

No Such Thing as a “Deliverance Ministry.”

Among the spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament, there was nothing that says Jesus established a ministry of exorcism. The Lord Jesus never, nor did the apostles, give instructions as how to look for demons in other believers or encourage them to seek their own lives and pray for the Lord to manifest any demon they may have in their life. What Jesus did give believers was the power of authority over demons, but did not say this would be the primary role of some believers to have a “deliverance ministry.” There is no such thing as a “Deliverance Ministry.”

We must be very careful because there have been many people hurt by “deliverance ministries.” We should also not be surprised that many will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. (1 Tim. 4:1)

There is no example of believers delivering demons out of other believers. There is no mention that they should search for or ask the Lord to manifest demons that might be in their life. There was no “specializing” in one area of the ministry where a person could be elevated to a superior position of authority from the rest of the church. Our mission is to preach the gospel to get people saved, healed and delivered and become disciples of Christ.

I can remember reading many years ago a book titled “Pigs in the Parlor.” From what I read, just about everything was a demon, had a name, and had to be cast out. I still drink coffee, so I guess I did not get rid of the demon of caffeine. I saw my brothers and sisters all of a sudden go on a witch hunt. Just about anything that was wrong, a demon was involved. At a few prayer meetings I remember this one young gentleman who would want to be prayed for. People believed he was manifesting a demon because he would groan or drool at the mouth and show some anger. This went on for a couple of weeks. The last time I decided not to pray for him because it was obvious the man was simply on the immature side and looking for attention. He had some emotional problems and they had nothing to do with demons. I let my thoughts known to the brother where our prayer meetings were held. In time, the young man did not seek any more attention. We were simply upfront with him and dealing with where he was at.

The following is written by a brother in the Lord who was involved in “Deliverance Ministry.”

RETHINKING DELIVERANCE

"And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. (NAS) John 3:19

INTRODUCTION

This message is for individuals with past or present involvement in Christian “deliverance” ministry. It is an especially relevant message for those who have left churches, where, the often

fanatical and excessive behavior associated with deliverance ministry, has left indelible traces of hurt or confusion. I dedicate this to my dear friend Linnie.

My purpose in writing a dissertation is to bring balance and perspective from scripture on deliverance. It is not my intention to 'knock' or put down my brothers and sisters in Jesus who have been or who are still involved in deliverance ministry. I practiced and was a leader in deliverance ministry for three years, and I have perspective comes from personal experience, both good and bad. My familiarity with it nearly 15 years ago was the driving force for motivation to search the scriptures. I wanted an objective and unbiased scriptural point of view without the authoritarian prejudice of a pastor's doctrine.

Unless you have actually been deeply involved in deliverance ministries, this lesson will only be vaguely informative. It will, however, keep you from falling into some of the ditches and excess lived out by those steeped in this movement for years.

For congregations involved with deliverance, or individuals that have come out of churches still participating in deliverance sessions, I think you will find the scriptural view to be your greatest source of direction. Let me begin by stating that I don't claim to have all the answers, nor do I think my view is the "right" one. Also, I am not opposed to being prayed for, or praying for others who have been tormented and held in bondage by demonic forces. I believe it is scriptural to resist the devil, and to pray for one another.

I am even in favor of prayer for deliverance from the strongholds that bind either a Christian or an unbeliever. The methods endorsed by those who claim to cast demons out of Christians, and whose unique deliverance language of communication is contrary to the word of God, is something I adamantly oppose. The reasons for opposition will become evident as you read further.

Today, I still have sweet fellowship with friends that once attended a large charismatic church together. These are God-fearing, Jesus loving people that have a fervent and intense desire to please their Lord. The church we attended had a split, and corrupt leadership eventually led to its' downfall. We were involved in demonic deliverance, as this was one of the central doctrines of our former church. Today I still hear some of my dear companions unaware they are using the 'lingo' exclusive to demonic deliverance ministries. I hope this helps them to sort out reality from deception.

- **I Jn 2:26** These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. (NAS)

As an evangelist and teacher, I spent many years on the streets of Seattle and Tacoma, Washington. During that time I would often pray for people, and on occasion would spot individuals who were demon-possessed.

I was eyewitness to the jeering, hissing, and ridicule, as these wicked demonic creatures inhabited human beings, and used them as vessels to taunt me. Anyone who has confronted a person who is demonically possessed will testify of the hair-raising and intensely iniquitous

nature of such an encounter. There is an unmistakable presence of diabolical evil that pervades the air, and that seems to bore through the center of your very being. This evil presence can linger for hours, days or weeks without prayer.

One man I prayed for many years ago was so teeming with demons that his eyes revolved in his head. He was one of those characters who lived on the streets, and reeked of human stench. He had not bathed or washed his clothing for many months, and his claw-like fingernails protruded as yellowish talons from his nicotine-stained hands.

I cannot articulate in words the elation I felt when, using the name of Jesus; we were given authority by God to set this captive free. Even more astonishing, was the dramatic transformation in his countenance, as the spirit of God now resided where demons made their habitation. The very next day I witnessed a new creation in Christ. He had bathed, trimmed, and found a new set of clothes at the local Salvation Army. His demeanor reflected a serenity shining as the summer dawn through his battle-worn eyes. He had returned to say a “thank you”, and then disappeared into the fabric of the city streets.

From this example, it is obvious I am not in opposition to casting evil spirits out of the souls whom they vex and torment. ***I do, however, make a distinction between an established believer in Jesus Christ, and the unbeliever who has not yet experienced the power of God.*** While there is strong precedent for commanding demonic forces out of those possessed, I find nothing in scripture teaching the church to practice demonic exorcism amongst believers.

Fanaticism In The Christian Churches

I am opposed to the fanaticism and excess I have observed in churches that put into practice demonic deliverance. Watching born-again Christians endeavor to cast demons out of one another can be an atrocious spectacle. Sometimes the person who is being prayed for will begin to “manifest” demonic behavior. This sort of “manifestation” may perhaps include writhing on the floor, deep guttural moans, screaming, demonic shrieks, and even at times abusive language.

These manifestations are believed to be the unyielding demon or demons revealing itself or themselves through the individual being prayed for. Believe it or not, I have come to the conclusion that many (not all) of these demonstrations are truly demonic in origin. Still others are a desperate imitation of what desperate Christians *think* is God’s power at work. I will explain the reason for this later.

Do these things astound you? The first time I walked into a church service or prayer session and observed such lifelike and strange behavior, it freaked me out. It seemed bizarre and surreal. As time passed, these “manifestations” became more frequent, as the church I attended was steeped in deliverance ministry.

The more I saw, the less unusual they appeared. I suppose one might liken my acquiescence to the proverbial frog that, being perfectly capable of leaping out of a shallow pan of water, didn’t jump because the water was slowly warmed to boiling. The frog grows slowly and steadily adaptable to his deadly environment. By then it was too late.

Thank God we are not frogs! God has given us a heart and mind that can escape such deception through repentance, loving support, and especially from the truth that can only be found in scripture.

It sounds very peculiar to a person, having never been exposed to this kind of practice, but I liken it to other such oddities legitimized by numerous Christian churches and church organizations. On the far end of the spectrum are the snake handlers of the Deep South. These enthusiastic and devoted fanatics use the very words of Jesus to justify their practice.

- **Mark 16:17-18** "And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." (NAS)

Their "faith" is supposed to protect them from the deadly copperheads and Eastern Diamondback rattlesnakes they toy with every Sunday morning. Ironically, many have been bit practicing these crazy rituals, and over the years there have been numerous deaths from snakebites. Is this really what Jesus had in mind?

While the snake charmers sooth deadly serpents in the name of Jesus, they fail to use scripture in its context. Jesus never handled snakes; rather, he likened religious leaders steeped in self-righteousness as such:

- **Matt 23:29-36** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers. **You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell?** Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation." (NAS)

It is true the apostle Paul was bitten by a venomous snake incidental to making a campfire (Acts 28:1-10). However this is the ONLY mention of the fulfillment of Jesus' words. Furthermore, it was a demonstration of God's power among the unbelievers who witnessed Paul's experience. Picking up vipers is not my idea of Christian fellowship!

More prolific in churches worldwide is the peculiar ways of those involved in the "renewal movement." My wife and I attended one such meeting in an Assemblies of God church where men and women alike were crawling on their hand and knees and barking like dogs! This aberration was not indicative of all that went on in the three-hour church service, but it was very pervasive, especially among the "regulars" at these weekly meetings.

I believe the people there loved God and truly wanted His presence, so I am NOT attacking them. I too have felt God's presence and acted unbecomingly on occasion. So did King David (2 Samuel 6:14-22); he danced when the Ark of the Covenant was returned to Israel, because with the ark came the presence of God to the true believer.

However, we cannot have "dancing" services every time we meet, simply because David danced, or because scripture teaches it. David also feigned madness before Achish, king of Gath:

- **1 Sam 21:10-15** Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?" And David took these words to heart, and greatly feared Achish king of Gath. So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard. Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?" (NAS)

Should we now have scribbling and dribbling church services each time we confront our enemies? I think you see my point.

Ironically, in the same church where the barking was happening, people were alternately laughing, falling down, crying, singing and clapping hands. I really had no difficulty with seeing believers sing, clap, laugh and weep. But barking like dogs? Either the individuals doing the barking felt God's presence, reacting in a fleshly display, or they were mimicking one another in the hope that God might somehow touch them as He had others. People hungry for God will sometimes do just about anything!

I believe God initiated the outpouring of His spirit in churches that had become dry and lifeless. He also shattered the legalism and religious spirit that had become pervasive in so many congregations.

Unfortunately, just like the early days of demonic deliverance, the churches made the renewal movement the 'end-all.' It wasn't enough for God to do what He wanted once or twice; they would do their best to get God to do the same thing every week. Now renewal meetings have become, in large part, another manmade program to tickle the ears and rouse the emotions of Christians who have not grasped the essence of the gospel. It also raises big bucks for dry coiffeurs.

The most common reaction to the original outpouring of God's spirit was laughing. Today I hear people laugh every time they feel God's presence; once it nearly stumbled a newborn Christian who considered the laughing to be irreverent (I agreed with him, given the tenor of the direction of our group prayer). We must have freedom and liberty in the spirit; however, our liberty should never be used as occasion to be a stumbling block.

- **1 Cor. 8: 9** Only be careful that this power of choice (this permission and liberty to do as you please) which is yours, does not [somehow] become a hindrance (cause of stumbling) to the weak *or* over scrupulous [giving them an impulse to sin].

Most Christians go to church to get spiritually revived, and never experience the ongoing joy of the Lord at simply being a servant to others in Jesus' name. Church services are the place they get their weekly 'buzz' from God. Often what folks think is "the Lord" is really just endorphins and adrenalin. O that there were more laborers in the harvest field! God is calling, but so few hear His voice in the din and clamor of programs.

- **Luke 10:2** And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (NAS)

Scripture Is Always The Final Authority

Every church has its own doctrines; doctrine is simply another word for teaching. The scripture should be the final authority for all teaching, especially in spiritual matters. Those who practice demonic deliverance use the scriptures to justify their position and practice.

Unfortunately, like so often is the case, the scriptures are taken out of context, and are used in a distorted manner. Demonic deliverance amongst believers is no exception; oftentimes elaborate and complex develop and human rationale gives way to evil influence. This is one way deception begins; it is perhaps the most dangerous form as well.

- **1 Tim 4:1** But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, **paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.** (NAS)
- **2 Pet 3:16-17** He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, **which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.** Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. (NIV)

Before you become indignant towards the Christians involved in demonic deliverance, remember they are your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. These are not stupid individuals; many of them have university degrees. They love Jesus and earnestly desire to please him. They are your brethren in God's family, and should never be ostracized. There are too many self-proclaimed heresy hunters like Hank Hanegraaf (aka 'The Bible Answer Man') who use this kind of information to alienate Christians from one another; please don't be one of them!

- **Matthew 7:1-5** DO NOT judge *and* criticize *and* condemn others, so that you may not be judged *and* criticized *and* condemned yourselves. For just as you judge *and* criticize *and* condemn others, you will be judged *and* criticized *and* condemned, and in accordance with the measure you [use to] deal out to others, it will be dealt out again to you. Why do you stare from without at the very small particle that is in your brother's eye but do not

become aware of *and* consider the beam of timber that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, Let me get the tiny particle out of your eye, when there is the beam of timber in your own eye? You hypocrite, first get the beam of timber out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the tiny particle out of your brother's eye.

If you know a brother in Christ who has gone a little overboard in the deliverance areas, he should not be regarded as a leper. He may use some very peculiar language when discussing such things, but he is still a child of God. Make certain that the information provided here is not used as a tool to attack and accuse, or you may have to face the eternal Judge and give an account of yourself for it.

The basis for participation in demonic deliverance by these brethren more often than not points to the leadership. By and large the headship and direction within most every church comes from the senior pastor. Because very few Christians know how to study scripture by themselves, they usually trust whatever their pastor teaches them.

Those immersed for years in deliverance ministry and activity have developed a language exclusive to themselves. Examples will be given later in this study, but the essence of this extra-scriptural verbiage relegates negative or sinful behavior as being "demonic" or "a demon manifesting itself." They won't say, "I'm having a tough time trying to stop smoking cigarettes." Instead, they would rephrase it something like, "A demon of nicotine has really gotten hold of me, and has made it tough for me to quit smoking."

Do you see the problem with this? There is a subtle shift in the blame and responsibility for the cigarette smoking. Instead of it being "my addiction to cigarettes" it is "that demon's influence who keeps me in bondage to smoking." I believe this is more than mere semantics; there is a deception involved. Yes, the devil may tempt you to smoke, but he cannot *make* you smoke. Thus demonic deliverance can turn into demonic deception very easily.

Furthermore, when you smoke, it isn't the "demon manifesting" but it is simply you puffing on a cigarette. I am not implying that everyone who practices deliverance blames everything on the devil, but I do believe that they give the devil some or more responsibility for actions than they should. It takes more humility to confess your faults one to another than to blame it on a demon.

- **James 5:16** Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed *and* restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

Before someone gets too self-righteous, I do not think that smoking cigarettes is the eleventh commandment of God. I simply used this as an example. There are many God-fearing people who smoke. While this habit is harmful to ones' health, it is not as destructive as the noxious vapor of gossip and slander spewing out of many 'tobacco-free' Christians. Which do you think God will be more concerned with in eternity?

I believe the scriptures are always the final authority in spiritual matters, and those who teach and practice demonic deliverance are no exception.

- **Prov 30:5-6** Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar. (NAS)
- **2 Tim 3:16-17** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (NAS)

God says to test, reprove and correct any teaching that is contrary to His word. The scriptures equip us to do spiritual warfare, and they provide the blueprint for how we should do it. The scripture does not use language like, "I am manifesting a demon," or "You need demonic deliverance."

There is mention in the N.T. of behavior that is demonic, but it does not limit sinful actions to merely being the influence of demons. In fact, there is only one scripture passage that even uses the word "demonic," and nowhere in the context is "deliverance" mentioned. I have highlighted "demonic" to make it easy to see.

- **James 3:14-18** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, and **demonic**. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And those who make peace sow the seed whose fruit is righteousness in peace.

The context James is speaking of the tongue being used for either good or evil. James 3:14 states that, "bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart," are the cause of evil speech, not a demon. The devil may tempt you with such things, but *it is your choice* to resist or yield to his temptation.

- **Ps 25:11-12** For Thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. (NAS)

It is apparent from scripture that the "wisdom" behind "bitterness, jealousy, and selfish ambition" has demonic influence. It also states that such wisdom is also "earthly" and "natural." I find this to be ironical; never have I heard those who believe in demonic deliverance speak of an, "earthly, natural manifestation."

God's word is penned under His direct inspiration. It has been preserved to facilitate us in our thinking, actions and speech. Through the scriptures we are instructed how to resist the devil, and gain victory over his influence. Again, of the few passages that mention resisting the devil, God provides us with instructions.

- **James 4:6-11** But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it. (NAS)
- **1 Pet 5:8-10** Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that your brethren who are in the world are accomplishing the same experiences of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

In these verses nothing is mentioned about Christians laying hands on each other and casting demons out. We are supposed to pray for one another and to carefully examine the things that the Lord says will help you to resist the devil:

- 1) Draw near to God, cleanse your hands, you sinners and purify your hearts
- 2) Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord
- 3) Do not speak against one another
- 4) Be of sober spirit, be on the alert
- 5) After you have suffered for a little while God will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

What Is Deliverance Ministry?

Several years ago, prominent ministers began teaching that Christians could not only be oppressed of the devil, but that demons (i.e. – imps; messenger spirits from Satan’s kingdom of darkness) could indwell and manifest their evil nature through a believer’s actions, thoughts, or speech. For the most part these teachers do not claim that a believer can be demon possessed; rather, the language of their doctrine is guarded and referred to as “demonic oppression.”

The primary reason instruction started regarding deliverance from demonic forces was a sincere effort to explain the influence of the spiritual powers in a Christian’s life. For years, Independent Bible Churches (IBC), Baptist, and other mainline fundamental churches failed to acknowledge the effects of the supernatural. Many of these church organizations denied teaching on healing, speaking in tongues, and miracles. “Those things ceased with the apostles,” they claim, “Once the Bible was finished being written, we no longer need them.”

Even mainline charismatic churches such as the Assemblies of God (AOG), Church of God in Christ (COGIC) and others who practiced speaking in tongues, healing and miracles failed to adequately develop teaching on the influence of demonic powers in a Christian's life. Christians, for the most part, were completely ignorant of spiritual influence and spiritual warfare. The deliverance teaching began primarily with ministers who were part of non-denominational Pentecostal churches. They were not restricted to the rules and doctrines of large church organizations.

Most churches still believe that human beings can become demon possessed. Typically, they distinguish this kind of possession from the influence of evil spirits in the Christian's life. I find it hypocritical to say someone can be demon possessed (as in the days of Jesus) and to say that casting out demons is a practice we should no longer engage in. Of course the greater percentage of these apathetic, so-called believers are not out in the streets preaching the gospel. Consequently they would find little opportunity in their little comfort zone to engage in this kind of spiritual warfare.

It cannot be denied that the scriptures teach spiritual warfare, especially the New Testament. Deliverance doctrines evolved from those seeking an explanation of the evil influence often demonstrative in believers' actions. Road rage incidents would be good examples of the effect demons have on Christians; it is more than natural anger. Rather, it is the infusion of demonic input to fuel our natural anger and impatience. Once the adrenalin gets rockin' there's no turning back until you skyrocket to a level ten anger.

The search for answers demanded a pragmatic application of the scriptures in the lives of individual believers. Questions were asked, "How can a Christian be set free from the demonic influence so evident in our every-day behavior?" and, "What methods of spiritual warfare can we apply to break Satan's hold in our lives?" These sorts of questions originate from a desire to understand verses similar to the one found in the Book of Ephesians:

- **Eph 6:11-12** Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (NAS)

If our struggle is not against flesh and blood, then who is it against? Who are these "rulers, world forces, and spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places?" Are these spiritual forces something we should know about? If so, how do we gain the knowledge of our enemy to fight him? I don't think the average Christian has seriously contemplated such questions, even though they stem from the word of God.

The tempter is Satan, and he commands a host of evil spirits who do whatever they can to destroy us. Deliverance ministers began teaching that part of our "spiritual armor" was to get "delivered" from the demons that had "strongholds" in our life. Thus the birth of "deliverance ministry." **NOTE: Some of the quotation marks used in this study will help to identify the specific language used by those associated with deliverance ministries.**

The men who wrote books about demonic deliverance used Jesus' words in Matthew 10:8 as "proof" that "casting demons out of a Christian" had Biblical support:

- **Matt 10:7-8** "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, freely give." (NAS)

Their reasoning went something like this, "If we, as New Testament Christians, believe in healing and miracles, then why not casting out demons?" This question sounds logical by itself. However, one must find clear evidence in the Bible where the early church engaged in casting demons out of one another.

The context of Matthew says that casting out demons was to be done as the disciples were *sent out to preach the gospel to the lost* sheep of Israel. In other words, they were to share the gospel amongst the unsaved of Israel who had not heard of redemption found in Jesus the Messiah.

- **Matt 10:5-6** These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (NAS)

The Book of Acts offers the only examples of demons being cast out of people, and the apostle Paul was the one whom God used to do this. In the first example, he did it to "Jews and Greeks," not Christians. In the second example, Paul cast an evil spirit out of a woman who practiced divination (highlighting added).

- **Acts 19:10-12** And this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, **both Jews and Greeks**. And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them **and the evil spirits went out**. (NAS)
- **Acts 16:16-18** And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, **a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination** met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." And she continued doing this for many days. **But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment.** (NAS)

I have actually witnessed ministers who send pieces of cloth in bulk mailings to Christians their mailing lists, claiming that they have prayed the prayer of faith over the cloth. They instruct people to touch the cloth, and like the handkerchiefs mentioned in Acts, they will be healed! Even more ridiculous is what I have seen at church services, where believers are instructed to bring a handkerchief to church so they can have it prayed over by deliverance ministers. The magic handkerchief can then be used to cast the demons out of their lives!

The church I attended did not use handkerchiefs, as that was viewed as a gimmick. In the early 1980's there were those in deliverance circles teaching that the demons that had been cast out of the believer needed another place to reside. The example used to prove this ludicrous practice was when Jesus cast a legion of demons into a herd of swine.

- **Matt 8:31-32** And the demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Begone!" And they came out, and went into the swine, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. (NAS)

Though I never personally witnessed it, I heard a cassette tape of a congregation being prayed for to exorcize the demons. They were instructed to bring paper bags with them to church, and when they felt the demons leave their body, they coughed into the bags, and quickly closed them shut. Crazy as it sounds, they believed the demons were now contained, and could not return to inhabit their body. I always wondered what they did with those paper bags!

Deliverance ministry teachers do believe in repentance, for the most part. They don't teach that simply exorcizing a demon is sufficient to be free from its' evil influence. They also believe it is necessary to repent by changing one's sinful behavior. For example, with a "demon of lust" they say a man will have to stop using pornography on the Internet and other sources, and he must use the truth of scripture to live a life of purity. This is the only way he can be completely free of the demon. If he failed to do this, the spirit will return with even more power over him. In fact, twisting the following scripture verses, the pastor of our church used this fear tactic to control and manipulate:

- **Luke 11:24-26** "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first." (NAS)

We were taught to believe that if we didn't fully repent, we might be allowing an unclean spirit that had been cast out to return with seven other spirits more evil than itself! This type of flagrant misuse of scripture can hold a person hostage to fear if they really believe it.

The Unique Vocabulary of Deliverance Ministry

The teaching on deliverance for Christians has its own vocabulary. For example, if a person gets angry about something, this is labeled as a "spirit of anger." If someone gets angry he or she is said to be "manifesting a demon of anger" or simply "manifesting." If they are depressed, it is, "a demon of depression."

Basically, all negative or sinful behavior is viewed as demonic in origin. Those entrenched in deliverance theology make statements like, "I was manifesting a spirit of anger," rather than saying, "I got angry."

To get “delivered” of a demon, it is taught that each person must submit himself/herself to someone who has authority over the demonic power. That “someone” was usually a man or woman who was active in deliverance ministry. The most active and experienced person in deliverance is typically referred to as a “deliverance leader.”

For example, the man with sexual lust must renounce a “demon of lust” to be free of its power. He has to do this before the demons’ power can be broken through prayer in a “deliverance session.” The “deliverance session” is usually a group of spirit-filled Christians who are “intercessory prayer warriors” and who are also experienced in the “deliverance ministry.” Some churches call these groups, “deliverance teams.” I was the leader of a deliverance team.

By renouncing aloud the “stronghold” of demonic power, the man with the lust problem has now taken the first step in getting delivered from the demon’s grip. His renunciation might begin like this, “You demon of lust, I command you to release your hold on my mind and body in the name of Jesus!” He has begun the process of repentance and deliverance. Now he must request special intercessory prayer from another Christian, or group of Christians who understand how to implement demonic deliverance.

Typically this means that he submits himself to his brothers and sisters in Christ, (i.e. the deliverance team), by allowing them to lay their hands on him during a prayer session. They begin to pray by first asking God to cleanse him from sin, which usually involves his public prayer of confession. It goes something like this, “Lord Jesus, please forgive me for my lust. I receive your forgiveness, and renounce my involvement with pornography.”

After this simple confession, the deliverance prayer begins. The man is instructed to “come against the demon of lust” by praying aloud as the deliverance group prays. The group then begins to pray simultaneously, alternating between prayer in tongues and prayer in English. The “deliverance leader” directs the group as they pray, and his role is to keep things “on track” so that people don’t lose their focus and purpose of the deliverance session.

I have seen these prayers sessions last as long as three or four hours. Some sessions have been known to last even longer. One session I witnessed lasted nearly eight hours! During each session, different members of the prayer group receive the “word of knowledge” or “discerning of spirits.”

The “word of knowledge” is purported to be revelations from God on why the man got into bondage by the demon of lust. The “discerning of spirits” is a “revelation” of other demons that have been working together along with the “demon of lust” to give it a “toehold” or “stronghold.”

One of the traps that deliverance leaders fall into is a display of pride and arrogance. I have seen this, and such individuals claim they can reveal the various types of demons in other Christian’s lives. They even justify their pride by calling their revelation, “the gift of discerning spirits.” With great remorse I had to repent of acting with such pride myself.

This “word of knowledge” is also said to be the revelation of “secret sin” of the man being prayed for. Perhaps it is something he was afraid or ashamed to reveal before a group of people. His secret sins are considered “strongholds” the “demon of lust” would continue to make use of to keep him in “bondage” to sexual lust (e.g. Playboy or Penthouse magazines or pornographic videos he had hidden somewhere in his home, etc.).

Once these strongholds have been “revealed” through “the word of knowledge” the intercessory prayer by the group usually stops praying. The man must then confess his sin aloud to God in prayer because he did not tell the group about the pornography he still had in his home. He is instructed that confessing his sins before the group will break the demons “power.” Humiliated, he then confesses before a group of men and women that he has pornographic literature hidden in his house.

One of the central themes of deliverance is the belief that certain objects in your house can become “homing devices” for demons. A homing device is considered to be objects, books, pictures, and etc. that have a demonic influence, and therefore particular demons “home in” on them. Even innocuous items like red chili peppers are labeled as a sort of spiritual magnet for demons to cling to.

One example of what would be such a homing device might be a cement garden ornament like a pagoda. Let’s say Lydia goes to visit Betty, and she spots the pagoda in the midst of the flower garden. “This evil pagoda is used in Buddhism Betty,” Lydia warns her, “If you keep that thing in your yard, it could open you up to a ‘demon of Buddhism.’”

Poor Betty, what should she do? The pagoda was given to her years ago when her husband returned from WWII. Now that he is deceased, she often enjoyed it among her lovely dahlias; it was a sweet reminder of her late husband’s love for her. She is terrified that she might be vulnerable to the “demon of Buddhism” and in love and obedience to God, she disposes of it. Perhaps this example reveals the foolhardy yet treacherous results demonic deliverance teaching can inflict.

One dear brother and a close friend of mine is a skilled craftsman. He paints lovely pictures, forges metal, and hand carves wooden dulcimers. His name is Jim, and I dearly love him. When the church we attended started practicing demonic deliverance, poor Jim was told he must rid his house of all of his beautiful musical instruments. “These dulcimers are associated with Celtic culture, and they are homing devices for demons!” he was told. What nonsense! What travesty! Why not rid us of all musical instruments, since most of them did not originate from Christian heritage?

I know of another sister in Christ who was instructed to throw away a cluster of dried, red chili peppers she had hanging in her kitchen. The reason? These red peppers were associated with the practice of voodoo! “You could be opening yourself up to spirits of the occult if you keep those evil dried red peppers.” This was one of many “sacrifices” she made in the name of deliverance. To make matters worse, she was chronically ill, and was actually *blamed* for her illness; she was told it was demonic in origin due to her many occult household objects! Rubbish, I say, simply rubbish!

Other homing devices might be a book, such as the Freemason book, 'Morals and Dogma' by Albert Pike. Since this is the handbook of Freemasons, if it was on your bookshelf, "demons of Freemasonry" would manifest themselves in your house. If that were the case, then how can a theologian ever do an expose on Freemasonry or Mormonism without having access to their literature?

I am in agreement that idols such as statues of Buddha, or Catholic relics should not be in the home of a believer. Anything that is obviously of ungodly derivation should not be openly displayed. Obviously objects associated with the occult such as talismans, pentagrams, etc. would not only be unfit for a Christian home; to keep these kinds of icons demonstrates an affectionate attachment to them.

When we get born-again, we are a new creation, and old things pass away. Scripture teaches us not to have fellowship with darkness and the world. The newborn Christian should trash things like music that has satanic lyrics or graphic sexual innuendos. Any attachment to something from our old life we should consider as rubbish, whether it be music, ungodly relationships, substance abuse, fowl language, 'R' and 'PG-13' rated movies filled with violence, gore, vulgar speech, etc.

- **Eph 5:5-11** For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them. (NAS)
- **I Jn 1:5-7** And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (NAS)
- **Phil 3:8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ. (NAS)
- **James 4:4-5** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? (NAS)
- **Phil 4:8** Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. (NAS)

The scripture teaches us not to affiliate with the darkness that has been promulgated by Lucifer, the prince of darkness.

- **Rom 13:12** The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (NAS)
- **Gal 5:19-21** Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (NAS)

While I am in agreement that overtly demonic items should not be a part of the Christian life, I take exception with the excess involved in the deliverance movement. There were people told to rid themselves of jewelry, certain clothing, furniture, and a host of relics. One brother in the Lord was instructed to rid himself of an antique table because the feet were carved wood that had a ball-and-claw design. This kind of rampant and unwarranted fear-based instruction borders on extreme fanaticism.

I don't think an antique table with ball and claw feet is an invitation for demons to gain a "stronghold" in your life. Neither is a cement ornamental pagoda in somebody's flowerbed, or a strand of dried peppers, or a hand carved musical instrument. These few examples help us understand that unless we follow the scriptures, doctrines like demonic deliverance can lead us down the path chasing a demon in every corner.

The Truth Shall Set You Free

Much more detail could be devoted to explaining this complex, bizarre, and oftentimes confusing subject. Usually, when manmade doctrines develop, they become complex, difficult to comprehend and lead one away from the simplicity of the gospel.

- **2 Cor 11:3** But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. (NAS)

Those who promote demonic deliverance for Christians see a demon involved whenever a believer has a spiritual or emotional problem. They are so caught up in their ethereal practices that they cannot see what the devil is *really* doing. Demons tempt and influence Christians for one purpose...to entice them to sin. **The scripture teaches us to resist the devil's influence by turning away from the temptation and/or repenting of sin. It's that simple; even a child can understand the gospel message.**

- **Prov 20:11** Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.

How do you expect a child to understand the complexities of the language proliferated in the deliverance circles? God says, “even a child is known by his actions.” He does not change the rules for adults.

- **Matt 18:1-6** At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" **He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.** Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. (NIV)

Our actions declare what we are, and what we will become in Jesus, not how many demons are living within. Nowhere in scripture does it say that demons “manifest” themselves through us. In fact, quite the opposite!

- **John 3:20-21** "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, **that his deeds may be manifested** as having been wrought in God." (NAS)

Whose deeds are manifested? If you practice the truth, ***your deeds are manifested!*** If you hate the light of God’s truth, your deeds will be “exposed.” Demons don’t manifest through the “child” of God; the child of God exposes the “deeds” of darkness. In other words, your evil deeds become evident when they are exposed to the light of those who are walking in the truth. If you are manifesting a demonic nature, it can only mean one thing; you are no longer following the light. Ouch! That hurts!

The only persons that Satan can “manifest” himself through are liars and deceivers. They are men who call light darkness, and darkness light. They manifest the devil, because they are his children, not God’s. Lucifer (meaning ‘light bearer’) wants Christians to believe that casting demons out of each other is the spiritual solution to sin.

In his “craftiness” (2 Cor. 11:3) the serpent has used the doctrine of demonic deliverance to partially or wholly dissociate Christians from their personal responsibility to turn away from his lure. Thus, Satan calls light darkness, and darkness light. Is it any wonder he uses his ministers (i.e. in the church) as the instruments of deceit?

- **2 Cor 11:13-15** For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. **And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.** Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds. (NAS)
- **John 8:44** “**You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because

there is no truth in him. **Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.** (NAS)

Notice that the final judgment on these wicked persons is because of “their deeds” (John 8:44). They cannot blame what they did on demonic influence. Jesus said that those who carry out the “desires” of their “father” the devil manifest his “nature.” The devil can tempt and harass the child of God, but he does not “manifest” through them.

About now I’m certain that there are some who may question this position. They are sure that born-again Christians quite frequently mimic the nature of demons, particularly in times of heated arguments. Again I say, let scripture be the final authority when deciding what you believe. We turn once more to the Book of James, the only passage of scripture that mentions “demonic” behavior in the church is found in the context of James 3:6-18.

Before reading this passage again, consider the following:

1. What is the inner motive behind “demonic” wisdom?
2. Does this passage of scripture blame the misuse of one’s tongue on “demons?”
3. Is iniquity & sin at the root of evil behavior?
4. What does the passage mention as an antidote to evil behavior?

Tip: Italicized words give you the answers

- **James 3:6-18** And the tongue is a fire, the very world of *iniquity*; the tongue is set among *our members* as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire *the course of our life*, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can *tame* the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it *we bless* our Lord and Father; and with it *we curse* men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both *blessing and cursing*. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Neither can salt water produce fresh. Who among you is *wise and understanding*? Let him *show by his good behavior his deeds* in the gentleness of wisdom. But if *you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart*, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is *earthly, natural, demonic*. For where *jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing*. But the wisdom from above is first *pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy*. And the seed *whose fruit is righteousness* is sown in peace *by those who make peace*. (NAS)

There is only one example in the Book of Acts specifies a believer having Satan “fill” his hearts. It was *not* called “demon oppression” or a “demonic manifestation.” This was the story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. They had dedicated money from a piece of property they sold to the Lord, and then kept some of the profit for themselves.

- **Acts 5:3** But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?” (NAS)

If you only read Acts 5:3, you might say, “Well, there is an example of a demon manifesting inside a believer.” However, the Greek word for “filled” means “to make replete; to cover over.” In other words, *Peter rebuked Ananias* for allowing Satan cover up his heart with a lie. Further proof for this interpretation is seen when Peter rebukes Sapphira.

- **Acts 5:9** Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out as well " (NAS)

Like her husband, Sapphira covered the truth about the money, and Peter’s chastisement of her states, “Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test?” Neither Ananias nor Sapphira got “delivered” of what deliverance folks would call, “demons of deception and greed.” Instead, God struck both of them dead!

Peter was the one God used to expose the greed and selfish ambition of Ananias and Sapphira. Prior to the day of Pentecost, Peter had experienced a similar rebuke from the Lord Jesus when he sought to hinder him from going to Golgotha. Again, as you read the passage, note the italicized words as key to interpreting this passage from the gospel of Mark:

- **Mark 8:31-37** And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; *for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.*" And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, *let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.* For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; *but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.* For what does it profit a man to *gain* the whole world, and forfeit his soul? *For what shall a man give in exchange* for his soul? (NAS)

Jesus told Peter, “Get opposite me! You are a dupe of Satan himself because your motives are self-serving!” Jesus did not begin a session of demonic deliverance with Peter. Rather, he instructed all the disciples to deny themselves, take up their own cross, and follow him. Yes, a disciple can be deceived by Satan, but only because his interests are opposite God’s. After Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, he had a second opportunity to make good on his promise to confess the Lord Jesus to men (READ Acts chapter two).

The scripture speaks of the devil as our enemy, as the tempter, and as a deceiver. Some verses previously listed instruct, even command us to resist him. There is not one single mention in the Bible of Christians gathering to pray and cast demons out of a brother or sister in Jesus. If demonic deliverance were an important and integral aspect of our walk with God, do you honestly believe He would omit mention of it in the scriptures?

We know from Jesus' ministry that He healed those who were "oppressed by the devil." In other words, it is evident that **some** sicknesses originate from a demonic affliction. However, those whom Jesus prayed for were unsaved Jews, with a few exceptions here and there.

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

Deliverance ministers are quick to use Peter as an example when he tried to keep Jesus from going to his death at Golgotha.

- **Mark 8:33** But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." (NAS)

"You see, even Jesus recognized a manifestation of Satan in Peter, 'chimes' the minister or teacher defending demonic deliverance in the churches. There is a vital flaw with such an argument. First, Peter was not yet filled with the Holy Spirit, and was more prone to yield his careless tongue to temptation.

Second, and more importantly, Jesus didn't blame Peter's behavior on Satan or a "manifestation." Rather, he clearly explained himself, "...for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." Jesus blamed Peter the *man!* Otherwise he would have said, "Peter, you are manifesting Satan and you need deliverance." Peter didn't need a deliverance team to pray for him to be "released" from a "demonic stronghold." What he needed was to set his mind on what the Father God's interests were.

We are commanded in the New Testament to pray for one another's ailments, whether they are demonically or naturally caused. Even if the sickness did include binding a demon's power, it would be a far leap to build an entire doctrine around such passages by claiming that our behavior is also a demonic manifestation.

Our deeds are our responsibility and sickness is something we have no control over most of the time. Besides, there is mention of the main cause of both illness and death in the body of Christ, and it isn't demonic; it is selfishness amongst believers!

- **1 Cor 11:28-34** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. **For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world.** So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you may not come together for judgment. And the remaining matters I shall arrange when I come. (NAS)

Instead of blaming sickness on “demons of infirmity” like is so often done in deliverance ministries, God’s word commands that we are judged by Him for disciplinary reasons. This was a very pragmatic application to the early Corinthian church. The believers would gather to have a meal, which they called breaking bread. Some Christians were very poor (like third world nations today), and these gatherings were some of the only food they got to eat all week.

Since there was hoarding and gluttony amongst those who actually brought food, the poor, weak and infirmed would grow even weaker, and sicker. Some would even die. The answer was not to have a “deliverance session” and cast out “demons of hoarding and gluttony.” God used Paul to instruct the Corinthian church, “So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.” In other words, be a servant to your brethren, and stop merely looking after your own interests. This principle applies today too.

- **Phil 2:4-5** Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. (NAS)

Preparing To Be A Soldier In God’s Army

God tells us to resist, and overcome the wicked one. He gives us simple instructions on how to execute His will. While His instructions from scripture are not hard to understand, they cover the vast array of human complexities. We are intricately created beings, with different personalities, emotions, ways of thinking and perceptions, backgrounds, etc.

The Bible was never intended to be a handbook of solutions for the variety of individual ways mankind has found he can sin. It does not address the problem of crack cocaine, cigarettes, workaholics, road rage, television, etc., etc. Yet for all the complex issues we face from day to day, one can always find comfort, strength, direction, hope, peace and what God provides through His word. The battle with spiritual forces and how we are to fight as soldiers in God’s army are no exception; Jesus leads us through the scriptures inspired by his Father, and penned by men.

When we speak of warfare, whether natural or spiritual, the first thing that comes to mind is the soldier.

- **2 Tim 2:3-7** Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. (NAS)

The first thing we know about spiritual warfare you are a soldier in **active service**. This means every day of your life you must be combat-ready. Your enemy is the devil, and he constantly looks for opportunities to ambush you through trickery and deceit. You cannot allow yourself to

become entangled in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

The Greek wording for, "entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life," reads like this, "gets into a fixed position of being twisted up in the pragmatic aspects of his trade and means of livelihood." The application to our life is an admonition not to be consumed by the mundane aspects of our job, and other everyday dealings of life. These humdrum routines and everyday affairs often drown out God's voice, scripture, family, and especially service to others.

If it were as simple as "casting a demon out," then spiritual warfare would be quick and relatively painless. Paul tells Timothy, "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." We are in active service to our commander Jesus, and as good soldiers we follow him everyday. It takes discipline to turn the television set off, and to dig deeply into the rich soil of God's word.

It takes the combat-readiness of daily conversations with God and fellowship with the sufferings of Jesus to make a good soldier. These are the frontline troops who flush the enemy out of the lives of those whom they serve on behalf of their God. They set their interests on God's will, not their own. They are willing to "deny" their needs, their desires, and the cry of their flesh.

- **Heb 12:1-3** Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, **let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith**, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. (NAS)

A good soldier must also "lay aside" every encumbrance and sin that so easily entangles. If being "delivered" of demonic spirits was the solution, why isn't this included in the soldier's preparation list for battle against Lucifer and his dark hosts?

The word, "encumbrance," means, "a burden or hindrance" It refers to those matters that weigh us down, becoming a burdensome hindrance. All those things we fret and worry about; our marriage, finances, problems with our children, and so on. We cannot fight an effective and offensive spiritual battle if our mind and heart is tied up with loads we're unable to bear.

The last item we will discuss about preparation for spiritual warfare is the soldier's equipment. The best example is found in the Book of Ephesians, the sixth chapter. Many authors, scholars, and theologians have written volumes on the "armor" of God that we are to wear into battle.

Time forbids an exposition; I have given the pertinent verses from the Amplified Bible for your consideration. Read each verse slowly, and take time to ponder on the meaning of each piece of equipment you should have as a soldier of the Lord. Of all the scripture passages that mention spiritual warfare, this is the most detailed; yet it doesn't even hint at the notion of demonic deliverance for the believer.

Ephesians 6:11-19

Put on God's whole armor [the armor of a heavy-armed soldier which God supplies], that you may be able successfully to stand up against [all] the strategies *and* the deceits of the devil. For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the despotisms, against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly supernatural) sphere. Therefore put on God's complete armor, that you may be able to resist *and* stand your ground on the evil day [of danger], and, having done all [the crisis demands], to stand [firmly in your place]. Stand therefore [hold your ground], having tightened the belt of truth around your loins and having put on the breastplate of integrity *and* of moral rectitude *and* right standing with God, And having shod your feet in preparation [to face the enemy with the firm-footed stability, the promptness, and the readiness produced by the good news] of the Gospel of peace. [Isa. 52:7]. Lift up over all the [covering] shield of saving faith, upon which you can quench all the flaming missiles of the wicked [one]. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword that the Spirit wields, which is the Word of God. Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose *and* perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God's consecrated people). And [pray] also for me, that [freedom of] utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth to proclaim boldly the mystery of the good news (the Gospel).

Fighting The Devil Without Demonic Deliverance

While there is no mention of the doctrine of demonic deliverance practiced within the Christian church, this does not imply the individual believer is not in a conflict with powers of darkness. Therefore I have listed many of the New Testament scripture passages that deal with the correct approach to war against demonic forces (demonic deliverance is not mentioned of course, because it does not exist within the church):

The highlighting and underlining have been added to indicate one of two things; how the devil is able to take advantage of sinful behavior, and how to be set free from his influence. Of course, if you read the entire context of each passage, you will gain even more insight and become skilled at avoiding the devil's pitfalls.

- **Eph 4:25-32** Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. **Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.** Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (NAS)

- **1 Tim 3:4-6** He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); **and** not a new convert, **lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.** (NAS)
- **2 Tim 2:24-26** And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, **if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil,** having been held captive by him to do his will. (NAS)
- **Heb 2:14-18** Since then the children share in flesh and blood, **He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.** For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, **He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.** (NAS)
- **James 4:2-11** **You lust** and do not have; so you commit murder. **And you are envious** and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because **you ask with wrong motives,** so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that **friendship with the world** is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." **Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.** Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves** in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. **Do not speak against one another,** brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it. (NAS)
- **1 Pet 5:6-10** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. **Be of sober spirit, be on the alert.** Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **But resist him, firm in {your} faith,** knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. **And after you have suffered for a little while,** the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. (NAS)

- **1 Cor 7:4-6** The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. **Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.** But this I say by way of concession, not of command. (NAS)
- **1 Tim 5:14-15** Therefore, I want **younger widows to get married,** bear children, keep house, **and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; for some have already turned aside to follow Satan.** (NAS)
- **2 Cor 2:10-11** But whom you **forgive anything,** I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, **in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.** (NAS)
- **1 John 3:7-10** Boys (lads), **let no one deceive and lead you astray. He who practices righteousness [who is upright, conforming to the divine will in purpose, thought, and action, living a consistently conscientious life] is righteous,** even as He is righteous. **[But] he who commits sin [who practices evildoing] is of the devil [takes his character from the evil one],** for the devil has sinned (violated the divine law) from the beginning. The reason the Son of God was made manifest (visible) was to undo (destroy, loosen, and dissolve) the works the devil [has done]. No one born (begotten) of God [deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin, for God's nature abides in him [His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him]; and he cannot practice sinning because he is born (begotten) of God. By this it is made clear who take their nature from God *and* are His children and who take their nature from the devil *and* are his children: no one who does not practice righteousness [who does not conform to God's will in purpose, thought, and action] is of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother (his fellow believer in Christ). ^{1[5]}
- **Acts 26:18** "To open their eyes so **that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God,** in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (NAS)

These verses of scripture show us the attitudes, motives, decisions, and repentance necessary to be freed from demonic influence or bondage. Did you see anything that indicated casting demons out of a Christian was part of God's master design?

Is Deliverance Ministry Listed Among the Gifts in the Church?

There can be no doubt that Christians experience a spiritual warfare with the devil. The New Testament begins (technically) with the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Thus, examples of demonic influence prior to the book of Acts (i.e. – the four gospels) are not applicable to the manner in which a believer engages in spiritual warfare. Certainly we can apply the teachings of Jesus to our lives, but I am speaking about specific examples from scripture where the early church is seen casting demons out of one another.

The scripture does mention “discerning of spirits” as a gift given by God to some in the church. However He does not elaborate by making it into a complex doctrine on demonic deliverance. In fact, it need not relate to demonic spirits at all.

- **1 Cor 12:7-11** But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, **and to another the distinguishing of spirits**, to another { various } kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. (NAS)

Strong’s Dictionary defines “distinguishing” as follows:

- diakrisis (dee-ak'-ree-sis); from 1252; **judicial estimation**: KJV-- discern (-ing), disputation.

Christians have misinterpreted the meaning of this word, and developed elaborate doctrines on discerning of spirits. They mistakenly teach that it is a gift from God to give certain individuals supernatural ability to identify specific demons or angels. The deliverance ministry proponents teach that this gift is needed to identify the demons inside other Christians that need deliverance! This is absolute nonsense, and a twisting of scripture to conform to their pet doctrine.

The Greek word “diakrisis” (see definition above) is used only three times in the N.T., and it comes from the root word, “diakrino” meaning, “to distinguish or decide through [the act of] mental or judicial means.” Thus, by implication, it can mean, “to try, condemn, punish.” Therefore, distinguishing of spirits would properly be defined as, “making a distinction between [human] spirits, with the authority to judge, and punish [if necessary]”

We only see one example of the implementation of “distinguishing, or judging of spirits in 1 Corinthians chapter fourteen (highlighting and underlining added):

- **1 Cor 14:29-33** And let two or three prophets speak, **and let the others pass judgment.** But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, **so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; nd the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets;** for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. (NAS)

To summarize, those who are prophets must distinguish between false or true messages given by other prophets. To make this kind of distinction takes wisdom from God, and the experience of a mature believer who can test another prophet's words against the scripture. He must determine if another prophet's words align with the truth of God's word; if they do not align, he can ask that prophet to keep silent. This is the judicial aspect of "diakrisis."

Demons That Some Believers Must Learn To Live With

A demon is a messenger of Satan. It is a spirit being that is evil, and can afflict a person with disease and other types of physical infirmities. The apostle Paul *was given a messenger of Satan to keep him humble!* God had given Paul such incredible insight and revelations (e.g. the God-breathed letters he wrote) that pride and self-exaltation was an ever-present temptation.

When you receive the kind of revelations that Paul had been given, the temptation to receive the accolades and praise of men is so great that the only "way of escape" (1 Cor. 10:13) is physical suffering. Pride would be to Paul what alcohol exposure would be to a recovered alcoholic.

Therefore he was "given" a "thorn in the flesh" called "a messenger of Satan." This messenger of Satan was obviously given to him by God, because it was given to keep him humble. Do you think Satan, the king of conceit, would give Paul something that would keep him humble before God?

- **2 Cor 12:7-9** And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, **there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-- to keep me from exalting myself!** Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (NAS)

While Paul's messenger of Satan buffeted him with physical sickness, there are other ways demons can make humans suffer. The emotional and mental torment experienced by some can be every bit as devastating as physical pain can be. I believe that feelings are perhaps the most powerful of the human senses.

Paul's experience would be considered more the exception the rule, but his suffering and weakness was not uniquely his. There are today, as in the past 2000+ years of the history of the church, numerous examples of women and men who have endured hardship and a life of torment that is, by way of comparison to Paul, incomprehensible.

In 2 Cor 12:7-9 the Greek word for, "thorn" should be translated as follows, "withered at the front, i.e. a point or prickle; a bodily annoyance or disability." It originates from two root words meaning, "to parch; through the idea of leanness; the leg (as lank)," and "to gaze at something remarkable while experiencing it for one's own self."

The Greek word for “flesh” means, “flesh (as stripped of the skin).” Combining the various Greek word definitions, the phrase, “thorn in the flesh,” in 2 Cor 12:7b should be translated as follows:

- **2 Cor 12:7b - [a] withered leg, or leg skin, [that is a] bodily annoyance and disability, [with painful symptoms] such as a burning itch; [t was a gruesome sight] causing him to gaze at it because the flesh of the leg would to be stripped off.”**

By consulting today’s medical resources, it is possible to guess what the apostle Paul’s skin ailment was. While not definitive, it brings us a bit closer to understanding the life of relentless pain this dear brother endured.

There are some nasty strains of cellulitis and dermatitis that have symptoms quite similar to Paul’s infirmity. Some are known to cause the skin to burn, itch, become blistered, boils, full of puss, dark in color as the layers of skin die, etc. Certainly these kinds of symptoms would cause Paul to gaze repulsively at his diseased leg. It would also be tremendously excruciating for him to walk and travel across Asia Minor preaching the gospel. Can you imagine trying to escape from your persecutors, even being lowered over a city wall in a basket while nursing a leg or legs that were raked in searing agony?

The Greek word for “weak, weakness, weaknesses” in 2 Cor 12:9-10 is the most common word used in the New Testament for “infirmities; sickness; disease.” Literally the word weakness means, “feebleness (of mind or body); by implication, a malady.” It is translated in numerous places elsewhere in the N.T. as disease, infirmity, sickness, and weakness.

Paul prayed three times to be healed of this disease; but God knew it was best for him not to answer it Paul’s way. God refused Paul’s request to remove the messenger of Satan that buffeted him with sickness, because God loved Paul and didn’t want him to fall prey to the enemy. However, if Paul attended a church practicing demonic deliverance, they would insist he get “delivered” of these “demons of skin disease.”

Isn’t it easy to see how the doctrine of demonic deliverance is so contrary to God’s plan for our lives? He has established the rules, and unless we follow scripture, even with the best of intentions, it is so easy to be led astray.

Some Christians Are Intentionally Delivered Over To Satan

Sometimes certain Christians become troublemakers. Their actions affect and stumble other believers, and give cause for offense among unbelievers. Repeated attempts by the local church are usually given to such persons to provide adequate opportunities to repent. When they refuse all correction and instruction, they are “delivered over to Satan.” This means that they are put out of the congregation by unanimous decision of all members of a particular church.

- **1 Tim 1:18-20** This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in

regard to their faith. **Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.** (NAS)

This corrective action involves abstaining from any fellowship with them by other believers in the hope that they will see the error of their ways, repent, and return to the Lord. But if these sorts of men were in a church practicing demonic deliverance, they would have to submit to a lengthy prayer session; the solution would not be to put them out of the church, but to cast out their, “demons of rebellion.”

- **1 Cor 5:5-13 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.** Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within {the church} But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves. (NAS)

God’s word says remove such men or women from your midst. If an employer has one bad employee who won’t follow the guidelines, he usually gets warned a few times, then fired from the job. Why shouldn’t the church have similar common sense solutions?

CONCLUSION: Manifesting God the Father and His son Jesus

We have already covered the scriptures thoroughly, and there is no mention of a born-again, spirit-filled Christian, “manifesting demons.” To conclude, there are numerous places regarding the way we are to “manifest” the nature and characteristics of God the Father, and His son Jesus the Christ. As you read these passages, contemplate their application to your life; then apply their truth to your thoughts and actions. This is the highest form of “deliverance”: from the power of demonic forces...overcoming evil with good (READ Romans 12:21). SELAH.

- **2 Cor 5:9-11** Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. **Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God;** and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. (NAS)

- **2 Cor 4:7-11** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be **manifested** in our mortal flesh. (NAS)
- **Rom 16:25-27** Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, **but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets**, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen. (NAS)
- **2 Cor 3:2-3** You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; **being manifested that you are a letter of Christ**, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. (NAS)
- **I Jn 4:9-12** **By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son {to be} the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. (NAS)
- **James 4:17** Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin. (NAS)
- **Rom 16:19-20** For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil. **And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.** (NAS)