

# The Difference Between the Orphan Spirit and a Spirit of Sonship

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Ever since Adam and Eve were alienated from God the Father in the Garden of Eden, an orphan spirit has permeated the earth, causing untold damage! (By “orphan,” I am referring to a sense of abandonment, loneliness, alienation and isolation.) Almost immediately after the fall in Eden, the fruit of this orphan spirit resulted in jealousy, culminating in Cain murdering his brother Abel because God the Father didn’t receive Cain’s offering. To make matters worse, in contemporary society, with the breakup of the nuclear family, large amounts of people are not only alienated from God but are brought up without the loving care and security of their biological fathers.

I believe all of the emotional, physical and spiritual ills of society can be traced to humans feeling alienated from God and their biological fathers. Orphaned men have a hard time connecting to their spouses, their children, those in spiritual authority and their supervisors, and they have a hard time accepting and loving themselves. There are presently millions of incarcerated men who are acting out lives of violence and rebellion because their earthly fathers abandoned them. There are churches filled with pastors and leaders who use people and destroy relationships because they are driven to succeed, and it’s due to their need for a father’s affirmation—which is a hole too large for ministry success or performance to fill.

The only way to break this orphan spirit is for people to be filled with a sense of the Father’s love for them in Christ, which then enables them to become mature sons who serve God out of knowledge of His undeserved grace instead of trying to earn the Father’s love through performance.

The orphan spirit is perhaps the greatest curse on the earth today. It will take spiritual parents with great spiritual depth and authority to break and reverse this curse to perpetuate a generational blessing. Only when a person is healed of fatherlessness through the love of God is the orphan spirit broken so they can begin the process of entering mature sonship. Sonship is so important that all creation is presently crying out for the manifestation of the mature sons of God (Rom. 8:19)!

The following 11 traits contrast the orphan spirit from the spirit of sonship:

**1. The orphan spirit operates out of insecurity and jealousy. The spirit of sonship functions out of love and acceptance.**

Those with an orphan spirit are constantly battling jealousy and insecurity, since security originates in a secure relationship with our parents. Those with an orphan spirit are so insecure, they even have a hard time hearing a biological or spiritual father praise their siblings or co-laborers. But those with the spirit of sonship are so secure in the Father’s love and favor that they’re content to serve in any capacity needed, whether or not they are in charge or celebrated in the process.

**2. The orphan spirit is jealous of the success of his brothers. The mature son is committed to the success of his brothers.**

Those with an orphan spirit are happy when their brother fails because it makes them feel good about themselves. On the other hand, those with the spirit of sonship joyfully commit themselves to serve, celebrate and help their brothers succeed, since they don't work for human accolades but out of a deep sense of the love and affirmation of Father God.

**3. The orphan spirit serves God to earn the Father's love. The mature son serves God out of a sense of divine acceptance and favor.**

Along these lines, those with an orphan spirit are constantly striving and trying to earn the Father's love through accomplishment in ministry or career. Those with a spirit of sonship already know they are accepted in Christ and serve others out of the abundance of this acceptance.

**4. The orphan spirit tries to medicate its deep internal alienation through physical stimulation. The mature son walks in the joy and presence of the Lord for comfort.**

Those with an orphan spirit are constantly trying to push down their sense of alienation, loneliness and lack of self-worth through constant work, going from one relationship to the next, physical gratification and a life of narcissism and self-indulgence. However, the more they indulge, the more addicted they become and the larger the hole in their heart becomes because only the love of the Father can fill the deep emotional needs they have.

Those walking in sonship bask in the presence and love of God and practice the joy of the Lord continually as their source of strength because they understand that grounding their security and self-life in anything other than God is like trying to build a house on sinking sand.

**5. The orphan spirit is driven by the need for success. The Spirit leads the mature son into his calling and mission.**

Many attempt to accomplish great things to satisfy the deep yearning in their hearts for their father's approval. This results in them being driven to succeed instead of being led by the Spirit. Even many leaders get their churches into huge debt to build huge buildings, driving the people around them because they are blinded by their own innate feelings of inadequacy. They think they can feel good about themselves with great accomplishments.

Only those with a strong sense of sonship will allow the Lord to direct them and bring opportunities to them without trying to drum up their own success.

**6. The orphan spirit uses people as objects to fulfill goals. Mature sons serve people to bless the kingdom.**

Those with an orphan spirit tend to use people as objects to accomplish their goals. Whenever we objectify people, we manipulate them with words threats, and anything necessary to have our way and control them. Mature people who walk in sonship don't use people; they serve and release people to fulfill their destiny in Christ.

**7. The orphan spirit repels children. The spirit of sonship attracts children.**

Leaders and parents with an orphan spirit are constantly in turmoil, fighting and striving for their own way, which gives their spiritual children the sense that their leader is in competition with them instead of loving them. This results in repelling spiritual and biological children, which can forfeit influence over the next generation! Those who walk in sonship walk in the Father's anointing and draw children toward them because their children hear the voice of a shepherd who cares for them.

**8. The orphan spirit has anger and fits of rage. The spirit of sonship rests in the Father's ability to control and guide the future.**

Those with an orphan spirit have issues with uncontrollable anger, fits of rage and other forms of manipulation because they feel they must control others and their circumstances in order to fulfill their goals. This is because they lack the trust necessary in their heavenly Father to guide and control their future.

Those walking in sonship walk in the Father's rest and have ceased from their own works so the Father can have His way in their lives.

**9. The orphan spirit is always in competition with others. The spirit of sonship is always blessing others.**

Those with an orphan spirit are always trying to outdo others in their church, family, business or denomination because they receive their identity through being better than everyone else. Those who walk in sonship are constantly seeing how they can bless others, since they already have the affirmation of God in their souls. They want to freely share His love with others.

**10. The orphan spirit lacks self-esteem. The spirit of sonship walks in the love and acceptance of Father God.**

Those with an orphan spirit have a hard time loving and accepting themselves. Those walking in sonship are filled with a sense of divine love and acceptance that enables them to walk confidently in the joy of the Lord in spite of the fact that all humans are sinners and fall short of the glory of God.

**11. The orphan spirit receives its primary identity through material possessions, physical appearance and activities. The spirit of sonship is grounded in sonship and the Father's affirmation.**

Those with an orphan spirit never have enough career success, material possessions, pleasure or illicit relationships to satisfy the hole in their heart related to their identity. Consequently, they are constantly striving to gain satisfaction through the use of various things or people in their lives. In many cases, even their form of dress—including an inordinate amount of tattoos, skin piercings and hairdos—can be their way of standing out as unique in a cry for attention due to a lack of self-esteem and fatherly affirmation.

Those who walk in sonship are so grounded in their divine Father's affirmation that they can be satisfied serving in the background and can celebrate the success and attention others receive. The void in their soul has already been filled with the unconditional love of the Father.

In conclusion, the greatest gift known to humankind is to accept, receive and walk in the love of the Father, who so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that we may not perish or waste our lives away but experience the abundant life that only our divine Father can give.

*This article originally appeared on JosephMattera.org.*

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