

# DISCERNMENT OF SPIRIT

## SPIRIT OF WORLDLINESS

Manifestation/Collaboration/Characteristics:

### A) THIS SPIRIT IS A DIRECT REPRESENTATION OR MANIFESTATION OF SATAN.

- Titles for Satan – ‘Anti-Christ’(1 John 4:1-4), ‘Adversary’ (1 Peter 5:8), ‘Accuser of the brethren’ (Rev 12:10), ‘Father of lies’, ‘Murderer from the beginning’ (Jn 8:44), ‘Thief’ (Mt 4:3), ‘Beelzebub (Lord of flies)’ (Mt 12:24), Serpent (Rev 12:9), etc.
- But there are more titles that are related to ‘worldliness’ or ‘world’ than anything else. E.g. ‘spirit of the world’(1 Cor 2:12), ‘god of this age (world confined to time)’( 2 Cor 4:4), ‘prince of this world’ (Jn 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), ‘Ruler of the kingdom of the air’ (Eph 2:1-2), ‘powers of this dark world’ (Eph 6:12).
- **SPIRIT OF WORLDLINESS = SATAN**
- Attack by Satan in the form of spirit of worldliness:-
  - Temptation of Adam & Eve (Gen 3:7)
  - Temptation of Jesus (Lk 4:5-6)
  - First attack on Israel in Promised Land – Sin of Achan (Josh 6-7)
  - Mark of the beast (Rev 13:16)
- E.g. a kid engrossed in fashion, pop music, pop stars, will have the tendency to be rebellious. -> direct manifestation of Satan – the spirit of rebellion.

### B) THIS SPIRIT IS AN ENEMY OF GOD (AND PEOPLE OF GOD).

- James 4:4, ‘*You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*’
- John 15:18, ‘*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.*’
- 1 John 2:15, ‘*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*’
- **LOVING GOD AND LOVING WORLD COULD NOT EXIST TOGETHER!!**

- **A WORLDLY CHRISTIAN IS NOT A TRUE CHRISTIAN (OR CHRISTIAN TO BEGIN WITH)!**

**C) THIS SPIRIT IS AN ENEMY OF ALL THAT HAS GOT TO DO WITH GODLINESS AND HOLINESS.**

- **2 Tim 2:16 (NAS), ‘..avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness.’**
- **WORLDLY = UNGODLY**

**D) THE SPIRIT TERMINATES THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIAN.**

- **Mt 13:22**, ‘*The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.’*
- **Lk 8:14**, ‘*The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.’*

- A person who is attacked by spirit of worldliness will :-
  - **Often worry and easily be deceived.**
  - Be **unfruitful** and **immature**.
- If we find ourselves not growing, reason could be we are still very into the world, or have embraced the spirit of worldliness.

**• IT IS NOT OK FOR CHRISTIAN(CHURCH) TO STOP GROWING AND BE IMMATURE IN THEIR FAITH!**

- **Heb 5:12-13, 6:1-8**, ‘*...but the land that produces thorns and thistles (i.e. not growing) is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end, it will be burned.’*

- A person who is attacked by spirit of worldliness will be **spiritually blind**.
- **2 Cor 4:4**, ‘*The god of this age(world) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*’
- This includes mind-blockage or the inability to understand scripture or things of the spirit.
- During Jesus’ time, He only opened the mind/eyes of DISCIPLES. (**Mt 13:11-14, Mt 16:17, Lk 10:21, Lk 24:25, 31, 45**). Jesus never opened the mind/eyes of the Pharisees/teachers of the law, despite of the fact that they were intensively ‘searching’ for the truth.
- So the key to which our eyes be opened is that we must first be willing to be His disciples. There is no way to truly understand the Word if we just study the Word w/o the willingness to be His disciple.

- A person who is attacked by spirit of worldliness will have **no genuine commitment** even if he is to serve God.
- **2 Tim 4:10**, ‘..for Demas having loved this world, has deserted me..’

## **E) WHAT IS EXACTLY WORLDLINESS?**

### **I) UNSPIRITUAL**

- **1 Cor 3:1**, ‘Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ.’
- The opposite of ‘spiritual’ is ‘worldly’, which suggests ‘unspiritual’ = ‘worldly’.
- Manifestation of the spirit of worldliness:- Jealousy, quarrelling, division, etc (**1 Cor 3:3-4**)
- When one is unspiritual(worldly), he is under bondage -> living life in old man state.
- **Rom 7:14**, ‘We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as slave to sin.’
- **V15**, ‘I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do.’
- Implies that a person who is attacked by the spirit of worldliness will have:-
  - Lack of self-control
  - Doubtful, not being able to make right decision
  - -> lack of discernment. (e.g. going for shopping and buy whichever is interesting w/o knowing why they buy it.)
  - May have the desire to do good, but cannot (as in the case of Paul in **Rom 7:15**) (e.g. Person like this would say, ‘I desire to be praying for at least 1 hour a day’, but they can never fulfill.)
  - -> Weak will. Easily deceived. (e.g. easily swayed by advertisement, and end up buying new products all the time. Addicted to shopping, new handphomes, gadgets, etc.)
  - Easily distracted. (e.g. come from watching too much TV programs/advertisement. Most advertisement are within 20 sec. Person watching advertisements could have his mind trained to have a concentration that is only short spanned.)
- **II) CARNAL(of the flesh)**
- The word ‘unspiritual’ in **1 Cor 3:1**, **Rom 7:14**, is the word ‘sarkikos’ in Greek, which means ‘carnal’.

- **'Sarkikos'** comes from the root word **'sarx'**, which means **'flesh'**, which means a person who is worldly is very much of the flesh. E.g. living by animal instincts.
- Animals do things by their instincts, and not be hearing the voice of God.
- By survival instincts. E.g. when they are hungry, they will eat by instinct. When their instincts tell them to sin, they will sin. -> Lack of self-control.
- Worry about or focus on what to eat, drink and wear.
- (e.g. person like this will turn the stone into bread when the devil tells them, because their instinct tells them they need food.)
  
- **A person who is carnal cannot live by the Spirit, or may not even have the Holy Spirit in them at all.**
- **Gal 5:16**, *'So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature (carnal). For the sinful nature (carnal) desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature(carnal).'*
- **Jude 19**, *'These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts (NAS:- Worldly minded) and do not have the Spirit.'*
- **1 Cor 2:14**, *'The man WITHOUT the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God.'*
  
- **What happens when a person dwell too much in the carnal(flesh)?**
  - Focus on the outward.
  - Will resort to endless doing or buying to things (e.g. cosmetics, jewelries, plastic surgery) to make one look good.
  - Focus on achievement, e.g. Paper-chasing. (Showing off their papers/qualifications)
  - Focus on fame/security or things that will bring him to a higher recognition or status (e.g. owning of certain type of car, club membership, private apartments, expensive tours, playing of golf.) (NB: Nothing wrong with playing of golf as a sport. It is the spirit that is behind.)
  
  - They will manifest the 4 evil desires mentioned in Book of Habakkuk: - Desire of Possession, Comfort & Security, Fame & Achievements, and idols.
  - Basically, spirit of Babylon.
  
  - From this perspective, Spirit of Worldliness is connected to many other spirits.

- E.g. if like shopping, not just have the spirit of worldliness but have the desire for possession, which is the spirit of greed.
- If like fashion, not just have spirit of worldliness, but have the spirit of immorality.
- If like movie stars => spirit of idolatry.
- If like gadgets => spirit of distraction. Fear of being losing, left-behind. 'Kiasu' syndrome.
- If like sports => spirit of rivalry/competition, desire for fame.
  
- And why people like to dress up, make self looks good, e.g. indulge in cosmetics, hair-do, fashion, clothes, health products, etc.? => Fear of rejection, insecurity, desire for approval, low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with God (E.g. God created me short.) -> as a result, deception (E.g. do not know how beautiful God has created him to be.)
  
- **Next, this spirit rides on convenience. (spirit of convenience)**
- E.g. online worship, instead of physically going to church.
- Cashless, credit card, Paynow, etc
- Instant noodles, fast food, FoodPanda, Grab, Instant Messaging, scan QR code, (and the list goes on.)
  
- Have the bible verses on the screen, rather than having the need to turn to the bible.
- Have everything we need in the phone, and so there is no need to remember things. (Gone were the days we need to remember phone no and addresses of other people.)
  
- Leads to loss of memory. (Unable to remember what was preached.)
- Hippocampus blocked. Cannot hear God's voice easily.
  
- Leads to laziness and passivity.
- Attention span will be short. E.g. listen to sermon and wanted something crisp, instead of lengthy exposition to know the full meaning of the verses.
- Go to church and fall asleep when sermon starts -> usually strong manifestation of spirit of worldliness (and of course, idolatry.)
- Want to have sermon presented to them in the form of catch-words or phrases, like brand names and publicity slogans.

- Want to have sermon series presented in the form like that of CD titles. Anything with more than 6-7 sermons in a series is a turn off.
- Leads to lack of communication with people. (Superficial fellowship) Communication Breakdown.
- E.g. communication with emoticons. A smiley face could mean a person is happy, or just simply nothing to say. (or an evil smile). It is hard to express true feelings through this gadgets or social media.
- Next, it works the same as spirit of idolatry
- ***Ps 115:8, 'Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.'***
- When devoted to something, will take the form of the spirit of something that is devoted to.
- E.g. idolize a pop star, will take the spirit of the pop-star. (Youths becoming rebellious, depressed, commit suicide, drugs taking.)
- When we believe that a gadget (like handphone) is what we needed most, that the gadget will be an idol, and we would take the form of the spirit of the gadget we put our trust in. (e.g. mind blockage, insensibility, seeing only in 2 dimensions. Only have 4 choices, i.e. up, down, left, right) (idols have hands but cannot feel, feet but cannot walk.) -> basically, will be numb to the spiritual world, and to things of God.
- **Questions to consider if we have fallen prey to the spirit of worldliness in the choice we make:**
  - 1) Does it take my time or my heart away from God?
  - 2) Does its decision feed the self-centered, appetite-driven part of me called the flesh?
  - 3) Does it lure me into obsession with what is earthbound and temporal versus what is heavenly and eternal?
  - 4) Does it replace my dependence on God?
    - E.g. if depend on Waze or GPS all the time, instead of asking God and hearing God's voice.
    - Anything don't know, just Google, instead of praying.

- **III) STANDARD OF THE WORLD**

- **2 Cor 10:2-5** – standard of the world, thoughts/values of the world.
- **Titus 2:12** – worldly passions (desires)

- **Rom 12:2** – patterns of this world
- Doing things not according to the ways of God.
- The standard of the world is more than the standard of God.
- The values of the world are more than the values of God.

## **F) SO HOW DO WE COMBAT THE SPIRIT OF WORLDLINESS?**

- Renew the mind (**Rom 12:2**)
- Cast down imaginations(thoughts) that sets itself against the knowledge of God. (**2 Cor 10:2**)
- Abstinence (**1 Pet 2:11**)
  - (e.g. If addicted to shopping, fast shopping for 1 yr. If hooked to internet, fast from internet for 40 days. Repent!)
  - Enter into wilderness!
  - Come out of Babylon!
- Be filled with the Holy Spirit all the time (since carnality is the opposite of being spirit-led.)
- Know that Jesus Christ has prayed to the Father to preserve us from the evil in the world as we carry out our mission to the world. The word of God is the key to sanctifying our thinking and our living in the midst of the world. (**Jn 17:14-17**)