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Recap

- We began this course by looking into the theology of spiritual warfare.
- After that, we began talking about practicalities of spiritual warfare, examining the nature of the occult, and the believer's authority in Christ.
- Today, we want to move into the next block of the course, and see how we can prevail in our spiritual warfare.

1. Some Questions About Deliverance and Prayer Practices.

In the past few years, deliverance ministries have gotten a lot of attention. This has both pros and cons, so we need to be wise and discerning as we're growing. Some common prayer practices in these areas raise important questions for us.

1.1. What's the difference between rebuking demons and casting them out?

Be aware: many of the words and phrases Christians use in prayer can prove to be nothing more than traditions. If the Bible doesn't support the way we're praying, we won't be as effective. We'll be more effective when we pray **according to reality**.

When you're casting out a demon, you are **expelling** it from the person; "casting out" is an eviction. Rebuking, however, is something different. The Greek verb *epitimáo* means you're silencing someone, quieting them with authority.

- The disciples rebuked parents who brought children to Jesus.
- Peter rebuked Jesus for predicting He was going to be killed... yikes!
- Jesus rebuked demons, as well as the winds and the seas.

1.2. When do you use rebuking and casting out in deliverance... or do you?

In deliverance, there are times we command a spirit to stop acting up or stop speaking.

1.3. Do we rebuke and cast out Satan?

It's unlikely we're bothered by Satan himself; it's unlikely that Satan or any high-ranking angel ever inhabits people or controls them directly. An exception in Scripture may be Judas Iscariot (see John 13:27), and perhaps the future, final Antichrist (see 2 Th. 2:9).

1.4. When do you "bind" in deliverance, or, when do you bind?

People think this will cause the Devil's activity to cease, but we can't find it in the Bible. When Jesus spoke about binding, He wasn't giving us a **technique**.

"This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. (Matthew 12:24b-29)

Jesus was simply giving us an illustration of how He was overcoming Satan. He was binding Satan in the same way that robbers overpower people and tie them up. It has nothing to do with using a verbal formula such as, “I bind you, Satan!”

If demons are causing a scene or doing anything else we don’t want them to do, we command them to stop in the Name of Jesus.

1.5 What about the power of binding and loosing?

Jesus said, “...whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18:18). However, in context, all that meant was to exercise authority and judgment in the church. In Matthew 18 Jesus is discussing people who are being put out of the church (excommunicated). When Jesus came, He gave the Apostles the ability to bind and loose, like the rabbis had.

1.6. Cursing spirits and reviling authorities.

One of the sins mentioned in the books of 2nd Peter and Jude is **reviling authorities**. In the Scriptures we see the holy angels upholding this principle. Michael and the Angel of the Lord both spoke to Satan saying, “The Lord rebuke you.” They trusted in God to decide how and when to deal with the enemy. Do we have the ability and the authority to curse Satan?

1.7. A little more about some dubious forms of prayer.

The fact that unscriptural techniques seem to be so ineffective should cause to us to reconsider how we speak to the enemy.

Our prayers also need to “make sense.” Are we really dealing with the enemy or are we merely “reporting” that we are? For example, is there any effect when a person says, “Lord, we rebuke this demon!”?

In the New Testament, we see people speaking to the demons directly. Jesus and His disciples made **commands to the demons** themselves. We don’t pray about demons (although it might not be wrong), but we **speak to them**, in Jesus’ Name.

If something doesn’t work, that might be because it doesn’t work. ☺

Therefore, beware of learned behaviors with no biblical justification.

What about binding the enemy’s work in other people? Some things are a matter of intercession, rather than something that we can simply take authority over.

1.8. What about using the Blood of Jesus as a weapon?

The Blood is meant to be directed **to God**. It gives us access to the Presence of God, and to His Throne of Grace. We could neither worship nor pray without it.

The Blood is our weapon against condemnation. It reminds us of Jesus’ sacrificial work, which eliminated the state of enmity that existed between us and the Father. Pleading the Blood reminds Heaven that we are partakers of the covenant that Jesus purchased for us by His Blood.

The New Testament never speaks of the Blood as providing physical protection.

1.9. Concluding Thoughts.

Don't let the enemy cheat you out of your authority in prayer and in deliverance. **Pray biblically.** Saturate yourself in the New Testament and see how **they** operated. Remember that the Greater One lives within you, and don't be intimidated!

2. Walking in the fear of the Lord.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil" (Proverbs 3:5-7). Contained in these verses is a missing ingredient – a "lost secret of the church!" If we don't have **the fear of the Lord**, we can't please the Lord.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Prov. 9:10); "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul..." (Deut. 10:12).

2.1. What is the fear of the Lord?

The fear of the Lord is to reverence Him with the kind of reverence that a child would have for a loving parent. "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My fear?" (Malachi 1:6). If we only see the **love** of God and never think about His holiness, then we'll have a warped understanding of Who He is.

Jesus said in John 14:15, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” In verse 24 He added: “He who does not love Me does not keep My Words...”

The fear of the Lord is “the other side of the coin,” the other side of God’s love. If we really love the Lord, we will honor Him by observing and obeying His Words. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... teaching them to **observe all things** that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19-20a).

Reverence for God will enable us to live holy when no one is watching us. Joseph said: “...how... can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9).

2.2. How can I check my heart to see if I really fear the Lord?

Do I hate what He hates, and love what He loves? “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate” (Proverbs 8:13).

Do you ever take time to examine yourself? “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalms 139:23-24).

God cannot be bargained with. “Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes” (2 Chronicles 19:7).

God never violates His own standards: “Forever, O LORD, your Word is settled in Heaven” (Psalms 119:89).

2.3. Is the fear of the Lord for the New Testament, too?

Wasn't God sort of angry in the Old Testament, but more loving in the New? NO!

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28-29).

- The grace of God we now enjoy enables us to truly walk in His fear, and bring pleasure to God's heart.
- God is the most loving, the kindest, most patient person there is or ever could be. There's so much talk about the love of God today — but too often it's coming from people who are redefining it.

The Cross is the greatest revelation of God's love!

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [the atoning sacrifice] for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

But the Cross shows us the **holiness** of God, as well as His great love. The Cross teaches me the true depth of my sin, even while it's teaching me the extent of His love.

In the New Testament, we actually have a greater responsibility to walk before Him and walk before the world in purity – because we’ve experienced His love and grace to an unparalleled degree!

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” (Hebrews 12:22-26).

Don’t be deceived by the spirit of this age into seeing a God of love who overlooks sin. Today, some claim we can sin without consequences because of grace.

“...some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God’s marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives” (Jude 4a NLT).

The grace of God teaches us “to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age...” (Titus 2:12 ESV).

Beware of any teaching on grace that excuses sin! If you really encounter God’s grace, your life will change. There will be good fruit and good works.

“I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2:14b).

Don't be afraid... of the fear of the Lord! And don't be afraid when the world calls you a “hater”. "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20).

2.4. A challenge!

“Then the churches had rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in **the fear of the Lord**, and in **the comfort of the Holy Spirit**, were multiplied” (Acts 9:31).

- The church was walking in two things. One was the *paraklesis*, or comfort, of the Holy Spirit. This word emphasizes how God fills us with His Spirit and gives us boldness. Many walk in this supernatural power, but not in the fear of the Lord.
- In our part of the world, the fear of the Lord can help us stand against envy, greed, and coveting what other people have. “Let not your heart envy sinners, but be in the fear of the LORD all the day long” (Prov. 23:17).

2.5. Rewards of walking in the fear of the Lord.

God says He will take care of you: “Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want [lack] to those who fear Him” (Psalms 34:9).

You'll be rewarded with the Lord's Presence and a heightened relationship with Him:

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:21-23)

And there are many other blessings God promises to those who fear Him!

2.6. Let's live holy!

If we've hit a wall in our growth, let's ask whether we always have the fear of the Lord.

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:2-4).

Avoid double-mindedness! "Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; **unite my heart** to fear Your name. I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forevermore" (Psalms 86:11-12).

Let's take inventory of our hearts!

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:17-32)

3. The Springs of Life: Preparing and Guarding our Hearts

“[S]ubmit to God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Success in intercession and in ministry is more than simply learning techniques or praying correctly. We must be careful above all to prepare and guard our hearts. Proverbs 4:20–27 gives us powerful instruction:

- 20 My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.
- 21 Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart;
- 22 For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh.
- 23 Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.
- 24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you.
- 25 Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you.
- 26 Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established.
- 27 Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.

3.1 God says to give attention.

Give attention to what? To his words.

3.1.1. Give attention to my words. This word *give attention* means to listen attentively, to pay attention, and to be alert.

3.1.2. Incline your ear. This Hebrew word for *incline* means we turn or bend our ear towards someone who is speaking, so we can hear him well.

3.1.3. *Don't let them depart from before your eyes.* This means that we're never too far away from the Word of the Lord, or too far away from communing with Him.

3.1.4. *Keep them in the midst of your heart.* This word *keep* means to guard, and watch over. It tells us that the Word must have a lodging place in our hearts.

I believe one of the greatest needs of the American church is to re-orient ourselves **away** from entertainment and **towards** edification. It's only by spending time in the Word—which the Bible says can divide all the way down to the dividing of soul and spirit—that we can be assured that our thinking and our impressions are ordained by God, rather than coming from some other source.

3.2 God says to keep your heart.

In verse 23, God says: Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. This is one to memorize!

3.2.1. *God says to keep or guard our hearts with all diligence.* This really means to guard your heart **more than anything else that you guard.**

3.2.2. *The springs of life.* Life issues forth from your heart! The currents of life come from there, and it is the wellspring of life. Jesus said that out of the heart comes forth every kind of sin, and that out of the abundance or the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. Because of this we need a pure, or single eye.

Jesus said the words that He speaks to us are spirit and life (see John 6:63). By the same token, when we are filled with the Spirit and sow to the Spirit instead of sowing to the flesh, out of our heart, out of our innermost being, there is a flow — a flow of rivers of living water that can not only refresh us but make streams in the desert.

Notice also that it isn't **God's** responsibility to guard my heart, **it's mine**. He says:

You guard it, more than you guard anything else I've given you!

- We allow ourselves to indulge in “inordinate affections.”
- Remember how David said he would put no wicked thing in front of his eyes.
- A heart that's being built up by the Word of God will be able to sense when the hedge around our spirits is being broken down. “Whoever has no rule [control] over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls” (Prov. 25:28).
- The failure to guard our hearts results in a breach of the walls, allowing enemies to come into the castle of our hearts.

3.3 God says let all your ways be established.

The word *established* means that your life and your ways have become firm and secure because you've built your life on the unshakeable foundation of Christ. Notice:

24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you. 25 Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. 26 Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. 27 Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.

Notice the powerful principles within these verses:

- Avoiding deceit and a perverse mouth.
- Not letting your vision be pulled away to things that are destructive.
- Examining your life regularly.
- Letting all your ways be established. Don't give yourself the luxury of having any part of your life operating under the wisdom of this world!
- Turn away from any evils we may be actively participating in.

3.4. Sin operates as a seed.

Be careful: sin, just like the Word, operates as a seed. Scripture is always warning us about the power and the danger of things that happen **gradually**. Watch out for the “deceptiveness of the gradual.” Examples:

- King Rehoboam “did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD” (2 Chron. 12:14). We need to give deliberate attention to our heart, not neglect it.
- There are bad consequences to relaxing our standards: “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep — so shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man” (Prov. 6:10-11). That’s a warning about physical and spiritual laziness.
- Lustful desire is like a seed that develops over time, or like the growth of a child. “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1:14-15).

3.5 A concluding word:

We know that the enemy is seeking someone whom he may devour.

Only by taking heed to our own hearts and guarding our hearts “above all things” can we keep our house a strong house, secure from the inroads of the enemy. By doing this we can continue to be effective against him and remain useful to God in helping to set others free.

Let’s make our hearts strong in the Lord and pay attention to the walls of our spirit. The preparation and keeping of the heart is a neglected part of spiritual warfare... but it’s so very necessary!

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