still, there must be a change in the spirit and application of the spiritual principles to connect the eternal aspects to each individual.

- **But I say, walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God).**

**Galatians 5:16 AMP**

Only focusing on the natural is not only a ploy of the spirit of religiosity but the reason this demon desires this is to keep people from being prepared in their spiritual ability to obtain victory.

- **But the spiritual man tries all things [he examines, investigates, inquires into, questions, and discerns all things], yet is himself to be put on trial and judged by no one [he can read the meaning of everything, but no one can properly discern or appraise or get an insight into him].**

**1 Corinthians 2:15 AMP**

When God's people are spiritual, as God desires them to be, they examine, investigate, and question all things. When they are spiritual they also have the Holy Spirit to help them in their weaknesses.

- **And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.**

**Romans 8:26 NLT**

These verses do not sound like therapeutic desires but are submissive to God reflecting a true relationship with Him. When people take on the newer ideology of religiosity there is a belief that God wants people to be nice and happy. This creates the therapeutic mindset that as long as people are nice, happy, and believe that God exists then they are right in God's eyes. God did not establish His kingdom to work in this manner.

- **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.** **Romans 12:21 KJV**
- **These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**  
**John 16:33 KJV**
- **But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.**

**1 Corinthians 15:57-58 KJV**

God's people are called to be overcomers not to be given therapeutic band-aids to administer on gashing wounds. Therapeutic methods accommodate to solidify the pleasure of self as the normal method of living but this directly opposes God and His Word.

The enemies of this therapeutic goal of religiosity are marked as standing in the way of people's happiness. With this in mind, the attacks of religiosity as previously discussed, *in Lesson 4*, are the motives behind such actions against the true people of God.

- **Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.]. And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.**

**2 Timothy 4:2 AMP**

Looking at this verse displays how the therapeutic methods of religiosity go directly against the Word of God. Why do so many churches or Christians allow this demon to tend to them? The answer is the pleasing of the flesh rather than having a true relationship with God. This is the height of religiosity that is manipulated to not recognize the need to change by this same demon. When accommodations are made it is easier to not face the truth and deceive oneself as being in right standing with God.

May Christians face the truth of God, make the necessary changes, and not accommodate themselves but accommodate the Spirit of God to have a true walk with God.



## THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY

### LESSON 6

### The Legalistic Martha vs Righteous Mary

In discussing this spirit of religiosity two main ditches represent the heart of how it operates within the body of Christ. In this lesson, we'll discuss the legalistic aspect. In both ditches, this demon attacks three main areas: sacrifice, honor, and worship.

The best example of the legalistic method of this spirit is Martha.

- **As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."**

**Luke 10:38-40 NLT**

Martha is hosting Jesus in her home yet Martha does not find it permissible for her sister, Mary, to sit at the feet of Jesus to worship, sacrifice, and honor Him. Martha's name means who becomes bitter. Martha's distraction was her work but she could not get passed the facts of Mary not being legalistic in her works like herself.

- **But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."**

**Luke 10:41-42 NLT**

Jesus tells Martha that she is upset over the details yet Mary is the one who is right focusing on Jesus. Martha being upset means being anxious, taking thought, and caring about the details of these distractions as opposed to having time with Jesus on her mind. This defines the legalistic method of religiosity of works and no relationship with Jesus.

Jesus' response in one translation states, "**Mary has discovered the one thing most important by choosing to sit at my feet. She is undistracted, and I won't take this privilege from her" (Luke 10:42).**

He knew that Mary was seeking intimate time with Him as opposed to being focused on religious works like Martha. Works alone do not constitute a right standing with God.

- **For what reason? Because [they pursued it] not through faith, relying [instead] on the merit of their works [they did not depend on faith but on what they could do]. They have stumbled over the Stumbling Stone.**

**Romans 9:32 AMP**

This same spirit of religiosity uses organizations to create a legalistic means of distraction as opposed to having a true relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The deception of having such a lifestyle with only the label of Christianity is a false type of religion. Christians must have a relationship with God through Jesus, the Stumbling Stone, to make their eternity in Heaven.

- **Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him.**

**John 14:6-7 KJV**

- **Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.**

**James 4:8 KJV**

Knowing Jesus helps people to understand God and how He desires to fellowship with mankind. Christians are to have a work ethic for God but not in a legalistic manner. A purified heart seeks to get close to God and in return, He draws close. A work ethic should be produced from love produced by a pure heart and faith reflecting a relationship with God.

- **So also faith, if it does not have works (deeds and actions of obedience to back it up), by itself is destitute of power (inoperative, dead).**

**James 2:17 AMP**

- **You see that a man is justified (pronounced righteous before God) through what he does and not alone through faith [through works of obedience as well as by what he believes].**

**James 2:24 AMP**

Faith needs works and works need faith. Either one without the other is dead and inoperative.

- **Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

**Matthew 7:22-23 KJV**

These verses display that works and faith must go together. Faith should produce a work from a heart of love and obedience. Without the proper balance of these two working together, legalism takes root making that person religious and now disobedient to God even though the action may be correct biblically. Jesus did not rebuke Martha for her works but for the heart behind her works.

- **But the Lord said to her, “My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.”**

**Luke 10:41-42 NLT**

A heart that has a true relationship desires to have excellence but the desire to have a relationship outweighs the obsession of details. The spirit of religiosity has a goal of perverting the works that a person does for God to bring legalism and lack of relationship. Even though this deception is stealthy it convinced Martha to question Jesus about her sister Mary. As legalism begins to take root it will produce bitterness toward those who seek a true relationship with God. This attitude in return leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of those desiring a walk with God based on the encounter with such religious people they have met. Sadly, some of the people who have encountered these religious members may never understand those religious people who have been hindered by a demon themselves need the same repentance and walk with God they are looking for.

- **Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.**

**Hebrews 12:15 NLT**

If not handled, a root of bitterness will not only affect the life of that person but also the lives of many around that person. Bitterness likes to spread similar to a disease. Christians must not allow such a thing to corrupt anyone’s walk with God, including themselves.

- **You can have no part in this, for your heart is not right with God. Repent of your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts, for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin.**

**Acts 8:21-23 NLT**

Peter rebukes Simon the Sorcerer for wanting to carry out religious acts with the wrong heart. Even a baby Christian is rebuked for having the wrong heart in this area. Why would a modern Christian get better treatment with the same heart? All Christians should not be legalistic in any manner but serve God in faith that produces action through love.

May Christians everywhere examine their hearts, be in right standing with God, and not fall for the legalistic traps of the demon of religiosity.

**THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY**  
**LESSON 7**  
**The Deceiving Judas vs Righteous Mary**

In discussing this spirit of religiosity there are two main ditches that represent the heart of how it operates within the body of Christ. In this lesson we'll discuss the deceptive aspect. In both ditches this demon attacks three main areas: sacrifice, honor, and worship.

The best example of the deceptive method of this demon is Judas.

- **Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance. But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor."**

**John 12:3-5 NLT**

This passage discusses Judas coming against Mary when she is making a sacrifice, honoring, and worshipping Jesus. At first a person could see Judas as desiring to be a good steward to help those in need and to conduct ministry but his heart is deceptive with an ulterior motive.

- **"That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." Not that he cared for the poor – he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself.**

**John 12:5-6 NLT**

Judas was a deceiver and had used the ministry for himself. Not only did he use the ministry, but he covered his actions under the cloak of Jesus' name and character. How many people gave to support Jesus but Judas stole from them to please himself? This describes how some Christians use ministry, another person's ministry, or the name of Jesus to hide their personal motives, schemes, and sins.

- **And every spirit that does not confess Jesus [acknowledging that He has come in the flesh, but would deny any of the Son's true nature] is not of God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and is now already in the world.**

**1 John 4:3 AMP**

Judas followed Jesus but he refused to apply Jesus' true nature to his own life. This denial left Judas as a deceiver seeking his own motives and gain. The spirit of religiosity is fueled by the antichrist motives in perverting a true relationship with Jesus Christ.

- **You shall not use or repeat the name of the Lord your God in vain [that is, lightly or frivolously, in false affirmations or profanely]; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.**

**Exodus 20:7 AMP**

Taking the Lord's name is not referring to the American version of using cuss words, but applying the name of God to one's life without holding to His standard. This context also implies that God's name has to be added to one's word or life because their own word is no good (**Leviticus 19:11-13; Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12**). Those that misuse God's name will not go unpunished (**Deuteronomy 5:11**). This should warn Christians everywhere to not be like Judas as a deceiver by placing the name of Jesus on their life and living how they desire to live.

This type of deception was a heart issue for Judas as Mary anointed Jesus' feet with precious, costly oil. Not only did Mary use this oil to anoint Jesus but she had an estimated 12 ounces in a flask while the normal flask only contained 1 ounce. This displays the sacrifice, honor, and worship Mary had for Jesus.

- **Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance. But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor."**

**John 12:3-5 NLT**

The true motives of Judas were exposed when he realized he was missing out on an opportunity to gain for himself. The demon of religiosity does not like to pass up an occasion especially when there could be a big increase for self. When another person's sacrifice, honor, and worship get in the way of selfish motives, this spirit of religiosity will voice its opinion to obtain compromise from those seeking a true relationship with Jesus. The custom for Jewish hosting was to provide the resources to wash feet and to anoint the heads of guests as a sign of honor. Mary was placing herself as a servant to handle the feet of Jesus and uncovered herself by exposing her hair especially to worship Him.

- **But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor."**

**John 12:5 NLT**

Judas knew exactly what the value was because it had his heart. This deception caused him to betray Jesus, the other disciples, and the kingdom of God which he declared he was submitted to as a disciple.

- **Not that he cared for the poor – he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself.**

**John 12:6 NLT**

This type of attitude and deception must be handled by rebuking and not coddling. Jesus rebukes Judas because of the unrepented rebellious heart not the thought of selfish gain. When it is a thought it can be cast down but when it is within the heart as an act about to take place or has taken place this requires discipline.

- **But Jesus said, Let her alone. It was [intended] that she should keep it for the time of My preparation for burial. [She has kept it that she might have it for the time of My embalming.]**

**John 12:7 AMP**

Jesus addressed Judas in this manner because He knew the content of Judas' heart. Deception can work against other believers but Jesus can see through to the heart. Having such a spirit speaking and a lack of power to correct it creates a wolf mentality.

- **Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits...**

**Matthew 7:15-16a KJV**

These false prophets are imposters or people who declare untrue words, not just ministers of corrupt doctrine in the Fivefold office ideology. Wolves of this manner of people could be from a plethora of backgrounds or walks of life.

- **Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.**

**Acts 20:30-31 KJV**

These verses display that some will arise from within the camp to draw people away from sound doctrine. The spirit of religiosity uses this type of person to bring deception while keeping the façade of a relationship with God. This demon places this type of behavior in the heart to betray the kingdom of God (**John 13:2; John 13:27; Matthew 26:16; Luke 22:4**).

God's people must remain humble, walk with Him in sincerity, and cast down any ideas or doctrines that contradict the Word of God. In doing this, the demon of religiosity will not be able to penetrate the heart of Christians.

May Christians everywhere overcome this deceptive demon and obtain victory for God!

## THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY

### LESSON 8

### The Reliance of the System

Taking a look at the manner in which this demon works should allow a visual of the elements of deception. The spirit of religiosity desires to keep people under its power by seeming to be the source of hope, happiness, and right standing with God. This dangerous mindset leads those people to believe that outside of their group or doctrine others are cultish or going straight to Hell. With this demon there is little judging things by the Word of God allowing them to have the corner market of religious activity to those who submit to their system.

*A word of warning:* Those of a rebellious heart gladly submit to these deceptions for a lesser walk with God not being convicted by a biblical church or pastor. Those who are new in desiring a relationship with God may be deceived by these principles within an organization believing this is Christianity. One scenario is willful deception while the other is innocence being deceived.

#### SCARCITY

Scarcity is one of the principles used in this reliance method. Scarcity is defined as a limited availability of a commodity, good or service that is in demand within a market. This spirit uses this tactic for others to believe that hope, happiness, and God cannot be found anywhere else than where they are at. Part of this element of reliance creates an elimination of competition with other churches or religious groups.

- **What sorrow awaits you who lie awake at night, thinking up evil plans. You rise at dawn and hurry to carry them out, simply because you have the power to do so. When you want a piece of land, you find a way to seize it. When you want someone's house, you take it by fraud and violence. You cheat a man of his property, stealing his family's inheritance.**

**Micah 2:2 NLT**

- **Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.**

**Proverbs 3:27-29 KJV**

These verses display that withholding or thinking of ways to do others wrong bring the judgment of God upon that person. Although churches may not become a monopoly by running others out of business, those with this demonic influence will use this same power over the people who attend to create the feeling of no other place can give me the connection with God, happiness, or hope. This could not be further from the truth of God's design for His house.

- **Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.**

**Psalm 127:1 KJV**

- **But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**

**Galatians 5:22-23 KJV**

God builds His house to bless His people not to create a monopoly of His presence. Each Christian is to walk with God for themselves with the byproducts of the Fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**) and the hope of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ (**1 Peter 3:15**). Although the church one attends should mature them for the work of the ministry (**Ephesians 4:11-16**), it is not the church that gives a relationship with God or produces the fruit of one's life. These only come by a personal daily relationship with God.

### **CONTROL**

Control is part of the principles of the reliance method of this spirit. The control of this system uses the group over the individual attitude. This is found in statements like, "A group cannot be wrong" or "With this many people it can't be wrong". When control is given to this demon to lead and dictate one's life, a holy standard of God or God-led church is labeled as cultish.

- **I appeal to you, brethren, to be on your guard concerning those who create dissensions and difficulties and cause divisions, in opposition to the doctrine (the teaching) which you have been taught. [I warn you to turn aside from them, to] avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites and base desires, and by ingratiating and flattering speech, they beguile the hearts of the unsuspecting and simpleminded [people].**

**Romans 16:17-18 AMP**

- **These men [the Judaizing teachers] are zealously trying to dazzle you [paying court to you, making much of you], but their purpose is not honorable or worthy or for any good.. What they want to do is isolate you [from us who oppose them], so that they may win you over to their side and get you to court their favor.**

**Galatians 4:17 AMP**

These verses display both ditches of this demonic spirit. The legalistic side will create divisions, dissensions, and difficulties while the loose moral side will court you to join them. Both sides desire the control over the people attending their organization for money, publicity, or any other means they desire. The control is really expressed in your need to connect to the organization and less connection with God.

### **CHOICE**

The choice principle deceives people into thinking everyone has the right to choose while this spirit gives them the only options to be chosen. The deception of this within these



organizations allow people to live how they desire as long as they make the choice to come to the group with money, labor, and stay an attendee as a statistic.

- **But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.**

**Joshua 24:15 NLT**

- **See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.**

**Deuteronomy 30:15 KJV**

- **And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him". And the people answered him not a word.**

**1 Kings 18:21 KJV**

People should be given choices of serving God by choosing life rather than choosing sin which brings death. Organizations that need a reliance on the people focus on giving limited choices that are manipulated for their own means and motives (**Matthew 7:15; Matthew 24:4; 2 Corinthians 11:14**). Biblical Christianity presents the truth of God and allows everyone to make their own choice to serve God or not. A biblical church relies on God for supply and provision, not taking away the choice of the people through manipulation.

## COERCION

The coercion principle of the reliance method uses the organization's power over individual lives by presenting the exclusion of those who do not align with the mass of people. Coercion is defined as to compel to act, to achieve by force or threat, or to restrain or dominate by force. This includes being ostracized or other means of exclusion until the individual chooses to be in alignment with the organization. In addition, these organizations will restrain those desiring more of God to align with the lukewarmness of the people present.

- **Quench not the Spirit.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:19 KJV**

- **And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.**

**Ephesians 4:30 KJV**

- **You stubborn and stiff-necked people, still heathen and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are always actively resisting the Holy Spirit. As your forefathers [were], so you [are and so you do]!**

**Acts 7:51 AMP**

## RELIGIOSITY

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When the coercion principle takes place it is stunting growth in God while breeding rebellion and lawlessness. This is dangerous for all Christians.

Overall, each of these principles of the spirit of religiosity are also used by the demon of socialism/Communism. These demons work together to bring bondage, famine, and death. This does not look like the kingdom of God but the kingdom of His enemy.

### **THE SOLUTION**

A biblical church allows people to make their own choices to serve God or not. Everyone must give account for their life (**Romans 14:12; Matthew 12:36**) and have their own walk with God (**Philippians 2:12; Romans 4:5**). Every Christian must find the local church that God has called them to be at that does not have the spirit of religiosity. No church will be perfect, but God will call each of His people where they can be fed, be led, be sheared, and loved with the truth of God.

May Christians beware of the spirit of religiosity and find where God has called them to.

## THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY

### LESSON 9

### Overcoming This Demon

The spirit of religiosity is a very dangerous demon to combat but it can be overcome by a true relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Religiosity is a lower form of blasphemy that has not reached its highest stages due to the nature of falsely serving God with words but a heart that is far from God (**Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8; Ezekiel 33:31**). Blasphemy is a dangerous slope for Christians to play on knowing the things of God then turning away.

- **And everyone who makes a statement or speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit [that is, whoever intentionally comes short of the reverence due the Holy Spirit], it will not be forgiven him [for him there is no forgiveness].**

**Luke 12:10 AMP**

- **Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy (every evil, abusive, injurious speaking, or indignity against sacred things) can be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the [Holy] Spirit shall not and cannot be forgiven.**

**Matthew 12:31 AMP**

These verses display the dangers of blasphemy. Blasphemy is defined as to defame, speak evil of, to speak lacking reverence or proper respect. Religiosity does this in both ditches making it a common theme of this demon. Legalistic religiosity blasphemes by making their action more important than a relationship with God while the loose morals religiosity blasphemes by lacking reverence for God and the things of God as holy, even as major as unclean living. The method of victory against this spirit is to build faith and serve God with all one has, especially the heart.

- **So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**  
**Romans 10:17 KJV**
- **And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.**  
**Hebrews 11:6 NLT**
- **For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith.**  
**1 John 5:4 NLT**

A Christian's faith sets them up for victory and success. This is why the spirit of religiosity makes such an attack on a walk with God to include the deception of a label while removing the substance of the relationship. Self-glorying and narcissism accompany religiosity. Along with this attitude comes the lack of acknowledgement of sin in one's own life but an abundance of pointing it out in the lives of others without biblical authority. The legalistic

ditch will point out sin in everyone else to display their own piety. The loose morals ditch will point out the sin or flaws in the people that have a heart for God to excuse their own choice of lukewarmness.

- **And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.**

**Acts 15:1 KJV**

Here the Judizing teachers were more focused on the act of physical circumcision while God is looking for a circumcision of the heart and fleshly desires after Jesus' resurrection.

- **And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye, when you can't see past the log in your own eye?**

**Matthew 7:3-4 NLT**

Religiosity leans more on the natural world than the spiritual. The answer to this demon is having a heart to help others not only out of maturity but also from a heart of love.

- **For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.** **Matthew 7:2 NLT**
- **I give you a new commandment: that you should love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you too should love one another.** **John 13:34 AMP**
- **He who spares his rod [of discipline] hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines diligently and punishes him early.** **Proverbs 13:24 AMP**

A true heart desires to help a person mature in every area of life, especially in their relationship with God. A person given to this spirit of religiosity only desires independence and pointing out flaws in others as a boost of self-esteem. Part of this self-esteem issue is having a desire to reap without sowing. Attempting to reap the benefits of being a Christian without sowing the Word of God into their own life or the efforts of sowing into a relationship with God. This creates a pride or arrogance within self in either ditch while removing this person further from God.

## **WEAPONS TO OVERCOME**

To overcome such a deceptive spirit each person must notice signs of the fruit of religiosity and then discover the root it is coming from within their life. A root grows under the surface but feeds what is viewed above. Victory will not come unless the root is dealt with.

The first weapon a Christian has to overcome this spirit of religiosity is the *Word of God*. The Word of God should be one of the first weapons a Christians uses in every scenario.

- **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV**

This weapon is also a source of truth (**John 17:17**), source of happiness (**Proverbs 8:34**), a source of power (**Luke 10:19**), a source of spiritual growth (**Acts 17:11, Romans 10:17**), a source of guidance (**Psalms 119:105**), a source of comfort (**Job 23:12**), a source of protection (**Hebrews 4:12**), and a source of victory (**Luke 1:37**). The Word of God penetrates this demon when backed by a humble but bold heart and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The legalistic ditch is addressed much like the Pharisees and Saducees in Jesus' time while the loose morals ditch is rebuked for such a lower standard of living than God's Word. Christians need the Word of God to be accurate.

The second weapon Christians have to overcome this demon is the *Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit is a teacher (**John 14:26**), be a remembrancer (**John 14:26**), helper in weakness (**Romans 8:26**), a witness of Jesus Christ (**John 15:26**), the Spirit of truth (**John 15:26**), an interceder in prayer (**Romans 8:26-27**), the giver of power as a witness (**Acts 1:8**), a convincer or rebuker (**John 16:8-11**), the agent of salvation (**2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13**), a guide (**John 16:13**), a revealer (**John 16:13-14**), a fruit bearer (**Galatians 5:22-23**), an exhibitionist (**1 Corinthians 12:7-11**), a sanctifier (**2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4**), and a tongues equipper (**Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38; 10:44-46**). This weapon anoints Christians to have power over all demons and leads God's people in righteousness. Either ditch does not like to be led by God's Spirit into holiness making this weapon vital to having victory.

Another weapon Christians have to conquer this spirit is a *local pastor*. The local pastor is given by God after His own heart (**Jeremiah 3:15**), an overseer of the flock of God to care for the people (**Acts 20:28**), given by Jesus as a gift to mature the saints (**Ephesians 4:11-12**), a watcher of the souls within the church (**Hebrews 13:17**), a qualified overseer (**1 Timothy 3:1-7**), a minister of the Word at all times (**2 Timothy 4:2**), an example of faith and life of the Word (**Hebrews 13:7**), a worker rightly handling the truth of God (**2 Timothy 2:15**), a leader of God's people into the Rapture (**1 Peter 5:1-4**), a teacher of sound doctrine with the ability to rebuke for safety (**Titus 1:9**), and a preacher helping declare the truth (**Romans 10:14**). This weapon is established by God the Father but given by Jesus Christ to help God's people grow up, stay on track, and not stay the same. These attributes make the local pastor important in staying in a proper relationship with God.

The next weapon Christians have to overcome this demon is a *humble heart*. A humble heart is teachable (**Psalms 25:9**), is given grace by God (**James 4:6**), is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven (**Matthew 18:4**), is able to be exalted by the Lord (**Matthew 23:12; James 4:10**), a seeker of God receiving forgiveness and healing (**2 Chronicles 7:14**), the attitude of Jesus Christ (**Philippians 2:7-8**), and the proper attitude to walk with God (**Micah 6:8**). This weapon is needed in addition to each of the other weapons. A humble

heart keeps Christians impressionable by the things of God to submit, to love, and to honor God no matter the circumstances. A humble heart is vital to repentance and righteousness.

Lastly, a *hunger and thirst for God and His righteousness* can help Christians to have victory over this spirit. People who hunger and thirst for God will be satisfied by God (**Matthew 5:6**), will feast and drink from Jesus (**John 6:35**), will seek God not themselves (**Jeremiah 2:13**), are satisfied by walking with God (**Psalms 63:1**), receives everything as sweet (**Proverbs 27:7**), and are given all things that are needed (**Matthew 6:33**). This weapon keeps a person dependent on God for supply in every season of life. Losing this weapon will begin a search in other places that cannot fulfill in the same manner as God does. Using this weapon will keep Christians seeking God on a regular basis as part of their spiritual life and away from the deception of the demon of religiosity, especially when applied with the other weapons.

The fruit of a relationship with God is salvation and blessing. This fruit is not produced by either ditch of religiosity but only through a true walk with God. The evidence of a right heart before God is the Word lived out not only in action or the words one may speak but a heart that displays the presence of God each day.

May all Christians overcome the spirit of religiosity by knowing God, serving God, and loving God with a right heart all the days of their lives.