

## WHAT IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE?

'Spiritual warfare' is the struggle to have life in this material world reflect as much as possible God's loving governance. It is a 'war' because there are forces working vigorously to thwart God's work. God is in charge, but there is an enemy that is in full-scale revolt, and they have great influence all around. As with the [unseen](#) God, the forces behind the revolt are unseen, non-physical, and supernatural. They lust after power in the world of visible, material beings. Just because the battle is unseen doesn't mean it isn't going on. It is. In every nook and cranny of our earthly existence. In deciding to follow Christ, the believer accepts the rulership of Christ in his/her life (that's what's meant when Jesus is called 'Lord' -- His authority and rule). This [New You](#) yields the throne of the self to Jesus, but the Old You doesn't like it one bit.

The struggle against the Devil and all his empty promises is at its heart a 'second Person' matter, a work of Christ Himself. The Holy Spirit leads us in our part of the struggle.

The Scriptures speak of spiritual warfare in several places, but most directly by Paul in [Ephesians 6](#), where he speaks of the full armor of God. Most pointed is verse 12 : **"For we struggle not against flesh and blood, but against the kingdoms, against the powers, against the world leaders of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in the high places"**.

The Devil has already lost. But the Devil is trying to take as many with him as he can, apparently just to hurt God. And however much the Devil succeeds in doing this, God hurts -- like a parent does over losing a child. This sort of spite is very much in keeping with the Devil's character. Satan is a leech; he is so lacking in life that the only life he has left is what he can suck out of the living.

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## WAR TALK

Many people, including many Christians, do not like the use of the word 'warfare' here. I'll be honest: I myself do not like the imagery. War's a horrible thing, and we follow the Prince of Peace. But Scriptural imagery uses warfare language, and thus it would be very wrong to reject it. Just as important, those who are going through the worst of the struggle sooner or later find themselves leaning on war-like terms. They're going through more than a mere 'struggle' -- they're going through a kind of hell. War imagery captures this with a precision and emotional connection no other imagery has yet come close to. Everyone knows what the imagery means, so when it's used, the point is quickly understood by believer and non-believer alike. And war language, while it may make too much of any one 'battle', is the only language which successfully catches the epic proportion of what is going on in the supernatural realm. I would hope for a substitute, but 'war talk', judiciously and wisely used, will simply have to do for now.

That said, Christ's followers are called on to use a very different set of weapons: we are to be [instruments of peace](#). Paul refers to the shoes of the gospel of peace; the belt of truth; and the sword of the Spirit -- the word of God ([Ephesians 6:10-18](#)). These are hardly A-bombs or bullets or bayonets. Such weapons are not only very destructive to the evils of the Devil's work, but are also the blocks upon which a lasting shalom is built. In ancient Judah, [King Jehoshaphat](#) took 'weapons of peace' [literally](#) : he sent out praise singers in front of the soldiers, causing such disarray that the enemy started slaughtering each other. Then as now, the lesson is that only God gives the victory over evil.

## TACTICS

It's not only good faith, but often a good tactic to take action in the opposite way from evil. Where there's anger, act to bring calm, and things may calm down. Where there is greed, start giving - it might become infectious. Where large egos rule, be a servant of all, and the contrast will speak for you. Where there is backbiting and gossip, say things to build people up, and it may suck the poison out. Where there is disunity, seek a way to bring people together, and you may find surprising allies. Do these things deliberately, in a way that exposes the evil for what it is. You may not be safely able to name the evil, but your actions and attitudes can reveal the truth when words can't.

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## WHAT IF I CAN'T LOVE ENOUGH?

The most important truth about spiritual warfare is that it is first and foremost a work of love. Not love for the struggle, or the love of "saving souls" or of victory. It's a work of love for God's Kingdom, and love for the people Jesus was crucified over -- which is each and every one. Some people have an easier time with loving. Their emotional makeup and life circumstances make it easier for them to make their love effective. It's much easier to love if you've been loved. Many people have a much harder time of loving. They're burdened with a heavy load of taunting, fear, oppression, or mental disease. Or worse, they haven't experienced love from anyone and so have no idea what it really is or what it does or how to give it.

The hard truth, though, is that *noone* has enough love on their own to do spiritual warfare. In Matthew 7:7, Jesus says to ask and it will be given. So ask God to enable you to love with God's love. The Spirit's more than happy to give you this. But like everything else God gives, it's made to be real. It will take stubborn, regular prayer, and maybe some hard lessons and changes in outlook, for the love to start flowing out of you. If the love isn't there, it's like going into battle unarmed and unprepared, straight into the line of fire.

## SPIRITUAL WELFARE

One can only start 'spiritual warfare' from the point of view of 'spiritual welfare'. In both senses of the word 'welfare'.

- 'Welfare' in terms of one's spiritual good. Satan looks for weakness, and exploits places in our life where we allow ourselves to be a sham. The art of [turning oneself over to God](#) and partaking in God's friendship is at the heart of all the Christian forms of spiritual discipline. When one does that, there's much less room for Satan's torments. We also can fight Satan by praying for the 'spiritual welfare' of others (a form of 'intercessory prayer', which itself flows from love).
- 'Welfare' also in the sense of the US social services program. For we all are spiritually-impoorished vagabonds with no way to support ourselves. Only God can win the spiritual struggles. If we depend on our own resources, we get tangled in the web and eaten by the Spider. There is no place for personal pride in spiritual warfare. We share in **God's** victory -- the empty tomb -- but only as far as we share in God's **loss** -- the cross. The cross is a moment of being emptied into self-surrender. That is where 'spiritual warfare' starts.

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## WHAT IS SATAN?

So, what kind of a Satan does the Scriptures tell us about? The devil is shown as having **will**, [ability](#), and much supernatural [power](#), even if the power comes mostly from his skill at [lies and deceit](#). Satan has [identity](#) (a sense of 'I') and a [purpose](#) (or [anti-purpose](#)). Satan is at once an instigator and a reactionary, the one who starts fights and the one whose reason for being (at least so far as he's concerned) is to frustrate and obstruct God's Kingdom in every way. The Devil is more than a match for any person standing on his or her own, or for that matter any group of human beings. We're no match for Satan on our own because we are out of kilter with the only One who has the power to best Satan. Christ, by coming into the created world, calls Satan's bluffs and flushes him out from where he lurks.

The Devil is not an anti-god. The Devil is more like a sham god, a face without a person behind it, all apparition and no substance. Satan can [tempt](#), but can never fully [be](#). Satan, like the [archangel he once was](#), can't make us do anything. Martin Luther likened Satan to a snarling dog that is chained in place, who can only do you real harm if you're foolish enough to come too close. All Satan can do is use cunning tricks to play off our weaknesses and circumstances, to lead us to [choose](#) to do things which suck the life, hope, and energy out of ourselves and others -- especially others who did nothing to harm us. And each time we do, we lose a bit of the person behind our own face.

Satan has servants, too. These 'demons' or 'bad angels' do the day-to-day whisperings, the temptations within each moment of daily life. Give them a centimeter and they will try to take a kilometer.

If all this Satan talk puts you off, or if you think that Satan is just a construct or a symbol that people created to show how humans tend toward evil, **please hear what I'm saying, because it's very important and true :**

- there really is a force or entity from beyond us and from outside of us, calling each and all of us to evil, trying to get evil thoughts to turn into deeds, and meshing together or coordinating those deeds into an evil mess;
- When it's said that all of us are 'fallen', it means that some aspect of us is working to the same ends as this force.
- if you don't believe at least this much about evil, you're not dealing with evil for what it really is.

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## **SATAN AND SPIRITUAL THINGS**

"The devil sees nothing more abominable than a truly humble christian, for [that Christian] is just the opposite of [the devil's] own image."

----- **Hans Nielsen Hauge**

The [spiritual gifts](#), most especially discernment and wisdom, are there in part to thwart Satan's efforts to put people in bondage. Satan's into this bondage stuff -- he's really one hyper-kinky dude. Satan can use whips, chains, domination and submission, but usually doesn't. Satan uses twisted ideas, manipulations, half-truths, the lure of sex and victory and wealth and power, fear, vengeance, self-images of shame, and the burning anger of being wronged. Satan uses the show, drained of substance; the excitement, drained of reasons to celebrate. Satan deals marked cards from stacked decks, hands us loaded dice, and then urges us to gamble. Such things are Satan's idea of spiritual discipline, or more accurately, disspiritual un-discipline. And just as [spiritual disciplines](#) help to open us up more to the Holy Spirit, indulging in an evil way of life opens us up to an inner anarchy which (like all anarchies) eventually turns in on itself to crave authoritarian rule from the one who most wants that kind of absolute power.

The main ways of fending off the Devil are to live as a follower of Christ and to love your neighbors as yourself. In doing that, you give the Devil less room to play with. An act of spiritual warfare can be as simple as :

- telling the truth instead of lying;
- treating people with respect instead of cussing them out;
- ordering vegetable juice instead of a daiquiri;
- not going on a spending spree to keep your lifestyle more upper-class than your neighbor's,
- not flipping a finger at the guy who just cut you off in traffic, or even just a smile.

- gentle words for your girlfriend,
- a helping hand to an elderly woman in a store;
- an act of kindness done just to be kind.

You could choose to do something else, and that idea would not usually be from the Devil. But that idea would still have to be chosen \*against\* when there is a more Christlike response to be chosen \*for\*. Living as a Christian is not a neutral thing; it presses on to a higher calling. Thus spiritual warfare could be something like choosing not to abort that child, or choosing not to throw that punch or draw that knife, or choosing to stop trying to be a hip hop star so you can have time to work with troubled teens, or choosing not to work overtime because your family needs your presence more than your money. **Even things that you are allowed to do, things you are morally justified in doing, things that would make your life a lot easier, things that create opportunities -- even those things are to be turned away, if there is a more Godly choice to make.** The classic case is when a church or ministry receives the proceeds of drug sales or prostitution. They would not be wrong in thinking there's a lot of good that can be done with the money. But Satan still wins if they knowingly accept it or have a strong suspicion where the money came from. When you accept the benefits of wrongdoing, you become part of the problem; it changes you and your role in the system. The warfare is fought in you and among the parts of society that are around you, every day.

## POSSESSION

The Devil never really 'possesses' (owns) anyone or any thing. The world is in revolt, but it is still the Creator's world, and the Devil can't change that. The Greek New Testament term for 'possession' is **daimonizomai**, which can be seen several ways. One way is to see it as demonic influence, where one is so twisted up by heeding the devil that one becomes 'demonized' - made like the Devil. The other way is as a demonic energy or impulse that not only stirs up evil in a person, but enables that person to do the Devil's work with an ability or power beyond what they would otherwise have -- a demonic dynamism. Bondage is created either way. It takes the bigger dynamism of Christ to free someone from that bondage, and it takes 'Christ-ization' to keep them free.

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## WHAT KIND OF TRUTH SETS US FREE?

It's common for people to say that "the truth will set you free". But mere factual knowledge, standing on its own, can't do anything to the Devil. The more we know, the more places that Satan can grip in order to twist our minds. And even if somehow you were able to know how to stop Satan from twisting your knowledge, Satan could still get at you through your body, with accident or tempting sensations or illness. And even if you were able (as Job was) to defy Satan even as he works against your body, Ol' Scratch

could still scratch away at you through your relationships. And so on. There are just too many ways to get at us.

There is a truth that sets us free. One truth that gives strength to all the other truths. Jesus, the Christ. And, since the key truth is a person not a thing, our freedom is found in our [relationship](#) with that person. In a relationship, you bring all aspects of yourself into play : thoughts, knowledge, [feelings](#), [experiences](#), memories, deeds, tastes, time. If everything about you is involved somehow with Christ, it doesn't matter what angle of approach Satan uses, Christ will already be there. Even the Devil's worst wickedness can be turned into good by God. The Christ who wins the spiritual battles is the same Christ who won the war. What could be more secure than that?

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## SOME QUOTES TO THINK ABOUT

"I am persuaded that the powers of darkness have pulled off an amazing coup. While the American Church is undoubtedly the wealthiest church ever in education, discretionary time, and money, a major segment of that church has been lured into believing it cannot make a difference for world peace or social justice. Ironically, in this deterministic view of the future, not only can't the church make a difference, neither can **God**. This eschatology of despair unwittingly seems to lock God outside of history, characterizing God as an important absentee landlord who is unable to effect any real change in the present world. All God gets to do is bring down the final curtain at the end of history."  
----- **Tom Sine**, in *\*Sojourners\** magazine, regarding the kinds of end-times theories circulating in the Fundamentalist and Pentecostalist circles.

"The Devil is easy to identify. He appears when you're terribly tired and makes a very reasonable request which you know you shouldn't grant."

----- **Fiorello La Guardia**, former mayor of New York City

"Those who are their own god will end up consigning themselves to the Hell they built for their enemies."

----- **Unknown**, on-line.

"When it comes to being possessed, ask not whether you have been a little loony; ask rather whether lying has become your life-style."

----- **Lewis Smedes**, *\*A Pretty Good Person\**, p.102

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

If you're studying spiritual warfare as a group, ask these questions among yourselves, and share your answers with the group.

1. Do you think that you've ever met Satan? (I'm not talking 'symbolically', or 'it was like Satan' -- I mean the real presence of the Evil One, so strong you can almost touch it.)
2. If you've ever chosen to come forward publicly to do something in Christ's name : did things start happening which drew your attention away from doing it? What sort of things? Did you do it anyway?
3. The theme of Jesus' Lordship runs throughout the letters of John and Paul, most notably [Philippians 2:9-11](#). Try to picture how Jesus' reign would break into your life. What would it be like?
4. In what ways can our thoughts or feelings be 'twisted'? In what ways has this happened to you?
5. There are times when parts of the Church have been 'twisted' into deep evil. Can you think of an example? What happened to bring the church out of it?
6. How do you react when you see or hear similes or images (in movies, TV, music, or in books) that represent deep evil and the demonic? Does anything stir in you? Do you ever think about having powers and using them on others? What can or should Christians do about the use of these images, if anything?

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## EXORCISM

The Gospels say that Jesus did exorcisms. He Himself fought directly with Satan during the wilderness temptations. When He commissioned His followers, He specifically gave them authority over the spirits ([Mark 6:7,13](#); Matt 7:11, 10:8; Luke 10:18-20) and specifically over evil forces ([Mark 3:14-15](#)), in His name. In the case of [Luke 10](#), it was not the Twelve disciples who were given the power, but a chosen **seventy** of Jesus' followers. This amazing authority has been passed on to the Body of believers when they act as a body. It's clear that Jesus saw there to be a battle of some sort against the Devil ([Mark 1:23-28](#), 3:23; Luke 11:21-23). This was true also of the early church in Acts. That they understood the healing ministry as one made up in part of casting out "unclean spirits", is clear ([Acts 5:16](#), 8:6-8, 19:12). But many church teachers over the years have taught that these could also be understood as acts of [mercy](#) on people who needed it badly, or as acts of psychological release.

The scene in [Acts 16:16-18](#), however, demands to be understood in terms of authority over evil spirits. There, a slave girl has been filled with a spirit of divination (fortune-telling) which made lots of money for her masters. Paul cast this spirit out of her. Satan, of course, fought back through less-supernatural means, the raw greed of her masters. They sent for the authorities, who imprisoned Paul and Silas, leading to an earthquake and a witness to the jailer.



Some churches teach that Jesus' exorcisms, as well as His healings, were done to 'show' to everyone Jesus' authority and His true place in the divine scheme of things. There's an element of that (John 2:18, 6:30). But that's not the half of it. There's more! The [Synoptic Gospels](#) (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) treat the healings, exorcisms and other acts of power as **the start of the Kingdom's arrival**. The King was giving orders, and was seeing to it that they were carried out. Fending off Satan was not in the forefront of Jesus' mind; love was. While Jesus did powerful acts to undo Satan's works ([1 John 3:8](#)), the key motive was compassion for those whom Satan had bound ([Mark 1:41](#)).

Exorcism is an act, not a sign, and a gift only in the sense that it is a power given to the church as an organism and not merely to any one person in it except on behalf of it. It is the power to command the Devil to leave. It is another, more focused side to what some traditions call 'the power of the keys', the power given to the Body of believers, the church, to forgive and to damn. On its other sides it's more normally given to the Body's servants, the ordained ministers. It is something to be set apart from the other matters of the Spirit or the Church, because the Devil is so serious a thing. It calls for intense commitment and even more intense [prayer](#). It's best done as a matter of teamwork, of people acting together as a mini-community because they love that particular person, group of people, or institution. The team's goal is to free that person from their bondage to Satan. It is that love, a love which is Christ's love at work in them, plus the hard work of stripping off the lies, peeling away the layers of [self](#) so that this love can get down to where the Devil is lodged within, where the miracle of casting out demons takes place. It is this love which gets whatever goodness there is in that person to join in making the liberation happen.

Some Christians believe in using exorcism rites over all sorts of matters that torment people, not just the hard-set, destructive evil of classic "possession" or demonization. Disease, mental illness, anger, confusion, conflictive relationships -- all are treated as the creation of some sort of demon sent to pester that person. And these Christians have developed a complex set of beliefs and practices around the effort to cast these demons out by name. They believe that there are ways that a demon can get a 'legal right' to be inside someone, or that a demon may come into someone just because they hang out at an 'occultically-occupied' location. They speak of vast demonic hierarchies, with each demon assigned to specific tasks. They speak of curses that can be passed along from one's forebears, or through a relationship with someone involved in the occult. They use elaborate and wearying rituals or courses of action which supposedly can force a demon to tell the truth and obey orders. Some of them even expect to see spinning heads and levitations and glowing eyes and such, as if this was a horror movie. They believe the real work should be left to a 'gifted', 'trained' specialist in casting out demons.

It's strange how the Bible does not support *any* of these beliefs and practices, if they were so important in the struggle against Satan. It's strange how the worldview one gets from all this resembles that of the occultic follower. Truthfully, the kind of things some call "demonic affliction" are more like strong forms of "temptation". Demons will ply their lying craft, but it is our sinful selves that pay heed. The responsibility is ours, not theirs. The Bible deals with temptation not through exorcism but by way of self-examination,



confession, repentance, character-building, determination to resist, and trust in God. Our rescue from temptation is done by Christ, the power to resist from the Spirit -- not from an exorcist. The key is to remember Whose we are.

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## SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND THE PRINCIPALITIES

Note, please, that I'm not talking just about people. The Devil lodges himself in many groupings, and in many situations.

Perhaps it's :

"For the powers are *incarnated* in very concrete forms, and their power is expressed in institutions or organizations....The spiritual warfare we are summoned to is concerned with human realities -- with injustice, oppression, authoritarianism, the domination of the state by money, the exaltation of sex or science, etc."  
-- **Jacques Ellul**

- in the general public of Germany during the Third Reich (World War II as, in part, an act of exorcism?)
- in the world's slave trade which ran ugly throughout the course of history but became its ugliest self in the 1700s and early 1800s because of the vast new US market.
- in the Khmer Rouge, in the days of the killing fields.
- at My Lai when US soldiers slaughtered villagers (war as, in part, an act of demonic possession?).
- in a corporate boardroom, as they plan a cover-up for the damage done by their product.
- in a school taken over by violence and disruption.
- in the mob psychology of the worst stages of the French Revolution.
- in the long string of 'bad popes' in the Middle Ages.

There is usually a person whose sellout to the Devil most characterizes the group's (for instance, Hitler or Pol Pot), but their possession is nonetheless a part of something bigger. The bigger it is, the more complete its captivity to the Father of Lies. And the more important it is for the witness of Christ's followers to take it on. But human society (and the people in it) denies the Devil even more than the evil he foments, and in the same ways : by putting both of them out of mind and out of our personal and collective history. The Devil can be exorcised from any of these 'principalities' or any group of people no less than from any one person. But it takes Christ, love, and believers working together as a team or community, to get the Devil out.

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## How to be an instrument of peace.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.  
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

## What's Different About Intercessory Prayer?

Intercessory prayer is not the same as prayers for yourself, or for 'enlightenment', or for spiritual gifts, or for guidance, or any personal matter, or any glittering generality. Intercession is not just praying for someone else's needs. It is praying with the real hope and real intent that God would step in and act for the good of some specific other person(s) or other entity. It is trusting that God will act, even if it's not in the manner or timing we seek. God wants us to ask, even urgently. It is casting our weakness before God's strength, and (at its best) having a bit of God's passion burn in us.

**"I commend intercessory prayer, because it opens man's soul, gives a healthy play to his sympathies, constrains him to feel that he is not everybody, and that this wide world and this great universe were not after all made that he might be its petty lord, that everything might bend to his will, and all creatures crouch at his feet."**

**([Charles Spurgeon](#))**

## INTERCESSION IN THE BIBLE

The Bible has many cases of people standing up for others before God. The most striking example is that of [Abraham](#). He took the initiative to step forward before God on behalf of his neighbors in Sodom and its area. He cared enough to do it, even though he knew

how thoroughly wicked Sodom was, and knew how furious God was about it (which explains why he was so careful in speaking to God about it). [Moses](#) also stepped in when God was angry, standing in the gap in the most literal sense : offering his own life for that of his nation. (Thankfully, God didn't take him up on the offer.) It was part of the role of a prophet not just to speak what God speaks, but to speak with God for the people of Israel. A fine example is the exchange between the prophet [Habakkuk](#) and God, where the prophet asks for God to act against injustice, but God replies about a coming doom. Isaiah prayed with King Hezekiah to save the nation from defeat and destruction at the hands of Assyria, and the armies were suddenly turned back (see Isaiah ch. 36-39). The master builder [Nehemiah](#) prayed to God to bring about the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of his people. As they took their concerns to God, the key motivation behind these giants of faith was compassion. They loved the people, the culture, the faith with a love like God's love, and it burned in them so much that they dared to take on God on their behalf. Unlike the gods of the lore of most other lands, this God did not zap them with lightning or turn them into half-beasts. God listened to their cries -- not by ignoring the wrongdoings that got the divine wrath kindled in the first place, but by saving at least some of the people and bringing them back to where they belonged.

The New Testament has its cases of intercessory prayer. Jesus was the prime example of an intercessor. He interceded in prayer that [God bless and protect](#) His followers. At the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Indeed, His whole life, His whole reason for being born, was to be a living intercession, a giving of His life to span the rift caused by our rebellion against God. [Stephen's last words](#) were an intercession on behalf of those who were killing him. [Paul](#) prayed constantly for the struggling young church, for character, behavior, witness, and wisdom. It is Paul's regular prayer for the church and its people that sets the usual pattern for our own intercessory prayers. And Epaphras was the '[prayer wrestler](#)' for the church in Colossae.

Even at its earliest, the young church was praying for people : for [safe travel](#), praying that people might [know Christ](#) through other peoples' witness, praying for [healing and health](#), for [rescue](#), for wisdom, for childbirth, for [spiritual growth](#), for marriages -- asking God to bring benefit or blessing to people other than themselves. The others were not always beloved; they prayed for their political leaders, some of whom were out to kill them. But they knew their God was merciful and was intimately involved with what was going on in the world. And they knew that they were called by God to share in that involvement.

## DOING IT YOURSELF

The place where intercession must start is with you. It's great to know that others may be stepping up for someone before God, but God wants you to put something of yourself on the line. Otherwise, it's too cheap to be real. Your private devotions are not just for your own benefit. If God's love is at work in you, you will care about others, and your love for them will lead you to take it to the ultimate Source of strength, healing, and love. Don't

be fearful; be persistent and stubborn. God doesn't mind; God likes to see divine love at work in you. God honors your part in the relationship.

It is best to always be aware that you never really pray alone. For when the honest love in you for other people causes you to ask God to act to strengthen, heal, defend, change, or bless them, there is someone else praying with you : the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is leading you to pray. When your love is not whole or your mind is not clear, the Spirit steps in for you, to express the prayer and draw you into it. It's been the practice of Christian intercessors over the past two millenia that intercessory prayer is prayed in a 'Trinitarian' manner : to the Father, through the Son, and in and with the Holy Spirit. God isn't fussy about that pattern, but it helps us to see some part of how God works in prayer.

The intercessory prayer that first comes to you about someone may not be what God wants you to pray for. For instance, you might be praying to lift a burden, but the Lord might be using the burden to prepare them to do something for God. Then again, your prayer might be what God wants to happen. Thus, we are to pray listening for the Spirit, and pray that God's will be done. I find myself concentrating better when I mutter the words; it gives my mind more focus. The mind may go off to explore something during personal devotions, but not while you're interceding for others -- those others must be your first concern. So, it's sometimes best to do it before you seek stillness (though God will sometimes lead you out of stillness into intercession -- be open to it).

Don't be surprised if the Spirit starts tugging on your heart to take some sort of action about a matter you're praying about. You may be the answer God sends into their lives. That's not a license to be a buttinski, stepping into everyone's private lives like some sort of conquering hero. But the Spirit might be calling you to be more than a bystander. Be ready for it. When you intercede, bring your knowledge, gifts, abilities, attention and energies before God and say, 'use these, if that's what it takes to set this right'.

## GIFTED INTERCESSION

Anyone can pray for others and step in with God on their behalf. But some people are gifted at intercession. They have an ear for the needs of others, and take them before God even when those other people reject God. An intercessor's heart is touched for those in need, not so much *on* their side as **by** their side and **on** their behalf. They have a burden for that person. They persevere. They let the Spirit give them comfort about it, instead of worrying. And when word of results comes, they celebrate and are happy about it. If that sounds like you, then you may be a gifted intercessor.

Sometimes, someone is led to be an intercessor for a specific person or mission or task. Such people are valuable even beyond donors. Such intercessors sometimes get a strong sense of coming danger about whom they're praying for. They often report that they're driven to their knees to pray about something they can't otherwise have known was happening.

Intercessors also pray for world, national, and local [political leaders](#). This follows in the tradition of the early church's prayers for the Roman [authorities](#). Some people actually think it's good to pray against evildoers and oppressive leaders, even to pray for their death. Not that God would pay any attention to you if you did. But such thinking poisons *your* attitude. Pray rather that the Spirit would lead them or [change them](#). When James and John asked for permission to do harm to their enemies by praying for divine acts of judgement, Jesus reminded them of why He was there (and they, too):

**"For the Son of Man did not come to destroy peoples' lives, but to save them"** (Luke 9:56).

Intercessory prayer aims to build people into what God wants of them, not to tear them down.

## **THY WILL BE DONE**

**"Therefore faith prays in such a manner that it commits everything to the gracious will of God; it lets [God] determine whether it is conducive to his honor and to our benefit."**

([Martin Luther](#), in a sermon on [Matthew 8:1-13](#).)

Some people make the claim that we can ask God to do things on behalf of people, and know that it will be done. It's understandable to think that, for Jesus promised that our prayers would cause things to happen, especially when we keep at it. But look at the Biblical intercessors again. Their 'success' was very real, but far from complete. Abraham stuck his neck out with a rightly-angry God, but could only save his relatives. Moses' people were spared immediate destruction, but his generation would not get the land God had promised -- the next generation did. All of David's deep and totally sincere weeping and begging could not save his baby son -- though it did set up for the birth of his successor. There is no evidence Paul ever lost the 'thorn in his side'; it may have helped his ministry in some ways, but at some point one runs out of lessons from such a thorn. The apostles prayed for the unity of the church, and gained much unity, but still had serious divisions. They prayed for their poor, but had more poor members by the day. They had hundreds of people constantly praying for their safety, but they died martyr's deaths. In such cases, God's mercy does not override God's purpose nor God's justice, not to mention our own wills. We cannot fathom God's purposes or know for certain what God knows about what is to be. God's love simply has a broader, deeper, longer work to do, and sometimes what we pray for simply cannot find a place within that work. The intercessor sometimes must accept even the most bitter of losses, with the awareness that their prayers did not -- and sometimes must not -- avail. This is the mystery of intercession.

We should follow the example of Jesus, who prayed on Thursday that He not have to go through what He was to go through that Friday. He prayed, "Not my will, but Thine". In

praying that, He was not resigning Himself to death. He was praying with the confidence that whatever was needed to happen would and should and must happen, and though that apparently meant death, so be it. Praying 'thy will be done' is not the same thing as praying with doubt. It is the act of putting your trust in Whom it belongs.

None of us are fully aligned with God's purposes. There will always be a difference between the two. It's okay to ask for what you want from the situation; that's a part of being honest with God. You can pray that your request somehow be found in the divine purposes, and pray for doorways to a better way if it can't be. (Maybe God will provide you a ram as with Abraham when sacrificing Isaac.) But God may have other plans, and your part is to trust that God's plans will be best.

Intercessory prayer does not work by our own power, as if we were the Almighty. When prayer is answered, it is answered in God's way, and it may not be at all like the 'victory' you are 'claiming'. Much of the time, the Spirit's main work is to change *you*, to make *you* care more, and to get *you* to focus on what others are going through instead of only seeing it from where you are.

Try these sites on spiritual practices :

On Spiritual Disciplines and Practices	▼
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## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES AND PRACTICES

Christians over the years have learned that certain disciplines and practices help them keep the spiritual channels open and help keep the heart turned toward God. These disciplines can't save; they can't even make you a holy person. But they can heighten your [desire](#), awareness, and love of God by stripping down the barriers that you put up within yourself and some that others put up for you. What makes something a 'spiritual discipline' is that it takes a specific part of your way of life and turns it toward God. A spiritual discipline is, when practiced faithfully and regularly, **a habit or regular pattern in your life that repeatedly brings you back to God and opens you up to what God is saying to you**. Christian devotional practice is squarely centered on Jesus Christ as found in the New Testament. When Christ is not at the heart of it, it may still be beneficial in some way, but it is not being practiced in a *Christian* way. In the end, if it does not help you follow Christ, it is of no real worth.

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## WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT DISCIPLINES?

Spiritual disciplines help to keep our relationship with God in good working order, and even help develop intimacy. But no discipline is able to create or start one's [relationship](#) with God. Nothing we do can do that; Christ did it already. No discipline can earn us heavenly brownie points, because there are no such brownie points to earn. No discipline gives us even the briefest moment of escape from our broken nature. No discipline can make us more valuable as persons, or make us inherently more of a leader. Your life may go smoother because of it, but it may get much rougher, and neither is really the point of it.

Disciplines and practices are tools that are a part of cooperating with the Spirit on the task of remaking us into what God wants us to be. Tools, not magic, not willpower. Tools of [surrender](#) and remanufacture. Tools that are used with Scripture, not in its stead. Powerful tools, but only because of the powerful One we're working with. And you are not the foreman on this job.

## Spirituality and Simplifying Life

Some people turn to God in order to simplify their lives. That may happen -- it depends on how complex your life is now and on what God has in store for you. But God often makes your life more complicated. You are called to love God first. But then, loving God, you start to love what God loves. Other people. Nature. Truth. Commitment. Solidarity. And you start to be disturbed greatly by what disturbs God. War. Pollution. Greed. Powerlust. Disrespect for life. Divorce. Racism. And God's love calls you to action.

Moods swing. What at one time seems so totally, deeply true, or is even *known* to be true, can at other times seem so false and shallow. The disciplines of the faith train you to stay on course when the moods swing. If you don't, you drift away and lose course. Indeed, that is what most former believers have done : no momentous rift, just a slow drifting out and fading away, till it doesn't matter anymore to them.

"[The church's] holiness has very little to do with asceticism, otherworldliness, or superhuman perfection. Rather, holiness refers to the persistent discomfort of the church with the unchallenged existence of oppression and exploitation in the world. Holiness also points to the commitment of the church to resist the defilement that toleration and complicity in human oppression bring."

--- James Evans, \*We Have Been Believers\*, p. 136

## Doing and Resting

When people first encounter spiritual disciplines, they think it's something important to **do**. As they go along, they come to understand that resting can be a discipline, too. But, they still have the frame of mind which makes 'being at rest' something to do. I'll do x amount of rest, y amount of quiet, in z place at t time. Okay, so scheduling is important.



But so is ignoring the schedule, because the schedule - even on spiritual stuff -- is not God. The time can be spent just being, just letting God do something for you instead of you always straining to do something (even a devotional something) for God. There is a time for work, and a time for rest. A time to lead or take action; a time to not be in control and to let the Spirit lead, to sit there and watch the wheels go round.

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## The Power Is God's

"To know the mechanics does not mean that we are practicing the Disciplines. The Spiritual Disciplines are an inward and spiritual reality, and the inner attitude of the heart is far more crucial than the mechanics for coming into the reality of the spiritual life."

----- **Richard Foster**, *\*Celebration Of Discipline\** 2nd ed. (Harper, 1988), p.3

Spiritual practices can be sound and helpful, but they can also become the home of superstition and magic, too. Take, for example, prayer beads. This practice has traveled from India to the Sufi Muslims, through the Crusaders to the Roman Catholic Church, where it lives on in the form of the rosary. The idea is simple : a chain or bracelet of beads is used to remind you to pray and keep track of prayer wherever you go throughout the day. The beads can also be used to help the believer to remember key parts of Jesus' life and work. When used that way, the beads can be a blessing. Especially in tough and pressing situations, what you recall and re-speak with the beads can help make your attention and trust turn back to God. However, for most people who use them, in whatever religion, the beads (or the prayers associated with them) start to take on a magical or superstitious aura. It is as if they had miraculous powers that God or the saints had to answer to, or as if they gave some unique contact with God, or as if saying them backwards or in some wayward manner could act as a curse, or as if forgetting to use them would cause your life to crumble. To that, one thing must be said : **NO bead chain, cloth, jewelry, flag, statue, icon, or medal, and no devotional practice or body position or sequence of words or numbers, has *ever* made God respond any better to any prayer, nor made heaven or earth or hell or anything or anyone else bend to anyone's bidding.** God does not work that way; God's created world does not work that way. Devotional aids are there to help *you* direct *yourself* toward God. The moment you believe they have any powers or merit of their own, you are being idolatrous, and are breaking the first of the Commandments. If you find yourself having that attitude, stop doing the practice or using the devotional aid, right now. Become more aware of your superstitious tendency, and try something else that might cause less of a problem for you.

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## QUOTES

"Self-respect is the fruit of discipline : the sense of dignity grows with the ability to say no to oneself."

----- **Abraham J. Heschel**

"Resolved : that all men should live for the glory of God.

Resolved second : that whether others do or not, I will."

----- **Jonathan Edwards**

"The detachment from the confusion all around us is in order to have a richer attachment to God. Christian meditation leads us to the inner wholeness necessary to give ourselves to God freely."

----- **Richard Foster**, *\*Celebration Of Discipline\** 2nd ed. (Harper, 1988), p.21

"Meditation has no point and no reality unless it is firmly rooted in *life* ."

----- **Thomas Merton**, *\*Contemplative Prayer\** (Doubleday, 1969), p.39

"By means of the imagination, we confine our mind within the mystery on which we meditate, that it may not ramble to and fro..."

----- **Francis deSales**, *\*Introduction To the Devout Life\**

"I never had a close relationship with God through prayer and the usual disciplines. That worried me. At the end of life, I find He's been a part of my life, very clear; and it's OK. He reached out; I didn't."

----- **Reuel Howe**, by way of Loren Mead

"If you get the idea to do something good, just do it. It might be the Holy Spirit."

----- **Mary Stearns Sgarioto**, in *\*Lutheran Woman Today\**, May 1995.

"First, let [fasting] be done unto the Lord with our eye singly fixed on Him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven."

----- **John Wesley**, as found in the collection *\*Sermons On Several Occasions\** (Epworth, 1971), p.301

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Some good links to other sites :

- [Center for Spiritual Formation](#).
- [Centering Prayer](#), the methods taught by Fr. Thomas Keating.
- [Credenda](#)
- Mount Carmel's [Daily Texts](#).
- [ePrayerNet](#) (they take prayer requests and get real pray-ers to pray on them)
- [Wayne Tow](#) and [Lutheran Prayer Ministries'](#) prayer resources.
- the [Oremus](#) prayer and devotional resources
- John Veltri's [Orientations for Spiritual Growth](#)

- Richard Foster and [Renovare](#), a group fostering spiritual disciplines and spiritual life.
- [Sacred Space](#), a prayer guidance site by Jesuits in Ireland.
- [Upper Room](#), with a Methodist-rooted spirituality.
- home site of [Dallas Willard](#), a popular author on spirituality.
- [World Wide Web Source on Prayer](#), from the Catholic tradition; with lots of useful stuff.

<p><b>Spirithome.com Lenten devotionals</b></p> <p><a href="#">Ash Wednesday.</a>  <a href="#">First Sunday in Lent.</a>  <a href="#">Second Week of Lent.</a>  <a href="#">Second Sunday in Lent.</a>  <a href="#">Third Week of Lent.</a>  <a href="#">Third Sunday in Lent.</a>  <a href="#">Fourth Sunday in Lent.</a>  <a href="#">Fourth Week of Lent.</a>  <a href="#">Fifth Sunday in Lent.</a>  <a href="#">Fifth Week of Lent.</a>  <a href="#">Palm Sunday.</a>  <a href="#">Maundy Thursday.</a>  <a href="#">Good Friday.</a>  Easter.  Pentecost Sunday.</p>	<p><b>Other Spirithome.com devotionals</b></p> <p><a href="#">Advent 1st Sunday.</a>  <a href="#">Advent 1st Midweek.</a>  <a href="#">Advent 2nd Sunday.</a>  <a href="#">Advent 2nd Midweek.</a>  <a href="#">St. Nicholas Day (Dec. 6).</a>  <a href="#">Advent 3rd Sunday.</a>  <a href="#">Advent 3rd Midweek.</a>  <a href="#">Advent 4th Sunday.</a>  <a href="#">Christ's Mass.</a>  <a href="#">St. Stephen Day (Dec. 26).</a>  <a href="#">Epiphany (Jan. 6)</a></p>
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And, there's pages on the [Easter season](#) and [Pentecost](#). Check it out !

## HOLINESS AND THE SPIRIT

**"We misunderstand and distort reality when we take ourselves as the starting point and our present situation as the basic datum."**

-- **Eugene Peterson**, in *\*Leadership Journal\** magazine.

God calls us to be holy. After all, God is holy. (Most of us just assume that, but in the Bible they're so awestruck that they keep saying it : [1 Peter 1:15-16](#); [Romans 1:7](#); 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:4). When we speak of the 'Holy Spirit', we're saying that the Spirit is holy; if we are 'indwelt' and even '[filled](#)' with the Spirit, are we not to be holy? But **what is holiness?** Following the law? A saintly countenance? A quietude people can see? Churchly achievement? Good deeds? Being super nice to everyone?

The holy life is simply living as someone who belongs to God and who lives by the vision of the Kingdom of God. Were it only so simple to be that way. For we, on our

own, don't have much to work with. We can't rightly envision what a life of holiness is, and even if we could, we couldn't get ourselves to be that way. So, the Spirit brings us into the holiness of **Jesus**. (When I say that, I'm not talking about a holiness 'like' Jesus' or a holiness in Jesus' style. This holiness comes directly from your relationship with Jesus, of answering the Spirit's call to live from the goodness of Jesus. **His** holiness, given to you.)

Some Christians emphasize [biblical](#) standards of holiness. Some call this legalism, and unfortunately sometimes it **is** legalism. Firmer roots for personal holiness grow when we recognize that we are broken creatures, through and through. Even our vision of what makes for holiness is marred and twisted. We start growing in Christ by coming to understand that we are strangers to God's ways. This leaves us no recourse but pray for the Spirit's leading. Without the Spirit's work, we not only cannot know God, but we also fail to discover our true selves. The Spirit, through the Bible, shows us what a God-pleasing life is, and leads us to want to live it and treasure it.

God doesn't get appeased by your doing good things, any more than by sacrifice of a virgin or conquest of a nation. God's not impressed. God does better things in the first minute of each morning than anything we ever did. If you need Godliness, only God has it, so only God can give it to you. It is 'earned' in a sense, but only by what Christ did. And through what Christ did, his life, death, and transcendence of death, God gave it to you.

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## WHERE LOVE AND THE HOLY LIFE START

Whether we're Christian or not, we've all been taught the Golden Rule : "**do unto others as you would have others do to you**". Jesus [said it](#), in a positive restatement of something already in the Jewish oral tradition. It makes life's decisions a lot clearer by putting you in your own harm's way. Think like that, and you won't be so eager to do in your main rival at [work](#). We often pull up short when we feel in our own back the knife that we just started to twist into someone else's. This is a good place to start : there actually is something for us to measure up to. Yet there are some things missing in the Golden Rule. There is, of course, the sado-masochist twist -- someone doing unto others the torture he so craves from them. A more important problem, though, is that the Golden Rule keeps you in the center of it. No matter how many lessons you learn from trading places, they're still *your* lessons, and it still depends on *your* human capacity to love. That capacity is more like a dinner plate than a deep well, shallow when compared with the task at hand of living a loving and holy life.

Jesus takes us **beyond the Golden Rule**. The first step past it is when Jesus commends Deuteronomy 6:5's [Great Commandment](#) about loving God, and the second like unto it, originally from [Leviticus](#) (you know, the book everyone loves to avoid), to "**love your neighbor as yourself**". Jesus then measures this not by one's own love, but through [what](#)

[is meant by 'neighbor'](#). Jesus calls on us to be a neighbor, moving the focus from ourselves to others, especially another who is in need.

But one more step is needed. For while this approach builds up our capacity to love, it is still *our* human capacity to love that is being given out. In John's Gospel, Jesus makes the final step to setting this right, by giving a "[new commandment](#)" : "**that you love one another, just as I have loved you**". There is a new measure : to love as Jesus loved. Right after He said that, He went on His way to setting a [standard of love](#) beyond our wildest imaginings : to the cross and the tomb. Then, He gave out a new power to love in a manner like that : He emptied that tomb, and went back to God's Beyond, sending the Holy Spirit to us in His place. What the Spirit gives us is *Jesus'* holiness and *Jesus'* love. That's the bottomless well of boundless love. No longer do we have to dish out our own love in saucer portions, we can now drench everybody with love from beyond ourselves. We can now dare to live the life of holy love, trusting that in the end there is no loss where that kind of love is found.

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## TURNING OVER

"If you have really handed yourself over to Him it *must* follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because He has begun to save you already. Not hoping to get Heaven as a reward for your actions, but inevitably wanting to act in a certain way because a first faint gleam of Heaven is already inside you."

---- C.S. Lewis, *\*Christian Behavior\** (Macmillan, 1943), p.66

A key lesson about living in the Spirit is learned from the experience of the Twelve Step groups (like [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)). Step Three is about turning one's will and life over to God. It's one of the hardest things for an alcoholic to do. It's also something said far too glibly and easily by those raised in churches. To those who claim a Christian spiritual rebirth, the first reaction (and too often the only reaction) is to say "well, didn't I already do that when I accepted Christ, or when I was baptized, or confirmed? Aren't you really talking to the unbeliever with that?" **NO. NOT IN THE LEAST.** The unbeliever usually has a hard time grasping the idea of self-surrender. The believer has no problem with the idea. The believer, however, often has two other obstacles:

1. they don't see this 'turning over to God' as a continual, relentless, moment-by-moment, lifelong matter; or
2. they **want** to do it, **think** they have done it already and think they are **still** doing it, but haven't **really** done it at all because they do not know **how** to do it.

The steps after Step Three in the Twelve Steps are just that: a procedure of how to uncover -- and keep uncovering -- the matters of your life that have not let go of to God,

and how to discover where God wants you to go from there. Whatever procedures and processes one uses, the aim has to be to uncover and turn over.

The history of the Christian Church is full of good examples of those who made a devotional legacy for us to learn, from Polycarp and Irenaeus to Sts. Francis, Clare, Bernard, and Catherine, to Gregory of Nazianzos and Theresa of Avila, to Henri Nouwen and Richard Foster, and people in congregations near you, perhaps next door or even in your [family](#). It goes beyond merely [prayer](#), meditation, and fasting (as if those were in any way 'mere'). The [disciplines](#) help us to turn over as much of ourselves to God as possible, through God's own power. It also takes repentance : recognizing how wrong we are, laying it before God and another person, and then setting about doing right in place of the wrong we did.

Why is this 'turning over' so important for living in the Spirit? Because the Spirit is not going to override you. The Spirit will not rape the inner self. God seeks to create love rather than exercise control. The Spirit works to inspire you and set you right through what you surrender to God, even if it's just a little. Whatever you hold back from God won't be used by the Spirit.

The spiritual disciplines are not ways to salvation or even really to purification and holiness. Nor does repentance make you holy. They are tools for prying the self open to the Spirit, stripping away the barriers, and letting God mold you into the you that you are meant to be.

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## WHAT SHAPES US

"We live in a strange society where we make documentaries of serial killers, movie idols out of organized crime members, authors out of political crooks, and role models out of criminals who beat the system.... I don't know when crime went from being news to entertainment, but somehow it's made the transition."

--- Erma Bombeck

Are we 'without form and void'? Does that which is around us determine our shape? If so, the Spirit isn't shaping us. We'd be more like an amoeba than a Christian or a human being. A church that's a shapeless lump is not a church that is following the Spirit. A Christian chameleon who blends in with his/her surroundings isn't a Christian at all. Any group that tries to be everything in general and nothing particular is no kind of a group. Those who believe in Christ are called to live out the Kingdom.

How does the Kingdom stack up with today's moral climate? Think of the attitudes that are becoming more common nowadays:

- "It's only a crime if I get caught."
- "Become big enough to get away with it."
- "I've got to come out of it looking good."
- "Go do it; you can always cover up the consequences."
- "It's better to be believed than it is to be truthful."
- "Rules are made to be broken by me and used against others."

This is the stuff that's filling our minds. Many people even call it "getting real", because 'this is how the real world is'. But there's nothing 'real' about it. It is all about seeming to be what you're not, and that is no way to be real. In the eyes of God the Ultimate Reality:

- God knows even your inmost thoughts, so you **are** "caught";
- You can't get anywhere near big enough to throw your weight around with God;
- God doesn't care what it 'looks like';
- Your cover-ups have consequences too, and the more you cover up, the greater and more deadly the consequences;
- God doesn't believe; God knows, holds to the truth, and calls on us to hold to it too;
- Rules are made so that you stay aware that you are **not** God, and so we all don't have to be God in order to live reasonably well with each other.

You can't be holy if you're worrying about protecting yourself or about getting success or sex or fame or power. There's just no place for that before the God who ultimately determines your safety, success, or power. God wants you to **really** 'get real'. The emperor Ego has no clothes, and the Spirit is the little boy who has the sense to say so.

"My obligation is to do the right thing. The rest is in God's hands."

-- Martin Luther King Jr.

## Holiness Is Part Of a Larger Struggle

"As long as we think we can save ourselves by our own will power, we will only make the evil in us stronger than ever."

-- Heini Arnold, \*Freedom From Sinful Thoughts\* (Plough, 1973), p.82

Living holy is not only pleasing to God, it is displeasing to those who work evil in the world. To live as a follower of Christ and to love your neighbors as yourself is an act of spiritual warfare against evil. The struggle can be waged by acts as simple as :

- telling the truth instead of lying,
- treating people with respect instead of cussing them out,
- listening instead of blowing someone off,
- ordering vegetable juice instead of a daiquiri.



It could be :

- some gentle words for your girlfriend,
- a helping hand to an elderly woman in a store,
- an act of kindness to a stranger, just to be kind.
- keeping your lifestyle simple and less upper-class than your neighbor's.

You could choose to do something else, and that idea would not usually be from the Devil. *But that idea would still have to be chosen \*against\* when there is a more Christlike response to be chosen \*for\*.* Thus it could be something like :

- choosing not to abort your child,
- choosing not to throw your punch or draw your knife,
- choosing not to walk out on your marriage,
- choosing to stop trying to be a recording star so you can have time to work with troubled teens.

**Even things that you are allowed to do, things you are morally justified in doing, things that would make your life easier or give you more success -- *even those things* are to be turned away, if there is a more Godly choice to make.** The classic case is when a church or ministry receives what they know are the proceeds of drug sales or prostitution. They would not be wrong in thinking there's a lot of good that can be done with the money. But if they accept the benefits of wrongdoing, they become part of the problem; it changes them and their role in the system. These struggles are fought in you and in the parts of society around you, every day.  
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Thinking about you and God? Try these pages :

the Spirit as a Person

## QUOTES

**"When He wore a crown of thorns, do you wish to wear a crown of gold?"  
-- Johann Arndt, \*True Christianity\*.**

**"Being unable to cure death, wretchedness and ignorance, men have decided, in order to be happy, not to think about such things."  
-- Blaise Pascal**

"Frightful this is in a sense, but it is true, and every one who has merely some little knowledge of the human heart can verify it: there is nothing to which a man holds so desperately as to his sin."

-- **Søren Kierkegaard**

"The reigning cliché of the day is that in order to love others one must first learn to love oneself. This formulation -- love thyself, then thy neighbor -- is a license for unremitting self-indulgence, because the quest for self-love is endless. By the time you have finally learned to love yourself, you'll find yourself playing golf at Leisure World."

-- **Charles Krauthammer** in *\*Time\** magazine, 28 June 1993

"Everyone thinks of changing humanity, and no one thinks of changing himself."

-- **Leo Tolstoy**

"Pietists believe that evangelism is the preaching of the Law, to show man what he is in himself, and of the Gospel, to show how differently God now sees him in Christ and his responsibility to live in this new light. This is the theology of Word and Sacrament -- a creative 'can do' which replaces that 'can't do' of the Law. We reject the cognitive theory of religion that says a man can learn what is right and follow it. We also reject that peculiar.... idea that says when you know the right theology you have reached the goal. We hold that a belief which does not accomplish change has not been assimilated and cannot be classified as Luther's 'true and living faith.'"

-- **Ron Zess**

"I find it interesting that the meanest life, the poorest existence, is attributed to God's will, but as human beings become more affluent, as their living standard and style begin to ascend the material scale, God descends the scale of responsibility at a commensurate speed."

-- **Maya Angelou**

"Men will wrangle for religion; write for it; fight for it; die for it; anything but **live** for it."

-- **Charles Caleb Colton**

"For perfection, it is better for us to go through the crucible and conquer ourselves; to love God, it is better not to be perfect. How much better it is to be with Him than to compose one's perfection."

-- **Eugraph Kovalevsky**, *\*A Method Of Prayer\** (Praxis, 1993)

Every time we say, "I believe in the Holy Spirit," we mean that we believe that there is a living God able and willing to enter human personality and change it.

-- **J. B. Phillips**, *\*Plain Christianity\**

Illuminate our minds, our souls inspire  
Vouchsafe to us love's holy fire  
Thy wondrous pow'r on us bestow,  
That we in grace and strength may grow.

-- "Creator, Spirit, Heavenly Dove", verse 3  
(**unknown** 8th cent., translated by Luther into German, later translated into English)

"Glory be to 'the Holy Ghost.' Oh, I'm full of spirit, I am not unenlightened. I also have feeling, heart, sentiment, and imagination. But do I ever hold still in order that the wholly Other may fill me with his Spirit and give me a sense of the true priorities in life?"

-- **Helmut Thielicke** (as published in \*Leadership Journal\*, Fall 95)

"Holiness is a state of soul in which all the powers of the body and mind are consciously given up to God."

-- **Phoebe Palmer**

"You may as well quit reading and hearing the Word of God, and give it to the devil, if you do not desire to live according to it."

-- **Martin Luther**

The words below are ones that you'll often come across in 'spiritual' and 'religious' literature or talk. They're often intentionally twisted or spun into vagueness or a lie, so it's important to have a clear idea of what they really mean. This site is not a dictionary or lexicon, but a way of getting at what matters about these words. It gives a specifically **Christian** slant on the words, yet draws on their more basic or general meaning and on their origins. We hope you find the site helpful in clearing away the smoke.

<a href="#"><u>affirmation</u></a> <a href="#"><u>aim</u></a> <a href="#"><u>angel</u></a> <a href="#"><u>anger</u></a> <a href="#"><u>anoint</u></a> <a href="#"><u>anthropomorphism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>apologetics</u></a> <a href="#"><u>apostasy</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>avoidance</u></a> <a href="#"><u>beauty</u></a> (new) <a href="#"><u>belief</u></a> <a href="#"><u>blah blah blah</u></a> (new) <a href="#"><u>blasphemy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>carnal</u></a> <a href="#"><u>celestial</u></a> <a href="#"><u>churchly words</u></a> <a href="#"><u>compassion</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>confidence</u></a> <a href="#"><u>covenant</u></a> <a href="#"><u>creativity</u></a> <a href="#"><u>credence</u></a> <a href="#"><u>credibility</u></a> <a href="#"><u>credit</u></a> <a href="#"><u>death</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Deism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>dependence</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>desire</u></a> <a href="#"><u>diachronic and synchronic</u></a> study <a href="#"><u>discipleship</u></a> <a href="#"><u>dogma</u></a> <a href="#"><u>edify</u></a> <a href="#"><u>ephemeral</u></a> <a href="#"><u>epistemology</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>eschatology</u></a> <a href="#"><u>ethereal</u></a> <a href="#"><u>faith</u></a> <a href="#"><u>faith-experience</u></a> <a href="#"><u>fear</u></a> <a href="#"><u>gnosis</u></a> <a href="#"><u>gnosticism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>guilt</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>harmony</u></a> <a href="#"><u>heresy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>holism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>hope</u></a> to be <a href="#"><u>humble</u></a> <a href="#"><u>imagination</u></a> <a href="#"><u>irenic</u></a> <a href="#"><u>joy</u></a> (new)

<a href="#"><u>escape</u></a>		
<a href="#"><u>love</u></a> <a href="#"><u>mantra</u></a> <a href="#"><u>material</u></a> <a href="#"><u>materialism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>mercy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>metaphysical</u></a> <a href="#"><u>metempsychosis</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>to minister</u></a> <a href="#"><u>monism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>nirvana</u></a> <a href="#"><u>numerology</u></a> <a href="#"><u>numinous</u></a> <a href="#"><u>om</u></a> <a href="#"><u>pantheism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>paradox</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>paranormal</u></a> <a href="#"><u>propitiation</u></a> <a href="#"><u>psychic</u></a> <a href="#"><u>psychokinesis</u></a> <a href="#"><u>reincarnation</u></a> <a href="#"><u>relativism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>divine relationship</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>reliance</u></a> <a href="#"><u>redeem, redemption</u></a> <a href="#"><u>to remember</u></a> <a href="#"><u>respect</u></a> <a href="#"><u>sacerdotal</u></a> <a href="#"><u>sciolism, sciolic</u></a> <a href="#"><u>sect, sectarian</u></a> <a href="#"><u>self</u></a> <a href="#"><u>sinner</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>soul</u></a> <a href="#"><u>spirit</u></a> <a href="#"><u>spiritual</u></a> <a href="#"><u>supernatural</u></a> <a href="#"><u>syncretism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>synergism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>tantra</u></a> <a href="#"><u>tautology</u></a> <a href="#"><u>teleology</u></a> <a href="#"><u>telekinesis</u></a> <a href="#"><u>telepathy</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>temperance</u></a> <a href="#"><u>testimony</u></a> <a href="#"><u>theodicy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>theophany</u></a> <a href="#"><u>tradition</u></a> <a href="#"><u>trust</u></a> <a href="#"><u>universalism</u></a> <a href="#"><u>whatever...</u></a> <a href="#"><u>words about Scripture</u></a> <a href="#"><u>vada vada</u></a> <a href="#"><u>yogi</u></a>

Looking for what's real? Try these pages :

## On the demonized

- > It's been some time since she the demons were cast out, but now she's back in a life of sin.
- > She tells lies, and curses at me. How can I tell if she's infested with stronger demons than before?

I would doubt that she is infested. But even if she is, you have to start asking, '**Why would she be welcoming them back?**' Unless that's found out, casting out demons is not enough, she'll open the front door for them again. It's hard to know through the lies, so the best thing is to take a good look at her character. What is she angry at? What is it which draws her into anger? Is she afraid of something? Or running away from

something? These are things you might be able to discover as a friend; that is what you have to be for her **first**.

The next thing is, don't tackle this alone. [Intercessory prayer](#) works, and it works best when many people passionately pray for a person. So pray for her, **with others** -- at the very least, with a small circle of Christians, which may include others who know her.

Whether **she** can pull for herself with you depends on her awareness of her problem, and her willingness to face it. But at least **you** can pull for her.

[more on spiritual warfare](#)

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> The scriptures, to me, seem to implicate there will be a hell for the unsaved. Yet my local Episcopal

> minister believes we are all saved, no matter what.

If your local priest is an Episcopalian, he/she is free to believe as his/her conscience dictates. That is the Anglican tradition. But the teaching of the Anglican communion of churches, which the Episcopal church is part of, is that Jesus Christ descended to the dead, and returned from there, and will come again to judge the living and the dead (so the creeds). In Matthew 25, a key Scripture on matters of justice, Jesus is quite clear that there are those who will eternally perish. In the Gospels, Jesus speaks some pretty harsh words about the eternal fate of some people -- words so harsh that the gospel authors sometimes seem embarrassed. And one doesn't have to be a flaming fundie to recognize that this is a main thrust of the apocalyptic scenes of Revelation.

The **intent** of the Crucifixion was universal -- to save all. The **gift** of salvation is universal -- it is given to all. But we as creatures are, in a sense, cosmically suicidal due to our self-evaluation :

1. I'm too good to be sent to a hell, so I must be going to heaven;
2. I'm so unworthy of a heaven that I won't let God bring me there to ruin it.

Christ's death means that our goodness or badness has nothing to do with it.

God created us as creatures with choice. Some of us are like a prodigal son who decides he'd rather stay with the pigs than be with his father. There is no reconciliation, no welcome, no love, no re-started life, just eternal piggishness. And as much as the father wants the son by his side, he is not; the isolation is complete. The father loses sleep over that, to be sure. Hell is that sort of isolation from God, that sort of eternal piggishness. Hell is a gift rejected, a relationship destroyed, a citizenship betrayed. You know such things happen in life, and when you see it, you see and feel the pull of hell -- just like you see the Spirit at work in doing good, making good things happen, just like you find Christ in the Bread and Wine.

God **wants** an empty hell, passionately. So must his true followers. But that is not in our hands; God will not void our freedom for it, nor is God a Cosmic Teddy Bear who can be smiley-faced nice in the face of cold evil. An empty hell is a mere hope, a hope which God's revealed Word says is nothing more than that. Your minister bets on the hope, the niceness, the idea that maybe God will eventually convince them all back into the Kingdom by some sort of maneuvering or trickery or sophisticated argument, or a zap that overrides their [soul](#). But that is not Scripture, and is not what Jesus was talking about. God loves us too much and too honestly to do that.

This is the Christian tradition, which is so important to Anglicans. Much more importantly, it is also part of the core of the Christian faith. While one can be in Christ and not believe that some are eternally damned, it comes pretty close to missing the point of it all. That is why the creed authors put it into the creeds so long ago.

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<<I was wondering if you know of a place  
where I can find spells that many different witches use? >>

Yes, but I won't lead you there.

Life isn't about spells, but about following Christ and serving others in love. No matter how one rationalizes it, the use of spells isn't about service but about mastery.

Pray on it.

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<< what is your perspective on Multiple Personality Disorder?>>

I don't know, I'll have to ask my other selves what they think of it....

Seriously, MPD, an extreme form of dissociative disorder, is rare; some even question whether it really ever occurs. I had one who lived a few blocks away from me back in the late '60s, who was in and out of clinics, so I believe there is a real MPD. He had a full second personality, which grew out of his first, mainly because of sex abuse by a relative and two very traumatic accidents.

It's nearly impossible to talk about MPD without talking about 'possession', because most supposed instances of MPD since the start of the '70s involve some claim of [demonic](#) possession or twistedness. (Note : the above example made no such claim; he came before the '70s wave hit.) It's given a lot of money and attention to a lot of real jerks, liars, nuts, and demagogues. If you need a good source on that aspect of it, check out Jon

Trott of Cornerstone magazine, or his book \*Selling Satan\*, which touches on it through the sad story of Mike Warnke. I don't address MPD in my Spirithome site because **I do not believe there is a real connection between Satanic stuff** (or any other spiritual phenomena) **and multiple personalities**.

A demonic personality is willingly taken on from an outside source. Unlike a multiple personality, that personality isn't really a part of the person at all but a different 'being' (or maybe 'un-being') which controls from behind the facade of its host, slowly shaping the host into its evil image.

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<< **Brownsville came to Dallas and I went to hear their pastors at a local church. A little too ["hellfire and damnation"](#) for me. And you? >>**

I try not to be negative about 'hellfire' preachers. Instead, I stick to the better practices and let those who use the site (like you) do the discerning for each situation (like the one you were in). Since I'm not there, I don't try to do it, unless they're \*really\* way out there. I don't want to enter into judgement. I find their activity odd, but not unfamiliar or unprecedented.

My site's character is, in part, designed to be in dialogue with Charismatic and Pentecostal churches and their movements, including Brownsville, Toronto, Wales, Azusa Street, or whatever. They actually 'dialogue' quite well, they just do it in a very different, disorderly, 'trickle-up' manner. Even when they reject your views out front (as they often do), you're being heard **and** accounted for by someone among them, and the fruit of it show up where you least expect it somewhere else along the way -- not necessarily as agreement, but the shape of their view changes based on what you shared. I've had to learn not to act only on first reactions. It's the start, but rarely the finish.

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This was found in a church bulletin:  
**"Don't let worry kill you. Let the church help."**

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<<What do you call a group of angels? Is it a covey of angels? A bevy of angels? Help!>>

The only word I found in any of the resources is **"host"**. It's a demilitarized translation of the OT Hebrew military term "sabaoth" or "armies". It is this which is meant when we speak of "the Lord of Hosts" -- God commands armies or groups of heavenly beings (such as angels, cherubim, seraphim, and such).



But I don't know what a \*small\* group of angels are (for instance, a trio, like Tess, Monica and Andrew on TV). "Team" or "band" might be appropriate for that.

They are, of course, a 'choir' when they sing.

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- > I've always tried to come to a conclusion if there really is an "evil spirit" or is what
- > we call "satan" really an ABSENCE of God. Like dark is an absence of light. In
- > your writing , you said the evil one is a sham god who really doesn't exist (if I
- > interpreted it correctly!) but has a "mask" with nothing behind it! I'm not looking for
- > an answer but just curious about your interpretation.

It is, of course, just an interpretation, based on the idea of God being ultimate Reality. That which commits against God becomes unreal -- or better, surreal (a something that is placed on top of or over (Old French sur-) reality). The mask sits on top of the real absence of a life-giving reality that can only come from God. Another way to say it is to think of a person apart from God who gradually hollows out into a bizarre distortion and sometimes even a sad and pathetic caricature of him/herself. This is what happened in real life to the once-feared Anton LeVey of the Satanic Bible; in fiction, to the wizard Saruman in \*Lord Of the Rings\*. If that is so for people, picture what that effect does to the one most sold to it, the former archangel dedicated to rebellion against God !

Both are admittedly non-Scriptural images, though both have ties to the imagery of CS Lewis, JRR Tolkien, and Madeleine L'Engle. Those Christian writers sought new ways to communicate the Scriptural truth of Satan's inability to defeat God or of Satan's weakness in the face of the truth. Or, as Luther put it in 'Mighty Fortress', "one little word subdues him."

I refuse to term Satan an 'un-god' or 'anti-god' only because that raises the image of the balance of yin and yang, which would give Satan way too much credit.

- > You said it was like a "force". But do you
- > feel an individual could be Satan, just like an individual could be
- > an angel? If so, have you ever met that individual and what was it like.
- > I was curious as to your experiences with this.

The analog to an 'angel' is a 'demon', not Satan (who is the analog to Michael or Gabriel, archangels). I believe one can get so twisted by Satan's lies and tricks that one can be as one with the demons. At some point, the only difference between such a person and a demon becomes the faint hope which remains for all who breathe, that the Spirit has found a way inside and is pursuing this child of God with the diligence that marks a true father.

About the closest I came to seeing that was back in the late 1970s. In the late 1960s and early '70s, I was a child raised in a congregation that was being pulled apart by a Messianic group headquartered in another church of my denomination. As time wore on, they became more and more authoritarian and manipulative, until it became too much for even their outside supporters, and they shrunk to nearly nothing. I met one of the three leaders in 1979. Instead of the kindly visiting pastor I had known, I saw a broken man with a burning fire in his eyes. Not 'energy', not 'enthusiasm', not 'vision', but the opposite, a fire that consumed such things. I wasn't scared, just sad.

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- > I am doing a presentation on the theme 'Lord, change me' - with the sub-themes
  - > Changed through earthly power, demonic power, godly power

The first key here is that **the Lord** changed you from what you were, and is still changing you. As a baptized Christian believer, you have the Holy Spirit living inside you, teaching you how to live as a follower of Christ. The Spirit brings you Christ Himself, that you may have His righteousness. And the Spirit works through other followers of Christ, the people around you, building each other up strong and keeping each other going in the right direction. That's godly power. Tell them about what God has done for \*you\* in these ways.

Earthly power changes us, too. Think of the people around you who do not believe. What they do matters to you, affects you, shapes you. Their kindnesses and cruelties set the tone for much of what you do. What happens to your nation, and how it acts as a nation -- you're part of it, and you have to live with the fruit it bears. This is not right or wrong by itself -- it is just true. The world and local economies are earthly power -- it can bless with good things, like jobs, goods, and being able to go from place to place. Earthly power is a mixed bag. God can use it. The Devil can use it. But most of all, **people** use it and are used by it.

Demonic power changes us, too. Not that the Devil has any real power - Christ broke his power. The Devil has not much more than what we give him. When we give him something of ourselves, we sin. We decide we'll go for fame, power, [wealth](#), or lust. We break our promises of marriage, friendship, business, faith, village, law, or school. We break other people by way of gossip and maneuver to take their social place, to bring them down. All of us are that way sometimes. How have you been that way? And what led you to do otherwise, and follow God rather than these temptations? Share something of that. The more we give ground to the temptation, the stronger the pull of Satan on our soul.

Please remember to pray several times each day until you present, and trust that the Spirit will use you. Try to draw on your own experiences and of those you're talking to. And also read Paul's letter to the Romans.

Be bold; God's with you whenever you seek Him.

more on [the Spirit's work in you](#).

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Satan (otherwise known as the devil) is the original enemy of God who rebelled at the foundation of the earth. He is the one ultimately responsible for all the deception that exists in this world. He has deceived many to disbelieve in his existence, though both serious Christians and well-informed devil worshippers both know he exists. He is a personal being, and has been both seen and heard by many people. He can use many forms - including that of an "angel of light".

It is not surprising therefore that Satan has lately tried to convince many he is not all that bad - another deception. Actually, Satan is the most powerful fallen angel and the master of all evil. He exercises a massive influence in the affairs of the earth. He is only a created being however, and his power just doesn't compare with God's. When the right time comes God will command some angels to tie up the devil and throw him into the lake of fire. One day people will wonder how the devil ever managed to deceive and destroy so much.

Some ask how Satan ever came into existence. Here is the Bible answer.

God created multitudes of angels, including at least three archangels: Lucifer, Michael and Gabriel. Angels are spirit beings which may or may not manifest themselves in a visible form (usually not). All angels were created good and holy but Lucifer, the chief worship angel decided to exalt himself and led a rebellion in heaven against God (Ezek. 28:13-15; Is 14:12-14). Lucifer and his angels were cast out of heaven and became Satan and his evil spirits (2 Peter 2:4). Satan is active today in the air (Eph 2:2), in the earth (Job 1:7) and also under the earth, in hell. Not being everywhere at once, as God is, he works through his forces, including fallen angels and demons. These spirits seek to live in and work through people, usually in a hidden way - usually not openly. The results of Satan's work are still evident in our world today. Jesus came to destroy these works. (1 John 3:8).

Satan is therefore the author of evil. His chief desire is to receive the worship that belongs only to God the Creator (Matt. 4:8-10; Rev. 13:4). He also works in his hatred against mankind to destroy them as much as he can for time and eternity.

Why does God permit Satan to exist and have so much power? Is God unable to destroy Satan? No, God could do it, but Satan is permitted to operate for certain reasons. Firstly, so there could be a choice - people must choose to worship God now - there is an alternative. Secondly, Satan and his kingdom exists to ensure that people reap what they sow. Thirdly, Satan is permitted to operate while God gives mankind time to repent. For God could not forcibly remove evil from the Universe justly unless He also destroyed sinners at the same time. God instead is holding back his wrath, giving men time to turn to Him.

Like his evil spirits, Satan has a mind, emotions, and a will which is in rebellion against God. They are persons, not forces. See Luke 11:24 for proof of this. No matter what people may say, these spirits still exist and work in different ways around the world. Many (but not all) pagans know this fact better than ignorant preachers and ministers who in their pride no longer trust the account of the Bible.

# Demons And Fallen Angels

What are demons and fallen angels? This page discusses nature, origin and activities of evil spirits.

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Demons are disembodied spirits that are at work virtually everywhere in the world today. They are evil in nature, and are obedient to Satan, their ruler. In the Bible they are also known as "evil spirits" or "unclean spirits".

There are a number of theories about their origin, but the Bible doesn't make it absolutely clear. Many believe they are fallen angels who fell when Satan, formerly Lucifer, rebelled against the Lord God in heaven. This theory has the problem that demons seem to be earth-bound spirits that walk, and cannot fly, unlike angels. There are fallen angels, who presently occupy positions of influence and authority over the earth in a kind of Satanic hierarchy, and are referred to in the Bible as "principalities and powers" (Ephesians 6:12). Earth bound demons are the "foot soldiers" in Satan's kingdom, and they are the ones we deal with on a day to day basis, whether we realise it or not.

Some speculate that demons are the spirits of former inhabitants of earth who rebelled against God - possibly the results of the offspring of fallen angels and women in the days before the flood (see Genesis 6). The Bible doesn't tell us and we don't have to know. What matters is to know how to deal with them, and overcome them, as they are everywhere, and they enjoy making our lives miserable, if they can.

It may be that when God judged the snake in Genesis 3 and said it would crawl on its belly that this translated into a loss of power for many fallen angels. Its impossible to say with total biblical authority.

## Characteristics of demons

They have all the characteristics of personality. They are evil, malicious, deceptive and never to be trusted. We can see that demons possess the following:

### Mind

"Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are - the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:23, 24)

Demons have knowledge and are able to come up with things to say. The knowledge that demons have explains the source of knowledge at work with "psychics" and other occultists. It explains the knowledge of past events and places that supposedly confirms the false doctrine of reincarnation.

I remember one time while in the U.S.A. a young man I was with suddenly turned to me with only the white of his eyes showing, and a strange voice said to me , "I know who you are". Demons have knowledge.

### Will

"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' " (Luke 11:24)

I remember as a child saying things to myself like "What will we do now?". It was as if the demons in me were having some kind of conference. Demons are self-willed beings who seek to impose their will on the will of man.

### Emotions

"You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe - and tremble!" (James 2:19).

Demons definitely fear God and God's power. On the other hand, they have pleasure in seeing people suffer. Anyone who is that way is so because they identify with the demons in them.

### Identity and Self-Awareness

"Then He asked him, 'What is your name?' And he answered, saying, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.'"

Demons usually operate in groups. They know who they are and they know their names and functions. Sometimes demons change their functions. One spirit said, "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." (2 Chronicles 18:21).

Sudden and major changes of events can cause some demons to change their function or activity. Most of the time, however, they continue with what they have been able to do successfully in the lives of people.

### Capacity to Speak

Many of the above examples reveal the capacity of demons to speak. Sometimes they use a human mouth to speak through, but most of the time, they operate by planting their thoughts in the minds of people. The subtlety of this is that they usually do this in such a way as to suggest that the thought from them was really from the person himself! For example, a demon may cause the thought to come in your mind, "I don't feel like praising God", or "I wonder what is on T.V.?".

### Summary

Demons are real. Their activity accounts for many of the things that are happening today.

Demons are spirit beings with the principle characteristics of personality. Some are stronger than others, but all of them are totally corrupt and evil in nature. They never do any good. Any apparent benefit obtained through them via occultism is always just something to gain trust so they can do you and others far greater harm in the future. They are unsatisfied beings who desire to use and abuse you. They don't feel satisfied without a body to inhabit and through which to express their evil natures. God, on the other hand, is the source of goodness and life and who desires to give of Himself to you, and see you grow up to become like Jesus Himself.

Don't allow demons to get the upper hand in your life. Let us do all we can to destroy their influence by drawing near to God and letting God fill us and show us the way.

## Demon Activities

Discusses the chief activities of demons against human beings today.

1. They **tempt** people to sin, by putting various kinds of imaginations in the minds of men and women and speaking words of deceit (Genesis 3:1-6). Satan even tempted Jesus, and Jesus revealed to us the way to overcome temptation by using the Word of God (see Matthew 4:1-10).
2. They **deceive** (2 Corinthians 11:14). They especially lie about God, blaming all the evil on God. Many religious leaders are deceived by Satan. As long as we remain deceived on some important point, Satan's demons have something they can work with. They can return to it, like rats return to rubbish.
3. They **hurt** and **torment** through sickness (Acts 10:38), death, breakdown of human relationships leading to strife, war and violence.
4. They **threaten** (producing fear) (2 Timothy 1.7). They suggest all kinds of negative scenarios in order to create anxiety and fear. Many fears of people today are unreasonable and are the direct result of demonic suggestion.
5. They dominate, or **enslave** (2 Timothy 2:26). Satan seeks to recruit slaves through the power of witchcraft and other forms of false religion. He gives power or money or sexual pleasures in exchange for various forms of worship and obedience. But Satan always double-crosses his servants, so they too become victims of his hate. Jesus said, "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul?" (Mark 8:36)
6. They **accuse** God's people so that they have reduced effectiveness in their prayers and their relationship with God.
7. They **harrass** - through repeated attacks on mind, emotions, body, finances or through inspiring persecutors to make life hard for Christians.
8. They **glorify themselves** through witchcraft, false religion and other tools like the occult and much of today's popular rock-and-roll, rap and metal music.

Fear, hate and pride are the major motivations in Satan's kingdom. When you see these characteristics in a person, you are looking at someone who has yielded to evil spirits, whether they know it or not.

Jesus said that the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. If you make friends with spirits committed to your destruction, you are a fool. (John 10:10). God loves us, and doesn't want us to have fellowship with demons (see 1 Corinthians 10:20). For that reason, we must worship God and not give that place in our hearts to the various idols in our culture.

We are called to war against Satan and evil spirits (Ephesians 6:12). Only in Christ's power and authority can we drive them out of their positions of influence. If we are in right relationship with God we have nothing to fear. If not we should cry out to God for deliverance.

Satan's works include sickness, inspiring false religion, strife and wars, creating poverty and oppression, leading people to torment and eternal hell. He tries to rob Christians of their inheritance in Christ.



But praise God! We can overcome demons through faith in the name and blood of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God. Life is better for overcomers.

## Can Christians Have Demons

This page builds a biblical case in support of the idea that yes, born again Christians can have evil spirits that they need deliverance from. Clears up confusion on the misleading term 'possession'.

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There are very few people who are totally owned or possessed by demons. Many Bible translations talk about people being "possessed" by demons when in reality that is not the meaning of the Greek word translated "possessed" in the Bible. The Greek word in these cases is "daimonizomai" which would be better translated "demonized". It means to be affected by demons, to be under the influence of demons or to have demons. No doubt a Christian cannot be "possessed" by a demon because Christians belong to God through the blood of Jesus Christ. Whether a real Christian can have a demon is a controversial question to some but for those of us who have been set free from demons after we gave our lives to Jesus it is not so hard to determine. Let us now consider this matter from a biblical point of view.

Without a doubt, demons are at work **in** the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2). The truth is, people who are disobeying God are giving evil spirits a right to work not only around them but also **in** them. This applies also to church members. Peter declared that **Satan had filled the heart** of Ananias. All Ananias did was pretend that he was giving to God more than he really was. Therefore, anyone who is lying could have their heart filled by Satan.

Paul told the believers in Ephesus: "Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). This implies that it is possible for a Christian to give place to the devil. There is strong biblical evidence that a Christian doing this will later need deliverance from evil spirits, because they have by their own choices given ground to Satan.

Although the spirit of a born again Christian is regenerated, recreated and not possessable by evil spirits, the salvation of the soul is a process which is **not** automatic and requires firstly persistent faith in God, and secondly, knowledge of the truth. It is clear that evil spirits do have access to our minds to inject thoughts of all kinds from time to time. We must be watchful so that we do not accept these thoughts so as to let the evil one build strongholds in our mind that are not pleasing to God. There is a battle for the mind of every Christian. In order to keep demons out of our minds, we must fill our minds with something else. We must be full of the Holy Spirit and full of the Word.

**"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to MY HOUSE from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it EMPTY, swept, and put in order. Then he goes out and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first." (Matthew 12:43- 45)**

Every unsaved man is a child of the devil and being a son of disobedience it is a fact that evil spirits are at work in him. If those spirits are forced to leave - either by the fact that the person receives Christ or the Word of God, or by a special operation of the Holy Spirit, they will do exactly what Jesus said they would do in the passage mentioned above. If indeed after the evil spirit goes out, the person's life remains **empty** - that is, not full of God's Word and God's spirit, there will be a possibility for that evil spirit to enter into that man again - even if he has prayed to receive Christ. Why? Because although he may have confessed Christ, by ignorance or disobedience he denied Christ the first place in his life. He

didn't put the Word first, and he didn't get really filled with the spirit. Therefore demons can be in Christians, as we know them.

Demons can't stay in anyone who **consistently** submits to God and resists the devil. (James 4:7). The devil and all demons must flee from such a person. Such a Christian who is submitting to God in this way is not grieving the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Therefore the Holy Spirit is making sure that no demon remains in the temple of God. Such a person is "keeping themselves, and the evil one touches him not" (1 John 5:18).

The Old Testament is full of examples given for our present day instruction (Romans 15:4), which contain principles of spiritual warfare and help us to see that even the temple of God can be defiled if God's people are disobedient and break the covenant. In the book of Ezekial we see how the priests of God were idolatrous and unclean things were in the temple of God (Ezekial 8:6-17). This is the picture of the Christian who tolerates various forms of idolatry in his or her life. It was not until Ezekial 10 that the glory of God, the Holy Spirit - left the temple. This shows us that the Holy Spirit can be in the temple at the same time as abominations - but that eventually if idolatry persists the Holy Spirit will leave and the judgment of God will come.

Another example which illustrates how Christians can need deliverance is in the history of Israel's wars, especially in the period of the judges. Every time the people of God broke the covenant and worshipped foreign gods, the Lord God sent their enemies to invade the promised land and cause them trouble. In the same way, when Christians break their covenant with God through persistent sin, inevitably the demons will come to take what has been surrendered to them. It is vital therefore that we respect the conditions of the blood covenant we have with God and give no place to the devil through sin and disobedience.

Jesus cast demons not only out of people with legions of evil spirits (Mark 5:8-9) but also out of people who were not affected by demons to anything like that extent (Mark 1:32-34, 39). The people being delivered were orthodox religious Jews - not satan-worshipping idolatrous heathen - or their modern day equivalent - drug-abusing sexually-immoral heavy rockers into witchcraft and violence. In the same way, lots of ordinary religious people need deliverance from evil spirits - evil spirits which are producing conditions such as fear, doubt, condemnation and sickness in them.

From reading the gospels we can see that Jesus cast out of people spirits which were responsible for the causing of diseases. One time a man brought his son to the disciples of Jesus. He wanted them to cast the mute spirit out of him. The disciples were not able to do it because of their unbelief (Mark 9:19) and lack of prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29). But when Jesus came, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, **come out** of him, and enter him no more!" (Mark 9:25). Here we see that deafness and dumbness can be caused by the presence of an evil spirit, which must **come out**. The spirit was in there and Jesus told it to get out. In His healing ministry, Jesus first cast out the evil spirit responsible for creating the disease in the person before He applied the power of the Holy Spirit to their bodies to restore the damage (Matthew 4:23; Matthew 8:16,17; Matthew 9:32-34; Matthew 12:22; Matthew 17:18; Mark 1:34; Luke 4:40,41; Luke 6:17-19; Luke 8:2; Luke 9:42; Luke 18:11-16). And Jesus, knowing that mankind would always need this kind of ministry until the full inauguration of the kingdom of God on earth gave the same power and authority to His disciples to cast out demons and heal the sick by the Spirit of God as He Himself did (Matthew 10:1-2; Mark 3:14,15). This power was given to the church in the name of Jesus, and like the baptism in the Holy Spirit, was never withdrawn by God (John 14:12; Mark 16:17,18). So we as disciples are called to drive out demons just as Jesus did.

The connection between casting out demons and healing the sick should come as no surprise to those familiar with Acts 10:38, which says, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." This passage shows clearly that sickness is the work of the devil, not a work of God. That is why Jesus opposed sickness and cast out spirits of infirmity wherever He went. It is possible that many chronically sick Christians in fact need deliverance from spirits of infirmity just as that bent up woman did in Luke 13:11, named by Jesus, "**a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound**". Jesus did

not call every Jew a child of Abraham - see John 8:39,40. Even God's children can be bound by Satan in various areas. Jesus came to set us free. Instead of making theological excuses - calling sickness God's blessing or just closing our eyes and saying that God's children cannot have demons, we should be as practical as Jesus and treat spirit-based infirmities as our enemies and cast them out - just as Jesus did.

Someone may object that God has given us promises of redemption in the new covenant so that we need not fear the possibility that there could be a demon in us as Christians. In any case we should not fear. The only fear we should have is a healthy fear of God. The reality is, though, God has promised lots of things which many born-again Christians are not experiencing. Why? Because of a lack of repentance, faith and appropriate confession! God has promised healing and the baptism in the Spirit to His children. But how many Christians have until now failed to appropriate God's provision in this matter? In the same way, many Christians, through disobedience, ignorance, pride or unbelief have failed to appropriate God's promises in regards to deliverance from evil spirits. Having a theology that says we are free from evil spirits just can't compare in value to actually being free of their indwelling influence.

Jesus in Matthew 15:26 calls deliverance from evil spirits **"the children's bread"**. So deliverance from evil spirits is for the children of God! It is not primarily for the unrepentant or unbelieving, since if they get delivered and don't repent it is quite likely that they will end up worse than before! (Matthew 12:43-45).

Jesus taught his disciples to pray in the Lord's prayer, literally, "Deliver **us** from **the evil one**". Who should pray for deliverance from evil spirits? Disciples! Whose deliverance should they pray for? **For their own!** Even the apostle Peter was used as a mouthpiece for Satan one time (Matthew 16:22,23). This is still happening today occasionally even through born again Christians who are ignorant of God's total plan.

Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32). It is time for all believers everywhere to know the truth and through the truth get free of the indwelling power of sin in their lives. It is not time for religious excuses such as the Jews of Jesus' day made, such as: "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free.' " (John 8:33) We need to be made free **indeed** by Jesus, not theologically free or 'free' because we have a doctrine that tells us we are free, while our own lives lack the promised peace, love, joy and power of God.

So we see that disciples must pray for deliverance, must cast out demons (Mark 16:18), and as children of God, need the children's bread of healing and deliverance. May the Lord "deliver us from the evil one."

### **The Difference Between "the Flesh" and Demons**

We cannot blame all our problems on the devil and demons however. Many times it is simply a lack of application of the cross of Christ to the adamic nature at work within us. As new men in Christ, we must take authority over the adamic nature as well as any demons in order to get the victory over sin and self.

The apostle Paul in many places in the New Testament speaks of "the flesh" as being something at work in Christians that is striving against the leading of the Spirit of God.

**"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these things are contrary to one another, so that you may not do the things that you wish." (Galatians 5:16,17)**

Paul uses the Greek word "sarx" which means literally "flesh" or "meat". Some Bible translations translate this as "the sinful nature". When Paul speaks of the flesh he is usually not talking about our

physical bodies, but something at work in our physical bodies which is working in opposition to the will of God. It is the old Adamic nature inherited through the fall. It has desires which run contrary to those of the Holy Spirit and indeed to our new regenerated spirits. It thinks and desires in accordance with the values of the world system that we knew and followed before we became disciples of Christ. Some of its works are listed in Galatians 5:19-21. The works of the flesh are not only unlawful physical indulgences but are also soulish and spiritual in nature. For example, hatred, contentions, heresies are listed as works of the flesh. A lot of the programming that governs our behaviour and responses comes into the category of "the flesh" also. There can be demons associated with these things but by the Spirit we can have the total victory.

God's solution for the flesh is crucifixion. "**Those who are Christ's** have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (Galatians 5:24). This Scripture teaches us that **we** are the ones who must crucify the flesh. This is done **by** the Spirit - "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if **by the Spirit YOU** put to death the deeds of the body you will live." (Romans 8:13). Realise that it is **we ourselves** who, wanting to follow Jesus, must "**deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Him**" (Luke 9:23). We must reckon ourselves dead indeed to sin (Romans 6:11), discipline ourselves, say no to ourselves and not avoid the pains that come to those who consistently seek to do the will of God in all things. **Deliverance is no substitute** for making these daily decisions to put down the flesh and follow the Spirit. You cannot cast out the flesh, you must crucify it.

On the other hand, self-discipline and reckoning oneself dead to sin and alive to God, for all its importance, may not be the total solution for our sanctification. There are demons that can be at work in Christians, fixing themselves as it were in "the flesh" and fortifying "the flesh". These demons, unlike the flesh can't be crucified. We can't kill demons either. They must be cast out. A general rule is: if despite self-discipline and meditation on the Word a spiritual problem of some sort fails to be resolved, it is almost certainly a case requiring deliverance from evil spirits. Many times sincere Christians are using a lot of energy suppressing tendencies that are due to demons which could be cast out and should be cast out. We have seen in the previous section that it is possible for Christians to have one or more demons. Multitudes of sincere Christians baptised in the Holy Spirit can and do testify to this reality today. Therefore if despite all measures taken to deny self and crucify the flesh the victory is not received, certain steps should be taken to get free of evil spirits.

### **Marks of a Person Needing Deliverance**

1. A person who consistently lacks the fruit of the Holy Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control almost certainly needs deliverance in one or more areas of their lives.
2. A person who is often feels condemned by what they perceive as their failures usually needs deliverance, as well as a thorough understanding of the gospel which sets us free from guilt and makes us "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).
3. A person who testifies of being constantly harassed by evil spirits almost certainly needs deliverance from evil spirits.
4. A person who despite wise counsel never seems to break free of sinful habits needs deliverance as well as the real baptism in the Holy Spirit and solid Bible teaching on the Christian life and the victory we have in Christ.
5. A person who compulsively talks too much needs deliverance. Compulsion is a mark of demonisation.
6. A person who is attracted to occultic phenomenon and somewhere has yielded to this attraction almost certainly needs deliverance.

7. A person who is chronically sick and whose case doctors cannot successfully diagnose almost certainly needs deliverance from a spirit of infirmity of some kind. There may be other curses at work which must be broken also.

## How Demons Enter

Explores the most common ways demons get into people.

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It is often helpful to know the main ways that demons get into people. In order to get demons out, we usually need to know what it was that gave them the legal right to enter in the first place! Then by renunciation of that thing, and by determined faith in God, we can, with God's authority, command the related demons to leave. The demons will be forced to leave.

Demons cannot just enter people any time they want to. They need a legal opening to do so. Knowledge of the things that open the door to demons will also give us the knowledge of how to keep the door shut on them. It is also necessary in order to maintain our deliverance. What is the point of getting demons out, if they are only going to be let back in shortly?

### Openings through which demons get in

#### Generational curses

1. Demons very often get into people while they are still in their mother's womb. Idolatry and occultic sins are transmitted to the third and fourth generations of those who hate God (Exodus 20:3-5). Demons have a right to enter the unborn babies of those who are under such curses. It is through demons that curses are transmitted from generation to generation.

This may not seem fair, but it is a reality. We inherit both good and bad from our ancestors, but because of Jesus, we can break out of the curse and come into the abundant life as God's children. Some people are a certain way because they have been demonically oppressed all their lives, even from the womb. People can think it is part of them, but really it isn't. They can be freed.

I personally needed much deliverance from spirits associated with the false religion of freemason. My great grandfather was a high level freemason and the curse associated with that did affect my family and I. After deliverance from this my spiritual life was able to go forward and I had much more peace in my walk with God. There was definitely a spiritual struggle and some demons had to be coughed out of my system as I came to the Lord Jesus for deliverance.

Many Indian people, even from believing families, need deliverance from the curses associated with the idolatry of their ancestors. For example, I've heard of new believers in Fiji of Indian origin needing deliverance from spirits of the monkey god which their ancestors worshipped. Strange monkey like manifestations occurred when this spirit was confronted.

When you read between the lines in the Bible you can see how certain sins come down the generations. Solomon was born of David and Bathsheba, a relationship which began in adultery. And so Solomon's love for foreign women became his downfall. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines, and

his foreign wives led him into idolatry. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, also had plenty of wives and concubines - though he was a man of more modest means.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all had a problem with lying and deceiving. Abraham and Isaac both lied, saying their wives were their sisters. Jacob deceived his brother, and was later deceived by his own sons concerning Joseph. Even God's men can be vulnerable to this kind of generational character flaw.

This is not to say that a man is forced to sin because of the sins of his parents. Hezekiah was a good example of one king who refused to follow the ungodly example of his father. In Jesus Christ all can be freed from the chains of generational and cultural sins, and live in the perfect will of God. But often deliverance is needed before this can be realised.

### **Sins of Commission**

"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34).

When people yield to particular sins often enough - even at the level of mental acceptance - demons can enter them. Actually, even one deliberate sin can open the door for a demon to enter. It does not always happen, but it can, especially where repentance does not happen quickly.

When a person is doing a sin that they hate and resent, it is no longer freedom - it is slavery. Yielding to sin always costs more than it gives. You may have done it freely the first time, but you can't stop doing it freely. Demons drive and compel people towards the same evil things. One of the areas where many people are most conscious of this is in the area of sexual lust and masturbation. People may also feel compelled to lie, cheat, steal or think blasphemous thoughts. It is by the work of the cross that all such bondages can be broken, and deliverance from demons is made possible by the victory Jesus achieved there.

There is the law of sowing and reaping, which states that "whatever a man sows, this he will also reap". Demons work to make sure people reap the negative things they have sown. If we sow deception, we will be deceived. If we sow hatred, we will reap it. "Those who live by the sword perish by the sword". For this reason alone we would do well to avoid sin. Only Jesus can free us from sin's chains, from the power of sin. Once he frees us, we do well to give ourselves to Him completely so we can enjoy Him fully and stay out of further bondage to evil.

To the extent we compromise with evil we become the slaves of it.

### **Sins of Omission**

God said to Cain, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." (Genesis 4:7). Here "sin" is portrayed as a personality with the desire to rule over us. This speaks of demonic powers.

Sins of omission are the main reason that demons get into or back into Christians. We are supposed to be filled with the Holy Spirit as much as possible, and to seek the face of God. We are supposed to be devoted to prayer. However much we may seek to avoid this logic, when we are not doing this, we are living contrary to the will of God. And Satan knows it.

Demons return to empty vessels. The demon says, "I will return to my house from which I came. And when he comes, he finds it **empty**, swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." (Matthew 12:44,45).

Demons can only get back in when we are not doing what we are supposed to be doing. Paul said, "Nor give place to the devil." (Ephesians 4:27). We give place to the devil when we fail to give to God what truly belongs to Him, in terms of our praise, our love and our adoration.

If you have done this, be sure that God is well able to deliver you, but it will be when in your heart you truly return to the Lord as being the number one passion of your life.

### **Sudden shocks, traumas and crises**

These can open the door for demons to get in - for example, a sudden shock might open the door for a demon of fear to enter a young child. That demon may have a stronghold for years afterwards, producing irrational fears in a person at odd moments. Once we are aware of this, we will be more prudent about the kinds of things we let our young children watch, and we will also learn the importance of praising God instead of going to pieces when the storms of life strike.

### **Rituals of non-Biblical religions and secret societies**

These can open the door for demons to get into people - demons which will later work to blind them to the true gospel. Such spirits are also transmitted through curses down through the generations. Therefore, in seeking light from the Holy Spirit concerning a particular need for deliverance, be it in your own life or someone else's, be aware of this possibility.

### **Many forms of modern entertainment open people to demonic invasion.**

Much in the film, television and music industries is inspired by satan and opens people up to satanic or worldly philosophy and the influence of demons. Pornography, occultic role-playing games or devices to supposedly communicate with the dead or tell fortunes all open people up to demons.

These days the majority of films and television shows rated PG or above have elements which glorify evil, promote lust, or inspire fear. Many video games, besides being a huge waste of time, have violent themes which at worst can inspire violent attitudes and behavior in people.

### **Hurts and Wounds from Others**

When people don't deal properly with the hurts they receive from others in life, by forgiving them fully, they are going to be opened up to demons. Spirits of resentment, rejection, anger, hatred and bitterness are very common amongst people who have been dealt hard and hurtful blows by others. Christians who have been hurt by pastors or spiritual leaders are especially vulnerable. If this applies to you, for your own sake, forgive them, and avoid speaking evil of them. Otherwise you will go on suffering needlessly. Not dealing with the hurt correctly could mean you do more damage to the body of Christ than they did to you. Also, we are only forgiven by God to the extent that we forgive our Christian brethren from the heart (Matthew 6:12,14,15). That's just the way it is.

### **Covenants, Religious Festivals and Pilgrimages**

Strong demons have a right to enter people who worship other gods, and especially when they make covenants to them. Satan is keeping the teeming millions of Asia in bondage through all kinds of religious festivals which renew the demonic covenants between a nation and the evil spirits that rule over them in the heavenly realms. When you see Hindu priests with hooks through their backs who

apparently don't feel pain, you should realise we are not dealing with mere psychological or cultural curiosities. The pilgrimages to Mecca are a pillar of Islam whereby the evil spirits associated with that religion keep their grip on the minds of the faithful.

The Olympic Games is amongst other things a kind of pagan ceremony of Greek paganism. The spirit of Greece expresses itself in humanism, worship of the body, intellectualism and things like this. The amount of fuss created concerning the Olympic Games should alert us to the fact that it is a religious as well as a sporting event. It is well known that pagan priests are involved in the Olympic tradition, and the lighting of the Olympic flame, and Satan has always sought to use these games for his purposes. (God also has strategies to use the Games for His purposes too, but that is another subject).

The main point is that covenants and pilgrimages are often entry points for demonic powers. Satanic priest make a covenant with the devil, signed in their own blood, and many other religions involve pilgrimages and covenants which are not in accordance with God's revelation the Bible. They are inspired by a different spirit and lead to bondage whether people realise it or not.

### **Idols and Cursed Objects**

Any object associated with idolatry can bring demons into a person's life. We need to be careful about bringing back trinkets from third world nations that may be associated with gods, fetishes or magic in any way. Any object with supposed occultic power brings demons to the owner. Some symbols like the Ying and Yang symbol, the upside-down broken cross used in witchcraft and the "Peace" movement all have demonic connotations and can open the door for demons.

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## **What Jesus Did**

Looks at the deliverance ministry of Jesus, his delegation of the power to drive out demons to us, and the role of the blood of Christ at the cross and what it achieved.

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God the Father sent Jesus into the world for a reason. The Bible says in 1 John 3:8, "For this purpose was the Son of God manifest, to destroy the works of the evil one." Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. One demon sensed this when he cried out through a man in the synagogue, "Have you come to destroy us?" (Mark 1).



In order to overcome the devil's works, Jesus needed to overcome severe temptation. This he did firstly in the wilderness at the end of his 40 day fast. He did it by saying, "It is written" and following it up with a quotation from God's Word. In this way, Jesus was a model for us when we are tempted with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.

Jesus went on to cast out demons wherever he taught. This was his way of demonstrating and advancing the kingdom of God. "If I by the finger of God drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you". No demon was ever a match for Jesus.

Jesus then gave power and authority over evil spirits to his 12 key disciples (Matthew 10:1). He sent them out with instructions to cast out demons, taking no money for this service. Later he gave authority to 70, enabling them to do the same works. Finally, after his resurrection, he gave authority to those who believe in His name to drive out demons. This includes you and me, if we believe.

Yet the biggest critical blow against Satan's interests happened paradoxically when it seemed that all was lost. For when Jesus was crucified at the hands of sinful men, undoubtedly Satan thought he had won a great victory. Instead it turned out to be his greatest defeat. For by killing an innocent, sinless man, Satan overstepped his authority. By overstepping his authority, he lost it. Jesus now has all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18) and when we go in His name, under his instructions, his power and authority is upon us. Now all those who are "in Jesus" escape the domination of Satan. Rather than being condemned to an endless slavery to evil and corruption, true Christians can take authority over the works of the devil and destroy them in Jesus' name, driving Satan and his demons out. Yet the disciple is not greater than his master. If Jesus needed the Word, the Spirit and a strong consecration to God's will - then so do we, if we expect to have effective victory over Satan.

At the cross Jesus also took the curse for us, so that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, through faith (Galatians 3:13,14). We are legally delivered from all curses by the cross of Christ, by the blood of the Son of God that was shed. The blood of Christ breaks the rights of Satan, as soon as we submit to God.

Satan had us in his hands because we had willingly departed from God of our own free choice. Many of us went so far as to hate and reject God actively. God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, neither in the calamity that disobedience brings. But he cannot be just if he refuses to punish a determined rebel who just keeps rejecting God's own legitimate authority. It is God's world by right of creation and He is the only One wise enough, good enough and caring enough to know how it should be run. We are fools to ignore God's Word, and if we do, we harm ourselves. Not only that, but we open the door for both satanic influence in our lives, and God's wrath. The fruits of sin are not usually immediately obvious, which is why so many people are not afraid to sin against God. But without a doubt, people sow what they reap.

Rebellion brought us under God's judgment and the curse. It brought us into a place where Satan could lord it over us, and afflict us with all kinds of bad things. A sick soul and a sick body, for example. It was God's love and mercy which drove Jesus to the cross. There He did something about it, by cancelling our debt to Satan by paying it Himself. Satan's rights were destroyed - now he can only operate by deception and by continuing to get people to give him power by turning to sinful ways. As Christians we are in there with a fighting chance. Through the application of God's word, done in faith, we really can overcome Satan and enjoy more and more of the abundant life Jesus promises, beginning even now.

Praise the Lord for his great love for us! Who would not want to follow and serve our God?

If you would like to receive the benefits of what Christ did for you, may I suggest using [these prayers](#)?

Michael Fackerell

## The Kingdom Of God

A look at the meaning of the Kingdom of God and how it relates to spiritual warfare and driving out demons.

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The central message of Jesus Christ was the message of "the Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of Heaven". This message, when understood, is the most relevant message for the needs of humanity. It is a highly attractive message, and will produce the greatest results of any message one could give. This message must once again become the central theme of preachers and teachers in these last days.

When the message of the Kingdom of God is given correctly, the results will be dramatic, just as they were for our Lord and for the apostles of our Lord. For with the proclamation of the Kingdom comes the power of the Kingdom. Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 4:20 "for the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power". Anyone who dares to produce theological tomes on the subject of the Kingdom of God without demonstrating something of the reality the power of the Kingdom has missed the mark and does not know as they ought to know. The Kingdom of God is not in word but in power.

### John the Baptist Preached the Message of the Kingdom

"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:1,2).

### Jesus Preached the Message of the Kingdom

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17).

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sicknesses and all kinds of diseases among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them." (Matthew 4:23,24).

Many other references could be given from the gospels demonstrating that this was in fact the principal message of Jesus Christ. Many of Jesus' parables were about the Kingdom. He gave the secrets of the Kingdom to his apostles.

### Paul preached the Kingdom

"And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more." (Acts 20:25).

### **Jesus called Men to preach the kingdom**

"Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 9:60)

### **Jesus Predicted the Continued Preaching of 'This Gospel of the Kingdom' until His Second Coming**

"And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14).

Not only do we have Jesus and Paul as examples in this matter of preaching the Kingdom. We have the assurance from Jesus' own lips that this message of the kingdom should be preached 'as a witness' or 'with demonstration' to all the world. This is the main task we the church have.

## **What is the Kingdom of God?**

Some view the Kingdom of God as an alternative term for "heaven", but Jesus taught that it could be in our midst on earth, and come to us now through His ministry - for example - the ministry of casting out demons by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28). When Jesus spoke of entering the Kingdom he was not merely saying "going to heaven when you die". He was talking about entering into the Kingdom life here and now. This includes heaven later on, and whatever plans God may have for us on the new earth, but it is far more than that. The Kingdom of Heaven is not about "pie in the sky when you die".

The Kingdom of God is the place where Jesus is King. It is a spiritual, invisible kingdom which has made its presence felt to a degree in the affairs of this earth, but only to a limited extent. It is not confined to a particular geographical location, nor to a particular religious organisation. The Kingdom is truly present in a place to the extent that Christ is honored as Lord and his will done there.

There is an opposing kingdom at work. Jesus spoke of Satan's kingdom (Matthew 12:26). The Scripture declares that "the whole world lies under the sway of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). Satan is called "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4), "the prince of the power of the air" and "the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). Satan, operating through a vast hierarchical network of fallen angels, evil spirits or demons as they are variously known, exercises a stupendous influence on the hearts and lives of men, women, boys and girls. The existence of Satan's kingdom accounts for the hatred, the wars, the stupidity and selfishness of mankind, the existence of false religions and philosophies and the presence of every kind of perversion and deception on the face of the earth. Satanic influence is very effective because it operates in the background, and is generally not openly displayed. It is almost always covered under another name or philosophy.

The kingdom of God is in perpetual conflict with the spiritual kingdom of Satan. These are the two spiritual kingdoms which dominate the affairs of mankind and influence the lives of multitudes. They are totally opposite in nature. There is no third kingdom. The kingdom of God only advances through the destruction of the works and influence of the devil.

### **What are the results of the Kingdom?**

Paul said, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17). That is to say, God's kingdom in someone's heart will produce a state of righteousness before God, and the peace and joy of God will be known by that person. If people only understood and believed this, then they would make every effort to welcome the Kingdom of God into

their lives, instead of looking in all the wrong places for the happiness and fulfilment they desire. This comment applies to Christians as well as unbelievers.

When Philip the evangelist preached Christ in Samaria, "there was great joy in the city" (Acts 8:8). Today we need such a manifestation of the Kingdom of God in our cities. The message of the Kingdom of God applies not only at the individual level, but also at every corporate level. The key to it is the kind of faith that recognises and esteems Jesus Christ as His presence above all else. Such faith esteems the Word of Christ above all other authorities, influences or suggestions. The result in every community is the practice of justice, mercy, love, faithfulness, favor and blessing. These are exactly the things that people in the world long for. Because the church has largely failed to demonstrate and to preach these things of the Kingdom people have been willing to look for them in other directions. Satan has thus been able to capture the hearts and minds of men with all kinds of false movements and philosophies such as communism, islam and the New Age movement.

### **Divine Healing is a Sign of the Kingdom**

When God made Adam and Eve, no sickness was present. Sickness is a breakdown in the created order. When the body is no longer in divine order, sickness is the result. However, when the Kingdom of God manifests in a person's body, divine healing and health is the result. Every divine healing done through the power of the Holy Spirit is a manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

It is a matter of record that many, if not most, of the healings done by Jesus were done for those who were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10:38). In reality, most sickness is caused by demons - either directly or indirectly. Because large portions of the church have been ineffective in dealing with demons, there has been a corresponding ineffectiveness in dealing with sickness in the name of Jesus. Sickness represents the kingdom of satan in a person's body. When sickness is driven out in the name of Jesus, the Kingdom of God advances. These healings are done by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit moves in with his power when we **really** believe and operate in faith. This faith is the gift of God - it comes through the recognition of Jesus, the reality of God's Kingdom, and through personal relationship with the Godhead.

Since physical healing is something that people can see in the natural realm, it is therefore also a sign of the Kingdom of God. It is a biblical tool for evangelism. Divine healing accompanied Jesus constantly as he preached and taught about the Kingdom. This was not only done as authentication of his Messiahship (Matthew 11:4-6), but **also** as a demonstration of the truth of the message of the Kingdom of God. Divine healings were also done because of the Lord's compassion (Matthew 8:1-4), and His desire to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and to do the will of God in all things. All these considerations relate to the message of the Kingdom of God.

### **What is the Fruit of the Kingdom?**

If the Kingdom of God means God's effective rulership in things, then what is the fruit of the Kingdom? The fruit of God's Kingdom includes every blessing man can enjoy. True justice in human affairs, love in human relationships, the absence of tormenting fear, as well as the manifestation of all of the fruit of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 are just some of the fruits. Spiritual revival is the result of a large scale penetration of the Kingdom message and power in a society.

In addition to these spiritual and social blessings, the penetration of God's Kingdom will bring prosperity and success in natural affairs. Sin is extremely expensive to any people or nation. Just the use of drugs alone costs America more than 100 billion dollars per year. The cost of laziness, dishonesty in any society is beyond the power of any man to calculate in dollar terms. The penetration of the message of the kingdom progressively removes these factors. To the extent that the Kingdom manifests, people begin work in harmony with respect one for another. No one cheats or steals, or behaves foolishly. More people apply kingdom principles such as diligence, perseverance, faith and vision, resulting in greater prosperity and success.

All this is fine as long as people remain poor in spirit, thankful towards God and dependent upon God. The temptation to renounce the effective Lordship of the King and get into pride when all seems to be going well is well known in the history both of Israel and of many Christian nations. It always has serious consequences in the end. We are called to seek God when things are going well, as well as in times of trial.

Remove sin, and God's blessing comes - even in ways that are unusual. God wants to bless families, individuals, churches and nations. Satan seeks to weaken all of the above, so that he can enslave, destroy, mock and torment. The good news is that God has not left us helpless against Satan and his powers. We have the Word of God himself, the power of His Spirit, and the authority of the name of Jesus. However, all of these must be understood, received and applied in our daily lives for us to reap the benefits.

### **Through the Casting out of Demons the Kingdom of God Advances**

The gospels reveal that Jesus spent much time casting out demons. Some foolish theologians feel this is basically irrelevant to Christian ministry today, but in doing so, they reveal their spiritual ignorance. In the matter of casting out demons, God has hidden these things from the wise and learned but revealed them to babes (Luke 10:17-21). The things of the Kingdom are often missed by theologians with doctorate degrees, while "unschooled and ignorant" men, women, and even children not only know them, but also effectively apply them. Jesus said to his disciples who wanted to know who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, *that unless they became as little children they would not even enter the Kingdom of Heaven*. This is a very relevant word for many present-day leaders of Christian denominations to whom the significance of this ministry of deliverance is hidden, just as Jesus said it would be from the "wise and prudent". They may have elaborate theological arguments to defend their positions of spiritual powerlessness. However, on the day of judgement we will see whose word will stand - theirs or the Lords. The Kingdom belongs to the "poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3).

The reality is that the church has been subjected to a demonic invasion which has robbed it of most of the blessings of the Kingdom. These went on for centuries, but now, in these last days before the return of Christ, God is restoring the knowledge of the truth as contained in the Scriptures so that he might have a bride that is worthy of His name.

The Kingdom of God is not the same as the Church. There are churches where Satan has a large measure of effective control. The will of God is not done in these churches. This is evidenced not only by false doctrine, but also by a lack of love and the presence of all kinds of relational and personal sin. The Kingdom of God message tells us to bow the knee to Jesus and get the sin out of our lives. The presence of sickness in so many Christians is again evidence that the message of the Kingdom of God concerning divine healing has not been preached and demonstrated as it ought to be. Sin has opened the door to demonic oppression, and unbelief has held the church in bondage. The lack of true anointing in many churches is another proof that the church and the Kingdom are not the same.

### **Repentance and Faith is the Proper Response to the Message of the Kingdom**

When we truly see with the eyes of faith, and understand the message of the Kingdom, repentance is the natural response. A true recognition of Jesus as King and Lord leads to voluntary submission or deliberate rebellion. There is no third option.

Many of the things of the Kingdom of God can only be perceived by faith at this stage. Faith is a powerful law of the Kingdom of God. Only by faith do we make progress in the Kingdom of God. The principles and laws of the Kingdom are often contrary to natural earthly wisdom and it takes faith and moral courage to apply them - but they really do work.

### **Principles and Laws of the Kingdom**

There is much that can be written about this subject. Pat Robertson has written an excellent book on this subject called "The Secret Kingdom". Even this book can't give a complete picture of what is important in God's Kingdom. We could teach all our lives on this subject and still not exhaust it. After all, God's kingdom is eternal and he would not want us to get bored. God is creative and marvellous - and so is His Kingdom.

## How To Get Free

Practical steps you must take to get free of demons and their influence in your life.

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### FIRST THINGS FIRST!

**1. You must be truly born again!** This takes place when God's spirit convinces you of the reality of Jesus Christ and you respond to God, saying in effect, "Yes, I was wrong. I need you as my Savior and I want you as my Lord. I'm deeply sorry for the way I have lived without you. But now, I give my life to you. Come into me, Lord Jesus." Without the foundation of a true born-again experience all attempts to break free of satanic influence are ultimately doomed.

Being born again involves two things on your part, which can occur in any order. The first is faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any many should boast." (Ephesians 2:8,9). It is through faith that we recognise Jesus Christ and His right to be God in our lives. This faith is a certain inward knowing which leads to responses of love towards God. You must believe that Jesus died for you, to pay for your sins, and that God raised Him from the dead. Without this faith, you cannot be saved, nor lastingly delivered.

The other principle most people, including myself, find more difficult. It is wrapped up with the paradox that Jesus referred to when He said, "He who seeks to save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will find it." It is repentance. You can only be delivered to the extent that you allow the root of self-will, pride and independence from God to be taken out. Sure it is painful. Its rather like taking out a rotten tooth or a cancer that threatens to poison and destroy the whole body. But without repentance, demons will always have something to come back to. Shallow repentance puts us in a shallow place with God. Deep repentance puts us in a secure place with God. Without repentance, Jesus promises you will "lose your life", you will "perish". The Bible teaches that those who live on in sin will not inherit the kingdom of God. So consider well. Both the decision to repent and the decision not to are very costly. True faith will help you to see which path is ultimately the best one, which leads to life, not loss.

Sin is basically a "me-first" attitude of heart in which God's laws are rebelled against and God's involvement is resented.. Out of this principle of sin come all of the "sins" - things like adultery, hatred, masturbation, greed, envy and strife, which reinforce this separation from God. The whole tree, as well as its branches, need to go. What you do not finally deal with will eventually rise up to enslave and destroy you again. We can only escape from satanic influence to the extent that we are honest and thorough on this point. By all means begin with Jesus - and trust Him to change your heart - but remember that it takes *your* participation in the matter as well.

If you are not sure if you are born again, why not make sure by taking this step in the form of a [prayer of repentance and faith in God](#). Just click on the link, read the prayer, think about it and the pray it to yield yourself to God. You cannot really be permanently free from Satanic influence unless you freely give your life to Jesus. Please [contact me](#) if you have now decided to do this, or you have questions before you take this step.

### **Vital Keys for Deliverance**

I've chosen the passage of Scripture found in James 4:4-10 for this (please read it) because it gives some major keys for getting a clean heart. Although God is sovereign and can cause any person to experience some measure of deliverance, it is now well known that meeting certain conditions will make it a lot easier for you or any person you minister to to receive deliverance. Here are some major keys:

**1. Avoid friendship with "the world".** James said friendship with the world is enmity with God. This doesn't mean don't have friendly relationships with non-Christians. It does mean not to join yourself in close relationships with ungodly people where you are sharing their spirit and attitude. How can God free you from demons on the one hand if you are drinking them in on the other - through loving the ways of ungodly people - be they friends or media personalities on the box (television). You can't expect a powerful deliverance while you are giving your imagination passively to the ungodly programming of the media and entertainment industry. You need songs of praise in your heart and mind, not songs of entertainment, if you want God to move in your life. God's comfort is better than what the comfort the world offers, but you have to choose which you would rather have.

### **2. Have hope based on knowing God's will for you.**

Satan seeks to discourage, and bring us down into despair. God doesn't want us to despair - thinking we will never get free of satanic bondage. You will, if you just keep paying attention to His Word and the voice of His spirit more and more.

If you have given your life to Christ, Christ wants to take possession of what you have given to Him. This is only logical. As He does, He will work ever so wonderfully to get everything unclean out of your life. He wants to drive out the demons. Unite with His desire on this point, and look forward to the peace and joy you will enjoy because of it. As you pray, you will attract the Spirit of God. Your capacity to pray will grow from 2 minutes a day to 2 hours or more a day as the Spirit works more in your life. Prayer is a necessary condition for getting delivered and staying delivered. But it is not enough - you need faith too. Don't worry though, faith will come.

The Bible says, **"The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"** (James 4:5). We should realise that the Holy Spirit is very jealous for us and certainly wants to get all the demons out of us. So we can have strong hope in God and faith that He wants to help us. We must never fall into despair concerning God's willingness or power to help us. We are getting free to make room for the Holy Spirit to bring the kingdom of God more fully into our lives.

It is the knowledge of the truth which makes you free (John 8:32). Therefore, meditate on the portions of the Word of God relevant to your problem, and ask the Holy Spirit to quicken them to you.

### **3. Have FAITH in the grace of God.**

"But He gives more grace." (James 4:6). It is by the Spirit of God, by grace, that we are going to be delivered from evil spirits (Matthew 12:28). We need to trust and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in all this. God's grace is at work in our initial salvation experience, but also in all subsequent deliverance. Satan had good reasons to have us in bondage, but now because of Jesus' love and grace, we can get more and more free every day.

Faith means at some point accepting that God has given you legally what you already need. You "see" this even though your experience contradicts it. You ask for deliverance, believing that you receive. Then, after following the steps below, you can begin declaring and demanding that demons leave you and mountains of oppression be cast into the proverbial "sea" (Mark 11:23).

**4. Humility.** Therefore he says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6). Humility means a sober opinion of ourselves, in the light of God's glory. We can only have good qualities because God put them there anyway. God is the one who is able to make the difference for you. God's power flows to deliver us when we humble ourselves (James 4:10). In relation to deliverance, this humility implies the following:

a. Be willing to be honest about it and admit your need for help. A proud person will not do this. Satan would love to convince Christians through false theology or false faith teaching that they have no need of deliverance when their lives prove otherwise. The appeal is made to pride, "Fancy thinking I have a demon. Ridiculous!"

b. Admit that you need to change. Drop the rebellious attitude and get a teachable spirit.

c. Be willing to let God's Spirit minister deliverance to you in any way He chooses, even if you feel that it might make you look silly. Don't decide beforehand what you will and won't permit to happen to you. You might just hold the demon in if you do that. Sometimes demons have to manifest when they come out - it might be through a cough, a yawn, tears or vomiting - to give a few possible examples.

## **5. Know the Truth**

Jesus said, "If you abide in my Word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the knowledge of the truth shall set you free". (John 8:31,32)

Satan wants us ignorant concerning what he is doing in our lives. When we know the truth that knowledge is the key to our deliverance. "Through knowledge, the righteous shall be delivered" (Proverbs 11:9). The more **relevant** knowledge you have in your heart and mind, the greater and fuller can be your deliverance. Some knowledge only tends to puff us up - the knowledge we really need will show us the need to change to be more like Christ.

We need knowledge concerning two things - God's Word and ourselves - our own condition. The two are related.

If you are serious about deliverance I recommend listening for hours to the Bible on audio tape. This requires less discipline than personal Bible study and is also many times more powerful, since we **hear** the Word.

We must also know the **truth about ourselves**. Not just what we are in Christ, but also about what we are manifesting through our words, deeds and behaviour. These things are a fruit of our heart condition, and the kind of thoughts we are tolerating in our own minds. We must be willing to face up to it and acknowledge it. This takes humility. We need to call things by their right names. For example, if you have been enslaved to alcohol or other drugs, don't call it a "disease". Call it sin, and cry out to God for freedom from it.

Knowing the truth includes knowing what God means by sin. The moral law of God as revealed in the Bible gives us his knowledge. For example, idolatry (loving or valuing something or someone more than God the Creator), unbelief, pride, fear of man, complaining, slander, sex outside of marriage and occult activities are all sin and must be repented of. Occult activities, even on the part of our ancestors are especially dangerous in opening the door to demons. These activities include but are not limited to any form of astrology, consulting fortune tellers, channelers or psychics, witchcraft, divination or fantasy games containing these themes. (see Deuteronomy 18:9-12; Isaiah 47:12-14). We must know



the meaning of words so we can identify whether we are committing any of these sins or not! Satan will be looking to exploit any ignorance in these areas.

**Secondly, we must know the truth of God's Word.** Indeed, consistent meditation on God's Word is vital for breakthrough. It is a scientific fact that repetition causes words to go deeper and into more parts of our brain. We want God's Word to get wired into our brain. Understanding, confessing, declaring and proclaiming what the Word says relating to your life is a vital key to overcoming Satan in every kind of conflict. That's the way Jesus did it in the wilderness (see Matthew 4:1-10).

We can know Jesus as the overcoming victor in our life through the revelation of Him in God's Word. This releases faith for a victorious life.

**6. Submit to God.** (James 4:7). We are not in the place to receive deliverance if we will not submit to God and His Word. Submission to God occurs on a moment by moment basis. It means doing the **one thing** the Spirit of God is urging us to do NOW.

This is not a legalistic solution. Legalism throws a rule-book of requirements at people and says - here's God's rules, shape up! It's all up to you! Whereas God works through by His Holy Spirit to take us by the hand and lead us step by step to break with evil. He does give us the power we need at every step. He is very patient with us also. Most of us have taken years to get where we are and we are still a long way from where we want to be. But if we had not yielded to God at all - nor sincerely spent time going after God we would not even be where we are today!

The thing is to keep your eyes on Jesus. He is gentle and gives us strength to do what needs to be done. The issue relates to this: do we want Him or do we just want relief? If we only want relief, we will fall again after our deliverance. If we want Him, He will fill our lives.

**Submission to God includes:**

**a. Confession of all known sin.**

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins **and** to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

God knows all the nasty details of what we have thought, said and done. He can't be shocked by our confession of what it was. But he requires us to open up our hearts and share with Him our shame, so He can take it away. We get close to God when we confess the things in our hearts and wait before Him.

Until confession of sin occurs, demons have a legal right to remain. One of our biggest mistakes though is to take our eyes off Jesus. Let Him empower you to confess your sins.

**b. Repentance from all known sin. (Luke 13:3)**

God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). Jesus said to the church at Laodicea, "Be zealous and repent" (Revelation 3:19). A half-hearted turning to God won't cut it.

Repentance is for Christians. If we still want to open the door for the devil through sin, what is the point of trying to cast the devil out? We will reap what we sow. It's wise to turn from sin.

**c. Renunciation of Satan, occultism, idolatry back even to the 4th generation**

Vitality important here is the renouncing all contact with Satan. You must totally repudiate the occult in all its forms if you hope that the devil will leave you. Even a visit to a fortune teller, a psychic or a witch counts as occult involvement, and will get demons into you for sure. They won't leave easily either,

unless you take a firm attitude. Destroy any idol, fetish, unclean or occultic book or magazine in your home (see Acts 19:19).

Your prayer to God should also include a renunciation of all generational curses and occultic activity or idolatrous worship of your parents, grandparents, great grandparents and even great great grandparents. You must renounce the sins of your forefathers, because these open the door to oppression in your life and you need to cut it from you by a verbal renunciation.

**c. Forgiving all those who have hurt us or we feel inclined to complain against.** (Read Colossians 3:13; Matthew 18:35; Mark 11:25).

If you find yourself complaining about someone, don't be deceived, you need to forgive that person from the heart.

Forgiving others is absolutely foundational to getting free from curses and demons. At some point we have to forgive and break the vicious circle of wrongs, offenses, and bitterness leading to further bondage and unhappiness.

True emotional healing is strongly tied with the grace to forgive others for the injustices - real or imagined - which they have committed against us.

Jesus said in Matthew 18:35 that if we do not forgive our brother from our heart, God will hand us over to the tormentors. The demons are the tormentors. You cannot even be permanently forgiven by God if you will not forgive others, and your prayers won't work either. This one sin of unforgiveness explains about 50% of the problems in the church today, and one of the major reasons for our powerlessness and frustration.

**d. Making restitution or confession to others for past wrongs.**

For example: if you stole a stereo from someone God expects you to give it back. If you have spoken malicious gossip against a brother God expects you to make it right to the best of your ability by a public confession if necessary. All this is not easy but it opens the door for God to move.

**e. Trusting God completely for salvation and deliverance through the blood of Jesus alone.**

Don't get caught into the trap of trying to establish your own system of attaining righteousness based on a system of ritual, fasting, penance or whatever. Get back to the simple good news of Jesus' sacrifice in your place and thank God for His gift of righteousness.

**f. Calling on the name of the Lord.**

"Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered." (Romans 10:13).

To be delivered you must be desperate. Calling upon Jesus verbally, crying out to Him has power. Once God has led you through the above steps, call upon Jesus to set you free. He will do it.

**7. Resist the devil and he will flee from you** (James 4:7). Having fulfilled all the previous steps it is necessary to resist the devil. This word "resist" used here is not a passive resistance, but an active resistance. You have to command the demons to go. You must throw them out violently. Jesus said that those who believe in Him would CAST OUT demons in His name (Mark 16:18). Use the principle of Mark 11:23 - do not doubt that what you say will come to pass! It takes an attitude of spiritual violence, of aggressive faith but God has given that faith to you!

You can call them by what they produce e.g. "Spirits of fear, get out of my life in the name of Jesus!" No longer do you listen to the voice of spirits, and their arguments designed to discourage and

undermine your faith. Now, in the name of Jesus, knowing that God is with you on this, you tell them to get out. Expect they will leave and act on your faith, expelling them physically by breathing out.

When demons no longer have a legal right to remain, they have to go. They may resist, but your faith and God's anointing will make them want to leave! They find God's presence and power tormenting (which is why they do all to stop a Christian tapping into the power of these things!). Know that "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4).

You must expel the demons (Mark 16:18). Jesus said those who believe would expel demons. Expelling involves an act of the will and a breathing out. The word for spirit is the same as the word for breath in both Hebrew and Greek. Often you will feel the spirits coming up as you breath out. Different manifestations such as coughing or vomiting are possible at this point - but are not essential to deliverance. Let them happen if they start, but don't let the demons talk through you, if possible. What is important is to be sure you get them out and that you keep them out.

### **8. Maintain your Deliverance by Drawing Near to God at all times.**

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." (James 4:8). In practical terms this means:

a. Develop a lifestyle of praise and worship, for God dwells in the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). Rejoice always. (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

b. Pray always (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Keep seeking God through prayer. Develop communion with the Holy Spirit more and more. Through a life of prayer you can be full of the Holy Spirit as God requires - and then you will not be empty so as to leave openings in your life for evil spirits. Ephesians 5:18 says, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit."

c. Give thanks to God always (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Thank God for your deliverance. Thanksgiving puts us on an upward path, strengthens our faith and solidifies our healing (Luke 17:14-19).

d. Hear the word of God and do it (Luke 11:28). It is significant that this instruction follows directly after Jesus' teaching on the way evil spirits seek to return after they are cast out. Matthew 12:43-45 reveals that the man's problem here was that he was empty. That is why we must get filled with the Word and the Spirit to maintain total deliverance. This is what God wants for our lives.

### **9. Let love be your goal and motivation in all things.**

**(1 Corinthians 16:14; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 Corinthians 14:1)**

The purpose of God is that we walk in love. We must keep our minds on God's love and how we can love others, and not get on an endless hunt for demons. God's main purpose is to build us up in love. This is something positive for us to do and seek. Doing the positive will of God will enable us to avoid the negative traps of Satan. We must always keep Jesus in mind and seek to use our knowledge of deliverance to serve others and as a tool to help them both enjoy God more fully and also to fulfil God's destiny for their lives.

May God bless you as you put these principles into practise in your own life and in the lives of those to whom God leads you to minister deliverance in the mighty name of Jesus Christ!

Please let me know how this teaching has been helpful to you.

## Power Over Demons

A theological understanding showing why disciples of Jesus have authority over evil spirits and how we can have power over them also to give that authority teeth.

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"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10:19).

It was a major breakthrough for me when I discovered that demons were really at work in my life, and the life of others around me, and that I *could* get free of them by applying the principles mentioned on this site. Any Christian who learns to cast out demons will be far more effective in their service for the Lord. Certainly it helped me to get free of many negative features in my personality, which I had thought were "just me". It cleared the way for my faith to effectually operate in the gifts of healing. As a result of this, I have been able to make more impact as a witness of Jesus Christ than would have been possible otherwise.

Jesus gave the disciples their marching orders to cast out demons in Mark 16:17 and also in John 20:21 where He said, "As the Father sent me, so I send you." The disciples, in turn, were instructed to teach us to obey all things that Jesus commanded them (Matthew 28:20) which obviously includes the command to train up more disciples who would cast out demons. It is quite logical then that we have authority in Jesus' name over demons - *to cast them out*. We don't have authority to try to send them to do things for us - this is what witches try to do and it is an activity that God hates. We should cast them out by the Spirit of God and then keep them out.

I don't believe that we are *all* called to major on deliverance ministry. Some are called to spend more time on it than others, but God knows that there is a vast need in the church for this kind of ministry. Relatively few people in the body of Christ have been willing to make the personal sacrifices necessary to sustain this kind of ministry for a serious length of time. We should pray for those who are involved in this ministry, as they surely need prayer support. God needs more people willing to do this ministry out of love for Him and for others.

### The Authority of the Believer

"Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority (Gk: *exousia*) to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons." (Mark 3:14,15).

We see in this passage that "being with Jesus" comes before receiving the authority to cast out demons. In order to cast out demons, we must first "be with Him". Otherwise demons may treat us as they did the sons of Sceva, saying, "Jesus we know, and Paul we are acquainted with, but who are you?" Just saying that we belong to God will not impress demons greatly if they know our hearts are divided. Being with Jesus, spending time in His presence, is the key to effectively destroying Satan's works. Our life is in Him. Demons will try to distract us and keep us out of the place of intimacy with God, because they know when we are close to God, they cannot stand before us.

Legally we have been purchased by the blood of Jesus. To the extent that we truly give ourselves to Christ, and keep abiding in Him, Satan cannot touch us. In fact, when we have our spiritual armor on (see Ephesians 6:12-18), when we are clothed with Christ, we are armed with authority "in Jesus"

name" to cast out demons. Added to this authority we must receive "power" through the [Baptism in the Holy Spirit](#) (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:4) for maximum results in casting out demons.

Incidentally, if you live carelessly, it is not enough to say, "I am a born again child of God" and expect demons to flee from you in terror. Effective authority over Satan and his demons comes through true submission to God. Jesus never did anything unless the Father showed it to Him or spoke it (John 5:17). It is presumption to think that we can go off independently of God and destroy Satan's strongholds. Nothing "independent" of God will cut any ice in spiritual warfare.

Having said this, I want to encourage you to believe that you have been given authority to cast out demons. It is not something you have to be "ordained into the ministry" to do. It is something that Jesus will teach you to do as you stay in His presence, especially if others around you can model faith and wisdom in these areas. That is the advantage of being in a church where the people take the power of the name of Jesus seriously.

### **Begin with yourself**

My advice is this: if you are new to casting out demons, make sure you are full of the Holy Spirit before attempting to help anybody who needs deliverance. And if you struggle to be filled with the Holy Spirit and live full of the Holy Spirit, you should learn how to cast demons out of yourself - or find someone else who can help you! This might sound extreme at first, but believe me, this is the way it is. Many times demons of doubt and unbelief have wrapped themselves around the minds of Christians. The result is that although they would like to believe from the heart, something just stops them. Demons are tormentors in the realm of the mind as well as the body and emotions. Many times persistent evil attitudes and thoughts in us - a critical spirit, an ungrateful complaining spirit, a spirit of hurt - are linked to the presence of demons at work in us. These sins must be confessed and renounced so that the demons associated with them can be driven out.

A lot of Christian ministers would do well to drop some of their present ministry activities to spend some time attending to these matters. Failure to do this could be likened to a woodchopper who insists he has no time to sharpen his blunt and ineffective ax.

### **You must be a Person of Prayer**

It is no accident that revival breaks out only in places where God finds people who are truly devoted to prayer, and usually fasting as well. We are exhorted to pray always and not lose heart (Luke 18:1). Satan fears our prayers more than we realise. Casting out demons requires faith, but it also requires prayer. Prayer is the secret of power with God and power over demons. Prayer attracts the Spirit of God, who is more than a match for any demonic spirit or fallen angel.

### **Confessions Relating to Casting out Demons**

I have previously compiled some verbal confessions on the subject of casting out demons which you can use to build your faith in this area. There are other Scriptures also which are relevant to this area. The Holy Spirit can show you these things. Those who want to see and use these confessions may [click here](#).

### **Be Encouraged**

You were born to win. You are more than a conqueror through Christ. Through the cross and His subsequent resurrection from death, Jesus has made the way for you to be victorious over every work of the devil. If you have never given your life to Christ and would like to, please [click here](#). Please let me know about your victories in God as time goes by.

## How To Cast Out Demons

Practical ministry suggestions on how to cast out demons, and do deliverance ministry.

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**Note:** This page is intensely practical. It contains suggestions and principles for the ministry of exorcism, intended for use only by Christians truly devoted to Jesus Christ. The theological principles upon which this ministry is based can be found on this site. Read it before proceeding to read and study the information on this page.

### Legal Disclaimer:

By reading further you agree that the author is not legally responsible for anything that happens to you as a result of putting any or all of the suggestions on this page into practice. You do so at your own risk. I do hereby warn you that taking on demonic forces means entering into a spiritual battle - and war is dirty. It can have consequences in every area of your life. You must live right with God and others to do this ministry. By reading on, you agree that you alone are responsible for happens as a result of putting into practice the knowledge gained by reading this page.

Read on if you belong to Jesus Christ and you believe He may be calling you to learn how to drive out demons.

[If you agree to these conditions click here, otherwise back out now!](#)

## Practical Suggestions for Deliverance Ministry

### Be Prepared

To be in this ministry you need to be a person of prayer. At the very least, you need to have a strong anointing from God, which you could only have received through previous faithfulness to God in

prayer. However, in this ministry, more than others, we are dependent on God the Holy Spirit. Even Jesus did not drive out demons except by the Spirit of God. So keep close to God through prayer. Remember the seven sons of Sceva who were humiliated by the demons because they did not know Christ for themselves. Acts 19:13-16.

### **Work in A Team if at all possible**

Jesus sent his disciples out two by two to heal the sick and cast out demons. It is better to work with others. In any case, never get into a counselling or deliverance situation alone with a person of the opposite sex. Satan does send people to come for counselling who later accuse ministers of sexual misconduct and other false things. If you were alone with that person and they accuse you, it is your word versus theirs. You can lose your reputation and ministry like this through false accusations.

Make sure your team relationships are in good order. Be watchful, practice humility and forgiveness so that Satan cannot gain an advantage over you. Where there is unity between brethren, Christ is present and commands His blessing.

### **Bind The Devil**

You have effective authority over evil spirits to the extent that you submit to God and resist the devil. To use the name of Jesus Christ you must live under the authority of Jesus Christ. As the spirit leads, you should bind the devil according to Matthew 18:18 with words such as these:

"In the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, we renounce all the power of darkness which may exist in this area or in the life of [Counsellor's name] for any reason. We bind all evil spirits assigned to [Counsellor's name] and forbid you to operate in any way, in the name of Jesus Christ."

### **Determine if the counsellor (person needing deliverance) is a born-again Christian.**

If they are not, it's much better to spend time explaining the gospel to them, and leading them to a point of trust and faith in Christ. Without this basis, they cannot be properly set free from demonic influence.

Some people are too bound to respond directly to the gospel. There are too many approaches you can take here.

(a) While others pray and bind the demons, patiently explain that Jesus can set them free, that Jesus can save, that Jesus paid for their sins at the cross and that Jesus rose again and is alive. Make it very simple, since demons will attempt to work overtime to confuse their minds with distractions and irrelevant considerations. Invite them to call upon Jesus for salvation first.

(b) If the anointing for faith and power is upon you, ask for permission to lay hands on them [on the head and the back are good places for this], and, then, in the name of Jesus, do so, releasing by faith the anointing and commanding the demons to get off their mind and out of their lives. This will work for long enough to get them to a point of being able to hear and understand the gospel message. You must lead them to Christ at this point before continuing ministry.

## **For Deliverance Ministry Aiming for Thorough Cleansing**

### **If possible, create an atmosphere of PRAISE where Jesus Christ is honored.**

God dwells in the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). So acknowledge God's greatness by beginning times of deliverance ministry with songs of praise to God. This builds faith, invites the Holy Spirit to

come with his anointing, and weakens the power of Satan in the area. Demons feel uncomfortable with praise directed towards God and will be more willing to leave when they feel bad in a place. Praise silences the voice of the enemy.

"Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have ordained strength, because of your enemies, that you may silence the enemy and the avenger." (Psalm 8:2). In Matthew 21:16 Jesus quoted this Scripture as follows, "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise". Together, these verses reveal the secret that PRAISE silences the voice of the enemy (demons). We are exhorted to "continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise" (Hebrews 13:15). The more we do this, the less problems we will have with demonic harassment. Teach people to praise God. A lot of their problems will be solved if they learn to praise God through the difficulties until God's light starts to shine through. People can only keep deliverance by continuing to praise God.

Just before the time for the person to confess their sins and call upon the Lord, it is good to really get into praising God. Music helps here.

### **Be Thorough**

Identify what areas of demonic influence are in a person's life (a) by listening to them (b) by asking questions (c) by listening to God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some things are obvious, others require revelations from God.

Do not depend on the demons themselves for information. Although Jesus once asked the demon what its name was, you generally don't need to. In any case, Jesus did not ask each of the thousands of demons in that man what its name was.

In commanding demons to go out, you don't need to know their name. They can be identified by what they promote. Thus demons of fear, lust, deception, pride, anger, violence and so on can be commanded to leave using just those names. For example, you can say, "You spirit of fear, come out in Jesus' name!" or "I command you spirit of infirmity to loose her in Jesus' name!"

It is outside the scope of this article to give a complete list of the demonic problems that may afflict people. You need to keep learning and studying. Read books by authors like Noel Gibson, Graham Powell, Bill Subritzky and others with plenty of practical experience of actually doing it. Learn from the Lord yourself through each experience.

### **Some Questions to Ask the Counselee**

Have you truly given your life to Jesus Christ? Would you like to?

What do you want freedom from?

When is the first time you had this trouble? (Be listening, and seek to discover through what action or event the demons got in in the first place. These doorways need to be closed through renunciation for deliverance to be lasting.)

What experience have you had of personal rejection by others?

Are there people you find it difficult to forgive? (People must forgive or God hands them over to demonic tormenters - see Matthew 18:34,35).

Are you aware of any occult history in your family or your ancestors - e.g. witchcraft, freemasonry, false religions etc? (All these must be renounced).

### **Procedure for Deliverance**



## **Practical Instructions**

### **Explain the Need for Laying on of hands**

Some say that we shouldn't lay hands on those with demons, lest they come into us, but we need not fear if the power of the Holy Spirit is truly upon us. Jesus took Peter's mother-in-law's hand, rebuked the fever and it left. Demons hate the power of the Holy Spirit that comes through the laying on of hands and when hands are laid on in Jesus' name, demons are more likely to leave quickly. It is not an absolute requirement but it can be a point of contact for faith.

NEVER lay hands on a person inappropriately. Avoid touching areas which may open the door for lust. (It shouldn't be necessary to say this but it is better to be clear).

### **Explain how a person may co-operate in the process of expelling demons**

Tell the person that they should co-operate with their deliverance after prayer by deliberately breathing out, and perhaps coughing. The word for spirit is the same as the word for breath or wind in Greek and Hebrew, and evil spirits can be breathed out by an act of the will and by faith, once the legal conditions are met - see lesson on [deliverance](#) which describes what these are.

Instruct them during the time of ministry not to pray audibly, to use the name of Jesus, or to pray in tongues. Instead, they should focus their minds on Jesus and breathe out in faith. Demons can't leave a person while that person is busy praying or has the name of Jesus on their lips. They have to know this in order to let the demons out.

Manifestations of demons may occur, but are not a condition of deliverance. These manifestations could include coughing, yawning, tears coming to the eyes, vomiting, spitting etc. A person should not let the demons talk through them. The only manifestations they should permit are those where the demon is leaving.

Experience has revealed that demons in the body many times are located around the stomach or chest and during deliverance move up into the throat from where they are expelled. They tend to produce knots of tension in the body in the places where they are. You can command the demons not to link and reinforce. Faith in the power and authority of the name of Jesus combined with the anointing will drive them out.

After these things are explained it is easier to do the ministry.

### **Prayer for Deliverance**

Lead the counsellor in a prayer something like this:

"Jesus, I come to you as my deliverer. I believe that You are the Son of God, that You died for me and rose again. I confess You as Lord and renounce all influences of Satan in my life. Lord, you know the demons that oppress me, that harass me, that entice me, that enslave me. I confess all my sins to you. (You must name them out loud before God). I repent of (turn away from) all my sins. I renounce any form of the occult or idolatry in my life or in the life of my ancestors (Name them to the extent of your knowledge of it). I forgive anyone who has ever hurt me in any way and I let go of any bitterness or resentment. (Name any such people whom you associate with personal pain and forgive them by name). I believe I am saved by the blood of Jesus and Satan has no further legal rights to my spirit, soul, mind or body. Through the blood of Jesus I am justified, just as if I never sinned. Through the blood of Jesus I am sanctified, set apart to God. Jesus Christ is my Lord. Through the blood of Jesus, I am redeemed out of the hand of the devil.

Jesus you said whoever calls upon the name of the Lord SHALL be delivered. I call upon you. Deliver me!

Now in the name of Jesus Christ I bind every evil spirit in or around my life. In the name of Jesus I command you to get out and leave me alone. Go in Jesus' name!"

A shorter prayer taken from the writings of Noel Gibson:

"I confess Jesus Christ to be my personal Savior. I confess and renounce every iniquity, transgression and sin that I, my parents, or ancestors may have committed and which has brought bondages and dominations to my life, and ask for forgiveness and cleansing. I repent from any action, attitude or habit which does not glorify Jesus Christ. I renounce the devil, and all of his works, influences, bondages, dominations, inflictions and infirmities in my life. I claim the release and freedom promised by Jesus Christ, that He may be the Lord of my whole life. Amen."

Please note though, there is power in the specific renunciation of sin. The more specific and definite we are, the better the results. For this reason I would suggest leading the person to name the sins and bondages they want broken off their lives. Corresponding confession is appropriate.

### **Command the Demons to Leave**

The actual words to use might be: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command all evil spirits - get out now! Spirits of ..., get out in Jesus' name! (repeat for each category if necessary)."

### **Follow the Holy Spirit**

If things seem to block, ask the Holy Spirit what to do next. You may be led to ask the person what is going on in them. Many times the counsellor gets information during deliverance which when shared provides effective keys to their own deliverance. Remember that they are co-operating in their own deliverance and that the Holy Spirit is showing them things too many times. In effect, they are part of the deliverance team also.

### **After Deliverance**

If you have peace from the Holy Spirit that no more deliverance should happen at that time, the person counsellor should be encouraged to invite the Holy Spirit into all the areas of their lives from which the demons have left. It may be appropriate to have another time of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Teach the counsellor the things contained in my [lesson on deliverance](#) concerning how to maintain deliverance. The most important thing is that they draw near to God through meditation on the Word, much prayer and through faithful obedience to the Lord. These things are very important, since demons always try to get back in later. People must be full of the Holy Spirit if they want to be sure of staying free.

### **Further Deliverance**

Sometimes people are not ready to get all the demons out in one session. They need to learn to walk in the freedom they have received until that point, making adjustments in their life. If they are faithful the Lord will soon enable them to go further in the process of deliverance. They may be able to continue their own deliverance by themselves following the principles in this lesson and the foundational teaching on deliverance.

In reality it is rare that all the demons come out in one session, although it is possible. However, the counsellor should be taught how to depend on Jesus and get himself or herself free as soon as

possible, rather than creating a situation of perpetual dependence on the counsellor or deliverance minister.

### **Further Principles to be employed in this Ministry**

Seek the root causes, not just symptoms. By dealing with the most powerful demons at the root of the person's problems, many of the smaller demons will have nothing to cling onto and be forced to leave. However the reverse principle is not true.

Study and learn more. Any disobedience to the Word of God which becomes a habit can open the door for demons. Study and meditate on the Word. Build faith in this way and resist demons which seek to bind with unbelief, doubt and fear.

Learn to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can give us thoughts and images just as demons can, so be open to these revelations from the Holy Spirit which can greatly assist in ministry.

Give the glory to God and keep Jesus central. Resist demonic suggestions that you are so great now that you are casting out demons. If they can trap you in pride you will be in for a fall. We must respect all the biblical conditions for our own freedom in Christ before we can effectively minister freedom to others. Remember that it is God's power not yours that drives the demons out. We didn't earn this power. Jesus paid for and supplied everything through the cross and by His grace. We are just privileged to be vessels and messengers for God. So we should never seek to take credit for the results.

"Freely you have received, freely give" ( Matthew 10:8). Do not stoop to demand monetary payment for delivering the gifts of God to people. Nowhere in the Bible did any servant of God accept money for healing or ministering freedom to a person. Those who do so are on dangerous ground indeed.

## **Blessings And Curses**

Teaching on what blessings and curses are.

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Few realise how powerful the effects of curses and blessings are in peoples' lives today. Curses and blessings release spiritual power which influences the course of events in people's lives in many ways, and usually affects the way they are, too.

### **What is a blessing?**

A blessing is a positive declaration over someone or something. When God blesses a person, He declares good concerning them which will surely come to pass. God is a great King, and as the Scripture says, "Where the word of a king is, there is power, and who can say to him, 'What are you doing?' ". Our ultimate concern should be to please and glorify God. He certainly deserves it. However, in truly doing this, we will attract God's blessings and we will attract God's favor. A good example in the Bible of someone who attracted God's favor was David. Although David did some really wrong things at times, and was quite bloodthirsty and shrewd, the fact that he worshiped God with all his heart made him one of God's favorites. We will attract God's favor and blessings if we worship, praise and thank the Lord from our hearts also.

The Bible gives many examples of the effects of blessings. For example, "The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and He adds no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22). When God bestows good things on us, they are blessings. It is very easy for God to bless someone He wants to favor. All God has to do is speak the word, and the blessings come to us. The way God distributes and administers these blessings is ultimately up to Him, but we do know that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Do you believe that? He is looking to bless those with a heart after Him - those who love Him more than they love themselves, anything or anyone else.

Blessings can come through people, also. Christians are instructed to bless others, and not curse them (Romans 12:14). Just praying the Word of God for someone can release real blessings to them, but we can also SPEAK out blessings as the Spirit of God leads. We should speak out blessings over people according to the good promises of the Word of God. God's angels will be assigned to bring these words to pass, if we have done this thing in union with God.

God commands blessing to come when Christian brethren dwell together in unity (Psalm 133). We need those blessings. When we are in unity, God is going to pour out blessings. The only true Unity is based on the Spirit of God, and comes as we all look to Jesus and worship Him in Spirit and Truth. Jesus went so far as to say that when two or three on earth harmonise about something in His name, God will do it.

Speaking and confessing the Word can release blessings over us and also over others. There are many personalised confessions of God's Word on this site which you can use to release God's blessing. They help because they cause us to hear God's word for ourself, which produces faith. (Romans 10:17)

All spiritual blessings are available to us in Christ (Ephesians 1:3), and we should avail ourselves of them by walking with the Lord and not separately from Him. Blessings like peace, joy, love, wisdom, faith and other choice things are vital in an effective spiritual warfare against Satan. God does not want us miserable. Satan is happy to see miserable and sad Christians.

## **Curses**

Curses come either through generational or family influence, or by someone who speaks negatively of us. If God speaks negatively of us, we are in trouble. His Word declares many judgments on sin, rebellion and disobedience. God is slow to anger though, but at times all that is necessary is for us to open the door through sin and then people can curse us - and it does generally have an effect. Repentance, humility and faith combined with right words can set us free from curses and the reality is that Christians often need deliverance from the effects of curses. This is even true of experienced and mature Christians.

For more information on the subject of Curses and Blessings, I recommend Derek Prince's book on the subject. But I do have on-line a very helpful book written by a personal friend I met while in Romania. His name is Carl Fox and his book is called Turning Curses to Blessings. You can read it [here](#).

I hope you will take the time to do some Bible research into this vast subject. It will change your life if you do.

God bless you!

## **Healing Through Deliverance**

There is a big relationship between sickness and demonic power. Experienced ministers estimate that 80% of sickness is caused by demons. So understanding and appropriating deliverance can have a very positive effect on health.

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38)

In the gospel accounts, there is plenty of evidence that physical healing and deliverance from evil spirits are closely related.

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

"Then his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed (Gk: daimonizomai - demonized), epileptics, and paralytics, and He healed them." (Matthew 4:23,24).

When Jesus preached the message about the Kingdom, it was a message of God's effective rule coming. The signs of the coming of the Kingdom included the destruction of Satan's works. Amongst these are sicknesses and torments. These things often go hand in hand. They are both due to the operation of evil spirits in the bodies and souls of men.

## **Are All Physical Problems due to Demons?**

I do not say this. If someone falls over and breaks their arm, the broken arm is not due to a demon. Sometimes such wounds are prevented from healing due to demonic infestation or a curse, but that is another matter.

Poor diet or overeating, especially of the wrong foods, can open the door for disease. This has been well established. If you fill your arteries with cholesterol, it's not necessarily the devil's fault if you have a heart attack. But if you have a spirit of gluttony - a very common problem amongst the people of God, then demons are related on the onset of disease, albeit perhaps not directly.

Having said this, a lot of internal diseases and disabilities involve direct demonic oppression. Demons may find access to a person's life through some kind of generational curse, and this can mean that a person, even a Christian person, may be afflicted with multiple spirits of infirmity, which need to be driven out. Demons can work to reinforce sickness, and magnify the oppression over people's lives. It is extremely common. Demonic infestation in Christians of one degree or another is at least as common as the presence of physical sickness in Christians. These things need not be. Jesus took our infirmities and bore our diseases at the cross. But the victory of calvary must be appropriated - otherwise for us, it is no more than a legal provision that we have neglected to our own hurt.

## **The Ministry of Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ clearly had a ministry of total liberation. For Jesus, it was not enough to preach only about a legal state of righteousness with God without demonstrating the power of the Kingdom to make a difference in people's lives! For example, Jesus did tell the paralytic man in Mark 2, "Your sins are forgiven you" but went further and demonstrated he had authority to say this by the next word, "I say to you, arise, take up your mat, and walk". It is easy to SAY "your sins are forgiven you". Anyone can say this, but not all can say it with authority from God. Some preachers will tell you your sins are forgiven when you are still clinging to them! Jesus did more than declare unseen and unverifiable things. By the same authority, Jesus told the paralyzed man in Mark 2 to walk - and it happened, **SHOWING** that there is more to Jesus' authority than theological assertions.

Now God wants not only our souls but also our bodies to be free from satanic harassment. Some people are only interested in the healing of their bodies, and they don't expose the unrighteousness in their souls to the Lord, so the Lord has a free hand to move in their entire being. This is a serious mistake. Now God can do things for people in any order He chooses. He can, if he wishes, physically heal a person with all kinds of soulish issues requiring deliverance. God is sovereign. But many times, especially in the life of a believer in Christ, the healing of the soul takes precedence over the healing of the body, and God will not work unless certain issues are dealt with.

Deliverance from evil spirits at the level of the soul prepares us to receive from God at the physical level also. It also prepares us to move in the power of the Holy Spirit for the deliverance and healing of others. Many times it is the internal bondage to wickedness in ministers of the gospel that is limiting the flow of God's power to others. Does that sound too harsh? Well, God talks, for example, about "an evil heart of unbelief that departs from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12). There could well be degrees of this - not all of them relating to personal salvation. Unbelief concerning certain promises of God could be a spiritual bondage that a minister of the gospel needs freedom from.

People seeking healing MUST forgive those who have wronged them. If we hope to extract justice from those who have wronged us, and hold the pain of the injustice in our hearts, we are going to miss out on a lot of God's blessings. Forgiving others from the heart and "tearing up the IOU" so to speak - is an essential condition of deliverance, healing, faith, receiving answers from God, and even of God's forgiveness. That is the teaching of Jesus. (See Matthew 6:14,15; Mark 11:25; Matthew 18:30). I have seen people who have been healed physically only when they yielded to the Spirit of God on this point. Jesus said God would deliver us TO the tormentors if we do not forgive our brother from our heart.

The verse quoted above in Acts 10:38 proves that SICKNESS IS A WORK OF THE DEVIL. Jesus healed those who were "oppressed by the devil" - not "oppressed by God". If we can grasp this one thing, we can proceed with an undivided soul to wage warfare on sickness wherever we find it. Yes, God may be looking for other forms of deliverance in people's lives at first, but we can be sure that He really wants them to be healed physically.

The gospels attribute much sickness and disability directly to the work of demons. When the spirit causing the physical problem is cast out by the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of the name of Jesus, healing often happens immediately. The vandal must first be thrown out of the house before the house can be repaired. If we don't get him out, and keep him out, our efforts to bring restoration could be in vain.

Illustrations of this fact abound in the gospels. Some conditions are referred to almost interchangeably with the demons that cause them. In Mark 9:17 it says:

"Then one of the crowd answered and said, 'Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit' ".

This man knew a lot more than many Christians. Many of us, if we met someone who could not talk, would be very reticent to think the person had a demon which stopped them from being able to talk. The tendency today even amongst those who believe in the existence of demons is to be so very judicious and uncommitted regarding the source of disease as to have little to say to our generation in this regard. In my view though, we won't go far wrong if we treat all such cases as "mute spirits". Unsophisticated? When did Jesus ever say to someone, "Go in peace. Your sophistication has made you well!"? Let us not try to be more sophisticated than the Son of God.

That is the way I was led to deal with the problem in India when a 12 year old girl, deaf mute from birth was brought for ministry. By addressing the demon of muteness - not once but several times, we got a great victory and the name of the Lord was glorified.

## **Why does Disease sometimes come back after prayer ministry?**

One reason so many people experience relief and a measure of healing through prayer and the ministry of laying on of hands, and then lose the blessing, is their failure to be vigilant concerning the possibility that the demons that caused the problem are likely to try to return and cause the same affliction again. We are called to abide in Jesus, and follow Him. We have to be filled with the Word and the Spirit of God in order to give no place to the devil.

## **More Scriptures proving the relationship between Sickness and Demonic Oppression**

One woman in Luke 13 was so bent over that she could not raise herself up. I'm sure if their physicians had our medical knowledge of today, they could make all kinds of interesting scientific observations concerning it. But Jesus simply declared a word of freedom and the woman was healed. Her back straightened. In talking about the incident, Jesus called this woman a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound (Luke 13:16). And the Bible account says this woman had a "spirit of infirmity" for eighteen years (vs 13:11). If a righteous woman could have a spirit of infirmity then, why could a Christian not have a spirit of infirmity today? It is not a sin to have a spirit of infirmity. What is shameful though, is that we are many times so ignorant and ineffective that we don't deal with these spirits and get them out of the temple of the Lord - which is our bodies.

"Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw." (Matthew 12:22).

Jesus referred to this incident in the verses that followed as "casting out demons by the Spirit of God". We see therefore what is going on. The demonic power had gotten into that boy, attacking him physically. His eyes, made by God with the purpose of seeing, were stopped from working by the rotten devil. Same with his speech capacity. Jesus drove the demon out, and the man saw and spoke. Simple.

### **Deliverance as a Key To Healing and Healing Ministry**

If we have faith to cast out demons, we are far better equipped to minister healing in some of those "difficult" cases. And as we grow in experience, our faith grows in dealing with demons. We have a growing measure of the power of God effectively working in us, which allows us to deal with increasingly severe demonically caused problems, as the Lord leads us. Our faith grows as we see how the Lord changes lives through the ministry of deliverance he operates through us.

Ministers who do not have this understanding concerning can still be effective in divine healing, but I believe they do so with less understanding. The anointing will drive out the devil, even if the minister does not imagine the devil to be involved. But when you know it is that rotten devil, a righteous hatred can rise up in you through which the Lord can move to bring his power into a situation. It also helps us to realise even more that it IS God's will to heal people. It IS God's will to destroy the works of the devil, of which sickness is one. And it IS God's will to keep his promise. Therefore, let's use all the spiritual weapons God gives in order to destroy sickness and disease, and may God use this for his glory and for the true salvation of many souls. How to Apply this Knowledge When ministering, you may be in a counselling situation. In such a situation, issues may come up and you may be able to explain to the person things in such a way that they realise they need deliverance. You can then proceed to minister more methodically. In public ministry situations, God can give extra grace. You may be able to minister via a mass prayer. I have frequently rebuked demonic power en-masse, commanding it to leave the people, and many have received healing immediately. Just ask them to first thank God verbally, and then to do something that was difficult to do before. People with a simple faith can often receive in this way. In laying hands on people, you must first be filled with the Holy Spirit. You should use your faith to impart the power of the Holy Spirit directly against the demonic force causing the sickness. Tell it to leave, and do not doubt in your heart. Do not take the time to worry about whether God has done it or not - that gives place to doubt. As Jesus said, believe that the things you say will come to pass. This is how faith works (see Mark 11:23). I hope this article has been

a blessing to you, and that through it your faith has increased. May God use YOU to destroy the works of the devil, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I hope this article has been a blessing to you, and that through it your faith has increased. May God use YOU to destroy the works of the devil, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Michael Fackerell

## Spiritual Warfare Praying

Spiritual warfare prayer and intercession can open up a community to God.

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**"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12)**

Real Christians are involved in a spiritual conflict. This is a fight in which guns and tanks are of no use. Paul said, "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood". The conflict is not with people, or nations, but with Satan and his demons. We need to recognise that many times when people oppose us, the reason behind it is spiritual. The spirit at work in the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2) hates the true children of God and wants to hinder the work of God through us. This is one reason why there will always be certain people rising up to cause trouble for the children of God. Sometimes these people will be from within the church. Some of them will be born again Christians. Being a born again Christian is no guarantee that the evil one will never speak or act through you. We all need to be vigilant. We need to be on guard, prayerful, keeping the Word of God in our hearts and our eyes on Jesus. If not, we are vulnerable to satanic attack ourselves.

We are to love and forgive our human enemies, but we are to oppose the evil spirits at work behind them with all the spiritual weaponry that God makes available to us. Paul was keenly aware of the reality of the spiritual conflict in which all true believers are involved, since he himself had to fight many battles with the powers of darkness in order to be effective in his ministry. Paul's instructions in the letter to the Ephesians are highly relevant for us in our spiritual warfare against satan and his demons.

### The Spiritual Realm

The spiritual realm is normally unseen to us. At times, people may be granted insights into the spiritual realm through gifts such as "the discernment of spirits" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10. This gift often manifests in the form of a vision or dream. A person may see a picture or an image - normally with their eyes closed but sometimes even with their eyes open. What is seen is not physical but spiritual in nature. God does not let us see like this all the time, and not everyone has this gift. Whether we have this gift or not, we are still called to engage in spiritual warfare. We must understand that the real action of warfare is taking place in the normally unseen realm of the spirit. The spiritual realm operates in parallel to the physical world. There is some correspondence with physical geography. By this I mean, a certain geographical place may have more or less demons or angels present at any given time. Evil activities attract evil spirits. Prayer, praise and faith bring God's angels on the scene and disperse demonic powers.

Some countries are held in a stronger grip than others by demonic presence and powers. Effective prayer is the key to breaking Satan's grip on a person, place, city or nation. For prayer to be effective



to this end, there must be **lots of it**. Only with much extraordinary prayer will Satan's death grip on a community, city or nation ever be seriously weakened. Such spiritual warfare must take place **together** with activities of evangelism and discipleship if the hearts and minds of the masses are to be won for the Kingdom of God. The Lord has much to teach us concerning these things.

### **Satan's Hierarchy**

Ephesians 6:12 reveals that we are struggling against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, and against a spiritual host of wickedness in heavenly places. Think of them as a huge cloud of insects blackening the atmosphere, biting helpless people, irritating them, poisoning them, infecting them, weakening them, sending them crazy and eventually killing them. The people cannot see these insects and because of their irritation, attack one another instead of the insects they cannot see. These "insects" are operating according under the command of other larger, darker entities which have authority over certain zones, cities and nations. At times these principalities are in conflict with each other in order to increase their influence and prestige, but generally their efforts are concentrated on destroying the people of God. The people of God are not entirely defenseless against this demonic horde, indeed at times the cloud of "insects" is driven back in certain places and at certain times through the prayers of God's people, and some of the wounded and dying are rescued and come to a place where they receive healing for their wounds. At other times though, when some of God's people stop praying, they themselves become bitten and weakened by the onslaught of the cloud of "insects". This is a fairly accurate picture (howbeit incomplete) of the spiritual warfare as it is in our times.

What are these principalities? They are demon princes, which are assigned by Satan to control certain cities and countries in the interests of Satan. In the book of Daniel, chapter 10, verses 12,13 and 20 we are granted a rare Scriptural insight into the organisation of Satan's kingdom. Here we see that the archangel Gabriel was sent by God in response to Daniel's prayers. However, Gabriel had to fight with the prince of Persia (a demon prince over the Persian empire) for 21 days. It was during this same period that Daniel was setting his face to seek God through a partial fast. Gabriel could not break through with the message from God until another one of God's archangels, Michael, came to assist and defeated the demon prince of Persia. This allowed a very important prophetic message of God to reach the prophet, who was concerned to know what was God's plan and purpose for Israel, God's chosen people, who were in bad shape at that time.

From this we can see the following:

1. Satan organises his kingdom in a hierarchy, with a demon prince over each country or empire.
2. God hears our sincere prayers from the first day we offer them, and send angels to bring the answers to prayer.
3. The manifestation of the answer, be it a message or a change in circumstances, will not come through until the dark powers opposing the answer have been defeated, and God's angels break through.
4. There is a relationship between our prayers, our faith, our perseverance in prayer (and fasting) and the coming of the answer.
5. To engage in effective spiritual warfare, we must be patient, trusting God when the heavens seem to be as brass, and maintaining a determined attitude. Our motivation needs to be a concern for others, not just ourselves.

### **Modern Day Examples**

In some countries, there have been effective campaigns of prayer which have severely weakened Satan's grip on people and places. The most notable examples are Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala,

South Korea and parts of Africa. In these nations, significant portions of the population have woken up to their need for God and have responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is no coincidence that the church in these nations is deeply committed to prayer. In South Korea, tens of thousands get up very early day after day in order to attend early morning prayer meetings. This is true across all evangelical denominations. I have witnessed such prayer meetings and can assure you that it is not confined to one or two large churches. All growing churches in South Korea are involved in sacrificial prayer, day after day.

In Brazil and Argentina, Christians seek to pray whenever they have spare time. The result has been an outpouring of the power of God in many places, and the salvation of multitudes in the last twenty years.

Western church leaders must realise that this is the ONLY way to revival. We are not going to have revival by entertaining people with groovy music or other cool events. We are free to do these things if it pleases the Spirit of God, but without LOTS of sacrificial prayer, combined with true repentance, humility, faith and love, there will never be a true revival of significance in the Western World. The great need then in the west is prayer leaders who can mobilise many to pray. God is looking to pastors for such leadership. Sure its tough. But this is war.

## Strategic Intercession

How to pray for your city and break strongholds, through praying for everyone by name.

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All of us are called to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We are called to pray always and not lose heart (Luke 18:1). Yet God is ALSO interested in the quality and effectiveness of our prayer lives.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The most effective prayers then are those that bring a manifestation of God's will as revealed in the Scriptures to the situations on earth.

God wants none to perish and be lost. The Scriptures says that God "desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). The Lord is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

People do perish however for lack of heart knowledge of God. Even in places where the gospel is broadcast, such as America, Satan operates by blinding the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see perceive the truth.

"But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Remember that the weapons God has given us are "to cast down every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ".

Strategic intercession then pursues God for the lost, seeking that the major barriers in people's thinking, the spiritual powers that people have yielded to which are against Christ, be removed. We can only hope to do this by following God's instructions, which the Bible gives us concerning these matters.

**"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made FOR ALL MEN, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth."**

**(1 Timothy 2:1-4)**

This passage gives the strategy for taking a community for God. To mobilise the church for this task however, requires that the leadership unite around Christ and a passion for his glory. Intellectual strivings must give way to spiritual strivings in prayer against demonic power.

We are all told to pray for ALL MEN. I submit that this is not telling us to pray generally, but specifically, and individually, for all men

Let's say we live in a community where 3% of the population are true Christians. What is needed is to mobilise this 3% to pray for all the other 97% by name. The 3% would have to pray for about 33 different people each to have everyone covered by prayer. Before long, 5%, 8%, 10%, 15%, 25% of the population will be born again, since prayer is powerful. If the prayer movement continues, the 25% can bombard heaven persistently for the remaining 75% continuously. Each person would only have to pray for another 3 different unsaved people and they would be covered in prayer, and get a real opportunity to respond to God's message. The satanic powers which normally bind their minds would be bound themselves by the prayers of the saints.

To achieve this goal, Christian leaders must embrace it and promote it. Everything that grieves the Spirit of God must be given up. In particular, we have to give up the love of money to be involved in this vision. The love of money is one major reason church groups cannot co-operate effectively. Money represents power and influence by natural ability. Churches with lots of money can construct bigger facilities, invite more popular speakers who attract crowds, operate more programs to help the community, and attract more attention to themselves. Church leaders will sometimes subtly fight for property, money, and influence over the existing pool of Christians in the community. Church leaders are often wanting to get to the position where "one day they will come to me". This kind of thinking needs to be given up if we are to major on doing what the Bible says - praying for and then talking with everyone in our communities, including the civic leaders.

We should pray for the unity of church leaders and pastors in a city. When they unite, they can then go to the civic authorities as a united voice and ask them what problems they are having in government that need God's intervention. God delights to get involved in answering such prayers, and it can open many effective avenues into a city.

### **Identifying Key Strongholds in an area**

This can be done simply by getting out, noticing what the people are reading and looking at in mass popular culture, and identifying how these influences might be hindering people from knowing God and wanting to do His will. In prayer, God can reveal the spiritual strongholds over a community of people.

### **Binding the devil**

Jesus gave his people the authority to bind the works of the devil (Matthew 18:18). To do this we must be in unity with one another, having dealt with issues between us according to Matthew 18:15-17. This is more difficult than it sounds. But to the extent that our unity is compromised there will be holes in our own armour through which satanic fiery darts can penetrate.

We must also renounce the works of the devil in our own lives, especially in the areas where we seek to bind the devil off the lives of others. For example, I cannot bind the spirit of lust in a community if I am reading pornography. I cannot bind the spirit of violence if I hate those who have wronged me in the church. You cannot bind the spirit of apathy concerning spiritual things while you remain committed to wasting a few hours per day watching the television, playing computer games or listening to music that distracts you from what God is saying.

We need to humble ourselves and obey Christ from the heart before our prayers can have influence to neutralise satanic power within our community. The Spirit of God will lead us in our own journey of repentance as we seek to intercede strategically for others. Sometimes, we may be led to confess the sins of our community as the prophet Daniel did, not saying "they have sinned", but rather, "we have sinned". Daniel did this even though he himself seems to have lived a very blameless life of devotion to God and faithfulness in his responsibilities.

### **Scriptural Strategies**

Apart from these fundamentals, the Lord may lead groups of intercessors to do what seems like strange things - for example, walking around the city, praying over various places, praising God, declaring certain Old Testament passages out loud as prophetic judgments over the dark powers at work in a city. We must be willing to be led by the Lord in these things. However, all this becomes meaningless if we aren't committed first to living a consistent life in the presence of the Lord, where we pray for others - calling upon the Lord both for our Christian brethren and for those who are yet to know the truth about Jesus Christ. We ourselves would achieve far more if we restrained our tongues from speaking evil of other Christians who may have wronged us, or who don't agree with us, and instead, seek to walk in mercy towards others as Christ encourages us to do. Amazing things happen to those Christians who seek to remain conscious of the presence of God and wait on Him for instruction.

**Be a man or woman of prayer. And please pray for spiritual leaders in your city.**

### **Satanic Tactics**

Common strategies used by Satan and his demons to bring ministers of the gospel and Christians down.

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**"... for we are not ignorant of his devices." (2 Corinthians 2:11)**

Paul and his close co-workers made it their business not to be ignorant of Satan's devices. This does not mean that Paul spent a lot of time researching all the dark secrets of Satan's kingdom. No. Paul said to the Romans, "I want you to be wise in what is good, but simple (innocent) concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16:19). Honestly, we don't need to be "au fait" with all the latest conspiracy theories and what Satan may or may not be doing (Isaiah

8:12,13). But we do need to be aware of his basic tactics with regard to Christians. They are many, and we'd do well to understand them better so we can be aware when we are under attack in one form or another.

### **Unforgiveness and Disunity**

In the context of the text in 2 Corinthians above, we can see that Paul knew the importance of forgiving those in the church who repented. Yielding to an attitude of ongoing unforgiveness is to yield to Satan, and multiple the vicious circle of evil that keeps creating new offenses and counter-offenses. Such things keep us from enjoying "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). God "commands the blessing" where brethren dwell in unity, therefore one of Satan's principle tactics is to promote disunity in the Body of Christ. This happens at every level - disunity with God, disunity with oneself (double-mindedness), disunity within the family, within small groups, within assemblies, and within the city-wide church. Understanding the value of unity is important if we are to treasure it enough in order to resist Satan's attacks on it. Satan offers us far less than he seeks to take by destroying our unity. As Paul said on one occasion, "Why not rather be wronged?"

Jesus taught us to forgive when we pray. And since we are to "pray without ceasing" and "in everything to give thanks", "to pray always and not lose heart", there is never a time when it is acceptable in God's eyes for us to hold unforgiveness in our hearts against someone, especially, but not limited to, a brother or sister in the Lord.

According to the teaching of Jesus, we can't even be forgiven by God when we do not forgive our brethren (see Matthew 6:14,15). Satan would love us to remain unforgiven. We have no right to expect God's forgiveness while we do not forgive. Not only that, but we cannot pray the prayer of faith with unforgiveness in our hearts (see Mark 11:23-25).

While we are demanding what we see as "justice" (for ourselves) in a situation where we perceive we have been wronged, while we complain about it to others, we can quickly be blinded by the enemy of our souls to the point where God can no longer bless us.

A lot of the time it is better to just forget about the injustices done to us in the church or in society and get on with seeking God and telling others the good news. If we seek to reform society and root out corruption because injustice was done to us we are likely to get away from our primary calling as Christians. I've seen this happen to a number of people before. Its a trap. One week with God's favor is better than 10 years of fighting for one's rights in a corrupt world (or a corrupt church situation). Of course we can pray for God's will to be done and that is good, but beyond that we had better be very sure of our leading. Its easy to get sidetracked. Sidetracking us is one of Satan's specialties.

### **Attacking our Faith through Trials**

Satan wants to attack our faith any way he can. One of his favorite ways is mentioned above - he does it by attacking our love. When we are hurt by a Christian we have trusted its easy to yield to discouragement. Personally I am of the conviction that we can almost expect that Christians will disappoint us. But GOD is faithful. He is committed to us and our futures. Therefore we need to "hope in Him" and "encourage ourselves in the Lord". We can freely forgive those who have disappointed us and move on with the help of the Holy Spirit. Satan however, wants to suggest that we constantly replay the negative things over in our mind in an effort to promote bitterness and to cripple us up spiritually. A bad response to adversity or disappointment is usually far more damaging than the original blow itself.

Sometimes we can be discouraged through financial losses, especially when we thought we were being led by God. A lot of times its our own hastiness and self-will which is to blame. God does not

punish us for mistakes but He does allow us to feel the consequences of our folly. Again we have to put it behind and focus on God again to renew our faith and spiritual strength. It is the only way.

### **Temptations**

Demons are always on the lookout for ways to tempt us. Yielding to sin opens the door to enslavement to sin. The feeling of being trapped in a sin is worse than the pleasure of yielding to it initially. Hopefully as Christians we can learn this sooner rather than later. Sinning weakens our spiritual authority and starts a chain of negative causes and effects. Damage control in the case of sin includes confession, trusting in the blood of Christ for renewed cleansing, and stopping the sin. Sometimes though, sin yielded to becomes an enslaving bondage. It takes deliverance to break such bondages and the path to deliverance is not always easy and usually not entirely pleasant. Yielding to evil desires and habits only increases them. When we refuse to feed the evil nature and start to consider ourselves dead to sin as the Scripture instructs us in Romans 6, the desires for evil lose their grip and we become free to go after God with a pure heart and renewed faith.

How much favor Christians have lost with God and men because of sin that could have been avoided will never be possible to calculate in this life. Thankfully, God can restore us in a marvellous way if we get our eyes back on Him and allow Him to be the major reason and passion for our lives.

### **Getting our eyes of Jesus**

To obtain and maintain victory, all we need to do is keep our eyes on Jesus. By this I mean focussing our hearts on Him in worship, through the Word and in prayer until His presence and His purpose become the magnificent and permanent obsession of our lives. We look to Him for approval and wisdom, as well as for everything we need for life and godliness. These things have been promised and given to us, but they only become ours effectively "through the knowledge of Him". This personal knowledge of Him comes mainly through a heart and life devoted to worship. Sometimes the Spirit of God will reveal Jesus when we are not actively seeking Him, but usually He is revealed to those who seek after Him.

Satan knows He is losing ground whenever our eyes are on the Lord. That is why he will try anything to distract us. It doesn't matter what he uses - the television, the stock market, sexual fantasy, how "we are feeling", thoughts of condemnation and accusation, computer games, personal career ambitions ... any and all of these things can be used by the devil to get our eyes off the Lord. One of the most subtle traps is the religious trap of getting our eyes onto spiritual and moral laws, personal religious performance, how well "we are doing" or "not doing" - our failings or our successes. He tries anything to get us to focus on ourselves rather than on Jesus. He seeks to get us to eat from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" rather than the "tree of life", which symbolises Jesus.

The importance of this cannot be overstated. Keep your eyes on Jesus. He is all you need.

### **Distractions from Prayer**

Satan fears praying Christians, especially when they pray persistently in unity. But even a single Christian who seeks God in prayer can damage Satan's interests greatly. Therefore he seeks, through orchestrating events and suggesting thoughts, to distract you from real prayer. Prayer is the key to revival. Only prayer can bring God onto the scene. We need God. Prayer helps to create the attitude of humility in which God can bless us without causing us to be lifted up in pride, as though by our "own power or godliness" we had achieved great and mighty things.

You may have noticed that when you set out to pray, the phone rings, the baby cries, your spouse irritates you, something happens. Apart from such external things there can be the attack on our minds. Demons seek to inject thoughts of unbelief and any kind of ungodly suggestion or attitude to hinder or weaken our prayers. That is why we need to learn to cast down strongholds and imaginations that come against the knowledge of God in our own minds. Paul talked about this in 2 Corinthians 10:1-

5 and we need to know about the weapons of our warfare in God in order to overcome these insidious attacks.

Some Christians don't even take prayer seriously at all. These Christians will never seriously threaten Satan's interests unless they have a change of heart. It doesn't matter how rich you get, if you don't walk with God. "Let not the rich man boast in his riches" ...we only have something to boast about if we truly know the Lord, and without much prayer, that is just plain impossible.

### **False Doctrine and Deception**

Sadly Satan has ensnared many unwary people through false doctrines and other forms of deception. The only way to overcome this is to remain humble and teachable, stay in the Word of God and prayer, and in fellowship with other Christians. Much could be written about this, but its outside of my time constraints to write a great deal on this matter. Learning the Word of God and staying in it is a vital safeguard in this area. Don't easily believe that you have a great revelation or understanding which puts you in a category of believer far more advanced than others. Pride opens the door to deception very quickly, and Satan loves to promote pride. Maintain an attitude of dependence upon God, of love for God's presence and God's Word, and deception can be guarded against. Also avoid sowing deception - we reap what we sow.

### **Attacks on Christian Marriage**

Apparently the weakening of Christian marriages, especially of Christian leaders, is a major priority for satanic worshippers. That in itself is an encouragement for us to walk in love towards our spouses, if we are married. We need time alone with God, but also plenty of time together to communicate and serve the interests and wellbeing of the other, helping them to be all they can be for the Lord.

We can always find faults in our spouses and in ourselves, and Satan would love us to do this. We need to learn to accept our partner and build them up with godly words. Its also true that we should not look in our spouses for the happiness that actually only God can give. Nevertheless, when God enriches a marriage it is truly a source of joy and blessing for those involved and for others who relate socially to the couple.

### **More Later if God wills...**

This is just a brief introduction to what I consider to be some of the most important areas to watch out for. But let us not be fearful of Satan's power and influence. Rather let us seek the Lord and yield to His Spirit who is never far away from us - in fact He lives in us if we are true believers.

## **Weapons Of Warfare**

We need to know what the weapons of our warfare are in order to be able to fight against the Kingdom of Darkness effectively.

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"For the **weapons of our warfare** are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ". (2 Corinthians 10:3,4)

The apostle Paul here states that we are engaged in a warfare, and that we have weapons with which we must fight. As Paul states in Ephesians 6:12, our fight is not with flesh and blood, with people, but with the host of demons that work to defile, destroy, harass, tempt and enslave mankind. Part of the good news in Christ is that now, not only can we resist the devil's influence in our own lives, but we can destroy his influence in the lives of others. God has given us mighty weapons to counter satanic influence and activity. But in order to be effective in our warfare, we must know what these weapons are, and how to use them effectively.

Paul in this passage doesn't state what the weapons of our warfare are, but he does state what they do. They pull down strongholds. They **cast down arguments** (also translated imaginations) which come from Satan. They cast down every proud and high thing that seeks to stop us and others from **knowing God**. They bring **every thought** into captivity to the obedience of Christ. They also give us **power to punish disobedience** when we are obeying God (vs 6). Each of these results in worth considering in detail.

## What are the Weapons of Our Warfare?

To discover the answer to this question, we need to search through the Bible and see how it is that God's men and women of faith overcame the enemy. There is no one word that gives the answer to this question, but if there was it would be "obedience" - obedience to God. It is not a mindless, heartless obedience that gains the victory however. God does not want us to be ignorant. We need to have a growing understanding of the nature of the conflict we are in. Otherwise we will not be able to determine the source of the suggestions within us. In warfare, soldiers must learn to obey the orders of their commanding officers. A major part of our challenge is firstly to know **who is talking**, which spirit is motivating us to behave or act in a certain way, and to respond intelligently in the light of what God reveals. We must develop spiritual discernment. One of Satan's major strategies is to keep us from really perceiving with our hearts who God truly is. That is why Paul said our weapons cast down every high thing which exalts itself against the **knowledge** of God.

### First Weapon - PRAISE

So what are the weapons of our warfare? Well, without a doubt, **PRAISE** is a major weapon against Satan. Satan and demons just HATE hearing people praise God, **especially** when they do so from a pure heart. Praise releases the presence of God in a way that Satan cannot resist. If we would praise God more, we would have far less interference from demonic powers in our lives.

### Praise Silences the Enemy

"Out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, because of your enemies, that you may **silence** the enemy and the avenger." (Psalm 8:2).

And Jesus said to them, "Yes, have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have **perfected praise**.'" (Matthew 21:16)

The strength which God has ordained for us is **perfect praise**. Perfect praise **SILENCES** the enemy and the avenger. Many of our problems would be solved if we could only get Satan and his demons to **SHUT UP**. They operate by injecting suggestions into our minds which seem plausible, but are rooted in unbelief and rebellion towards God. The suggestions come as if they were our own thoughts, when



they are not at all! We lose battles when we believe and trust these demonic suggestions. These suggestions, thoughts and imaginations work to sow discouragement, confusion, fear, doubt and unbelief in our minds. PRAISE - be it spoken or sung to music, however, works to SILENCE the enemy. Perfect praise led by God's Holy Spirit will completely silence the enemy. Here is one reason why we should consider how we might praise God better. There are many biblical ways whereby the people of God are exhorted to praise God. We can find these in the psalms. Shouting, dancing, singing, rejoicing, making music are all valid biblical ways to express praise to God.

God dwells manifestly by His Spirit in the PRAISES OF HIS PEOPLE. "But You are holy, **enthroned on the praises of Israel**". (Psalm 22:3). The Kingdom of God will manifest through the presence of the King, which comes when we praise Him. The manifest presence of God drives demons OUT of the places near us where they can seek to gain influence over us. Let us therefore praise the Lord more than ever before!

On one occasion, Jehoshaphat, the King of Israel, came against a vast opposing army of many nations bent on Israel's destruction (2 Chronicles 20). The King put at the front lines of the army people who PRAISED the LORD with singing saying, "Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever".

It is no accident that David, perhaps the mightiest warrior for God in Old Testament times, was a man of praise. His strength was rooted in the joy he gave God through praising and worshiping God. How much more in these New Testament times, we, who are commanded to "continually offer up to God the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips which confess His Name" (Hebrews 13:15), are called to overcome the devil and his demons, and all their works, using PRAISE as a mighty God ordained weapon for the destruction of their plans and works.

## Second Weapon - the Word of God

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan (see Luke 4:1-13), He overcame the devil using the one weapon of **THE WORD OF GOD**. Rather than arguing directly with Satan's suggestions, as many Christians try to do, Jesus simply quoted the Word of God as it applied to the suggestion. When Satan tried to suggest a course of action for Jesus to prove his divinity and simultaneously satisfy his hunger, Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" (Luke 4:4). This silenced the enemy and ended the discussion on that point. Jesus used the Word of God once for each of the three main temptations which every son of man must face. These are: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Once we have overcome these fully, we have overcome Satan.

The apostle John wrote, "I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the **Word of God abides in you**, and you have overcome the wicked one." (1 John 2:14).

We see then that we are called to grow up to the stage of being "young men", in whom the Word of God abides, and "no longer children, tossed about by every wind and wave of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14).

It is when, through much study and meditation on the Word of God, that word comes to live in us, and consume our thoughts, that we will be strong in the Lord. Jesus promised that if we abide in Him, and His Word abides in us, we will ask what we desire, and it will be done for us (John 15:7). This will include victory over Satan.

For more information on the Bible, the Word of God, read [here](#). For examples of how we may confess the Word of God so as to overcome the devil, read [here](#).

Much more can be written on the power of the Word of God to overcome the devil. Make sure you get into the Word of God for yourself.

### Third Weapon - the Blood of Jesus

One of Satan's chief tactics is accusation. He is called "the Accuser of the brethren". When we sin we give Satan opportunity to accuse us, both directly and through others.

The reality is, we have all sinned. I'm still looking for a Christian on the earth who never sins. I'd love to learn from someone who no longer falls short of the glory of God. Sin is costing us too much. When to our sin, Satan adds his accusations, we can become condemned and discouraged if we are ignorant of the power of the blood of Jesus as it may be applied to this issue.

Praise God, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses us from all sin. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to **cleanse us** from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).

We must believe that no matter what sin we may commit, the blood of Jesus is there to cleanse us. We can be restored by this blood to a place of acceptance with God and peace with ourselves. It is because Jesus paid the price for our sins, and took the punishment we deserve, that we can be forgiven and go on after temporary defeats. Praise God for the blood!

Much can be written on this subject. Remember to [confess what the blood of Jesus does for you](#). "They overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the lamb, by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their own lives unto death" (Revelation 12:13).

### Fourth Weapon - Prayer

Prayer is not preparation for the battle. Prayer is the battle. We are commanded to pray without ceasing, so we should at least aim for it. God has made so many promises regarding prayer and we need to fill our hearts and minds with these promises. Since much of this has been covered elsewhere on this site, for now I will just refer you to my existing [teaching on prayer](#) on this site. Of course, volumes could be written on prayer and have been in various places. Learn to pray with power. When we prevail in prayer, Satan is defeated, miracles happen and people turn from the power of Satan to the power of God, their eyes having been opened.

Prayer is quite simply the key to revival. YOU MUST PRAY. To not pray is to surrender to Satan.

### Fifth Weapon - the Power of Your Testimony

One reason I publish testimonies on my site is that they are an effective weapon against Satan. Tell other people what Christ has done for you. This will promote faith. Tell yourself - you need to encourage yourself in the Lord - "forget not all His benefits". Tell God - praise and thank Him for it. Paul used his testimony in confronting King Agrippa and the Roman Governor Festus when called to account for his activities and the reasons for which he was accused by the Jews (see Acts 26 - also Acts 22).

They overcame came him [the devil] ... by the word of their testimony.

Everyone who is truly born again has a testimony. Everyone who has received an answer to prayer has a testimony. Please take time to write YOUR testimony on your computer and then [send it to me](#). It could go to work witnessing for you every day, without you doing another thing. It might be the most effective use of an hour of your whole life. I suggest that as well as mailing it to me, you get your own free home page and publish it there, linking to <http://www.christian-faith.com/truestories.html> as well so that you can also help me to get more traffic to this site, the purpose of which is to glorify God, encourage people and lead people to faith in Christ.

When writing your testimony, or presenting it, spend about 33% on what you were like and what you did before you came to Christ, 34% on how you came to Christ and were converted, and the rest on the changes that occurred in your life as a result.

If you can't do this because you are not saved, please jump here to [find out more about how to be saved](#).

### **Fifth Weapon - the Power of the Holy Spirit expressed through the Gifts of the Spirit**

We are commanded to "be continually filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). Just keeping this one command of the Lord is a major part of our spiritual warfare, and we will need all the other weapons in order to stay in this place.

A person who is "filled with the Spirit" and has learned to be "led by the Spirit" can also receive and use the "gifts of the Holy Spirit". These are outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. Most of them are expressed through our mouths. They all operate through divine initiative.

These specialised weapons of the gifts of the Holy Spirit all work along with the other weapons of God to build up God's people, win people for Christ and to destroy the works of the devil. They all operate through faith. God does not want us to be ignorant of the mighty gifts of the Holy Spirit. Satan has used theologians in times past to cast doubt on the availability of these gifts, but praise God, we are learning to pick them up again and use them. Books have been written on the subject of these gifts. I will mention what they are just briefly.

**Gift of Discernment of Spirits** - this gift gives the user, usually through a vision of some sort, the knowledge of what kind of spirit is motivating a person's thoughts, attitudes, words or actions. It also can reveal the predominant stronghold (read accepted lie) of Satan in a particular area, so that intercessors and prayer warriors can deal with it. It is a useful gift also when casting out demons.

**Gift of Word of Knowledge** - this gift imparts a small fragment of God's knowledge to a person concerning some detail of a present reality. It can be used to pick people out of a crowd who have a particular disease, or to just "know" what a person's problem is. It can also be used in the deliverance ministry. It is very powerful when used in evangelism.

**Gift of Word of Wisdom** - gives knowledge of the future and wisdom from God concerning what a person should do.

**Gift of Faith** - gives a supernaturally strong and bold faith for a particular work God wants to do. This faith is far beyond the normal faith level of that person.

**Gift of Miracles** - can manifest as instantaneous healings, creative miracles, or in any kind of miraculous activity such as did or did not occur in the Bible, according to the desire of God. God is the initiator of true miracles. Casting out demons is considered to be a "miracle" on the basis of Mark 9:38-39, where Jesus calls casting out demons "a miracle in my name". This is the most common and necessary form of miracle for our age.

**Gifts of Healings** - the divine ability to heal diseases through the power of the Holy Spirit, usually with the laying on of hands. This is done in Jesus' name. The gift of healing doesn't depend too much on the faith of the receiver, but on the accurate leading of the one using the gift. The normal way for people to receive healing is through faith, but sometimes God uses people with the gift of healing to get the healing through to people in spite of their doubts. It is a tool of evangelism and may or may not manifest immediately. [Divine Healing](#) can come in other biblical ways apart from the gift of healing - e.g. anointing with oil by elders, intercessory prayer, confessing and declaring the promises of God, and more.

**Gift of Tongues, Interpretation and Prophecy** - these utterance gifts all work to get an inspired utterance to the person who needs to hear and understand it. It works for building up faith, encouragement, exhortation and comfort. Tongues and interpretation are equivalent to prophecy in function, although sometimes the interpretation comes through a different person than the one who gives the message in tongues. This gift of tongues happens only as God initiates, and is for communication from God to men. It is not to be confused with praying to God in an unknown tongue - otherwise known as praying with the spirit (1 Corinthians 14:15). Everyone baptised in the Holy Spirit can pray to God in tongues whenever they so choose.

Whether or not tongues can be used by itself in an aggressive fashion to somehow address demons directly and pull down demonic strongholds is a subject which is unclear. It is theoretically possible, and perhaps some have been led by God to do it. Normally however, tongues are for speaking to God or to men, not to the devil. We would be on safer ground if we stuck to using the weapons which are clearly endorsed in the Scripture. They are adequate for our total victory.

## How To Overcome Sin

Keys to personal victory - overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil. Its is vitally important to overcome habitual sin because the bulk of God's promises are made to those who fear Him and overcome the devil.

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A major part of spiritual warfare is resisting the devil's enticement's to compromise on God's principles. We give the powers of darkness a definite advantage when we do anything that actually compromises the intimacy of our fellowship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit. Worldliness is anything attitude or occupation that makes your heart just a little colder towards the Lord. It happens when you love something that you would not want the Lord to interrupt you as you pursue it.

When we yield to sin, we lose a measure of divine boldness and spiritual authority and the faith which comes from a close and intimate walk with the Lord. Yes, there is always forgiveness as long as we don't harden our heart and become totally unrepentant, but we lose time and opportunities in spiritual warfare by sinning. We will never know what we have missed out on by those times we yielded to sin. Perhaps some people are in hell now because of our disobedience to the Lord.

The Bible says, "Submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:6). Resisting the devil is only possible when we first submit to God, by making God our God, and the first passion of our hearts and lives. We need to learn not only to praise God, but to worship Him by offering our bodies, our ears, our eyes, our mouths and our minds to God. It is only then that God's fire can work in us to make us holy and the power of sin loses its grip. When we have filled our souls on the spiritual feast God supplies, we will have little appetite left for sin.

A lot of people have gotten themselves exposed to major trouble by trying to take on the principalities and powers while their own submission to God was questionable. This warfare is real and we stand to suffer greatly through such foolish and presumptuous acts. Its better to wait on God, purify our souls through obedience to the truth, and wait for God to send us into battle, than to go out half-cocked and suffer needlessly.

We can't take authority over spiritual darkness that we are submitting to in our own lives. Therefore, we must personally renounce all the darkness before we can effectively bind the devil from working in

those areas. When the church renounces the subtle versions of the sins which resemble those of the society in which it lives, then things will start to really happen and our words will carry weight in the heavens.

### **What is sin?**

Sin is a "me-first" self-pleasing attitude of heart which denies God's authority to direct our lives and our world. Sinful actions such as theft, adultery and blasphemy spring from a heart corrupted by the power of sin. There are two root sins - one is pride and the other unbelief. Pride is evidenced by an attitude which is demanding and arrogant, denies its need for God, is unteachable, impatient, overly critical of others and hard hearted. How easy it is for any one of us to be infected with pride without realising it! Unbelief also, is the root of much sin. If we really believed in God's goodness, wisdom and love, what motive would remain for not doing things God's way? These attitudes hurt the heart of God and often cause insensitivity to others as well, resulting in us saying and doing things that were better not said or done.

Sin always takes more than it gives. Whatever you gain by compromise you will eventually lose. Sin is the deadly human condition which opens the door to Satanic oppression and God's displeasure and judgment. Sin definitely creates a barrier to true communication with God. The wages of sin is death. Primarily, this refers to spiritual death. God loves us and wants us to overcome sin. He knows we are powerless to do it by ourselves, and for this reason has given us divine resources in our warfare against evil and sin.

Every attempt to overcome sin by willpower, resolutions and self-discipline alone WILL fail. No attempts to overcome sin by observing laws and rules, however strict, will ever work. But the Bible says, **"Walk by the Spirit, and you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh"** (Galatians 5:17). That means, be governed by impulses coming from the Holy Spirit in your human spirit, and you won't be ruled by the natural thinking and desires that draw people away from holy living.

Romans 6 and Romans 8 are probably the most important passages of Scripture relating to this subject. I'd like to take some verses from them and make some comments.

"Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5). What does your mind dwell on? What do you choose to set it on? To overcome sin you must have a deliberate policy to set your mind on the "Things of the Spirit". If that is not your policy, make it so today. The things of the Spirit include the presence of God, the love of God, the fruit of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit (which involve supernatural communication with God), the Word of God and their application to life. The things of the flesh which we are not to set our mind on include any kind of lust, selfish ambition, greed, envy, jealousy, hatred, bitterness or prideful thought. We can't avoid these thoughts by seeking to avoid them. We must instead actively seek to set our minds on the things of the Spirit. To illustrate this point, try hard to avoid thinking of the word "frog" for the next 5 minutes. You'll find it harder now, but it would have been so easy had you not even tried.

"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). Your mind is influenced - either by the spirit of the world, or by the Spirit of God. God wants us to renew our minds through meditation on the Word of God. These means getting into each phrase very deeply, by much repetition, pondering and muttering. This has far greater power than a superficial but wide reading (which also has its place of course).

The peace and happiness we are wanting does not come through the satisfaction of the lusts Satan invites us to go after. Rather it comes by focussing our hearts and minds on Jesus and the things of the Spirit. This is really surprising to many when they first try it. "Taste and see that the Lord is good", said the Psalmist.

Romans 6 declares that our legal position as believers baptised into Christ is one of deadness to sin and sensitivity to God. Please read this chapter first to understand what follows. Once we are born again, we are not obligated to serve fleshly desires. Its still possible, but it can be avoided. One way to start is actually by considering that you are "dead to sin" even before you have any evidence of the fact. You may have just sinned in some horrible way, but you can consider yourself dead to sin "by faith". Its amazing how our experience is molded by what we believe. But the order in the life of faith is always, "believe first, then you will experience it after that". God wants us to identify with Jesus Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. This means, believe that the old you was crucified with Christ. Believe that old man was buried, and that you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) ready to walk in resurrection power. Now set your mind on the things of the Spirit diligently, and see how the Spirit of God moves in your life and gives you a new focus and a new power to live for God, in purity and righteousness.

Before you can do all this you must believe that God has forgiven you of your sins. If you are not sure of this, I invite you to read my message on the [Good News](#), and pray a prayer of dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I plan to update this page because obviously I've only begun to touch this vitally important subject.

God bless you,

Michael

**Relevant Links**