

Deliverance & Counseling

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The Bible often describes life as a battleground. God is raising up His holy people and releasing them into their destinies, but there is always opposition to His work. The Bible identifies three primary enemies of Christians which must be overcome to live a victorious Christian life. The Bible study which follows briefly exposes these three primary foes and how they seek to operate in believer's lives:

The Three Enemies

I. The Flesh

- A. ROM 8:3-4 and GAL 5:16-19 speak of man's flesh as being evil. The word in these cases refers to the part of man that has an unholy bent towards sin and is in rebellion to God. It is also called "our old man" (ROM 6:6, EPH 4:22). Paul in ROM 7 refers to it as the "sin which indwells me" (vs. 17), "sin which dwells in me" (vs. 20), "the evil present with me" (vs. 21), and "a different law (other than God's law) in my members" (vs. 23).
- B. This sinful nature of man is sometimes referred to as man's condition of "depravity." It means that all people are affected by sin (Romans 3:10-18,23) and are therefore "by nature children of wrath." (Ephesians 2:3) When a person comes to Christ the power of the flesh to control behavior is broken (Romans 6:1-10; 8:9). Christians must realize, however, that the authority of Christ must be exercised over the flesh through the power of the Holy Spirit on a continual basis to walk in victory (Galatians 5:16-18). Paul says that "by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body" (Romans 8:13).

II. Devil and Demons

- A. Satan (also known as Lucifer or the devil, Revelation 12:9), was a high-ranking angel who rebelled against God's authority and was cast out of heaven, taking a third of the angels with him (EZE 28:12-19; ISA 14:12-14; 2PE 2:4; JUD 6; REV 12:4,9).
- B. Demons are probably fallen angels (compare MAT 25:41 and REV 12:7 with MAT 12:24,26). (Also note that angels and demons have similar essence. Angels are called "spirits" (PSA 104:4; HEB 1:14), and so are demons (MAT 8:16, LUK 10:17, 20).
- B. These "angels" of Satan are either bound, confined to the pit (abyss- REV 9:1-11; LUK 8:31), or are abiding in the "heavenlies" and attacking mankind (EPH 3:10; EPH 6:12). Their goal is to oppose God's work and steal from, kill, and destroy mankind (JOH 10:10).

III. The World System

- A. Satan is called "the god of this age" and "the prince of this world" (2CO 4:4; JOH 12:31;16:11). He rules an organization of demonic beings and fallen man which establishes a counter-culture of sin opposed to God's righteous order. The enemy has so entrenched the world's value systems, that the Bible speaks of earthly, natural wisdom as demonic (JAM 3:14-15). The rulers of this world, following the wisdom of this world, crucified the Lord of glory (1CO 2:4-8). John also discusses the evil present in the world in 1JO 2:16-17. He speaks of certain aspects of our "human culture" as being "not from the Father, but from the world."
- B. Demonic entities not only seek to torment individuals (EPH 2:1,2), but also seek to control political governments, (DAN 10:13,20) world perspectives, and events (JOH 12:31; EPH 6:11-12; 2TH 2:8-10).
- C. Christians are encouraged by these words of Jesus: "In this world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33). We are also exhorted by John in a later book, "...for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

IV. Demonic Partnerships

1. Demons and the Flesh

Demons attack the flesh. They find weak spots (of wounding and sin) and take advantage. A good question would then be: Are normal sins "flesh" problems or demonic problems? The answer is often, both. Ephesians 2:1-3 gives us an anatomy of sin. The flesh, with its desires, becomes a target for evil spirits. They then attack the weak places in our flesh. That is why we are all at war with evil spirits (EPH 6:11-12).

When we are dealing with sin areas, we must "resist the devil and he will flee" (JAM 4:7) as well as put to death the weak places in our flesh by the power of God's Spirit (ROM 8:13). If a person chooses to chase away demons, but not gain control of his flesh by the power of the Spirit, then the demons will just come back and torment that individual again (LUK 11:24-26). In some situations where demons are involved, they are more of an effect of the problem than the root cause. Dealing therefore with the flesh, or a problem within the heart of the person becomes the key to real victory.

2. How do demons get control? Demons look for access in these areas:

- a) areas of wounding
 - b) places of sin
 - c) curses and generational sin
 - d) occult involvement or drug abuse.
- A) Beelzebub (the ruler of demons in MAT 12:27) means "lord of the flies." Flies flock around wounds, and so do demons. They try to use bitterness and unforgiveness to poison internal wounds much like a physical infection can poison outward wounds on a person's body (MAT 18:21-35).
 - B) Sometimes demons will use areas of wounding as a breeding ground for fear. Fear often draws the believer's focus off of the grace and power of God and onto the enemy (MAT 14:22-31). Deception can then usher someone into a place of bondage where truth must be spoken and received for real freedom to be experienced (JOH 8:32; 2CO 10:5).

- C) In regard to areas of sin, the following verses provide a sketch of the enemy's strategy:
- a) People follow their wicked ways (EPH 2:1,2).
 - b) Sin patterns give demons a foothold (EPH 4:27).
 - c) The mind begins to be corrupted and footholds lead to strongholds (2CO 10:4).
 - d) Once a solid stronghold of the enemy exists in a person's mind and actions, the evil spirit can move in and make the person his "house" (MAT 12:43,44a).
- D) Generational sins and curses can come upon people through sins of their ancestors (EXO 34:7; NUM 14:18; DEU 5:6-10), through their own disobedience (DEU 28:15-68), by satanic attack (sometimes channeled through others - NUM 22:4-6; Job; GAL 3:1; 1CO 4:12), or by words carelessly or maliciously spoken (PRO 18:21; GEN 27:11-13). Curses can be broken through repentance and prayer (Examples of such: NEH. 1:6,7; DAN 9:20), and by applying the blood of Jesus. Scripture says: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us..." (GAL 3:13). See also REV 12:11; MAT 16:16-18; 18:18-19.
- E) Occult involvement can also open the door for demonic control (DEU 18:10; GAL 5:20; 1CO 10:20-21). Even ouija boards and horoscopes (as innocent as they may seem to some), can open the door for demonic bondage. (Drug abuse will sometimes open the same evil supernatural windows that are opened through overt occult involvement - the Greek word for sorcery is "pharmekia," the root of our word "pharmacy." This is not to imply that medicinal drugs are Satanic or demonic in their origin, but merely points out that historically, the connection between the use of drugs, and between sorcery and witchcraft was better understood than in modern times).

3. Demons and the World System

Demons devise and inhabit many of the world's systems. Many of the social structures in our society are simply the visible entities which demonic forces use for their own unholy purposes. We find these specific examples in scripture:

- A) Demonic inspired doctrines (ITI 4:1) 2:8,20-23)
- B) The traditions of men (MAR 7:6-13; MAT 15:1-20) E) Demonic controlled government (EZE 28 - King of Tyre was a physical pawn for a demonic principality)
- C) Demonic inspired wisdom (JAM 3:14-15)
- D) Demonic inspired 'regulations' (GAL 4:3; COL

Examine Yourself (1 Corinthians 11:28):

- 1) We must take inventory. Have any "demonic", "earthly" structures become part of your thinking or behavior?
- 2) Are there "access points" in your inner man where the enemy is allowed to "latch on" and bring defeat into your life?
- 3) Are there any places of wounding that have not been properly healed? Do you still need to release and forgive any who have hurt you or mistreated you?
- 4) At Harvest Christian Fellowship, we will wage warfare on each of these three major enemies of the body of Christ as the Lord directs: the flesh, demonic forces, and the world system. The scriptures teach us that we should deal with the flesh and demonic forces alike. Many modern churches specialize in just one of these areas, ignoring the others. Our approach in helping people find victory in Jesus will take into account both the flesh and the devil. Many struggles in people's lives involve internal struggles with the flesh as well as external battles with demonic forces. In many such cases the root problem is a problem with sin or inner pain which leads to demonic bondage as a result, or an effect of the cause.

Relevant Questions:

1) Can Christians be demon-possessed?

"Demon possession" is probably not the best way to translate the Greek participle "daimonizomenas". It should be translated "demonized", which suggests demonic activity within a person, but does not infer that demons own the person afflicted. Christians, like God, are made up of three parts. The Bible says we have a spirit, soul and body (1TH 5:23). The Bible teaches that before we knew Christ we were "dead in trespasses and sins" (EPH 2:11). This is certainly referring not to our bodies or souls (the mind, will, and emotions), but to our spirits. At salvation, the Holy Spirit comes in and quickens (makes alive) our human spirit (ROM 8:10; 1JO 5:1,11). From that time on, the Holy Spirit lives connected to our human spirit. Demons cannot "possess" the spirit of a Christian. They can however, afflict the mind, will, emotions (soul) and body of a believer if they have been given a point of access. Careful study of the following New Testament passages illustrates this truth: LUK 13:10-17; ACT 5:3; 1CO 5:5; 1CO 10:20; 2CO 11:3,4; 1TI 4:1; GAL 3:1; 2PE 2:1-22.

2) Do you practice deliverance ministry?

Absolutely! Deliverance ministry occurs when mature believers gather around one who is struggling with demonic forces, and join together in prayer with that individual, asking God for breakthrough. The prayer warriors then resist specific evil spirits who have tormented the one receiving prayer. (MAT 16:17-18; 18:18-20) Deliverance is not an end in itself, but a means to an end (LUK 11:24-26). The goal of deliverance is to remove obstruction so that the individual can seek God in an unhindered atmosphere and receive into his/her mind and heart God's truth.

3) Do you believe in Christian counseling?

Certainly! The Holy Spirit is called the Counselor (JOH 14:16), and providing insight and counsel is one of His primary ministries to the church. Often, His counsel will come through a mature believer who is gifted to bring wisdom from the Lord into a tough situation (2CO 1:3-4; PRO 15:22). It must be noted, however, that some of the most effective counselors in the body of Christ do not have degrees from colleges, but are, nonetheless, highly gifted by God to provide Holy Spirit inspired counsel (1CO 12:8). On the other hand, other counselors that are recognized by the state may not be accurately communicating either God's heart or His truth. One must be very careful from whom he/she

receives counsel. At Harvest Christian Fellowship, in special cases where a counselor outside the church is needed, our zone leaders working with the family group leaders will make specific recommendations.