

#259 "Twelve Characteristics of a God-honoring Spirit" (Part 2 of 2)

By Brent Barnett

www.relevantbibleteaching.com

7. *God has called us to have an extraordinary spirit.*

Daniel 6:3 says, "Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom" (c.f. Daniel 5:12). The idea here is not that we come with awe before Daniel, for we must realize that what brought him the advancement among his peers was something more than Daniel in and of himself. Daniel is like you and me, ordinary in the flesh. But, like you and me, he had a great and powerful God, and it is His God Who is extraordinary. The world cannot really trust and love one another, but Christians should be different. The world cannot conquer sin, but Christians know the answer. The world cannot have hope when all seems lost, but Christians can always have hope and joy and peace. Add to these things supernatural wisdom from above and then you see what was so unusual about Daniel. The same was true of Joseph as he was advanced in position because God's hand was upon Him (Genesis 39:3-5). It is the supernatural empowerment of God that makes the world take notice that something more is going on, not so that they can marvel at the man but at the God that the man humbly serves. An extraordinary spirit is one that fully recognizes its inherent ordinariness and joyfully allows God's extraordinary power to work in and through him.

8. *God has called us to be strong in spirit.*

Luke 1:80 says, "And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel." Jesus was not going to be stopped in His mission, distracted by crowds and thrill-seekers, or confused by the temptation of the devil. He knew God's Word, held it dear, kept a deep prayer life, and knew why He was on earth, to die and to save sinners. We can be strong in spirit not of ourselves but because of Christ in us as we imitate His example of knowing why we are here and what we are called to do. Those who are strong in spirit are strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (Ephesians 6:10), and fortresses of the enemy will fall as souls are saved and as light shines into darkness through a God-honoring testimony and the proclamation of truth.

9. *God has called us to have a spirit of boldness without fear.*

2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." It is easy as Christians to be scared to death to share the gospel for fear of being labeled as one of those religious zealot nutcase radicals. It can be tough to open our hearts to another person and trust and believe that such a one truly has our best interests in mind. It can take great courage to keep believing God when the next paycheck is in doubt. There is much in life that requires us to keep trusting God and to maintain a spirit of courage, power, love, and a sound mind. When our minds spin because our world is spinning out of control, we need a spirit not of timidity but of courage, boldness, and clear thinking.

The gospel has set us free from fear. As Romans 8:15 says, "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" It is our place in Christ's family, not any strength or wiles of our own, that gives us reason not to fear and to be brave.

10. God has called us to have a spirit that is free from deceit.

Psalm 32:2 says, "How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!" This speaks of more than just not tricking people or lying behind their backs. It is about not deceiving ourselves about where we stand before Christ (James 1:16, Galatians 6:7). It is about not deceiving others by pretending all is well when it is not. It is about being forthright about what we really think and believe rather than just playing some role or touting some position. Self-deceit and deceit toward others must be eradicated for fellowship to deepen with Christ and with our brothers and sisters. Truth is what will set us free and make us be all that Christ would have us to be. As God works deceit out of our spirits, He can work all of the good things in.

11. God has called us to a spirit not of partiality but of unity.

1 Timothy 5:21 says, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality." Paul wrote to Timothy emphasizing that partiality and personal bias be avoided in cases of church discipline because that would only add to the sin that had already been committed. Partiality is also condemned in James 2:1 when it speaks of some giving preferential treatment to the wealthy and discriminating against the poor even in the church. Sadly, the church can succumb to petty acts of wanting to be liked by powerful people, wanting to feel better about themselves and therefore looking down on people lower in society, and trying to impress others in the church by making themselves look better than they are or by unfairly attacking others. When a church gets caught up in competing against one another rather than looking out for the interests of others, it is a spirit of partiality. Unity, on the other hand, reflects a selfless care for the well-being of others regardless of how it reflects back on self. Paul said in Philippians 2:20 concerning Timothy, "For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare." We must eradicate the personal favoritism and partiality and genuinely be concerned for the welfare of others not because of how it might make us feel or look but because our inner person cares. We need more kindred spirits in the church, united in spirit, of the same love, and intent on one purpose (Philippians 1:2).

12. God has called us to have a gentle spirit.

Philippians 4:5 says, "Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near." A gentle spirit is one that is patient with others, one that is willing to bear their burdens, and one that is willing to forgive as many times as necessary (Titus 3:2). A gentle person is not one who is seeking a fight but rather peace, restoration, and reconciliation. A gentle spirit does not spew forth hate, vengeance, and wrath (Proverbs 15:1), but it is willing to suffer for Christ's sake and not become bitter. Gentleness is not passiveness or a lack of emotion or feeling. Jesus was gentle and yet was also very bold and, at times, righteously angry. Yet it was not the broken and hurting that earned the rebukes but the arrogant and

the proud. Galatians 6:1 says, "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted." Jesus calls to all people in a spirit of gentleness (2 Timothy 2:25, 1 Peter 3:15), longing for them to repent and be restored to a right relationship with God. Even as Christians, it is His kindness that leads us to repent as we realize just how good He has been to us despite our disbelief. We don't have a harsh God that wants to beat obedience into us (Psalm 103:8), but we do have a gentle God Who waits as long as it takes for us to embrace His willing embrace. There is always forgiveness and mercy there, and we are to be merciful as those who have ourselves been shown mercy (Matthew 5:7).