

# The Secret to a Free and Unencumbered Spirit



**Clear Insight on Freeing Your Spirit From  
the Oppressive Influences of Day-to-Day Life**

*By Chris Simpson*

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*For additional copies:*

**New Wine Christian Fellowship**

1035 Fairmont Parkway

Pasadena, TX 77504

(713) 910-3330

(New Wine’s web page: [www.newwineonline.com](http://www.newwineonline.com))

*J*ob had a b-a-a-a-d day! If you're at all familiar with his book in the Bible, you'll agree that Job definitely leads the pack when it came to suffering and calamities. If losing his possessions, children and health wasn't bad enough, three so called "friends" showed up to comfort Job, and succeeded in doing just the opposite. Chapter after chapter records their discouraging dialogue, condemning Job with their shortsighted comments. After listening to them for days, another man, named Elihu, said to them all:

*"I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. I thought, 'Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.' But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty that gives him understanding. It is not only the old who are wise or who understand what is right. Therefore I say: Listen to me; I too will tell you what I know."* (Job 32:6-10)

Elihu told these "comforters" that he had something to contribute because of the "spirit" in him, though they were older and therefore supposedly wiser. "Even though I'm young," he said, "I just may have the understanding and solution Job needs." This passage clearly tells us that man has a "spirit," not just a soul and body - a very misunderstood fact. Most believe man's make-up is composed solely of body and soul. This differs significantly from what the Bible teaches. The Apostle Paul tells us, "...*May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

*"For the word of God is living and active....it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12)

The entire field of psychology is founded upon the premise that the Problem of man centers around his “soul.” Interestingly enough, the Greek word for soul is “psuche”– where we get the words psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, etc. The world’s solution to the mental and emotional Problems of man all focus on the soulish part of his nature. Such approaches will never satisfactorily solve the fundamental issues of man’s struggles, because man is not just body and soul – he has a spirit.

God told Adam and Eve that the day they ate of the forbidden fruit they would die. Yet, if you read the story in Genesis, they did eat of that fruit and yet went on to live many hundreds of years. So, what is it that died that day in the garden? Their human spirit. Their soul gained the ascendancy, and they began to live life from the mind, will, and emotions, rather than from God’s original intention – their spirit.

Over time, the death in their spirits worked its way into their souls, and finally into their bodies. Death was never God’s plan – it was brought about because of their disobedience, and as a result they ceased to live and relate to God through their human spirits. This working out of death took many centuries, because man was originally designed to live forever. Death started in their human spirits and worked its way through man’s nature until, finally, at some point after the Flood, man’s life span settled out to about seventy years. We’re told in the Psalms, “*The length of our days is seventy years - or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.*” (Psalm 90:10)

Centuries later God sent His Promised Messiah to redeem fallen man and to bring restoration to that fellowship that was lost in the garden. Jesus came on the scene saying, “*I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth*

*to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*" (John 3:5-7) Since it was Adam's spirit that died, so it is that our spirit must be brought to life, as a result of the new birth in Jesus. Until you are truly "born again," your spirit remains dead. In fact, you won't even realize you have a spirit until you experience rebirth in Christ. It's important to understand this to maintain any kind of on-going closeness with the Lord. Why? Because intimacy with God has everything to do with living life from your spirit, not from your mind or emotions.

### Why You Must Keep Your Spirit Free

God wants us to be keen to the realities of the spirit. Your human spirit is a delicate and fragile thing, like a finely tuned barometer. The Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus in the form of a dove, a very gentle creature. That's a type of our own human spirit as well. Our human spirit can be easily and quickly grieved, just as can the Holy Spirit. Your spirit can lose its spring and buoyancy; it can be weighed down and encumbered. Solomon said, *"The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" (Proverbs 18:14)* When your spirit is oppressed, your soul and body are affected. Thinking clearly can become difficult, as well as keeping wayward emotions in check. If not corrected in time, your body can become susceptible to infirmities and ailments that would be easily withstood when your spirit is strong.

Needless to say, it's vital that a believer keep his spirit strong, alert and free. How do we do this? It's really rather simple. Jesus said, *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:24) In other words, to strengthen and grow strong in spirit you must worship God in your spirit. When you do this, remarkable things happen in your soul. Jude writes, *"Beloved, build up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for God's mercy.... of some have compassion,*

*making a difference; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating the garment spotted by the flesh.” (Jude 1:20-23)*

Praying regularly in the Spirit not only builds you up inside, it also keeps you safe and sensitive in the ability to love and minister to others in just the way that’s needed (with compassion or snatching them out of the fire).

### The World Can “Dirty” Your Spirit

*“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?... Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.... Since we have these Promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)*

When you allow the lusts and desires of the world to get a hold of you in any way, this tends to affect your spirit, and it opens you up to the influence of the powers of darkness. That’s why we’re told, “...let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit.” Contamination is an excellent word to describe evil spirits - demons! Jesus treated demons like filth! He didn’t concentrate or focus on them; when He encountered them He would simply get rid of them, cast them out. The word often translated “cast out” literally means, “to eject, to thrust out violently.”

To consort with unclean spirits in any manner is evil. We are to hate these spiritual beings with absolute hatred, as we’re told in the Psalms, “...*Your enemies take your name in vain. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate you? Am not I grieved with those that rise up against you? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them my enemies.*” (Psalm 139:20-22)

## How To Keep Your Spirit Clean

Jesus said, “Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a fountain of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 14:14) What a beautiful word picture of the cleansing of the Holy Spirit. A fountain is a self-cleaning spout of water. Throw dirt into a fountain, and within moments it’s gone. Jesus goes on to say in the same chapter, “...*The Father seeks those who will worship him in spirit and in truth.*” (John 4:23) These two passages reveal a major key to keeping your spirit clean – worshipping in the Spirit.

Usually, however, when your spirit is weighed down with heaviness, the last thing you want to do is worship God. Yet that’s the very thing that will lift you up and out of a heavy spirit. When you draw near to God, He will draw near to you, with the release you need to keep your spirit light and buoyant. It’s essential that you become sensitive to your spirit, and that you do whatever it takes to keep it unencumbered and free. Solomon said, “*He that has no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that’s broken down without walls.*” (Proverbs 25:28) When the walls are down, the enemy can freely enter. Many of God’s people are living in bondage principally because of their failure to say strong in their spirit, thus leaving their gates open to the powers of darkness.

Solomon also said in another place, “*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city.*” (Proverbs 16:32) This is an incredible verse. Think of what’s involved in taking a whole city in warfare: strategy, intelligence, manpower, and timing. Yet, that’s not nearly as difficult an endeavor as what’s necessary to rule your own spirit – something you must do on a daily basis. In fact, if you’re not ruling your spirit, then everything else will tend to rule you: your emotions, feelings, appetites, desires, hurts, circumstances, situations, and the bad spirits in others.

## Learning To Discern and Resist

In order to live an overcoming life, a believer must learn to discern the state and condition of his human spirit. Solomon said, “*The spirit of man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit, who can bear?*” (Proverbs 18:14) In other words, when your spirit is strong, you can endure just about anything: calamities, sicknesses, trials or burdens - nothing will easily defeat you. We’ve all heard testimony of someone quite ill that, nonetheless, had a fighting spirit to survive. We’ve also heard, all too often, of those whose bodies wasted away as they gave themselves over to despair and hopelessness. The secret to healing and recovery often resides in the strength of one’s human spirit to endure and resist the ailments of the body (and soul).

For many years I came down with an awful flu every spring and fall. It was almost like clockwork; I could predict it. And, when the symptoms would appear, I’d resign myself to having to go through my semiannual three-day cold. Then, about twenty years ago, I began to learn about spiritual warfare and deliverance, and the power that comes from resisting from your spirit. I’m here to testify that those seasonal bouts of the flu are over; I haven’t experienced them since! Now, when I feel any of those old flu symptoms trying to get on me, I’ll ask for prayer and anointing of oil, and resist from deep within. If it doesn’t leave immediately, I’ll spend time worshipping in the Spirit, singing in tongues, until I sense the power of the Spirit resting on me. At that point, resisting is not at all difficult. To confirm this, Solomon said, “*A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.*” (Proverbs 17:22)

Sometimes, when you’re fighting a sickness or depression, the Holy Spirit will speak something along the lines of, “The reason you’re feeling heavy (or sick) is because two days ago so-and-so said something to you and you reacted to him in



anger. I spoke to you to humble yourself and resolve that issue, but instead, you turned your radio on to drown out my convicting voice. Now, you're depressed and gloomy, and you can't figure out why."

God longs to reveal to you what's really going on in your life, and to help extricate you from the cave you've worked yourself into. Hearing Him clearly, however, occurs when you choose to worship and praise God, particularly when you don't feel like it. As you break through, sometimes purely by faith, your ears will open to hear what you need to hear in order to get free! We're told in the book of Isaiah, "*The Lord gives.... the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.*" (Isaiah 61:3)

### Taming A Restless, Driven Spirit

Sometimes your spirit can become driven, strained, and restless. Solomon said, "*He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit displays folly.*" (Proverbs 14:29) A stirred-up spirit is evidenced by hyperactivity, nervousness, or non-stop thoughts. Nothing can be more nerve-racking than thoughts that restlessly swirl around in your mind; to just find the peace of sleep can be a challenge. The enemy, if he can't crush you with depression and heaviness, will attempt to push you to a place of restless anxiety. As mentioned before, when you're not ruling your spirit, you'll be overcome by everything else. You must either stay on top of things, or things will have a way of getting on top of you.

Solomon also said, "*He that answers a matter before he hears it, is his folly and shame.*" (Proverbs 18:13) This is something just about everyone does at one point or another. At times, someone will be telling me something, and I'll say, "I know what you're talking about... now here's a way to go..." Often, the other per-

son will look at me and say, “Gosh, give me a chance.” Repeated insensitivity in this area can be a symptom of a driven spirit.

Solomon said in another place, *“Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”* (Proverbs 29:20) A non-stop talker reveals an underlying restlessness and lacks interior peace and rest in their life. My parents and three brothers are very gregarious people. Growing up in New Orleans, we would sit around on Friday nights eating boiled crawfish for hours. It was a great time together, but, when we talked in my family, everybody would talk at once; it seemed we would all be shouting over each other. To say anything in my house you had to learn how to interrupt. If you didn’t, you were never heard. It was just the way we were – an outspoken, quick-thinking family. However, looking back, I can see the definite negative effects that kind of thing had in my life. It has taken me years to learn not to be so hasty in my words, to learn to wait on the Lord. I believe one reason I tend to focus so much in my ministry on waiting, being still, and being quiet is because those were such foreign notions to me as I was growing up.

Solomon said, *“The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. Do not be hasty in your spirit to be angry, for anger resides in the lap of fools.”* (Ecclesiastes 7:8-9) A hasty spirit is really a proud spirit. Why? Prideful, self-sufficient people often think they don’t need anyone or anything to help them. Having little patience with others, they often flare up with anger when things don’t go their way. If you’re honest, you must admit that at times we all act like this. However, as we grow in Christ, hopefully we’re learning not to react so hastily to people and things.

## Pearls of Great Price

The Apostle Peter (who had his own Problems with speaking before thinking) tells us, “...*And a woman with a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.*” (1 Peter 3:4) What is highly esteemed in the eyes of the world is an abomination in the sight of God. Jesus once told a parable about a merchant man who sifted through many pearls seeking a “pearl of great price.” Pearls are formed within an oyster through internal irritation. Something abrasive, like a grain of sand, enters the oyster’s little world, causing the oyster much discomfort. Every time it moves, it scrapes its body over that grating object. So, the oyster secretes a substance around the sand particle to keep it from hurting. Eventually, that little grain of grit becomes a beautiful pearl.

The Lord Produces the “pearl of great price” in us in a similar way! Consider your own “little world.” Often, when things are going fairly smoothly, the Lord will bring someone – a piece of sand - into your comfortable environment. It could be a coworker, a boss, and a neighbor, a close relative - somebody - a person that has a tendency to “grate” on you. As you seek God earnestly for the patience and grace you need to be loving, that irritating relationship can become the very thing that Produces a gentler, mellower attitude in your heart!

## Finding Quiet In Your Spirit

Solomon said, “*He that hath knowledge spares his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise: and he that shuts his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.*” (Proverbs 17:27-28) The word “excellent spirit” could also be rendered “cool spirit.” God’s desire is for us to have a poised, calm, composed, and peaceful spirit. He describes this with a word picture in a very familiar Psalm, “*The Lord is my shepherd I shall*

*not want, He makes me to lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters, He restores my soul.” (Psalm 23:1-3a)*

True soulish restoration and healing occurs in the quiet in His presence. In fact, one of the great secrets of spiritual growth is learning to be still - where God’s slightest whispers echo in the chambers of your heart. King David said, *“I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace unto His people and His saints...”* (Psalm 85:8) God told Elijah that He would speak to him in a *“still, small voice.”* And we’re told in the Psalms, *“Be still and know that I am God!”* (Psalm 46:10) The key to any moment-to-moment closeness with the Lord is to find quietness in your spirit – no longer struggling under depression and heaviness, or driven by anxiety and worry.

### Learning To Respond To Your Spirit’s Demands

Few things are as important as learning to “read” the state of your spirit and respond to its demands. Let’s consider an example. Suppose you get up one morning, and the first thing you feel is some kind of pressure or weight on your spirit. You’re not sure what it is, or why it’s there. The question is – what are you going to do about it? Too often it’s ignored. Maybe you slept in late after hitting the snooze button a few times, and now you’re in a hurry to get ready for work. So, you rush through your morning – showering, dressing, eating - all the while ignoring the inner signals of your spirit. Looking at the clock, you realize you’d best be on your way, so you jump in the car and take off. As it turns out, because you’re running a little late this morning, the traffic is backed up more than normal – just the thing to calm a restless and troubled spirit!

After a while, this feeling in your gut starts to get worse, so you turn on the radio. All the while, there’s this gentle voice inside saying, *“Take care of this thing NOW!”* So, you turn up the radio a little louder, hoping some *“Christian music”*

will make things all right. But, it doesn't. In fact, at that point, the best thing would probably be silence, or spending some time worshipping. Unfortunately, silence makes many uncomfortable because they might have to look at what's really going on inside. So, they fill their lives with radio, TV, movies – noise! Forgive me if I'm stepping on any toes here, but this is the truth. However, when you've heard the glory and beauty of God's voice in your heart, you won't want to fill your mind with anything but silence, rest and peace.

So, you finally get to work, but by now your spirit is quite heavy, and your thoughts are beginning to be affected. You start worrying about stuff you haven't even thought about for a long time. Besides that, you're aggravated and bothered by everyone you see. You mutter to yourself, "What's the matter with everybody today?" Still, you haven't investigated what's going on inside; you're way too busy. All the while, that gentle voice, getting dimmer by the hour, is still urging you to, "Stop. Come to the quiet. Hear my voice to be free." But, alas, by now someone in a neighboring office is playing rock-and-roll, and there's just no way you can pray with all that racket (you say, justifying your avoidance).

Finally, hours later, it begins to get unbearable. It's near the end of the day and you're starting to feel sick: headache, maybe flu symptoms.... something's coming on you. So, you head home and go to bed. After a while, you pick up the telephone and call a friend, "Help! I need prayer." So, someone comes over, lays hands on you, and prays. Finally, at the end of the day, you slow down enough to respond to the Holy Spirit. He gently whispers, "That heavy feeling this morning was from a spirit of fear. Had you come to me first thing, I would have revealed it to you. It wouldn't have weighed on you all day." You respond, "Forgive me, Lord. I woke up this morning and was in such a hurry that I didn't take care to respond to my spirit's needs, and I've had a miserable day as a result."

Do you know what I've found? Spending time worshipping the Lord first thing in the morning, and then refusing and resisting anything on your spirit, will save you a whole day's worth of agony. God wants us wise concerning the things of the Spirit. So many spend so much of their time spiritually dull, stumbling around, going in circles. Learn to strap on your spiritual armor first thing in the morning.

### Recognizing Satan's Fiery Darts

We also need to recognize and resist the fiery darts of Satan. We're told, "*Above all, take up the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*" (Ephesians 6:16) Whenever there's an opportunity, the enemy will do what he can to inject attitudes of darkness into your spirit. Like what? Sadness, soreness, grumbling, complaining, touchiness, sensitivities, depression, gloom, self-pity, etc. People often yield to these dispositions without the slightest thought of resistance. Consider this for a moment: suppose that, before you came to the Lord, you had a problem with stealing. Every time you went into a store, you looked around for what you might "pocket." You had "sticky fingers."

Then, praise God, one day you got saved! Now, with Jesus in your heart, you've repented of your past and have no desire to steal again. In fact, if you're tempted with the disposition to steal, you'd say, "No, I want nothing to do with that anymore!" Now, the question to ask is this: how often do we tend to yield to other dispositions without a second thought – dispositions just as poisonous as the disposition to steal? We may say "No" to the more obvious temptations, but at the same time acquiesce to such things as self-pity, anxiety, worrying, fretting, doubt, unbelief, anger, bitterness, and resentment. Yet, these things can be just as damaging (and in some cases more so) than the more notorious sins of the flesh. Solomon said, "*...it's the little foxes, that spoil the vines...*" (S. of S. 2:15)

## Keeping Your Spirit Unencumbered

In conclusion, how do we keep oppressive things of day-to-day living from weighing on our spirit? The answer is to develop a lifestyle of consistent praise and worship. Jesus said this is something that God the Father desires and seeks: *“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.”* (John 4:23) Whenever you have a free moment, stop what you’re doing and worship the Lord, preferably in the Spirit. After a while, things will start to clear up where they’ve been cloudy, lighten up where they’ve been heavy, and free up where they’ve been bound. Glorious liberty in the Spirit is very close to you. Open your heart and worship – and watch the Lord make Himself real to you as never before!

*“Now the Lord is the Spirit;  
and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”  
(2 Corinthians 3:17)*

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