

The Progression of the Religious Spirit

By Mark R. Anderson

www.markandersonministries.com

Published by:

Mark Anderson Ministries

P.O. Box 66

Cody, WY 82414-0066 USA

Email: goodnews@vcn.com

Phone: 307-587-0408

Copyright © 2001 by Mark Anderson Ministries. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Cover design by **Larry Gottfried**

Table of Contents

1	How the Religious Spirit begins.....
2	Finding Fault: the first Seed of the Religious Spirit.....
3	Pride and False Humility.....
4	Holding on to Manmade Traditions.....
5	Laying aside the Commands of God.....

BACK COVER

We have witnessed the Holy Spirit moving powerfully all over the world. We have seen God perform miracles, save people, deliver them from a life of torment and give them hope for the future.

At the same time it is extremely unfortunate to know and see many of these new converts committing to a local church, only to be driven away by Christians or Christians leaders who are influenced or bound by the religious spirit or religious attitude. Personally, I have not been exempt from this spirit at times in my life. I have given place to a religious spirit, which has hindered the move of the Holy Spirit in my life and ministry.

Through this book it is my desire to see the world harvest gathered and the new converts find their place in the Body of Christ, discipled and effectively serve Jesus. It is also my attempt to help bring awareness to the Body of Christ of the leaven and progression of the religious spirit.

Jesus warned His disciples, who walked close to Him, of the negative fruit of the religious spirit. How much more do we need to heed the Master's warning today and guard our hearts from the religious spirit?

Mark Anderson has been functioning in the office of an Evangelist and Teacher since 1978. He has traveled extensively throughout many parts of the world, conducting open-air campaigns,

minister's conferences, church campaigns, as well as ministering in contemporary gospel music. He and his wife, Sharmila, have a heart for reaching out to the unreached in the rural areas in North America and Overseas.

Sharmila Anderson has ministered at Ladies Conferences in India, Nicaragua and North America. She has a deep compassion for women and girls of her homeland, India. She has a passion to see them rise up and become all that God desires them to be.

PROGRESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

By Mark R. Anderson

Chapter 1

How the Religious Spirit Begins

In this book we would like to cover the attitude of the religious leaders of Jesus' day and how that attitude has been passed down through the generations to this present day. An ungodly religious attitude or religious spirit is not one that a person acquires overnight. It starts as a small seed and if left unchecked, it mushrooms and becomes a major stronghold in one's life. At this point it can go from being just an attitude to a demonic stronghold in one's life. My attempt through this booklet is to try to help people identify this crippling attitude and/or spirit, at its inception and deal with it, before it becomes a stronghold in one's life, ministry, or in the church.

Matthew 16:5-12, *"Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, 'take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees'. And they reasoned amongst themselves, saying, it is because we have taken no bread. But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? -But to 'beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees'. Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees."*

From the above scripture verses it is very clear that Jesus is warning His disciples to beware and cautious of the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees; how much more pertinent is this warning for us in this day and age. If the disciples had to guard themselves from the teachings and the attitudes of the religious leaders of their day, it is imperative that we the Church of today do the same. This ungodly attitude that the religious leaders of Jesus' day had, started rather small, but as time progressed it became a major hindrance to what Jesus wanted to accomplish. These religious leaders, some of which I am sure had a great zeal for God at one time, became a

major stumbling block to others as they allowed the religious spirit to progress in their life and control them.

Leaven is the same as yeast that is added in dough to cause it to rise when baking bread. Jesus compares the doctrines and attitude of the Pharisees to leaven used in bread (verse 12). It causes the bread to inflate but it offers no nutritional value. It does not add to the life and power of the Body of Christ. It only inflates it.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were the religious leaders in Jesus' days. They spent hours studying the scriptures and were well grounded in it. Thus, their problem was not the lack of knowledge of scripture, rather what they did with it, and how they used it to bind people in religious chains. Their major problem was their heart attitude. They were in the grips of the stifling religious spirit.

Proverbs 12:18 says *"There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health."* We can use the Word of God incorrectly and tear people to pieces mentally and spiritually or we can use it positively to promote the life and health of the spirit, soul and body.

Jesus experienced no difficulty ministering to the prostitutes, tax collectors and heathen; rather the greatest opposition He faced was from the Pharisees and Sadducees, the supposed religious leaders of the day. Today the greatest opposition to what God desires to do comes from the so-called religious people rather than the unbeliever. In Jesus' day the unfortunate and sad fact was that the religious spirit had grown to such enormous proportions, that when Jesus performed a miracle, these religious leaders wanted to kill Him. John 11 narrates the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. This caused the religious leaders to want to kill Him to get Him out of the way. Notice in John 11:48 their reason for wanting Him dead: *"If we let Him alone like this, EVERYONE WILL BELIEVE ON HIM..."* Think about it! A MIRACLE WORKING JESUS IS AN UNSTOPPABLE JESUS.

One of the goals of the religious spirit is to stifle the miracle working power of Jesus, thus keeping people from believing in Jesus. The effects of the religious spirit are evident all over the world today in obstructing moves of God and hindering the miracle working power of Jesus. This spirit has nothing to do with the spirit of Jesus Christ. Many will be deceived thinking that this spirit is of Jesus. Jesus said *"...He who has seen me has seen the Father..."*(John 14:9). If we want to know what Father God or Jesus God the Son is all about just look at Jesus in the Gospels. A religious spirit did not bind Him. He confronted the religious leaders of His day with great authority. He walked in power and unconditional love.

A great part of Jesus' ministry was healing the sick and casting out demons. 1 John 2:6 says *"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."* We need to walk in that same kind of power and anointing. He has not stopped performing miracles and/or setting

people free of demons. Hebrews 13:8 says “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*” Sometimes miracles and healings are what it takes to bring people into the kingdom.

Woman caught in Adultery

“But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do you say? This they said testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.’ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more’”(John 8:1-11).

Here was a woman caught in the act of adultery. What about the man? Why was he not brought before Jesus for judgment? Jesus said he who is without sin should cast the first stone. He then stooped down and wrote on the ground. I wonder what He wrote? It said they were all convicted and left one by one. What about Jesus? He was without sin. Why did He not cast the first stone? That is not the way Jesus acted, then or now. He is a God of great love. He forgives and forgets.

Once while ministering in Nicaragua I heard of a couple that had just accepted Christ. They attended a local church hoping to learn more about Jesus. Before they got a chance to know more about Jesus, the pastor and leaders in that church kicked them out of the church. The reason? They were not married, but living together in adultery. What would have happened had they had more patience with them, and let that couple stay in the church instead of embarrassing them. They could have preached about who they could be in Christ, showed them the love and goodness of God. Romans 2:4 says ... **“the goodness of God leads you to repentance.”** These two would have been convicted of their sin, repented, and got married. Then they would have been in a position to serve Jesus. Instead the church leader’s religious spirit drove the couple back into the world.

This is an example of what we have witnessed all over the world as we have conducted crusades in many nations. The religious spirit driving people away from our loving Savior! It is a shame that sometimes Christians do not walk in patience with new converts who are still struggling with certain sins in their lives, thus driving them away from Christ! Is this how Jesus would have acted? I think not! He asked the woman caught in adultery where her accusers

were. She said there were none. Jesus reveals His heart for people by saying “*neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more*” (John 8:11). Jesus did not condemn or condone her sin. He lovingly gave her an alternative to her lifestyle. What became of this woman? She became a follower of Jesus. Our former lifestyles and sins are of no consequence to Jesus once we repent. His focus is on what we can become and accomplish for His glory. Evangelist Mike Francen said at the Regions Beyond 2001 Conference “God never consults your past to determine your future.”

Staying Free of the Religious Spirit

In this booklet we would like to do an in-depth study of **Mark 7:1-13**, as these scriptures clearly and **concisely chart how the religious spirit grows and progresses**, if not repented of and dealt with at its inception. It is our desire to expose this demonic spirit to keep it from affecting Christians. We need to realize and accept the fact that all of us can have problems in our lives with this spirit **IF** we leave our heart unchecked. A sure sign of the religious spirit is when we always think messages are for another person, and somehow never for us. The religious leaders of Jesus day had an “everybody else but me” attitude. We can never experience total freedom in Christ if we take on this attitude. We need to be Christians that **search our heart motives regularly**.

*“Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, **they found fault**. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a **special way, holding the traditions** of elders. When they came from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things, which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, why do your disciples not walk according to the traditions of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? He answered and said to them, ‘well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written this people **honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me. Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men-** the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do’. He said to them, ‘All too well **you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition**. For Moses said, Honor your father and your mother; and He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death. But you say, If a man says to his father or mother, Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban - (that is a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, **making the word of God of no effect through your tradition** which you have handed down. And many such things you do”*(Mark 7:1-13).

As is apparent from the above scriptures the religious attitude starts small, almost inconsequential, but its progression causes major damage almost making the WORD OF GOD OF NO EFFECT in the lives of those who give place to it. If this religious attitude is left unchecked in one’s life it can become a demonic stronghold. From there it goes from an attitude

to becoming a demon spirit or religious spirit. Rick Joyner in his book **‘Overcoming the Religious Spirit’**, says, “*1 A religious spirit is a demon which seeks to substitute religious activity for the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.*” I believe it is one of the greatest single obstacles in the Church, to Christianity and to bringing people to Christ, as well as keeping new converts from growing in and going on with Christ.

I have noticed in my own life over the years that I have given place to the religious spirit. I have also noticed that it has robbed me of the anointing to serve Christ more effectively. I have also seen, through my travels all over the world preaching the ‘Good News’, Christian leaders bound by the religious spirit, making their ministry to the unsaved and new converts almost ineffective. They are unable to minister in love, which drives many away. In the following chapter we will do a STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT AND ITS PROGRESSION.