

# Ruling Your Spirit

18 November 2018 AM – Proverbs 25:28; 16:32 – Our Spirit – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** The word “*spirit*” is used many different ways in the Bible. It describes the Spirit of God, the third Person of the Trinity. It is used to describe breath or wind. The Bible uses it in a similar way to heart, the inmost seat of emotion in man. However, several times Scripture depicts our spirit as **our inner disposition**. It is that trait by which people know us. It may be good or it may be bad. The Bible speaks of man’s spirit being faithful, hasty, crushed, broken, haughty, humble, ruled, unruled, excellent, wounded, meek, wise, lustful, quiet, and fervent. From this, we learn that our spirit may be good, bad or damaged.

Any time you **get angry, become proud, act selfishly, hurt others with your words, yield to lust, blame others when things go wrong, or are unkind**, you have an unruled spirit. If you have no rule over your spirit, thankfully with God’s help, you can change.

**Transition:** This morning I want us to focus our attention on what God tells us about ruling our spirit. Read **Proverbs 25:28** and **Proverbs 16:32**

## 1. Having no rule over your spirit is self-destructive (Pr 25:28)

### a. When a person lacks self-control, he thinks and acts irrationally. Stevenson

- 1) Ruling his spirit is a virtue that he (**or she**) has not yet learned. How does this happen?
  - a) Perhaps he is following a bad parental example. Sadly, we often picked up our parent’s bad traits, and our children pick up our bad traits.
  - b) Perhaps his parents allowed him to do as he pleased and did not teach him self-control.
  - c) Perhaps he has never overcome the selfishness and pride that leads to an unruled spirit.
- 2) Without self-control, he (**or she**) acts foolishly.
  - a) He may allow his feelings to govern his words and actions.
  - b) He may be swayed by the uncontrolled mastery of his temper and anger. Wardlaw

- a) Ruling your spirit is a more difficult than capturing a city. Yielding to the flesh is easy. Pleasing self is common to our fallen nature. Allowing your spirit to please itself is simple. However, bringing your spirit under control is a challenging task. Treating others as you want to be treated takes work. Conquering selfishness and pride is a mammoth job. Replacing bad habits with meekness, quietness, faithfulness, and wisdom is a huge undertaking.
- b) To gain the rule over our spirit, we need God’s help.

### c. What can you do to rule your spirit?

- 1) You must **identify** any unruled spirit. Ask God to open your eyes to this. Many times this is a blind spot in our lives. We just cannot see it. Though humiliating, ask your spouse, your children or a close friend to help you.
- 2) Making no excuses, **admit** the need for change.
- 3) With God’s help, **put off** the bad and **replace** it with the opposite. Seek to quash even the slightest traces of a bad spirit (e.g., a prideful thought, an angry irritation, a sharp comment, a critical word, a selfish motive). (Romans 12:21) "*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*"
- 4) Have your spouse or friend hold you **accountable** for progress.
- 5) **Pray** for victory every day and through the day.
- 6) **Confess** all failures and seek forgiveness from those you hurt.
- 7) Never give up. **Rebuild** the wall of protection around your life by learning to rule your spirit.

**Conclusion:** Do you have an unruled spirit? Do others say you do? If you are not sure, follow the steps I just outlined (1-7 above).

Thankfully, an unruled spirit just like a broken down city wall, can be rebuilt properly. It will take hard work, but with God’s help, it can be done. The hardest task is admitting the problem.

**Song:** Yield Not to Temptation - **364**

- c) He may yield to the lusts of the flesh.
- d) He may be ruled by pride or selfish desires rather than yielding to the Holy Spirit.
- e) He fails to treat others as he wants to be treated, thus driving others from him.

**b. An unruled spirit is like a defenseless city**

✧ *In OT times, men of a city would build high thick stone walls around their city with solid gates for protection. Such walls prevented an enemy from entering the city. If the city had no wall or if its wall broken down, the city had no defence against an enemy.*

- 1) The person with an unruled spirit lacks the protective wall of self-control around his life. "It is in every one's power to take advantage of such a man; to get the better of him; to make him miserable. Any one knows how to provoke him." <sup>Wardlaw</sup>
- 2) He is easily defeated spiritually. He may want to live for God and live in victory over his temper, lusts, selfishness, pride and hurtful manners, but his unruled spirit has broken down the protective wall around him.
- 3) The person with an unruled spirit is easily carried away captive by sin. It may be a sinful reaction, unkind words, an angry response, or an action that hurts others.
- 4) He has no defence against the attacks of the devil.

✧ *If you do not with God's help rule your spirit, you are like one of those ancient cities that had no wall of protection or whose wall was broken down. You are living a defeated life.*

**2. On the other hand, ruling your spirit is heroic (Pr 16:32)**

**a. Ruling your spirit is better than being mighty**

✧ *In Bible days, war was a common part of life. Soldiers made a name for themselves by their mighty power in battle. David was honoured for his victory over Goliath. In 2 Samuel 23:8, David honoured several of his mighty soldiers for their heroic acts. Samson is known for his might in battle. Mighty men were looked up to as being heroes.*

- 1) In the first half of Proverbs 16:32, God tells us that being slow to anger is **better** than being a mighty warrior.
- 2) The word "*slow*" here refers to patience. God wants us to be patient. Patience when irritated rather than getting angry is a virtue God praises.
- 3) Anger is a sin.

a) Anger causes of much hurt. (Proverbs 14:17) "*He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*" (Proverbs 22:24) "*Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:*" (Proverbs 27:4) "*Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?*" (Proverbs 29:22) "*An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.*"

b) Anger is easy to identify, but the **spirit of anger** that ignites anger is more difficult to detect. That is what we must quash. **A spirit of anger is that irritated feeling that raises the blood pressure. It is that sudden spark of annoyance when someone displeases you. It may even be that quick raise of voice or sharp tone when someone says something you don't like.** The spirit of anger is like the tiny spark that ignites a forest fire.

c) In order to rule your spirit and prevent anger, you must quash the spirit of anger in your heart. Ask God to help you note it and stop it every time it flares up. This can be a daily battle.

**b. Ruling your spirit is better than conquering a city**

✧ *One of the most heroic things a soldier of OT days could do is to capture a city. It took skill, wisdom, planning, bravery, and strength.*

- 1) Here God tells us that it is an even greater heroic task to rule your spirit. God elevates bringing your spirit under control above the most heroic task a military general could accomplish. **As admirable as it was to conquer a city, one who has conquered his own spirit has achieved a greater victory.** <sup>Stevenson</sup>