

# Two Dangerous Spirits In The Church Today

by Sandeep Poonen

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*This sermon delves into discerning spirits, emphasizing the danger of religious spirits within the church and the need to focus on a pure devotion to Jesus. It highlights the importance of not being swayed by signs or intellectualism but seeking a deep relationship with Christ. The speaker warns against the pride that can come from intellectual knowledge and the balance needed in handling miraculous signs within the Christian life.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 12:38, Philippians 3:7, Mark 16:17, 2 Corinthians 11:3, Matthew 28:19

**Topics:** "Discerning Spirits", "Pure Devotion to Jesus"

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## Description

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## Transcript

So I want to share a couple of thoughts on discerning spirits. There are all kinds of spirits that are in the world. Most of which we probably don't even need to worry about.

Because we are in Christ. And the smallest, youngest child of God has power over all the demon forces. It's that simple.

Anyone who has Christ in them, greater is he who is in you. And we have to get established in God's word. The problem is that a lot of us are dumb minded.

We want a lot of things for ourselves too. We have two different mindsets. And we don't just want Christ.

If you are younger in faith, it's easier to find that. Then we only want Christ. Sincerely and simply.

Maybe in a somewhat immature way, but sincerely. But then there are things that can stifle the word of God. And so we go from worldly minded to spiritual minded.

From loving God to loving God. But then those things start to mix. And then you have the worst of all situations, the religious spirits.

And that's what we as Christians in the church have to worry about the most. I'm not worried about the spirits that are out there in the world. Liberal agendas, political agendas.

Very worried about religious agendas. Religious spirits. Every great country has always been corrupted from within more than from without.

And God's churches have never been hurt by persecution. Because the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. But corruption from within hurts the church more than anything else.

And so I want to share two things with you about the spirit that can kill Jesus Christ. It is really good to keep remembering that the people who wanted Jesus Christ killed were the most Bible believing people of that day. Those are the people who wanted Jesus Christ killed.

The Pharisees. So much so that Jesus said everything that they tell you to do, you should do it. Imagine Jesus saying that about a group of people.

But don't be like them. They studied the right scriptures. But God took a completely different end.

But they had a completely different goal with that. They went so far with that that even the Pilate said you don't have to kill Jesus, but they said yes, he has to die. And that is how powerful the power of a religious spirit can be.

Reading the scriptures. Doing a lot of religious activity. That even the heathen, evil Pontius Pilate looks good compared to the rest of them.

Pontius Pilate wasn't a good man if you read history. He was a typical evil Roman governor. Of that time.

But compared to the Pharisees he looks good. The power of the religious spirit. We must constantly remember that.

So would you like to know how to discern the Pontius Pilate spirit or do you want to know how to discern the Pharisee religious spirit? I'm not trying to justify the Pontius Pilate, but I'm much more worried about the religious spirit. I'm not trying to justify the Pontius Pilate, but I'm much more worried about the religious spirit. There are two aspects of the Pharisee spirit that I want to talk about with you.

I want to show you a verse in Matthew chapter 27. This is Jesus on the cross. Verse 41-43.

Matthew 27. 41-43. Everybody is making fun of Jesus.

The people who are passing by are wagging their heads saying, oh you claim to be a big person, look at you now. Look, but verse 41 says the chief priests are also joining in. But here's what they say which is different.

In verse 43 they even quote scripture. He trusts in God, let God rescue him now if he delights in Him. A quote from Psalm 22.

They are quoting scripture to Jesus on the cross. Can you believe it? We know who is the good guy here. They are quoting scripture to Jesus on the cross.

Look at what they say here in verse 42. He is the king of Israel. Let Him come now down from the cross and we will believe Him.

Can you believe it? The Pharisees were saying we are this close to believing Jesus. All we want is to come down from the cross. We know Jesus didn't buy that argument one bit.

But we know Jesus wasn't sensitive to that argument. This is the religious spirit which on one hand can kill Jesus and on the other hand continues to quote scripture to Jesus. My impression is that this is more serious than a demonic spirit.

Because we can see a demonic spirit and that stands out. It possesses a person and almost leaves them out of control. A religious spirit quotes scripture.

As they are crucifying Jesus. This is a spirit that we see in the Pharisees, Matthew chapter 12. They long for a sign.

And beware of a church or beware of a Christian that is looking for signs. Oh I went to this church because somebody got raised from the dead. I am going to this church because everybody falls down when somebody touches them.

Oh this person lays their hand and the sick are healed. We humans are so caught up with signs. The Pharisees are the people who wanted a sign.

And Jesus said it is an evil and perverse group of people who look for signs. That is Matthew chapter 12. If you want to go there I can show it to you real quick.

Matthew chapter 12 verse 38 and 39. Because the Pharisees said please show us a sign. An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign.

So we must be aware of any sign. And so we must be careful with a sign. And people who say if there is a sign then God is there.

Matthew chapter 7 maybe you know that verse. Many will say on that day to me, gentlemen, didn't we do all these things in your name? Dear brothers and sisters I have a question for you. Please don't take this literally.

Especially you. What if Christian was to fall down and die right now? And what if I were to raise him from the dead? Will you all listen to me more now? Ask yourself. Why? Because I showed you a sign? Many will come in the last day saying did we not raise the dead? Do miracles in your name.

Will you believe me more if I raise somebody from the dead right now? And I can ask myself and judge myself and say Lord the spirit of the Pharisees is very close to me then. I'm in the same boat as you are. If he raised me from the dead I'm going to be listening to him a lot more.

But that's how dangerous the religious spirit is. And if I'm not aware of it I'll fall for it. Jesus said many will come not a few.

And Jesus said I don't even know you. You who commit lawlessness. I'm not surprised at all when major leaders suddenly find themselves exposed for falling into some sin.

Because I'm not impressed by signs. I'm not impressed by numbers. I'm impressed by humility.

I'm impressed by people who are trying to go down not up. By people who are trying to go to a zero so that Jesus could be a hundred. I'm looking at my hero Jesus who said I came to be a servant.

So if I'm keeping on looking at Jesus I'm more and more impressed by people who serve. Not people who are being served. I have to change my eyes to be tuned to the right Jesus.

Who considered it no problem at all to die on a cross naked. Who considered it no problem to be the one who served everybody else. He must be my hero.

So when my hero says it's an evil and adulterous generation that looks for a sign I take it seriously. If I play the guitar and I had a hero play the guitar saying don't play it like that I'll take it seriously. If I play the guitar and I had a hero play the guitar saying don't play it like that I'll take it seriously.

But my hero says now an evil and adulterous generation is looking for a sign. But everything in me is under the impression of signs. It's going to take me and it's going to take all of us to fight that spirit.

To be thoroughly unimpressed with signs. Thomas came to Jesus and said I need a sign. I need to feel the body.

I need to feel the holes. What did Jesus say? Do you need to feel the holes to believe? Blessed are you. If you don't see and yet believe.

Luke chapter 10. Here is the final answer to those who want signs. Luke chapter 10 verse 17.

Jesus gave the power to 70 of his disciples to cast out demons. Jesus gave the power to 70 of his disciples to cast out demons. In the beginning of Luke chapter 10.

And then Luke chapter 10 verse 17. And then it says in verse 17. And Jesus said thou shalt not.

What did he say thou shalt not do? Verse 20. Do not rejoice that demons are subject to you in my name. We take the thou shalt not in the 10 commandments seriously.

How about taking this do not from Jesus seriously? But here is also a thou shalt not commandment from Jesus. How serious do we take that? Thou shalt not rejoice or be happy when someone casts out demons. What are you rejoicing in? That your name is written in heaven.

That is what protects us from this seduction of signs. And that is what I get from this verse. Do not rejoice in signs but rejoice in the fact that your name is written in heaven.

My name. Do you know everything that happens with my name? You have no idea. You do not know all the sins I have committed.

You do not know all the filth I have watched. You do not know all the filth I have said. You do not know all the filth I have seen.

And thought. And evil I have done. You have no idea.

I do. So when Jesus says your name is recorded in heaven. Christ name recorded in heaven I get that.

I get that Christ name is recorded in heaven. But my name, what does my name do in heaven? What does your name do in heaven? What do your and my names have to do in heaven? Have we ever thought

about that? But this is what we have to think about. Because God says that is where your joy comes from.

That is the secret to joy. Do not be seduced by signs. Forget healing the sick or raising the dead.

But what did you think about casting out demons? Jesus says do not do that. Do not be happy about it. It is a very spiritual thing to cast out demons.

But do not be happy about it. Joy comes out of the fact that your name is in heaven. That God looks at you and says justified.

Fully righteous. That is the only way my name can get to heaven. Despite all the things that I have done wrong.

Somehow God can say Sandeep is none the less justified or fully righteous. Then it is the same with you. That is where our joy comes from.

And that is what I mentioned yesterday. Earlier today. The blood of Jesus that we have to see between the words of the text is the blood that justifies us.

Our ability for us to crawl onto the father's lap is all because Jesus justifies us. Then we will have a loyalty to Jesus alone. Not to a system.

Not to signs. The other extreme of signs. The other extreme is not signs.

The other side of the spectrum is intellectualism. And I find that in my own life. I find it a lot with students, secondary school teachers that I come across.

Young people. When I go to colleges or colleges. Then I find two kinds of sincere Christians.

The music concerts and the signs and the charismatic trend. And the other people also like some of the good music but they really like the intellectual ideas and the arguments of different theological ideas. You find a lot of normal Christians who are not interested in either one.

You find Christians who are interested in either one. They don't have much interest to talk about it. But you find those two sincere Christian groups.

They have a passion for the Lord, they are devoted to the Lord but they are completely busy with signs. And worship experiences. And you have those other groups who are more philosophical, more busy with intellectual ideas and arguments.

And both secretly look down on the other. But I find little life in both of those extremes. I have absolutely tried to take my time to study the word.

I love music. I love art and beautiful drawings that draw us closer to Christ. And I encourage young Christians to ask a lot of questions.

But sometimes I also see the Pharisee spirit getting too much attention in their lives. In John 5, verse 39 you also see that side of the Pharisees. John chapter 5, verse 39 and 40.

You search the scriptures. Not the postmodern ideas. Not the secular humanist ideas.

No, you search the scriptures. Because you think in them you have eternal life. But you are unwilling to come to me.

So it is possible for me to keep searching the scriptures and not find Jesus. Pharisees did it. Same for us today.

It is so plain there. You study the scriptures, you search the scriptures. These people were not fools, they were studying it deeply.

But they were not willing to take all the scriptures and land end up in Jesus. And this is the challenge. I heard the story about a scientist who wanted to find the life that is within a bird.

So you know what he did? He dissected the bird. Did he find the life in the bird? He pulled the wings apart. He opened the rib cage.

He looked at all the feathers. But did he find the life in the bird? No, he killed the bird. We can cut and chop like this in the scriptures.

Go to the Greek and the Hebrew. I also go to the Greek and the Hebrew and there is nothing wrong with that. But I can cut the scriptures apart like this and still not find life.

And that is what Jesus says here. And there is a reason for that. And that is written in the next verse.

Because we are secretly looking for the glory of people. We want validation from other people. We want to be right.

We want to prove them wrong. I spent a lot of time building strong intellectual arguments and debating with a lot of people. But I got more joy in proving them wrong than in finding Christ.

When I was a young 20-something I studied apologetics a lot. And I had a lot of arguments with non-Christian friends. And I had a lot of debates and exchange of words with non-Christian friends.

And I studied it so much that I even started winning the debates. But do you know what I never did? I never won the soul. I won the argument.

But I did not win the soul. I did cut in the bird. But I never found the life.

I never took them all the way to Jesus. I did walk away with the idea that I won that debate. Those atheists think again before they come back to me.

But what did I gain if they did not find Christ? I just got a little bit more glory. You research the scriptures because you think you have life. But you do not see the life because you do not see the glory of people.

And it is really interesting what Jesus says here. Do you know who is going to accuse them on the final day? These Pharisees, John chapter 5 verse 45. He says the one who is going to accuse you is Moses.

Moses, the one who sent the law. Do you know why Moses is going to accuse them? Because Moses did not want the glory that came from men. Even though he only brought the law.

When God offered Moses a chance to start his own lineage. From Exodus 32. Twice God offered that.

Moses, I will kill all of these people and start a new generation. Moses, I will kill all of these Israelites and I will create a new people through you. Moses said no.

No, because your glory will suffer because you are the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Not of Abraham, Isaac and Moses. He said no, do not put my name there.

God might have said the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. Moses said no, thank you. Love your people.

I do not want any of that glory. Jesus said that Moses is going to accuse you. He said Lord, I want to see your glory.

Show me your glory. I am not interested in signs. I am not interested in intellectual proofs and ideas.

I want to see your glory. Those are the protective mechanisms. Not only protectors.

But they are protectors against religious spirits. Dear brothers and sisters, let us not think that it is easy to deal with that religious spirit. The Pharisees probably studied the scripture more than we all together.

And yet they crucified the Lord Jesus. There is a great longing in us to be satisfied with signs. Dear brothers and sisters, you have to kick the devil when he comes into your heart.

You have got some enemies inside of you. Who have pledged allegiance to the devil. Let me give you some of the warnings of what these enemies do.

Inside of us, they look for signs. They are seduced by signs. That spirit within us, all of us, is an evil and adulterous spirit.

And it hangs closer to us the more we read the scriptures. And there is another spirit which is an intellectual Bible study spirit. Because the goal of it is just the glory of people.

And so we judge others. We put other people into categories. We categorize people into certain categories.

So that we are the perfectly balanced people. You are too charismatic. They are too legalistic.

But we, we are right. We have studied the scripture well. But do I know Christ? Do I attract people to Christ? Is He becoming everything and me becoming nothing? Have I the spirit of Moses? Let alone Jesus.

Who says, don't make people after my name. Just show me your glory and that will be sufficient. We have to recapture that spirit.

That is the protection that for me, the Lord keeps reminding me of. That is the protection that the Lord gives me in my thoughts to protect me. Be aware that you are not looking for signs.

Don't look for it as a confirmation of anything. But look for the fruit of humility. And purity.

And love. And hate the glory of people. Don't be so impressed with yourself.

Don't be so impressed with people. Be impressed only with Jesus. And His humility and gentleness.

And learn from Him. Make Him your hero. These are the things the Lord keeps reminding me of.

And then the Lord says, I don't care what other spirit comes at you. Maybe today post-modern spirits and next week post-post-modern spirits. I don't know.

I just know that I want to fix my eyes on Jesus. And He will protect me. Maybe it is easier if I just do it in Dutch.

To be honest, sometimes I notice a spirit in my own heart. A family spirit. How do you deal with that? How do you deal with shortcomings? To keep it short.

The first thing you have to realize is that it is in all of us. If you say that you are blind, then Jesus says, then I can help you to regain your sight. But to the Pharisees He said, you don't think you have a problem, so I can't help you.

So the first important thing you have to do is to be honest that that spirit is very close to us. Not be based on our senses or our feelings or signs. What should we do instead? Be rooted and grounded in the Word of God.

You have to know your Bible. But this is how I say that you have to know your Bible. Do you know that the Bible is talking about a two edged sword? Do you know where that comes in the Bible? Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12.

Do you know what it is referring to? The Word of God. But, there is one other place where it also shows up. Revelation chapter 1. And do you know where the double edged sword is there? Coming out of Jesus' mouth.

117 is it? I don't know the exact reference. Is it 16? It is in my mind. A double edged sword now coming out of Jesus' mouth.

So here is what happens to the sword. The sword goes all the way down. The cut between soul and spirit.

Cleaning up all the soul is religious. All the religious spirits. The Bible is the one cutting that out.

Scripture separates soulish from spiritual. Hebrews 4, verse 12 tells me that. Cleans out all the religious spirit inside of me.

But the proof of it is it comes out of my mouth as a double edged sword too. It so consumes my heart. That even my speech.

How I talk to my wife. How I talk to my children. Is like Jesus.

The same double edged sword that goes into the heart is coming out of the mouth. That's my hero Jesus. So that tells me an incredible work of the word of God done to me as a being.

That my whole being is influenced by the word of God. I showed this to the young people earlier. What do you think is going to happen if I drop this pen? Anybody wants to guess that this pen is going to fall to the ground? If I let go of it? Any doubters in the midst? Probably not because you believe in the law of gravity.

You will say that the law of gravity is guaranteed to let the pen drop. The bible says heaven and earth will pass away including the law of gravity. It's going to pass away but my words won't pass away.

That's how guaranteed God's word is. More guaranteed than this pen falling down. What a work God's word has to do in our hearts.

I don't think a 2 month old baby believes in the law of gravity. I'm 47 I still can't explain the law of gravity. But I believe in it.

But do we believe in the word of God that way? God's word is guaranteed. That's us proof against souliness. And how we protect ourselves against soulish spirits.

And the seduction of emotionalism. And for intellectualism you can overcome that by not looking for the glory of people. But only look for the glory of God.

And the glory of God is seen as how Jesus came and became a human and died for people. Not trying to win arguments and push ourselves up. So in all of our intellectual questions my question is will answering this question help you be more like Jesus? If I could tell you the exact separation between sovereignty of God and free will.

If I could explain this to you in the next 15 minutes. Will that finally convince me to crucify my flesh? No. No.

A lot of people tell me Sandeep you're so blessed to have been taught by Zak Poonen. I'm very blessed. But it didn't help me crucify my flesh any better.

I had no advantage in that area. That's the thing we need to do. Give me any secret to help crucify my flesh.

And I'm all ears. Crucify that desire to seek glory of man. I'll entertain any question.

I'm happy to answer the question but to me I try to say Lord I want to get to the gas station. I want to know you as a father. I want to know why you died for me.

I want to crucify my flesh. There's a question that's a bit like a follow up to this question. There are Christians that in a more sincere way seem to occupy themselves with the gifts of the spirit and with miracles.

What place can these signs have according to you within the body of Christ and in what manner? Maybe the Dutch version. The question is, I'll read the second part. There are Christians that in a more sincere way seem to occupy themselves with the gifts of the spirit and with miracles.

What place can these signs have according to you within the body of Christ and in what manner? Signs can be incredibly useful. In March 2017 I met my wife. And I married her in August of the same year, 2017.

This wasn't an arranged marriage. How could I get married to her so quickly? How could she get married to me so quickly? We had godly counsel. But signs helped.

But I didn't let the signs dominate the decision. The godly counsel was the basis for the decision. I had a friend of mine... Oh, a friend of mine came to my house.

And I won't mention his name. And I said, that woman... Wait, isn't she engaged to somebody else? Yeah, he said yes, but god told me. And this is the proof of my faith.

This man was a very devout Christian. That lady got married to the other man who she was engaged to. And this man lost his faith.

As far as I know, he's no longer a Christian. He had a wrong understanding of how god spoke to him. Signs can be very, very dangerous.

They can be very useful at times. But what you really need is godly counsel. From people who know god.

But here's how I find signs in general to work in the Christian's life. Usually when god starts to work with somebody, there can be signs that accompany it. And sometimes god may work in the early days to say, I'm just going to open up my bible and I'm going to go to a verse and god speaks to me quite uniquely through that.

And sometimes you see that, especially in the beginning of the Christian life, that you open the bible and that exactly the bible speaks to you. And I've heard some beautiful stories from that. But as we mature in Christ, that's not the way god wants to work with us.

God's words to Thomas are very important. Blessed are you who don't see and yet believe. And 2 Corinthians 5, 6 says we walk by faith, not by sight.

We walk by faith in god's word, not by our senses driving us. So my 5 year old needs the Lego set to know that I love him. So my 5 year old needs the Lego set to know that I love him.

But it's very dangerous if my 25 year old also needs a Lego set to know that I love him. You know that, right? So I buy for my 5 year old a Lego set. But I'm working on my 5 year old.

So if he's 15 or 25, then he doesn't need stuff from me to prove that I love him. I'm for him. I'll give him everything for him.

Not a Lego set. Not one car. All that I have is yours.

He doesn't know that right now. The 5 year old doesn't know that. But it's true.

It's in my heart. He needs the Lego set right now. That's all he can understand.

But it's a sad situation when a 25 year old is still saying, daddy I need more stuff from you to prove that you love me. That is what god wants us to mature in the faith. So in the early days god will give you spiritual Lego sets.

He'll give you some miraculous answers to prayer. I've had people who have been miraculously saved from smoking or drinking. And other things I'm sure you've known in your life.

And other things that were wrong in their lives. But signs are for the immature. And as we mature quickly in Christ.

And if you look at the Israelites going to Canaan. God had given them sign after sign after sign for 2 years. He had split them in two.

He had given them manna every day. He had given them meat. He had given them water from a rock.

He had protected them from the Amalekites and other people. And finally he said, let me show you these giants. But I'm telling you, I'm going to help you to defeat them.

I'm with you. But it didn't work. And finally, have you not been so dependent on signs now? Can you just trust my word? And only 2 out of 600,000 could trust his word.

2 out of 600,000. Joshua and Caleb. Everybody else saw the sign.

Grasshoppers and giants. They could only draw and then defeat the giants. Joshua and Caleb saw God's word.

But Joshua and Caleb saw God's word. What God is telling me is, I sent my son to die for you. And I raised him from the dead.

And you believe it. And I have sent my Holy Spirit to live inside of you. And I have assured you that your sins have been forgiven.

And that your future is with me. For all eternity. Will you believe my word or do you need more signs? I hope that gives you a perspective of my heart.

So if we get older in our beliefs and we get like adults, you say we should need less signs, correct? As we mature in Christ. Yeah, okay. So what do we head towards then? Do we go to the other side? Do we become more intellectual? Or where do we head to? So the question is, so you want to grow up in Christ.

And you are not looking for signs, and also not for that intellectualistic, but how do you grow? What should you be doing? We don't become more intellectual, we become more like Jesus. We don't want to become more intellectual, we want to become more like Jesus. Let me show you a sign that Jesus received at the end of his life.

In John chapter 12. This is my point about signs. Signs can come.

I am not anti-signs. I am not anti-emotions. It is only not allowed to lead my perspective.

Or that today I say my feeling, you should follow Jesus or not, I am going to follow Jesus today. Of course I would like to follow Jesus from my emotion. Sometimes, especially at conferences like this, my emotions also say yes, I follow Jesus.

But there are also days when those feelings are not there. But that doesn't make a difference. In the same way I would say, signs, yes, I accept them as they are, I am not going to throw them away, but I am not going to look for them.

John chapter 12 verse 27, there we read about the last sign that Jesus received. There Jesus says, now my soul is troubled. Try to understand that.

This is Jesus, the son of God. And his soul is in trouble. So if your soul is in trouble, then you don't have to feel bad about it.

He is sought in all ways like we are. But look what he asks himself. Father, release me from this hour.

But no. This is why I came into this hour. Father, glorify your name.

And a voice came from heaven. Look, a sign, a sign. And do you know what the sign said? The voice did not say, oh Jesus, yes, I feel so sorry for you.

It is such a shame that your soul is in trouble. The voice from heaven is the voice of the Father that tells you what you feel. I glorify my name.

Your soul is in trouble? Okay. But you are going to glorify my name? Yep, you got that. I am going to glorify my name.

That is the answer to Jesus' soul being troubled. So there is one sign that God wants to give all of us. Let this be the voice from heaven that we hear in every trial we are going through.

Oh God, I am going through a really hard time. My soul is really troubled. Here is the voice that you will get back in response.

Here is the sign from heaven you will get. I am going to glorify my name. I am not interested in your name.

I am interested in you. And you glorify my name. There is the sign.

And we have to align to that sign. And Jesus is our example. He suffered more than we will ever suffer.

And Jesus' voice from heaven was very clear. The Father completely ignored the fact that Jesus' soul was troubled. I am going to glorify my name.

Over and over and over and over again. Did I answer the question? We can always talk more afterwards. I have one more question.

Maybe you can translate it. Especially people who have a clear understanding of the signs and miracles and the over-focus on that is unhealthy. They can sometimes go to the other side.

That you study the word of God as Sandeep advised this afternoon. But that you unconsciously see a kind of pride growing that I know it better than you. I know the scriptures better than you.

How do you prevent yourself from falling from one end to the other? For those people that stay clear of this preoccupation with signs and miracles and they go to the other extreme that they study the scriptures and they might get a bit proud. They might start to feel a bit elevated above the other people that are so occupied with signs. How do you prevent from getting proud? And especially for those people who have a healthy mind who like to study the word of God and go to Bible schools and read good theology.

How do you keep a low profile? And specifically for those people that have been gifted with a good mind with a good intelligent thinking capacity. How do you prevent yourself from getting proud? But still you are interested in theology you are interested in reading good books. Do you have some advice about that? I think I can relate to that.

I think I am intrigued by a lot of intellectual ideas. And I have researched enough to know the answers to some questions. And I have studied the Bible enough to know some of the truths.

This is what I have found about great people in any area even in life. Not all great people but some really high experts in fields. I have heard some great musicians being interviewed.

People who some would say are the greatest guitarists of their time. I have heard some interviews with some people who are considered incredibly good in some sports. And I have heard interviews with people who are world-famous.

Not all of them, but the ones that I've seen, who I respect, they're not impressed with their skills, they love the sport, they're not impressed with their guitar playing, they love good music and they are constantly realizing how much they lack. I've seen this in human skills, I see this in the Christian world too. A person who is truly seeking after Jesus, knows a lot of answers, but if you talk to him, if you pick his brain, if you really ask him questions, and look at his heart, then he wants to know Jesus.

Do you know who he is? The apostle Paul. Read Philippians chapter 3. He says, I've heard so much, I've done so much, but I consider it all rubbish. Paul was stoned, Paul cast out demons, Paul wrote some of the most intellectual parts of scripture in the whole Bible, and it was scripture, but if you dug into his heart, you see it in Philippians chapter 3. Consider it all rubbish.

For what? To be found in him, to know him, the fellowship of his suffering, not as if I've attained it as yet, but one thing I do. What? Study the Bible more? No, forgetting what lies behind. I press on toward the goal, toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

That's what gripped Paul, one of the greatest maestros in the Christian art system. Paul could run circles around all of us intellectually, but if you saw his heart, that's what we need to seek after. But I am afraid, that as the serpent deceived Eve, your minds will be led astray from a simple and pure devotion to Jesus.

That's what Paul was concerned about, 2 Corinthians 11 verse 3. That's the secret, that's the tree of life, that's what Eve missed, Eve missed the tree of life, not the tree of knowledge of good and evil. So rather than knowing what the tree of knowledge of good and evil and all the problems within it is, stay focused on the tree of life, the simple and pure devotion to Jesus. And Philippians 3, that message by Paul is a great testimony of Paul's heart, 30 years after being a Christian or something like that.

Philippians 3 is a great testimony of Paul's heart, 30 years after he became a Christian. Thank you, thank you. Does anyone have a pressing question? If you say, I'd like to go back to that, that will probably be the last question.

A very long question for the last one. Well, in Mark 16 verse 17 it says, And those who have faith will follow these signs. In my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in foreign languages, and so on.

And, well, that should get a place in the Christian life. And at the same time you have to be careful of the danger of, as it says, in my name they have cast out demons, and so on, but I have not known them. So how do they get a right place in our lives? That is seriously our question, from the last time in our lives.

Yes, also because in traditional churches it is often a subdued child, and just as you say, in charismatic communities there is a big focus on what place does it serve to get, because it does serve to get a place somewhere in the life of a believer, as it says there. Okay, so the question is, Mark 16, it is speaking about those who have believed and baptized will be saved, et cetera, et cetera, and those who have believed... These signs will accompany them. Exactly, and if that is written, then how are we supposed to take these verses seriously in our lives? And what place does it get? Absolutely.

And how do we avoid charismatic extremes? Wonderful question. A very good question. I believe that these signs are absolutely true, but should be handled with everything else.

Handled with everything else that is in scripture. Where I have seen this to be consistently true, is whenever God is starting a new work in a new area. If you are an evangelist or a missionary going to a new town, a new part of the country, a new part of the world, happens a lot.

Missionaries over the years have seen miraculous signs. But then as the church gets established, God wants to mature the Christians to where they are not controlled by signs. Now, the children of these Christians, they may have some signs.

I have heard some people in our church in India. The boy said, Mommy, I really want a mango. So the mother said, let's pray that daddy will bring a mango home.

For whatever reason, that father decided to get a mango on his way home. He always used to say no to buying mangoes. That brought faith into that little boy's heart.

God still sends signs. God uses signs for me. When I was a child.

But as I grew up, I know this, if I am going to a part of the world that does not know the Bible, does not know scriptures, the scripture is not yet announced or known, then I am convinced that God will give me signs that go with the preaching of the gospel. I have no trouble believing that. But we also have Matthew 28, and that writes about the same part where Jesus gives his disciples commandments before he ascends.

And that is the other side of the gospel. There is the side of the preaching of the gospel to people who do not know the gospel. But there is also the full gospel.

And there, in Matthew 28, we read nothing about signs. He says, go and make disciples. Teach them all that I commanded them.

And what is the sign? I am with you. Look, I am with you. That is the only sign.

My word. So I see that there are two sides to how we spread the good news. So I see that there are two sides to how we preach the gospel.

If we go to new areas where the gospel is not preached, then it can happen that there are signs, but also with our children, when God wants to speak to them at their level of understanding. But as we grow in faith, we do not need the signs. Imagine the first century Christians who thought that the lions would not eat them.

Snakes will not be able to bite us. But the lions have eaten them. We need to understand the signs in their broader context.

So let me repeat, I am not against signs. I know that signs will work a lot of times with small children, and with those who are young in the faith and who do not know God. Some people who come from abusive backgrounds, Muslims, who are in closeted countries, there are a lot of stories of people how Jesus miraculously meets with them.

God is a miracle working God. I also pray for people in our church who are sick, that God will heal them in a miraculous way. But He does not need to do that to prove anything to me.

He is who He is. He is all together good. His character does not change, whether He heals them or not.

So, if I go to a new territory, if I get killed, like Jim Elliot, I get killed. Or like brother Andrew, if he gets protected, he gets protected. Are you available if there are some people who have questions to ask them here? All day today, all day tomorrow.

I believe in a miracle that Corrie ten Boom said. Ten minutes of sleep with Jesus is better than ten hours without Jesus. I believe God for that miracle in my life.

I will stay up talking as much as I need to. God can make ten minutes of sleep feel like ten hours. He did that last night.

He will do it again.

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