



# Influence of Heaven & Hell

FaithBuilder 1 | Lesson 10 | Eternal Life

## Lesson Overview

### 1. True or False

### 2. Watch a Video

Watch *How to Stop Unwanted Thoughts* online at [bit.ly/OTLEHowToStop](http://bit.ly/OTLEHowToStop) (6min 01sec) and discuss.

### 3. Read

Good and evil spirits are with us each moment. Good spirits protect, evil spirits attack. pp. 1-2

### 4. Optional Activity

What could you do to stop troubling thoughts? p. 3

## New Church Concept Spirits with Us

The kind of spirit that is associated with us is determined by the kind of person we are in respect to affection and love, though good spirits are assigned to us by the Lord while we ourselves summon the evil ones. The spirits with us change as our affections change. This means we have one kind with us in infancy, another kind during our childhood, another kind as we are growing up and in early adulthood, and still another kind in old age. *Heaven and Hell* 295

## True or False

Read the following. Decide whether each statement is true or false. Explain your responses:

1. You are the source of the thoughts in your head.
2. Everything you think flows in from the spirits with you.
3. Good thoughts come from the Lord; selfish thoughts come from yourself.
4. The thoughts in your head become your own when you act on them.

## Watch a Video

Watch *How to Stop Unwanted Thoughts* online at [bit.ly/OTLEHowToStop](http://bit.ly/OTLEHowToStop) (6min 01sec). (Enter link in web browser bar at the top of your screen.) Discuss.

1. Do you have a similar tactic for stopping unwanted thoughts?
2. Which is easier—overcoming unwanted thoughts, or unwanted feelings?

## Spirits with Us

While we live in the world we are protected by angels and attended by evil spirits. These good and evil spirits link us with societies in heaven and hell, giving us the freedom to choose between good and evil influences in our lives.

At least two evil spirits and two angels are present with every person. Through the evil spirits a person is in communication with hell, and through the angels with heaven. Without the communication with heaven and hell a person could not go on living for even a moment. See *Arcana Coelestia* 697, 5849

A person is linked to them in such a way that he cannot think anything, or will it, unless he does so together with them, so that interiorly he is in communication with the spiritual world. *Arcana Coelestia* 5861

## How Do Angels Protect Us?

Guardian angels are always ready to protect us from the attacks of hell.

They impart charity and faith, notice the direction in which the person's delights turn, and modify and bend those delights towards what is good.... They are forbidden to act violently and crush a person's evil desires and false ideas. They must act gently. Their function is also to control evil spirits from hell. When evil spirits put in evils and falsities angels put in truths and goods, which—even if they are not accepted—temper the evil spirits' influence. Spirits from hell are constantly on the attack, and angels provide protection.



The angels moderate affections, since they constitute a person's life and freedom. They also notice any influence on a person from hells which are now open but were not previously so, which happens when a person goes off into some new evil. To the extent that the person allows, the angels close off those hells. They also remove any spirits who may be trying to come out from there.

The angels call forth the forms of good and truth with a person and set them opposite the evils and falsities activated by the evil spirits. As a result the person in the middle is not conscious of the evil or of the good. And being in the middle he is in freedom to turn towards one or towards the other. Angels from the Lord lead and protect a person every instant and fraction of an instant. See *Arcana Coelestia* 5992

### Spiritual Companions Change as People Change

The spirits and angels with a person change as a person grows spiritually.

The spirits with a person change according to how the person's states undergo change—the states of his affection, that is of his love and the ends he has in view. The spirits present at one time are removed and others take their place. In general what kinds of spirits are present with a person is determined by the character of the person himself. *Arcana Coelestia* 5851

### People and Spirits Are not Aware of Each Other's Presence

We are completely unaware of the spirits who constantly guard and protect us—and our guardian angels are only concerned with our spirits and know nothing about our worldly name and circumstances.

Angels and spirits do not know what people they are with. Neither do people know the angels and spirits they are with. The Lord alone knows and disposes this. See *Last Judgment* 9

### People Stay with the Same Spirits After They Die

As we make choices we build connections with specific communities of angels or devils by seeking their presence and influence in our lives. After people die they are prepared for life in heaven or hell. There, they live with the same spiritual associates they chose while living in the world.

A person finally returns to the same community, because that community had acted in unison with the love which has gained control in the person. See *Arcana Coelestia* 5861

### Discuss

1. We cannot know for sure what kinds of spirits are with us—but there are ways in which we might get some idea. What are they?
2. What risks would there be if you knew specific spirits with you?
3. King Saul struggled with a distressing spirit (see 1 Samuel 16). Evil spirits plagued him with terrifying thoughts. Use the activity on the next page to brainstorm ways of dealing with situations like this.

In most ancient times people had an inward communication with heaven, and so by way of heaven with the Lord. They were governed by love to the Lord, and people who are governed by love to the Lord are like angels, the only difference being that they have a physical body. Their interiors and lay open all the way from the Lord. The Ancient Church was not governed by love to the Lord, but by faith and by charity towards the neighbor. They had only external communication.

Everybody has a communication of some kind, including the wicked.... Without it a person could not exist.

Since the Most Ancient Church heaven has not been open in the same way. People have talked to spirits and angels - for example, Moses, Aaron - but they did so in a different way. The reason heaven has been closed is a deep secret, as is the reason why it is so closed now that no one knows of the existence of spirits, let alone that angels are living with him. He imagines that when he is thinking all by himself he is completely alone. In fact he is constantly in the company of spirits who observe and perceive what he is thinking and intends, as accurately and clearly as if the world could see. People are not conscious of this so heaven is closed to him. Nevertheless it is true. The reason he is not conscious of it is that if heaven were not closed to him when faith is non-existent with him, still less the truth of faith, and charity even less, he would stand in very great danger. See *Arcana Coelestia* 784

## Finding Inner Peace

Peace has in it trust in the Lord, that He governs all things, provides all things, and leads to a good end.

*Arcana Coelestia 8455*

Think about a time when you have been troubled by distressing thoughts. Write down examples of troubling thoughts and ideas that evil spirits might bring into a person's mind.



To soothe Saul, his servants went to find a person who could play the harp. Harps represent a spiritual love for what is true (*Apocalypse Explained 325*). What true ideas can help us gain perspective when we or our friends have troubling thoughts?



What might you put in your toolkit to have for the next time you (or one of your friends) are troubled by distressing thoughts?

