

## Doctrine of Spirits

1. The *Bible* teaches there are a variety of spirits in the world and not all are good and holy. There are spirits with personality consisting of will, emotion and intellect.
  - God the Father is declared to be a spirit. *John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*
  - God the Holy Spirit is a spirit reflected in His name. *John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*
  - Man is comprised of a spirit which is His soul. *Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*
  - Though true humanity Christ possessed the eternal divine spirit or essence of God. *John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*
  - Holy Angels are spirit creatures though they can take on material shape. *Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*
  - Satan is an angelic spirit creature. He is a fallen angel though once he was the highest of God's creative works. *Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*
  - Demons are spirit creatures, though fallen angels. *Matthew 25:38 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: Luke 4:33 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Luke 13:11 11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.*

- Animals also have a spirit for they too have will, emotion and intellect. *Ecclesiastes 3:21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?*
2. In addition to personal spirits possessing will, emotions and intellect the word “spirit” is used in the sense of a nature manifested in attitude and actions. These various non personal “spirits” are real and have lasting impact on life in time and eternity. Therefore, they too must be tested.
- There is the spirit of wisdom. *Exodus 28:3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*
  - There is the spirit of jealousy. *Numbers 5:14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:*
  - There is the spirit of understanding. *Job 20:3 I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.*
  - There is the spirit of a political ruler. *Ecclesiastes 10:4 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.*
  - There is a spirit of judgment. *Isaiah 4:4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.*
  - There is the spirit of knowledge. *Isaiah 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*
  - There is a national spirit. *Isaiah 19:3 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.*
  - There is the spirit of ignorance. *Isaiah 29:10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.*
  - There is a humble spirit. *Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

- There is a spirit of heaviness. *Isaiah 61:3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*
- There is a spirit of immorality. *Hosea 4:12 My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.*
- There is a spirit of grace and supplication. *Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*
- There is the spirit of divination. *Acts 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:*
- There is a spirit of bondage. *Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*
- There is a spirit of slumber. *Romans 11:8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*
- There is a spirit of the world. *1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*
- There is a spirit of meekness. *1 Corinthians 4:21 What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness? Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*
- There is the spirit of faith. *2 Corinthians 4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;*
- There is a spirit of fear. *2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*
- There is a spirit of glory. *1 Peter 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*

- There is a spirit of truth and a spirit of error. *1 John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*
3. The challenge for every believer, indeed the command, is to discern between the various spirits. This is not easy to do because the Evil One and his demons imitate Holy Angels and even God Himself.
- *Hebrews 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*
  - *1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*
  - *2 Corinthians 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*
4. Because it is the will of God to test the spirits the Christian should know how. The following techniques will help in practical application.
- Test the spirits by the Word of God. Nothing should ever be embraced which is contrary to the known Word of God.
- Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*
- 2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
- Test the spirits by their theology concerning Christ. *1 John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world....15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*
  - Test the spirits by the fruit that is produced. A spirit that leads others to greed, immorality and doctrinal heresy is a false spirit.
- Matthew 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*
- 1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

- Test the spirits by trusting those who are known to be godly and spiritually gifted.

*1 Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

5. Only by testing the spirits will the church be kept from immorality and heresy.
6. Once the test is made objectively and rationally that a spirit is personal and good in both doctrine and demeanor the heart can rejoice in the gifts of God.
7. If the objective and rational test reveals a spirit is of the world, the flesh or the devil then that spirit must be challenged.
  - Wrong spirits can sometimes be challenged and dismissed simply by exposure. Unfortunately, wrong spirits are militant and are not easily persuaded to change or depart.
  - Wrong spirits can be challenged by prayer and fasting. *Matthew 17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*
  - Wrong spirits can be challenged by exercising spiritual authority in the name of Jesus. *Luke 9:1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.*
  - Wrong spirits can be challenged by a faithful proclamation of the Word of God. *2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*
  - Wrong spirits can be challenged by open rebuke. *Galatians 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*
8. It is possible for a person to be in contact with a good spirit but still manifest a wrong personal spirit at the same time. Though Peter was indwelt by God the Holy Spirit He was wrong in his personal spirit concerning the Judaizers, which is why Paul rebuked him face to face, “*he was to blame*”.
9. It is possible for an individual to have a good personal spirit and a genuine heart for God but be in contact with an evil spirit. An evil spirit becomes manifested when people start doing the chicken walk, barking like a dog or dance and shake in an uncontrollable manner. There is nothing holy or seemly about such behavior. To ascribe to God what is of the flesh or the devil is reverse blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.
10. It is possible for a person to have a wrong personal spirit and be in contact with an evil spirit. This was the case of Simon. *Acts 8:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

11. It is possible for a person to have a good personal spirit and enjoy being in contact with God and or angels as good spirits. The experiences of Daniel indicate this in the Old Testament while the experiences of Peter or Paul and Silas in prison demonstrates this in the New Testament.
  - *Acts 16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.*
12. What Christians must never do is simple accept every personal spirit and every spirit manifestation without a critical investigation. The mind and reason is not to be suspended in the presence of the supernatural.