

## Hard questions: That wandering spirit

In *Luke 11:24-26*, Jesus said: “When an evil spirit goes out of a person, it travels over dry country looking for a place to rest. If it can’t find one, it says to itself, ‘I will go back to my house.’ So it goes back and finds the house clean and all fixed up. Then it goes out and finds seven other spirits even worse than itself, and they come and live there. So when it is all over, that person is in worse shape than he was at the beginning,” (TEV).

Using this maxim could make the work of ministers and professional therapists easier. Most of all, this counsel from God’s empowers people who struggle in life. What did Jesus mean by this story of the wandering spirit?

Most new converts to Christ seem purely motivated and their efforts sincere. As often happens with those who try to lose weight, new Christians start well, but suffer discouraging relapses. Church leaders urge them to stop their bad conduct. Still, they often fall back into sin. Jesus’ story of the wandering spirit helps us.

We rightly encourage new Christians to quit illicit sex, anger, dishonesty, greed, drugs, and drunkenness. It isn’t sufficient to expect that new converts will discontinue their former activities on their own. Quitting their former activities creates a vacuum that Christian novices must fill with good, positive behavior. A clean, empty house always invites squatters. Bums and demons love places like that. We pray with and for new converts. We also must help them engage in positive activities with godly goals. Unless we fill the house quickly, the demons will return seven-fold. “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable . . . think about such things,” *Philippians 4:8*. Many of us older Christians should regularly scour our *houses* and refill them, too. *Bob Blair*      [www.robertblairbooks.com](http://www.robertblairbooks.com)