

Signs of the Good Spirit

There is a real sense of our own worth – a renewed confidence.

Hope comes alive; we believe Jesus is with us, no matter what. There is a genuine feeling of movement: “It hasn’t got to be like this. I want to do something about it, and I can do something about it”.

Something lifts from us; we feel lighter, liberated. We grow in compassion, and sensitivity to the needs of others.

A questioning that is accompanied by clarity and conviction. We are led to bring our concerns into our relationship with Jesus, and focus on the relationship rather than on the issue. We tell him (even repeatedly!) how the issue affects us.

“(It) is necessary to suppose that every good Christian is more ready to put a good interpretation on another’s statement than to condemn it as false”. (None of us has a monopoly on the truth). We are led to let go of our hurts, and are able to pray – “Jesus, give me the attitude to this person you want me to have”.

Awareness of sin always tinged with hope and being led back into a relationship with Jesus, and others.

THREE REMARKS

- 1 The way of the Bad Spirit is to lead us away from relationships; the way of the Good Spirit is to lead us more deeply into relationships.
- 2 What we give our attention to colours all the other areas of our life. If we focus on negativity, the negativity will spread; if we focus on “grace” (which is life-giving), the grace will spread.
- 3 When I am open to the Good Spirit, I see many possibilities. When I am not open to the Good Spirit, I close down and see no way out.

Signs of the Bad Spirit

Loss of the sense of our own worth. We are down on ourselves and think and even speak of ourselves in ways we would never dream of speaking about anyone else.

Hope is blighted and fades away; the light goes out. There is a feeling of being stuck or trapped, of having nowhere to go or going round in circles, of being down a big, black hole.

There is a pervasive sense of heaviness; we feel burdened. We degenerate into cynicism (can’t see any good in anyone) or self-pity.

A questioning that creates anxiety and ends in confusion. We find ourselves mulling constantly over incidents, or giving all our attention to resolving some issue and end up more fragmented and de-energised than when we started.

We are easily led into negative interactions with others that degenerate into mutual recriminations, and “I’m right, your wrong” attitude. “Some people carry in their hearts the corpses of past relationships, addicted to hurt as a confirmation of identity.”

When we think of our sins and failings, we feel bad about ourselves, and stay there.