

Introduction

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8b).

- “Destroy” there means to loose, undo, or untie. Deliverance **looses** people!
- Jesus called deliverance the children’s bread (Mark 7:24-30).
- “In My Name they shall cast out demons!” (Mark 16:17a).

1. The Christian’s authority to cast out demons.

1.1. Jesus was anointed to free the captives.

Jesus saw His mission as one of liberation: “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD” (Luke 4:18-19).

“...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). A quarter or more of Jesus’ ministry involved casting out demons.

1.2. Caution: God at work!

Jesus said that His authority over demons demonstrated that the Kingdom of God had come: “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matt. 12:28). The arrival of the Kingdom demanded a response: “...Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel’” (Mark 1:14-15).

1.3. “As the Father has sent me, even so send I you” (John 20:21).

Our mission is not just to demonstrate His love, but His works as well. The power of the Name of Jesus demonstrates the **authority** of that Name.

“And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

1.4. Jesus trained and commissioned the Church to expel demons.

Jesus has authorized the entire Church to carry on His mission of expelling demons.

1.5. The Church carried on a deliverance ministry in the Book of Acts and afterwards.

“And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:6-7).

Tertullian (d. 220 AD) said that after the Word, the greatest proof of our faith was the testimony of the demons who have been conquered by Jesus!

2. Understanding common terms in deliverance ministry.

2.1. What do we mean by deliverance?

Deliverance is simply setting people free from demonic influence: expelling demons as well as breaking the grip of behaviors that give demons access to people's lives.

2.2. Avoid the term "exorcism."

Exorcism is driving out demons through rituals. The Bible doesn't use the word "exorcize" (*exorcizo*) to describe Christian deliverance. Jesus said we would **"cast out"** demons (a different word: *ekballo*).

Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority. Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word [Greek word "logos," meaning word, teaching, message] this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." (Luke 4:31-36)

2.3. Avoid the term “possessed.”

“Possession” implies that demons own a person. Also, “possession” isn’t the best translation of the word that describes people with demons. The Bible word, *daimonizomai*, simply means “to have a demon.” In English we can say “demonized.”

In the New Testament, people are either “demonized,” “have demons,” or are “held” by demons. But it’s not correct to say someone is “**possessed by**” a demon. In older English, saying someone was “possessed of demons” simply meant he had demons.

It’s better to use more gracious language when ministering to people, perhaps “harassed” or “afflicted” by demons.

3. Demons in the human person.

3.1. Where do demons reside?

The Bible claims demons can live in people. It’s not necessarily unbiblical to say that Christians can be “demonized” **provided** we’re clear and careful about what that means. It would be naïve to think that Christians can’t be influenced by demons. Note: Jesus says demons seek to reenter people after being expelled (see Matt. 12:43).

3.2. How do demons gain access to people’s lives?

Demonic influence can come about in a variety of ways.

3.2.1. Invitation: This is rare, but some people invite spirits to enter them.

- 3.2.2. Idolatry: Paul says the gods of the Gentiles are demons (see 1 Cor. 10:20).
- 3.2.3. Heredity: It's possible for demonic influences to pass through the bloodline.
- 3.2.4. Occult involvement: Engaging in occult practices or possessing occult objects.
- 3.2.5. Curses: A curse or spell can release demonic workings into people's lives.
- 3.2.6. Sexual sin and perversion: All sexual experience outside of marriage ("fornication") must be avoided.
- 3.2.7. Drug use: Hallucinogenic drugs can open people up to spiritual experiences.
- 3.2.8. Soulless witchcraft: manipulation, intimidation, and control.
- 3.2.9. Carnal religiosity: Intense religious zeal or guilt.
- 3.2.10. Unforgiveness: This is the devil's playground.
- 3.2.11. Violence: Observing violence, glamorizing it, and participating in it.
- 3.2.12. Wrath: Giving place to outbursts of wrath or hatred.
- 3.2.13. Carnal indulgence: A lack of self-control can become demonically energized.

3.2.13. Physical and sexual abuse, physical and emotional traumas: Persons who have experienced physical traumas, terrifying events, or “shocks” may become weakened in their soul to the extent that they are unable to resist demonic invasion. The victim is not to blame for the situation, but the enemy’s lies become part of the person’s self-image.

3.3. Diagnosing demonic behavior.

The Gospels show us some obvious signs of demonic activity. Others may be more subtle. Here is a **partial** list of things which may indicate demonic influence:

1. Inability to control the thought life, e.g., impure thoughts, excessive fear, irrational hatreds and mental constructs.
2. Inability to control emotions or sensations, e.g., hatred, self-pity, silliness and flightiness.
3. Restlessness, exhaustion and inability to focus.
4. Compulsive behaviors.
5. Fascination with darkness and the occult.
6. Erratic, inappropriate, and untimely behavior.
7. Unexplained changes in personality or morality.
8. Blasphemy.
9. An aversion to holy things such as the Name of Jesus and the Presence of the Holy Spirit.
10. Extreme religiosity and devotion to religious rituals.
11. Attraction to strange and unusual beliefs; doctrinal error.
12. Profanity and an attraction to uncleanness in general.

13. Mockery and cruelty.
14. Frequent lying.
15. Sexual licentiousness, promiscuity, and seductive behavior; sexual perversions and compulsions.
16. Self-harm, self-destructive behaviors, and suicidal tendencies.
17. Social withdrawal.
18. Supernatural knowledge or skills.
19. Supernatural strength.
20. Persistent patterns of “self-sabotaging behavior,” unexplained bizarre incidents or frequent accidents in a person’s life or family.
21. Persistent and/or difficult to explain illnesses.
22. Other overt supernatural manifestations and phenomena.

Demonic activity is best diagnosed by the Holy Spirit, and confirmed through prayer. Remember: **some** illness is demonic but most probably isn’t, including mental illness.

3.4. Demonic assignments.

Occult practitioners may send demons against people. Demons can specialize in their workings in people. The Bible reveals spirits of deafness, blindness, etc. We should leave no open doors for the enemy to take advantage of!

“Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:10-11).

4. Expelling demons.

4.1. Pastoral considerations.

Our first consideration in any deliverance session is the welfare and dignity of the person for whom we're praying.

4.2. Preparation.

- Jesus Himself taught that there were **hard cases** (Matt. 17:21). For this reason it's wise for the ministry team to fast ahead of a deliverance session.
- We give some directives ahead of time to people we're going to minister to, so they will know what to expect.
- An ideal team is on the smaller side.
- Unity and authority are important.

4.3. When should you not proceed?

A person must be willing to repent of and give up all known sin.

4.4. Steps to freedom.

4.4.1. Ask God for help!

4.4.2. As much as possible, be in an atmosphere of worship.

4.4.3. Encourage the person that Christ will set him free, but he must **want** to be free.

4.4.4. Seek to have the person repent of all known sin, or lead him to Christ.

However, if a person is not willing to receive Jesus as Savior, do not proceed with your deliverance session. Just pray blessing over them.

When I'm ministering in deliverance, I (P.N.) address five specific sins that will open the door for demonic influence, or open them to the effects of a curse: (1) harboring unforgiveness; (2) shedding innocent blood; (3) occult practices; (4) substance abuse; and (5) sexual sin. In each case we have the person renounce sins in general, then list specific instances. In addition to those five main areas, there may be other specific sins that the person needs to confess and renounce.

4.4.5. As a demonic presence becomes apparent, command any demons to leave in the Name of Jesus. If there are known curses, cancel them in the Name of Jesus.

- You may not know a demon's name, but you can believe God for a *functional name* and a battle plan. We don't need to know the demon's actual name.
- If necessary, insist that the demons release the person so you can communicate with him directly.

4.4.6. Be extremely cautious about conversing with demons!

4.4.7. Ministering in the authority of Christ means you are ministering in the authority of Christ. Demons fear and respect Him. You don't need to shout or engage in theatrics.

4.4.8. Pray until you are finished, but let God tell you when that is.

4.4.9. Pray for inner healing for the person.

4.4.10. Pray for the Holy Spirit's filling of the person.

5. What happens next?

5.1. After deliverance.

A person may need post-prayer directives to help him “maintain” his deliverance. More than once, Jesus said, “Go and sin no more.”

5.2. The problems of the flesh and iniquities.

Many people “lose” a deliverance because the root of demonic activity wasn't something occult but a matter of fleshly indulgence. The flesh must be crucified – it cannot be cast out!

5.3. What if you feel called to this ministry?

All Christians should be able to engage in this ministry, but it can demand a high level of commitment and a lifestyle that many American believers do not maintain.

5.4. Recommended books:

Neil Anderson, “Winning Spiritual Warfare;” Steven Beauchamp, “Power To Deliver;” Randy Clark, “The Biblical Guidebook To Deliverance;” Chris Hayward, “God's Cleansing Stream;” Derek Prince, “They Shall Expel Demons.”
