The Religious Spirit

Ephesians 2:8-9

DEFINITIONS

Religion: The demon that wages war against God’s grace and seeks to substitute religious activity for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It seeks to imprison God’s people by the removal of the pastoral, espousing the law as a means to please God, and creating replacement hierarchies against Kingdom authority.

Jezebel: An evil spirit who traffics in religion, control and, eventually, sexuality. She assumes a position of authority, counterfeiting spiritual gifts, and then justifying sin. She hates the no-compromise bent of true prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus (Rev 19:10).

Law: Any list of rules that tells you how to live, under the guise of pleasing God.

DOORWAYS

Generational; engaging in religions or their laws out of guilt or shame or unloving or fear or rejection, occult, false religions, fear + pride; believing lies about God.

DESCRIPTION

Religion opposes God’s grace by telling you to work for God’s love and approval. This idea runs throughout world religions as well as in the Church of God.

Religion and relationship are at odds with one another. Does your faith center more on relationships (with Jesus, with others in Christ) or religious ideas and activities? (Do you feel like you need to learn a method to share your Christianity, or can you just tell your friends about Jesus, with whom you have a real relationship? When I ask you the question, “How’s your spiritual life?” do you immediately start thinking of the activities you’re involved in, or would you consider how your relationship with Jesus and his Spirit is going?)

Religion forces people into pride or guilt. It’s about the appearance of spirituality. I Sam 16:7.

Religion makes us conclude that we can do something, apart from Christ.

It is the source of denominationalism and exalts “right thinking” as the mark of approval. Proverbs 3:5-6, Ephesians 2:1-3 says when we were lost, we were bound by what we could understand.

Religion is so violently self-defending that it crucified Jesus, who said the religious system based on the law had to be destroyed.

Religion perverts zeal for the LORD (Romans 10:2) and ties a burden on men’s hearts. (Good deeds are not a goal!)

Religion attacks the feminine, seeking to subject women. Women, you see, prophesy to the world about what it’s like to be the Bride, the holy Object of God's affections.

The religious spirit uses people.

Religion is anti-anointing. “YOU can’t hear God; come hear ME.” Religion would have you sign over your relationship with God to an organization. To this end, it creates phony hierarchies that advertise Kingdom authority. (Ex: Egypt)

Religion turns the joy of repentance into self-abasement, and the joy of obedience into recompense for sins.

Bible examples: Babel; Jezebel, who rules over Baal’s prophets and kills the LORD’s prophets (I Kings 18:13-19); Eli, in I Sam 3, ministered from a religious spirit based in guilt. He was zealous but wanted to sacrifice to compensate for his failures as a father.
UNDERLINGS

Unworthiness, Self-rejection, guilt, fear resulting from guilt, fear of losing salvation, terror toward God, CONTROL (a form of witchcraft. The enemy controls you without permission. God guides you with your permission), manipulation, legalism (the law), occult, perfectionism, respectability, performance, salvation by works, self-righteousness, religious or moral pride, false holiness, need to be right, denial, blame, judging, comparison, competition, argumentalism, critical spirit, gossip/slander, condemnation, unforgiveness, DIVISION, lying, error (doctrinal falsehood), racism, isolation, self-pity, unbelief, doubt, confusion

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Poverty, mental health, depression, back pain (re: performance)

GOD SAYS…

_The Pharises were Jesus’ number one target._ They cannot help people into the kingdom, because they’ve never been there (Matt 23:13-15), they’ve never heard God’s voice (Jn 5:37), they put their efforts on looking spiritual but don’t deal with the problems in their soul (Matt 23:25-28), they invest time in the Bible but not to find God (Jn 5:39).

_Only God knows what is good._ The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is still off limits. Gen 2:16-17, 3:2-6. God knows how to bring you into maturity. Heb 12:2. Our pre-formed ideas of good and bad are the law. Just submit and obey.!

_The kingdom of God is where our citizenship lies._ It is indestructible (Hebrews 12:27-28), invisible (Luke 17:20), inside people (21), Ruled by Jesus (Colossians 1:18), and destined to cover the earth (Is 11:9).

_Repent of dead works and be baptized._ Everyone who relies on the law is under a literal curse (Galatians 3:10, Jer 17:5 This is what the LORD says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD.”), so repent! (Heb 6:1, 9:14) Be baptized as a sign that you’re giving up your religious self-help approach to Him. This class can be another self-help effort if we make it that. (Word of warning to CR attendees: life tips, meant to help lost folks into a place where they confront God, are not a relationship with Him or His Spirit.)

_Get ready to contend with this spirit._ The end times battle will feature a throw-down with the religious spirit. (Rev 2:18-29)

_Grace is God’s antidote to the hell of religion._ Luke 18:9-14, “And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other...”

Romans 4:4-8, “Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

_Blessed are those_  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the one
whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”
Matthew 11:28-30, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your
souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
Galatians 5:4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law;
ye are fallen from grace."

If you believe that THE GOSPEL ISN'T ABOUT ME SHAPING UP FOR GOD'S SAKE, like I once
did, repent of it, for your soul's sake, and let Jesus start you over: give up on yourself, be born again, and
be baptized. Really.

RECEIVE GOD’S GRACE

Repent of involvement with these spirits.
Decide to love those who’re in religious prison.
Develop a secret relationship with God. Confess your sins. Ask for love. Seek God in both his
word and His Spirit.
Don’t submit to religion. Recognize that this is a former lover of yours and don’t toy with her. II
Tim 3:5 says that we’re to have nothing to do with a person who is into a form of godliness while denying
the power of God. These spirits can only intimidate those who submit to them! So DON’T.
Obey God even if it’s out of step. Make the desire of your life to be intimate with the LORD.
Humble yourself. Make yourself of no reputation. Correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and
careful instruction.
Believe, rely on, and imbibe of God’s enduring grace for you. Jesus is enough!

OBEY THIS WEEK

When are you tempted to compare your spiritual life (Bible knowledge, time spent in prayer or
study, good works) to others?
When’s the last time you made a significant, spiritual decision based on input you received from
others? (i.e., are you able to humbly hear God’s correction or personal direction from the Body?)
When’s the last time you were corrected and it went well?
Can you remember a time when you did something, nobody noticed, and it was a problem for you?
Does emotionalism gross you out? OR Do you think it’s not God unless there’s emotion thrown in
there?
How do you react to new movements of God? Do you resist changes in the church? What about
immaturity you see in the Body? Does that offend you?
Have you ever felt that if you didn’t attend meetings on Sunday morning that God was
disappointed in you?

MEMORIZE

Ephesians 2:8-9 It is by grace you have been saved, through faith. And this is not
of yourselves- it is a gift of God, not of works, so that no man can boast.