

Level 1

24 Lessons

Equipping believers with biblical principles and practical tools for deliverance ministry.

December 1, 2025

To Fellow Ministers and Leaders in Deliverance Ministry,

We are delighted to introduce the complete 24-lesson curriculum for Level 1 – Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance. This comprehensive series is designed to equip and empower individuals called to the ministry of freedom and deliverance. Our deepest desire is to see the Kingdom advanced and people set free, which is why we share these lessons with an open hand.

Open Distribution and Usage Policy

These lessons are not copyrighted and are offered at no cost. You are fully encouraged to distribute, adapt, or modify them to suit your local ministry context. To maintain clarity and doctrinal consistency for our School, we simply request that any modified versions not be associated with Beautiful Feet in any form or publication.

Methodology and Encouragement

We recognize that deliverance ministries employ diverse and valid methods. While we believe strongly in the effectiveness of the method taught in this course—“Following Jesus’ Model of Ministry”—we understand it is only one approach and carries no greater authority than other methods used throughout the global Church. We encourage those who use different models to draw from the principles and insights in this resource to enrich their existing approach.

Future Development

We are currently developing the advanced materials, and we expect the Level 2 lessons to be available by Spring 2026.

Looking to the future,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chet Swearingen', written in a cursive style.

Chet Swearingen
Founder and President of Beautiful Feet

Beautiful Feet

P.O. Box 915

Auburn, IN 46706

Contact Information

Phone: 260-920-8248

Email: romans1015@outlook.com

Website: romans1015.com

Table of Contents: Level 1 Lessons

1. Deliverance Practices of Early Christians and Non-Christians	2
2. Deliverance in the Synoptic Gospels	10
3. Deliverance in John’s Gospel and Letters	15
4. The Demonized Man in the Synagogue.....	20
5. Canaanite Woman’s Demon Possessed-Daughter.....	30
6. The Demonized Man of the Gadarenes	39
7. The Demonized Boy Who Was Deaf and Mute	48
8. Ministry of Deliverance Till 400 A.D.....	56
9. The Waning of Spiritual Power and the Shifting Role of Deliverance in Church History	65
10. Modern Views of Deliverance and the Theological Divide	70
11. Deliverance in the Roman Catholic Church	78
12. Reconciling Modern Psychology with Demonization	84
13. Stress, Depression, Fear and Anxiety.....	92
14. Hearing Voices – Schizophrenia or Demons?	103
15. Bipolar Disorder and Borderline Personality Disorder	112
16. Satan: Who Is He?	124
17. Demons and the Kingdom of Darkness	135
18. Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?	144
19. Legal Rights and Strongholds	156
20. Spiritual Warfare and Divine Boundaries.....	167
21. Blessings and Curses.....	176
22. Inner Healing.....	189
23. Introduction to Dissociative Identity Disorder	199
24. Planning for a Deliverance Session	214

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 1: Deliverance Practices of Early Christians and Non-Christians

Description

This lesson serves as an introduction to the ministry of deliverance, laying a foundation by examining the earliest recorded non-Christian and Christian practices related to deliverance. The intent is to understand the theological and historical contexts surrounding deliverance in both ancient and early Christian traditions.

Definitions

In the context of deliverance ministry, several terms are commonly used, each carrying particular connotations within different Christian traditions:

- **Deliverance, Freedom, and Liberty:** These terms are preferred in Protestant circles as they most accurately convey the activity of liberation from spiritual oppression. However, “deliverance” has, in some contexts, become associated with negative connotations, leading many churches to adopt the term “freedom” instead.
- **Exorcism:** This term is traditionally used in Catholicism and reflects the historic approach to the casting out of demons.

Scriptural Examination: Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19

- These passages highlight the prophetic and fulfillment aspects of deliverance, with a span of approximately 700 years between Isaiah’s prophecy and Jesus’ declaration in the synagogue.
 - Jesus’ reading of the prophecy in the synagogue marked the beginning of His ministry of healing and deliverance, which became a cornerstone of His earthly ministry.
-

Non-Christian Practices

Prior to the advent of Christianity, many ancient cultures developed their own methods for invoking or placating demons. These practices were often ritualistic in nature and centered around the use of incantations and protective rites. The “power encounters” seen in the ministry of Jesus—direct confrontations with demonic forces through divine authority—were distinct from the more ritualized practices of other cultures.

Babylonian Practices

The Babylonians held the belief that the world was populated by invisible spirits, some of which were benevolent, while others were malevolent. These harmful spirits were believed to cause disease, misfortune, and madness. To address these afflictions, a variety of rituals and incantations were performed.

- **Types of Spirits:**
 - *Utukku/Udug*: Malevolent spirits associated with death or the underworld.
 - *Lamashtu*: A female demon believed to harm infants and pregnant women.
 - *Pazuzu*: A demon invoked against Lamashtu; he was considered fierce but could also be used for protection.
 - *Rabisu*: Demons that ambushed individuals unexpectedly.
 - *Asakku*: Spirits that brought fever and disease.

Practices of Invocation or Placation

1. Apotropaic Rituals

These rituals were designed to protect individuals from evil spirits and included actions such as:

- Burning incense
- Sprinkling water
- Chanting incantations
- Wearing amulets

2. Incantation Texts

Numerous clay tablets contain ritual texts and spells used for exorcism. A notable example is the *Maqlû*, a Babylonian series of exorcism rituals involving the burning of effigies and chanting to drive away demonic forces.

3. Medical/Magical Practices

Illnesses were often attributed to spiritual causes, and *āšipu* (exorcists) used a blend of magical and medical practices to attempt to heal through spiritual means.

Use of Clay Figures in Rituals

Clay figures were often created to represent demons or witches and were subjected to ritual destruction. Examples of such rituals include:

- Binding the figure with cords
 - Piercing it with pins or daggers
 - Burning or drowning the figure
 - Smearing the figure with substances like bitumen
 - Crushing or smashing it underfoot
- These symbolic acts of destruction were believed to bind or banish the spirit associated with the effigy.

Present-Day Practices

The belief in and practices related to evil spirits continue in various forms around the world. A more detailed account of contemporary deliverance practices can be found in *Risk*, a book by Chet Swearingen that explores demonic activity and deliverance practices in Muslim communities in Southeast Asia.

Biblical Foundations of Deliverance

First Biblically Recorded Deliverance

- *Now the Spirit of the LORD had left Saul, and the LORD sent a tormenting spirit that filled him with depression and fear... Whenever the tormenting spirit from God troubled Saul, David would play the harp. Then Saul would feel better, and the tormenting spirit would go away.* (1 Samuel 16:14-23 NLT)
 - The narrative of King Saul's affliction by a tormenting spirit provides an early example of deliverance in the Bible. While David's music brought temporary relief from the spirit, it did not result in permanent deliverance. This event highlights the role of worship and the anointing of God in bringing temporary relief from demonic influence.
 - The spirit departed temporarily through David's worship, not by a direct confrontation.

Deliverance in Jewish Tradition—Prior to Jesus

Jesus Himself acknowledged that the Pharisees had their own disciples (referred to as exorcists) who performed deliverance ministries.

- Jesus refers to the exorcists of the Pharisees: *“And if I am empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said.”* (Matthew 12:27 NLT)
 - Wording of other translations:
 - *“By whom do your sons cast them out?”* (KJV, ESV, NASB)
 - These exorcists practiced Jewish rituals rather than acting in the authority of Jesus' name. Their success in casting out demons was not guaranteed. While they were recognized by the Jewish community as legitimate, their effectiveness was not always assured.
- *A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, “I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!”* (Acts 19:13 NLT)
 - This passage shows that itinerant Jewish exorcists were using Jesus' name in their rituals, but without genuine faith or authority.

- Some translations like the NASB and ESV, include the word “*exorcists*,” e.g., “Jewish exorcists.”
-

Deliverance During Jesus’ Ministry

Throughout His ministry, Jesus provided authority to His disciples and others to engage in deliverance.

- **The Twelve Disciples:**
 - *So the disciples went out, telling everyone they met to repent of their sins and turn to God. And they cast out many demons and healed many sick people, anointing them with olive oil.* (Mark 6:12-13 NLT)
 - **An Unnamed Man:**
 - *John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he wasn’t in our group.” “Don’t stop him!” Jesus said. “No one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me.”* (Mark 9:38-40 NLT; see also Luke 9:49-50)
 - **The Seventy (or Seventy-Two):**
 - *When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, “Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!” “Yes,” he told them, “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you.”* (Luke 10:17-19 NLT)
-

Conclusion

As we have seen, the ministry of deliverance has deep roots in both historical and biblical contexts, from the ancient practices of appeasing or expelling evil spirits to the direct confrontations with demonic forces demonstrated by Jesus and His disciples. This understanding underscores the spiritual authority granted by God, as revealed in His inerrant Word. The Scriptures, being fully inspired and authoritative, provide the foundation for our understanding and practice of deliverance.

Next Lesson: Deliverance in the Synoptic Gospels

It is important to recognize that deliverance was not only a central part of Jesus’ earthly ministry but is also a continuing call for believers today. The Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are rich with clear, authoritative accounts of Jesus’ acts of deliverance, showing that this ministry is integral to the Gospel message itself.

In the next lesson, we will explore the Synoptic Gospels, which frequently mention Jesus’ deliverance ministry. While the lesson will not delve deeply into each deliverance, it will

highlight how these Gospels consistently emphasize this ministry, underscoring its integral role in the Gospel message and its continuing relevance for the church today.

Addendum to Lesson 1

True and Counterfeit Spirit Possession

The Bible provides several verses that emphasize the concept of being “**filled**” or “**possessed**” by the Holy Spirit. Here are some key verses that underscore the theology of being filled by the Holy Spirit contrasted with demon possession:

1. The Holy Spirit Fills Believers

- **John 14:16-17 (NLT)**

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.”

- **The Holy Spirit’s indwelling** is clearly described here. The contrast with demon possession is found in the fact that the Holy Spirit “**will be in you,**” marking the believer as God’s possession, empowered to live according to His will.

- **Ephesians 5:18 (NLT)**

Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

- This verse highlights the **filling** of the Holy Spirit as something that controls and influences the believer’s life, much like how **demon possession** influences an individual. However, being filled with the Holy Spirit brings spiritual renewal and transformation, not oppression.

- **Acts 1:8 (NLT)**

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

- The **empowerment** by the Holy Spirit here contrasts with demon possession because the Holy Spirit gives believers the strength and ability to fulfill God’s purposes, whereas demon possession is about oppression and destruction.

2. The Holy Spirit as a Seal and Guarantee

- **Ephesians 1:13-14 (NLT)**

And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

- The **Holy Spirit** serves as a **seal** or mark of ownership and protective security, signifying that believers belong to God. This contrasts with demon possession, which is about being owned by evil forces.

- **Romans 8:9 (NLT)**

But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.)

- **The Holy Spirit's indwelling** is presented here as a mark of **belonging to Christ**. If someone does not have the Spirit, they are not truly His. In contrast, demon possession represents a situation where a person is controlled by a malevolent force, without belonging to God.

3. The Authority of the Holy Spirit Over Evil

- **1 John 4:4 (NLT)**

But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.

- This verse highlights the **greater power** of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer compared to any demon. The **indwelling Holy Spirit** empowers believers to overcome evil, contrasting directly with demon possession, where the individual is under the control of a destructive demon(s).

- **Philippians 2:13 (NLT)**

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

- This verse reveals God's active work through the Holy Spirit within believers, not only shaping our desires to please Him but also empowering us to accomplish His will. This internal divine enablement is in stark contrast to the external, coercive control of demonic forces, which seek to derail God's purposes in an individual's life.

4. Demon Possession vs. Holy Spirit's Influence

- **Luke 11:24-26 (NLT)**

"When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, searching for rest. But when it finds none, it says, 'I will return to the person I came from.' So it returns and finds that its former home is all swept and in order. Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before."

- In contrast to the **Holy Spirit's indwelling**, which brings peace, order, and transformation, this passage highlights the chaotic and oppressive nature of **demonic possession**, where spirits torment and lead individuals into greater destruction.

- **Matthew 12:28 (NLT)**

"But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you."

- Here, Jesus shows that the **Holy Spirit** has the authority to cast out demons, demonstrating the stark contrast between the Holy Spirit's work in bringing **freedom** and **deliverance**, versus demon possession, which brings oppression.

5. The Body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit

- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NLT)**

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

- The idea of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit stands in direct contrast to demon possession, where a person's body and mind are not under God's ownership but are instead under the control or oppressive influence of demonic powers.

Conclusion

The contrast between **being possessed by the Holy Spirit** and **demon possession** is clear in Scripture. Being **possessed by the Holy Spirit** leads to empowerment, transformation, freedom, and ownership by God, marked by peace and sanctification. On the other hand, **demon possession** leads to oppression, bondage, chaos, and destruction. The Holy Spirit in the believer is a symbol of divine ownership and a guarantee of God's work in and through them, whereas demon possession represents the manipulation and destruction of an individual's life by evil forces.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 2: Deliverance in the Synoptic Gospels

Description

This lesson examines the synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—each of which provides a general summary of the life and ministry of Jesus, often through similar accounts. In contrast, the Gospel of John presents a different narrative, which will be addressed in a subsequent lesson. In this lesson, we will see that a significant portion of the chapters in these Gospels includes at least one instance of Jesus addressing or overcoming demonic forces. This highlights the integral role that deliverance ministry played not only in Jesus' ministry but also in that of His followers.

Power Encounter

The New Testament provides no indication that Satan was permanently defeated during Jesus' earthly ministry. On the contrary, it makes clear that Satan and his demonic forces remain adversaries that Jesus' followers will continue to battle until the end of the age. This fact, however, need not elicit fear, as victory is assured for those who remain watchful and diligent until the end (Matthew 28:20; Revelation 20:10).

To confront these malevolent powers, Jesus introduced a model of ministry that was unprecedented—a “power encounter.” While deliverance from evil spirits was not unknown prior to Jesus' ministry, His manner of casting out demons was unique. Observers recognized that the authority with which Jesus performed these acts of deliverance was unlike any seen before, as He did not rely on the incantations, amulets, incense, or charms that were common in the rituals of both Jewish and non-Jewish exorcists.

Demonized Man in the Synagogue

One of the earliest demonstrations of Jesus' authority over demonic forces occurs in the synagogue at Capernaum. Following this remarkable act, the people were astounded, and Jesus' fame spread quickly.

- *Amazement gripped the audience, and they began to discuss what had happened. “What sort of new teaching is this?” they asked excitedly. “It has such authority! Even evil spirits obey his orders!”* (Mark 1:27 NLT)
-

References to the Demonic in the Gospel of Matthew

Approximately 25% of Matthew's Gospel includes references to the casting out of demons, underscoring the central role of deliverance in Jesus' ministry. Here is the first instance:

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

It is important to note the distinction in terminology between demon possession and physical ailments such as epilepsy or paralysis. Jesus not only cast out demons but also healed those suffering from various diseases.

Through these deliverances, Jesus garnered:

- Fame
- Authenticity
- Crowds

The Commissioning of His Disciples

Jesus gives authority to His disciples:

- *And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.* (Matthew 10:1 NKJV)

Here, again, a distinction is made between the act of casting out demons and the healing of sicknesses.

Seven of the twenty-eight chapters in Matthew's Gospel (4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 17) feature references to demons or demonic activity, demonstrating the prominence of deliverance ministry in validating the authority of Jesus' proclamation of the Good News.

- *"People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know."* (Acts 2:22 NLT)
- *"And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."* (Acts 10:38 NLT)

Some modern perspectives argue that signs, wonders, and miracles are no longer necessary to authenticate the authority of God's Word. This raises a pertinent question: if miraculous signs were unnecessary for Jesus, why did He rely on them for endorsement? Did He not preach with inherent power, making such signs redundant?

References to the Demonic in the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark opens with an account of Jesus casting out demons in a synagogue, linking His evangelistic work directly with the act of deliverance:

- *And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.* (Mark 1:39 NKJV)

Jesus commissions His disciples:

- *And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.* (Mark 6:7 NKJV)

Seven of the sixteen chapters in Mark's Gospel (1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 16) feature references to Satan or demonic activity. Notably, Mark 16:15-18 provides the Great Commission, explicitly stating that casting out demons will be a sign that follows believers:

- *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."* (Mark 16:15-18 NKJV)

References to the Demonic in the Gospel of Luke

In Luke's Gospel, eight out of the twenty-four chapters (4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13) contain references to demonic activity. Early in the narrative, Jesus demonstrates dramatic power by casting out demons:

- *And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!"* (Luke 4:41 NKJV)

Commissioning of the Twelve Disciples

Following His own confrontation with demonic forces—using power encounters—Jesus commissions His twelve disciples to do the same:

- *"Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you."* (Luke 10:19 NLT)

The twelve disciples returned from their ministry trip, having been sent out two by two, and they reported their success in Luke 9:10.

Commissioning of the Seventy-two Disciples

Jesus also commissioned seventy-two other disciples to preach, heal, and cast out demons. Here we see them on their return from a ministry trip, also having been sent out two by two:

- *When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, “Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!” “Yes,” he told them, “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. But don’t rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.” (Luke 10:17-20 NLT)*

Lessons from the Two Groups of Disciples

From the reports of the Twelve and the seventy-two disciples, we learn:

- The demons were subject to them.
- The demons must surrender—they are a defeated army.
- This defeated army is humiliated.
- The casting out of demons is a template for Christians across all eras.

It is important to recognize that Satan’s defeat during Jesus’ wilderness temptations and His resurrection was not considered final or conclusive. The full and ultimate defeat of Satan is anticipated in the future (Revelation 20:10). The ongoing battle with demonic forces is part of the spiritual warfare that believers continue to face (Ephesians 6:10-18).

The Ongoing Relevance of Deliverance Ministry

Given that one-third of the synoptic Gospels document encounters with Satan, demons, or demonic activity, it is worth considering the extent to which deliverance ministry should occupy the focus of contemporary ministry. Deliverance was not incidental to Jesus’ mission; it was central and intentional. It is, therefore, a matter of concern that this critical aspect of His ministry is often overlooked in modern discussions of discipleship and spiritual warfare.

Keep in mind, the power and authority demonstrated by Jesus was a primary reason why the religious leaders of His day planned His death.

Central Points

1. Deliverance is biblical.
2. It was a core aspect of Jesus’ ministry.
3. Jesus commanded His disciples to follow His example in ministry.
4. Deliverance is part of the Great Commission.
5. This mandate has never been rescinded.

Conclusion

We have seen that the ministry of deliverance is a central and defining aspect of Jesus' earthly ministry as presented in the synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each of these Gospels emphasizes the power and authority of Jesus in confronting and overcoming the forces of darkness. From His dramatic encounters with demonic powers in synagogues to the commissioning of His disciples to continue this work, the message is clear: deliverance was not a peripheral activity in Jesus' ministry; it was an essential expression of the Kingdom of God breaking into the world.

The synoptic Gospels collectively reveal that deliverance is deeply intertwined with the proclamation of the Gospel. It is not merely an afterthought or a side ministry, but a vital part of the victory Jesus came to secure over the works of the devil. As we reflect on the ministry of Jesus and His followers, we are reminded that the call to deliverance is not limited to the past but is part of the ongoing mission of the Church today.

Next Lesson: Deliverance in John's Gospel and Letters

As we transition to our next lesson, we will turn our focus to the writings of the Apostle John. While John's Gospel does not contain as many direct references to deliverance or miracles as the synoptic accounts, it offers us a unique perspective on the ministry of Jesus and the continuation of that ministry in the life of the Church. In his Gospel, letters, and the book of Revelation, John presents profound theological insights that complement the deliverance ministry found in the synoptics. He provides a different angle from which to view the spiritual authority of Christ and the implications of His work in defeating the enemy.

Although John's writings do not offer a direct narrative of deliverances or healings, they lay the foundational truth of Jesus' ultimate victory over the powers of darkness, which is crucial to understanding the full scope of deliverance ministry. As we study John's writings, we will explore how his unique theological perspective shapes our understanding of deliverance and its continuation through the Church, especially as it pertains to spiritual warfare, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the ultimate defeat of evil.

Let us now prepare to dive into the writings of John, where we will see the deeper spiritual truths that undergird the ongoing ministry of deliverance, even as we continue to confront the forces of darkness today.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 3: Deliverance in John's Gospel and Letters

Description

In this lesson, we will examine the Gospel of John and his letters, which notably lack detailed accounts of deliverance ministry. This is strikingly different from the other three Gospel writers. However, in place of those deliverance accounts, John provides rich theological insights into the nature of Jesus and the nature of Satan. Furthermore, John offers profound insights into the cosmic battle between good and evil, highlighting the ultimate victory over Satan and his subsequent demise.

John's Gospel and His Other Writings

Matthew, Mark, and Luke extensively cover deliverance ministry, but in John's Gospel, there are no accounts of Jesus or His disciples engaging in this type of ministry. Additionally, in John's Gospel, miracles, which are frequent in the Synoptic Gospels, are surprisingly sparse. Why is this?

We can deduce that John's writing was clearly focused on presenting a universal view, or the broader perspective of the life of Jesus. With the Holy Spirit being the author of all four Gospels, what we have is exactly what God intended for us: a complementary account of the life of Jesus, observed from different angles.

Although deliverance was well-documented and widely practiced in the Church, John was led to focus on other themes. Even so, he did not omit important information regarding Satan and the demonic realm.

John's Focus on Jesus' Divine Nature and Identity

Leaving the focus on deliverance and miracles to the other Gospel writers, John concentrated on revealing the identity of Jesus—who He was: the Savior, the Messiah, the Son of God, Emmanuel. John writes:

- *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31 NKJV)*

John's overarching theme also includes a focus on the salvation that comes through Jesus, as exemplified in this:

- *“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32 NKJV)*
-

The Nature of Satan

Despite the absence of detailed accounts of deliverance ministry, John does not neglect to include vital information about Satan and demons. John writes:

- *He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8 NKJV)*
 - *In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:10 NKJV)*
-

Cosmic War Over Good and Evil

John is also the author of the last book of the Bible, Revelation, which is filled with references to Satan and demons. In this book, we see the cosmic battle between good and evil. This battle is believed to have occurred before the creation of humanity, as described in Revelation 12, where it is depicted as a battle between Satan and his angels and the archangel Michael.

This was Satan’s attempt to “be like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:14). He sought to dethrone God and become the ultimate authority in the universe. The battle against Satan was fought by the archangel Michael and two-thirds of the angels in heaven, who remained faithful to God.

The battle is depicted through rich symbolism, where the “stars” in Revelation 12:3-4 are interpreted as referring to the one-third of heaven’s angels who followed Satan in his opposition to God.

- *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. (Revelation 12:3-4a NKJV)*

A few verses later, the actual battle is depicted:

- *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7-9 NKJV)*

Jesus also references this event in Luke 10:18, where He states:

- *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”* (Luke 10:18 NKJV)

The Character of Satan

John records Jesus elaborating on Satan’s nature, describing him as both a murderer and a liar.

- *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”* (John 8:44 NKJV)

Describing the nature of Satan further, particularly regarding his murderous tendencies, Jesus is recorded as saying that this nature leads Satan to destroy various aspects of life, such as hope, relationships, opportunities, ministries, finances, testimonies, and a person’s relationship with God.

- *“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”* (John 10:10 NKJV)

Apart from the absence of deliverance accounts, John emphasizes Satan’s nature and demonic activities more than any of the other Gospel writers.

Deception, the Basis of Demonization

At the root of all forms of demonization—whether through believing lies, yielding to temptations, or full-blown possession—deception is central. Once lies are renounced, deception is exposed, and truth is embraced, all forms of demonization dissipate.

- *“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* (John 8:32 NKJV)

As it is now, those who are not followers of Jesus are living in a state of deception, held there by a shroud of darkness.

- *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.* (1 John 5:19 NKJV)
- *But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.* (2 Corinthians 4:3-4 NKJV)

Satan Has a Short Time

After Satan was cast out of heaven and onto the earth in the battle with Michael, there was a celebration in heaven. However, there was also a warning that Satan is inflamed with great wrath, knowing that his time is short before his ultimate ruin.

- *Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”* (Revelation 12:10-12 NKJV)

Revelation Chapter 20

Even though Satan possesses deceptive powers, fierce anger, and the potential for harm, we need not fear him or his demons. While it is wise to respect them, we should not fear them. We do not fear a knife sitting in a kitchen drawer, but we respect it because, if handled improperly, it can cause great harm. Similarly, Satan has the potential to deceive and cause us to stumble, but he should not be feared.

At the end of Revelation, we witness Satan’s final days and the ultimate judgment that will be pronounced against him and his followers:

- *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit,* (Revelation 20:1-3a NKJV)
- *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.* (Revelation 20:7-10 NKJV)

Conclusion

While John's Gospel and letters do not extensively detail deliverance ministry, they profoundly illuminate the cosmic battle between good and evil. John's focus on revealing Jesus' divine nature and identity as the Son of God serves to strengthen believers' faith and understanding of spiritual truths. Moreover, John's writings provide essential insights into the nature of Satan and the ongoing spiritual warfare, culminating in Revelation's vivid depiction of Satan's ultimate defeat and eternal judgment. By emphasizing the victory of Christ and the power of truth over deception, John encourages believers to stand firm in faith, knowing that through Jesus, they have overcome the world and its spiritual darkness.

Next Lesson: The Demonized Man in the Synagogue

In our next lesson, we will delve into the powerful encounter between Jesus and the demonized man in the synagogue, as recorded in Mark 1:21-28. This event provides profound insights into the authority of Jesus over demonic forces and the dramatic nature of deliverance. We will first explore the customs and practices of the synagogue, setting the stage for this remarkable confrontation. We will then examine how Jesus boldly challenges the demonic powers, engaging in a direct conversation with the spirits within the man. Through this dialogue, we gain valuable understanding of how demons respond to Jesus' authority and the lessons we can learn from their exchanges. Finally, we will consider the impact of this deliverance on the larger public, as the man's liberation leads to a rapid spread of Jesus' fame and the growing recognition of His power to heal and set people free. This lesson will offer both theological depth and practical application as we examine the significance of this encounter in the broader context of deliverance ministry.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 4: The Demonized Man in the Synagogue

Description

This lesson provides an in-depth examination of the powerful encounter recorded in Mark 1:21-28, where Jesus confronts a man possessed by an unclean spirit in a synagogue in Capernaum. Through a detailed analysis of this biblical account, students will explore the dynamics of deliverance ministry as modeled by Jesus. The lesson underscores the authority Jesus demonstrates over demonic forces, the reactions of the individuals present, and the significant implications for modern-day deliverance practices. By engaging with this pivotal event, participants will gain valuable insights into the spiritual principles that underlie effective deliverance, emphasizing the necessity of confronting spiritual oppression with both authority and discernment.

The Demonized Man in the Synagogue (Mark 1)

The Bible documents numerous instances of deliverance from demonic oppression, with approximately two dozen accounts scattered throughout both the Gospels and Acts. This lesson focuses on one particular event, where Jesus delivers a man possessed by an unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum.

- ²¹ Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. ²² And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ 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!" ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" ²⁶ And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. ²⁷ Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." ²⁸ And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee. (Mark 1:21-28 NKJV; see also Luke 4:31-37, 40-42)*

This passage represents one of the earliest recorded instances of Jesus' public ministry, where He demonstrates His authority over demonic forces. The dramatic nature of this deliverance showcases not only the power of Jesus' words but also the stark contrast between His divine authority and the ordinary teaching of the scribes, which failed to elicit such immediate obedience from the spiritual realm.

Custom in Synagogues

It was customary for Jesus to teach in synagogues on the Sabbath. In these settings, He would typically be invited to read from the Old Testament scrolls and offer commentary or interpretation. The synagogue provided a communal space for religious instruction, and it was in this context that Jesus engaged in what would become a pivotal moment in His ministry.

During one of these teaching sessions, a man with an unclean spirit manifested his demonic possession. This occurrence highlights the spiritual reality that existed in the synagogue, where a place of worship was simultaneously a battleground for spiritual forces. Such manifestations, where demons reveal themselves through the actions and speech of those they possess, are often referred to as demonic manifestations, an observable sign of spiritual oppression being confronted by the authority of God.

Challenged with Power

A modern parallel to this account can be drawn from the 1984 Argentine Revival, documented in the Beautiful Feet ministry archives. In this revival, the evangelist Carlos Annacondia would regularly confront demons directly before he preached, commanding release for those they oppressed:

- *“Listen to me, Satan! In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, I command you to loose the captives, now!”*

This approach mirrors the encounter between Jesus and the demonized man in Capernaum. Much like the event at the synagogue, individuals present at Annacondia’s meetings would experience physical manifestations of demonic oppression. Many would fall to the ground in convulsions or writhing motions. In response, designated workers would assist these individuals, often using stretchers, and move them to an adjacent tent for further ministry and individualized deliverance.

The powerful lesson here is that **demons must be challenged directly**. Without such confrontation, demons will often remain hidden and continue their work of oppression silently within those they inhabit. This principle underscores a key aspect of deliverance ministry: **confronting spiritual forces head-on** with the authority given through Christ. When demons are not confronted, they may remain, undetected, continuing their damaging influence in the lives of individuals.

The outcome of such direct confrontation is evident in both the biblical narrative and the modern revival context—where the demons are expelled, allowing the preaching of the Gospel to proceed without the interference of spiritual forces. This approach to deliverance highlights the importance of **active intervention** in spiritual warfare, emphasizing the necessity of speaking directly to the demonic realm in order to remove its influence.

Why Was a Demonized Man in the Synagogue?

The presence of a demonized individual in the synagogue raises several pertinent questions, particularly regarding how such a person was allowed to participate in the religious activities of that day. Given the strict religious observance of the synagogue and its leaders, why would a man possessed by an unclean spirit have access to such a sacred space? Several plausible explanations can be considered:

1. **The Demonization Was Hidden:** The individual may have been under the influence of demons, yet this oppression was not immediately evident to those around him.
2. **He Was Perceived as Normal:** His behavior conformed to social norms, appearing normal to the synagogue's attendees and leaders, so his spiritual affliction remained concealed.
3. **Frequent Attendance:** The man had likely attended the synagogue on numerous occasions without displaying any unusual behavior, which might have further reinforced the perception that he was not demonized.
4. **No Prior Manifestations:** The individual had not previously demonstrated any overt signs of possession or spiritual disturbance, and there were no visible indicators that would have led the leaders or congregation to suspect demonic influence.

This account illustrates that demonic oppression can often be concealed, and it is important to recognize that individuals from all walks of life—including psychologists, healthcare workers, pastors, and public figures—can fall under demonic influence. One's profession, status, or education does not provide immunity from spiritual oppression.

The Demon Said, “*Let Us Alone*” (Mark 1:24)

This brief but powerful declaration, “Let us alone,” provides several important insights into the nature of spiritual oppression and the dynamics of deliverance ministry.

1. **Demons Seldom Invade by Themselves**
A person involved in deliverance ministry should always be prepared to confront multiple demonic influences, as demons often work in groups or hierarchies.
2. **Demons Come in Groupings According to Their Kind**
Demons often form clusters or groups that are aligned with one another, particularly those that share similar characteristics or influences.
3. **The Demon Who Speaks Is Not Always the Strongman**
In this account only one demon spoke. This highlights an important reality in deliverance ministry: only one consciousness can manifest at a time. However, the demon that speaks may not be the “strongman,” or the primary force of demonic influence. In many cases, the chief demon operates in the background, allowing lesser demons to come to the surface and be exposed. These lesser demons may be cast out, giving the illusion that

deliverance is complete, while the strongman remains hidden, continuing its work. The remaining demons may later open the door for other spirits to re-enter, re-establishing their influence over the individual.

4. **The Role of the Doorkeeper Demon**

Often, there is a demon that functions as a “doorkeeper,” facilitating the entry of other demonic spirits. This demon ensures that new spirits can enter once the individual has been left vulnerable or unprotected. The presence of a doorkeeper demon is only possible when the host allows for such an opening.

5. **Lingering Spirits After Deliverance**

After a deliverance session, a person may feel immediate relief, experiencing sensations of lightness, peace, or joy. However, it is crucial to recognize that not all demons are expelled during the first session. Some may remain hidden, avoiding detection, and continuing their subtle influence. Follow-up sessions may be necessary to address any spirits that were not fully drawn out. The individual may not be able to fully recognize or confront these remaining spirits until they persist faithfully in their relationship with Jesus over time.

- a. It is important for the individual to engage in daily devotions and spiritual discipline, which help to “starve” the demons by depriving them of access to sinful or harmful influences.
- b. Emotional healing is often an integral part of the process, as demons are frequently associated with past wounds, memories, or unresolved emotional trauma. Once these wounds surface and are healed, the spirits that had been feeding off of these wounds will be exposed and can be dealt with.

6. **Multiple Personalities and Layers of Demonic Influence**

In cases of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) or Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), demons are often embedded within the various personalities of the individual. This will be addressed in a subsequent lesson.

The Demon Said, “*What Do We Have to Do with You?*” (Mark 1:24)

The demons, aware of Jesus’ divine mission and authority, sought to avoid confrontation, as their presence in the man was not just a source of torment for him but also a means of wreaking havoc on those in his circle of influence.

Jesus’ Interference in Their Plans

Jesus’ interference with the demonic forces was not incidental but directly tied to His mission on Earth. The demons sought to maintain their hold over the man, tormenting him and disrupting his life and relationships. However, Jesus’ purpose was to destroy the works of the devil.

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

This scripture underscores that Jesus came to actively confront and dismantle the forces of evil.

The Demon's Question: "*Did You Come to Destroy Us?*" (Mark 1:24)

This question, while seemingly inquisitive, is more likely an attempt to delay or distract Jesus from expelling them. Demons frequently employ tactics like this to create confusion, stall the deliverance process, and retain control over their hosts. By raising doubts or invoking fear, they seek to shift focus and prevent their expulsion.

If we follow Jesus' model of ministry, we should expect similar challenges when confronting demons.

Demonic Resistance Tactics

During deliverance, demons may employ various strategies to delay or resist expulsion. Some of the most common tactics include:

1. **Fear and intimidation:** "You can't have them."
2. **Accusations:** "They were promised to me."
3. **Emotional appeals:** "This person needs us."
4. **Taunts:** "We aren't afraid of you."
5. **Pride:** "I'm a GENERAL! How dare you mock me!"
6. **Questions of authority:** "Are you sure you should be dealing with us?"
7. **Denial of authority:** "You don't have the power to make us leave."
8. **Resistance based on exhaustion:** "You are getting tired."
9. **Appeals to the past:** "I've been here since the womb."
10. **Fear of repercussions:** "I can't go back to Satan and report defeat."
11. **Manipulative reasoning:** "I can't leave this person; they will save many souls."

The deliverance minister must remain firm, commanding unconditional surrender from the demons and refusing to entertain their attempts to manipulate or distract.

The Demon's Knowledge of Jesus: "*I Know Who You Are—the Holy One of God!*" (Mark 1:24)

Through this verse we learn that demons not only knew Jesus—they also know us.

1. **Demons know who you are:** They are aware of your spiritual standing and authority in Christ.
2. **They can recognize threats:** Demons know whether you pose a genuine threat to their power.
3. **They assess your spiritual strength:** Demons are able to discern whether you are a spiritual force to be reckoned with or whether you are susceptible to their manipulation.
4. **They study you:** Demons observe and study their targets, learning their weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

5. **They may use your past sins against you:** Demons may bring up past sins of the deliverance minister to distract or weaken their resolve, attempting to exploit any unresolved issues in their life.

Why Don't Demons Always Manifest?

Two possible reasons why demons may not manifest are:

1. **They are not confronted:** Demons will only manifest when they are directly challenged. Without confrontation, they remain subdued and dormant.
2. **They are not threatened:** When demons are not confronted with spiritual authority, they remain hidden, as they are not under threat.

During a deliverance session, demons must be both threatened and confronted. When this occurs, they will inevitably come to the surface.

“*Jesus Rebuked Him*” (Mark 1:25)

This instance provides several theological and practical insights:

1. **Gender of Demons:** In this particular case, the demon appears to take on a male persona. However, it is important to note that not all demons are associated with a specific gender.
 - a. Moreover, many demons do not conform to a specific gender at all. Some commonly encountered categories of demons, such as hate, anger, murder, fear, anxiety, lust, perversion, and others, transcend gender distinctions. These spirits often manifest as emotional or behavioral forces rather than having a clear gendered identity.
2. **Demons and Their Identities:** In subsequent lessons, we will explore the concept of demon names and how they can play a role in deliverance ministry. Jesus Himself asked demons for their names during encounters, providing a biblical basis for ministers to engage in similar practices.

Some of the names commonly used by demons in scripture or ministry contexts include:

 - a. Jezebel, Mammon, Leviathan, Baal, Beelzebub, Satan, Lucifer, Legion, Lilith, Molech, Chemosh, Baphomet
 - b. Additionally, demons may use names drawn from Jewish folklore or worldwide mythologies, including figures like: Loki, Thor, Ra, Horus, Ishtar, Ashtoreth, Kali.
 - c. Through years of deliverance ministry, experience has shown that demons that identify with biblical or mythological names often prove to be more challenging to deal with. These names are associated with more resilient and obstinate spiritual entities. In contrast, demons identified with specific behavioral traits—such as hate, murder, or fear—may not always exhibit the same level of resistance.

3. **Multiple Personalities, Dissociative Identity Disorder:** When a personality emerges and identifies with a human name, such as Bob, Henry, Sally, or Barbara, etc., it may indicate the person may be suffering from dissociation. When this condition exists, it is addressed through prayer in the process of deliverance. We will discuss this more in a subsequent lesson.

Jesus Said, “*Be Quiet*” (Mark 1:25)

From this verse, some have suggested that this statement establishes a doctrine prohibiting all forms of verbal communication with demons. However, such an interpretation raises significant questions regarding how deliverance ministry is conducted in accordance with biblical principles. If silence toward demons were indeed an indisputable and unchangeable doctrine, how would ministers follow other biblical directives concerning confrontation with demonic forces?

1. How do we command a demon to leave a person if we are not permitted to speak directly to them?
2. How can we rebuke demons, or say, “The Lord rebuke you,” if we are restricted from addressing them verbally?
3. How do we expel demons from homes and other spaces without speaking to them?
4. How do we issue declarations and renunciations, informing the demonic presence of what it is permitted or forbidden to do?

In light of these considerations, it is essential to examine the broader biblical context. Jesus’ own ministry provides a model for addressing demonic forces with authority and verbal commands. For instance, during the temptation in the wilderness, Jesus spoke directly to Satan, engaging in a dialogue to counter his lies (see Luke 4:1-13). This demonstrates that communication with demons, when necessary, is a part of confronting them, as Jesus actively modeled speaking to Satan to resist temptation.

Furthermore, in Mark 5, Jesus asks a demon its name—another instance of verbal interaction with demonic forces. These examples suggest that Jesus did not prohibit speaking to demons but rather demonstrated how to engage with them appropriately and with authority.

Why Jesus Commanded Silence

This command raises questions regarding the purpose of silence in the face of demonic manifestation. Several explanations may be derived from this directive, such as:

1. **A Testimony to Those Present:** By allowing the demon to speak initially, Jesus demonstrated His authority over the demonic realm. Once this authority was established, He exercised the right to silence the demon. The demon’s initial speech served as evidence of the confrontation, but there was no further need to permit it to continue, thus allowing Jesus to issue a command of silence.
2. **Strategic Timing in Ministry:** Jesus’ ministry was in its early stages. He sought to avoid premature exposure of His mission, as seen in His frequent instructions to those He

healed not to tell anyone of the miracles (e.g., Matthew 8:4, Mark 7:36). At this juncture, revealing the fullness of His mission could have jeopardized the timing of His ministry, and Jesus chose to withhold further proclamations from the demon to protect the narrative of His purpose on earth.

The Truthfulness of Demons

There is a common assumption that every time Satan or a demon speaks, they are lying. However, this assumption is not supported by biblical evidence. In fact, there are at least 29 instances in Scripture where Satan and demons speak the truth. For example, in Mark 1:24, the demon correctly identifies Jesus as the “Holy One of God.” This acknowledgment of truth does not invalidate the deceptive nature of demons, but it highlights that they are capable of telling the truth in certain contexts, often to deceive or manipulate for their own purposes. Therefore, it is important to recognize that while demons may speak the truth, their words are not always trustworthy.

Beneficial Information to Extract from Demons

Though there is no explicit biblical command that forbids speaking to demons, caution should be exercised, and conversations should be limited to when it serves the purpose of their expulsion. Asking strategic questions can help uncover information necessary for the deliverance process. Below are several key pieces of information that may be beneficial when engaging with demons:

1. **The Name and Function of the Demon:** Identifying the demon’s function can help in addressing the specific issues it brings into the individual’s life.
2. **The Chief Demon or Strongman:** In many cases, there is a dominant spirit that holds authority over other demonic entities. Identifying the “strongman” can provide a clear pathway for addressing the root of the problem. Knowing the name of this chief demon can significantly impact the effectiveness of the deliverance process.
3. **The Length of the Demon’s Presence:** Demons that have been in a person for an extended period may be more deeply entrenched. Over time, they may cause the person to adopt behaviors or attitudes consistent with the demon’s influence. This longer presence often requires a more thorough process of spiritual healing and deliverance.
4. **How the Demon Gained Access:** Understanding the entry point of the demon is crucial. Whether through a curse, traumatic event, or authority figure, identifying the means of entry allows the deliverance minister to deal with the root cause, closing any doors that the demon may have used to gain access.
5. **The Demon’s Legal Right to Remain:** Demons often claim a legal right to remain in a person’s life. This could be based on sin, unrepented behavior, or involvement in occult practices. Renouncing these rights is critical for expelling the demon. The individual must renounce the power base that the demon is using to remain in their life, thereby removing the demon’s claim to their presence.

“Come Out of Him!” (Mark 1:25)

In deliverance ministry, a clear, pre-determined plan is essential when commanding a demon to leave a person. The moment the demon’s legal rights have been revoked, and it is ready to be cast out, a direct, forceful command is typically issued. The process of expulsion often involves several key elements (this process has been used with mixed results):

1. **Declare the Doom of the Demon:** It is beneficial to verbally declare the doom of the demon, reinforcing its defeat and the authority of Christ.
2. **Command the Demon to Repeat:** Often, the chief demon will be made to repeat a phrase indicating its defeat and lack of legal authority, as seen in commands like: *“I, murder, declare I have no legal right here. I am a trespasser.”*
3. **Bind the Strongman:** The “chief demon,” or strongman, which holds dominion over those under its power, is bound to them all as one.
4. **Expulsion:** Once the strongman is bound, all demons under its control are expelled as one.

“Convulsed Him and Cried Out with a Loud Voice” (Mark 1:26)

Some individuals attempt to prevent any manifestations during deliverance sessions; if a demon does begin to manifest, they instruct the person to stand up, walk around, and return once they have regained control.

Jesus, however, did not attempt to suppress or avoid these manifestations. In fact, the public demonstration of the demon’s departure served as a testimony of God’s power, highlighting the defeat of evil. This was not unique to Jesus’ ministry but continued throughout the early church and beyond. For instance, in Acts 8:6-8, Philip’s deliverance ministry in Samaria involved visible manifestations, with many evil spirits being cast out as witnesses observed the power of God.

- *Crowds listened intently to Philip because they were eager to hear his message and see the miraculous signs he did. Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city. (Acts 8:6-8 NLT)*

Ways Demons Leave

Deliverance experiences are unique, and it is essential not to assume all demons will leave in the same way. For example, some people have been taught to expect demons to be expelled through vomiting and thus prepare for that outcome, but this is not always the case.

Common manifestations observed include:

1. No visible evidence—the person simply realizes the demon has departed.

2. A calm exhale.
3. Yawning.
4. Coughing, whether gentle or intense.
5. Screaming, as seen in some biblical accounts.
6. Shaking.
7. Through the ears.
8. Passing gas.
9. Vomiting.

The intensity of the demon's departure is often indicative of its strength or resistance during expulsion.

“Then They Were All Amazed” (Mark 1:27)

The crowd's amazement at Jesus' deliverance ministry highlights the public nature of God's power in action. When individuals witness the expulsion of demons, they experience a profound recognition of God's authority. Without witnessing such acts of power, people miss out on the awe of seeing God's work firsthand.

“His Fame Spread” (Mark 1:28)

The impact of Jesus' deliverance ministry spread rapidly as more people encountered His power. His ability to free individuals from demonic influence met their real needs—not just their felt needs—and attracted a growing number of seekers.

Conclusion

The encounter between Jesus and the demonized man in the synagogue demonstrates key principles of deliverance ministry, showcasing Jesus' authority over evil. The dramatic manifestations and healing reveal God's power and the authority of Christ. As Jesus' fame spread, so did recognition of His ability to meet spiritual needs, a lesson that remains central to modern deliverance ministry. This event challenges us to approach deliverance with authority, discernment, and boldness.

Next Lesson: Canaanite Woman's Demon-Possessed Daughter

In the next lesson, we will explore the deliverance of the Canaanite woman's demon-possessed daughter in Matthew 15:21-28. This story will offer profound insights into the role of faith in deliverance, showing how the faith of a persistent mother led to a powerful encounter with God's intervention.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 5: Canaanite Woman's Demon-Possessed Daughter

Description

In this lesson, we examine the encounter between Jesus and the Canaanite woman, as recorded in Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 7:24-30. This passage provides profound insights into the nature of faith, persistence, and deliverance, as Jesus responds to a Gentile woman's desperate plea for healing on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter. Despite her non-Jewish background, the woman approaches Jesus with humility and determination, addressing Him as the "Son of David," a Messianic title. Her interaction with Jesus reveals significant theological and spiritual themes, such as the inheritance of generational curses and the recognition of spiritual authority. In exploring this story, we will delve into the implications of Jesus' response and the powerful lessons it offers for modern-day deliverance ministry.

The Canaanite Woman's Demon-Possessed Daughter: Matthew 15:21-28

- *²¹ Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." ²³ But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." ²⁴ But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" ²⁶ But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." ²⁷ And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. (Matthew 15:21-28 NKJV; see also Mark 7:24-30 NKJV)*
-

Syro-Phoenician—A Canaanite

In Mark's account of this deliverance (Mark 7:26), the woman is identified as a "Syro-Phoenician by birth," highlighting her Gentile status. This is significant because it underscores that she was not of Jewish descent and instead hailed from a people historically linked to the Canaanites. The Canaanites were considered one of the most spiritually corrupt civilizations in antiquity, often associated with idolatrous practices and demonic influence. While the exact age of the child is not specified, nor is there clarity on how the demon came to possess her, the woman's Canaanite ancestry suggests the possibility of a generational curse, potentially inherited through familial ties to pagan practices.

Paganism

Paganism, characterized by the worship of multiple gods, often involved ritualistic practices, including human sacrifices. Such rituals sometimes included the burning of children as offerings to these gods. Given this context, it is unlikely that the demon afflicting the child entered as a result of any personal actions of the girl. Instead, it is more probable that the demon was inherited, either through ancestral spiritual influences or through a susceptibility to demonic oppression permitted by actions within her family lineage.

“Son of David” (Matthew 15:22)

The woman’s recognition of Jesus as the “Son of David” is noteworthy. This Messianic title, traditionally reserved for the Jewish people, demonstrates her acknowledgment of Jesus’ authority and her faith in His power to heal, despite her Gentile background.

“Severely Demon-Possessed” (Matthew 15:22)

The mother’s description of her daughter as “severely demon-possessed” suggests the presence of intense demonic influence. The severity of the condition implies possible violent manifestations, such as physical outbursts or the speaking of different voices through the child. Importantly, Jesus does not challenge the mother’s diagnosis, nor does He suggest a medical explanation, such as mental illness. Rather, through the interaction, Jesus affirms the reality of the demonic affliction, aligning with the woman’s understanding of the situation.

Evidence of Demonization or Possession in Contemporary Contexts

In contemporary settings, various manifestations may indicate that individuals are experiencing demonization or possession. These signs can be both physical and psychological, affecting a person’s response to spiritual environments or Christian symbols. The following are common indicators:

1. **Physical Aversion to Sacred Spaces:** Individuals who are demonized may experience intense nausea, anxiety, or discomfort when approaching a church or attempting to enter its doors. This physical reaction may be a result of spiritual resistance to the presence of holiness or the environment associated with God’s influence.
2. **Perception of Darkness:** Upon entering a church or similar spiritual setting, individuals may describe a sense of heaviness or a “dark cloud” that diminishes the vibrancy of their surroundings, with colors appearing dimmed or lifeless. This perception could be linked to spiritual oppression or an inability to bear the light of the gospel.
3. **Discomfort Around Godly Individuals:** Those affected by demonic forces often report feeling uneasy or anxious in the presence of godly people, particularly those who exhibit

spiritual authority. This discomfort may manifest as a physical or emotional reaction that hinders their ability to engage with others who carry the peace and presence of the Holy Spirit.

4. **Difficulty Engaging with Scripture:** Some individuals may be able to read other books without issue, but when they attempt to read the Bible, they may experience physical symptoms such as blurred vision or headaches, as if their mind or body resists the truth of Scripture. This may indicate spiritual resistance to God’s Word, which is perceived as a direct threat to demonic influence.
5. **Mental Distractions During Spiritual Instruction:** When attempting to listen to a sermon or engage with teaching, individuals may experience an overwhelming sense of mental clutter, distraction, or noise that prevents them from focusing. This could be a manifestation of spiritual interference, hindering their ability to receive spiritual nourishment.
6. **Physical Reactions During Worship:** Individuals who are demonized may struggle to participate in worship, experiencing headaches, ear ringing, or other discomforts when singing worship songs.
7. **Physical Constriction When Speaking the Name of Jesus:** A common sign of demonic oppression is a physical reaction when attempting to utter the name of Jesus. This can manifest as a tightness or constriction in the throat.
8. **Negative Emotional Reactions to Christian Imagery:** Individuals experiencing demonic influence may become anxious, angry, or distressed when exposed to Christian imagery, such as the cross, images of Jesus, or Bibles. This reaction reflects the spiritual conflict between the forces of darkness and the symbols of Christ’s victory over evil.

“He Answered Her Not a Word” (Matthew 15:23)

In this passage, Jesus’ initial silence toward the woman is a deliberate act, designed to draw out her faith and test the depth of her resolve. His response, or lack thereof, serves to examine her level of desperation and her commitment to seek deliverance despite apparent rejection. This test of perseverance highlights the importance of tenacity in the face of spiritual challenges.

As seen in Mark 7:25, this woman’s persistence is further emphasized when she *“came and fell at His feet,”* a clear indication of her desperation and unwavering faith.

Is There Desperation?

1. Some individuals seeking deliverance approach with a sincere willingness to do whatever is necessary to experience freedom. These individuals exhibit deep trust in the deliverance minister, confiding their deepest pains, sins, and traumas. Their desperation to be set free fuels their commitment to the process of deliverance.
2. Others, however, may approach deliverance ministry with skepticism, questioning the deliverance minister’s ability and seeking guarantees of immediate results. This mindset reflects a desire for a “drive-through” deliverance, one that requires minimal personal effort or sacrifice and places little responsibility on them.

3. Some individuals seeking deliverance focus more on their immediate discomfort or symptoms rather than on a genuine desire to follow Christ. True deliverance, however, requires a shift in focus from merely escaping pain to a commitment to living for Christ, honoring Him as the ultimate Deliverer.
 - a. Deliverance involves a transformation of life purpose and focus, orienting one's life around giving glory to Jesus.
 - b. When this commitment to Christ is present, freedom can be realized, as it aligns the person's will with the will of God.

Warning

It is essential to exercise discernment in offering deliverance services. If a person is unwilling to fully turn from a life of sin, or if they are not completely honest about their struggles and intentions, deliverance efforts may be ineffective, and in some cases, could result in a worse state than before (Matthew 12:43-45).

1. Some ministries charge fees for deliverance, as ministry involves time, effort, and resources, which are not without cost.
2. In certain cases, churches may charge fees based on income to ensure the sincerity of the individuals seeking help and to support the operational needs of the ministry.
3. Similarly, while secular therapists may charge for their services, if they fail to address the spiritual root causes of a person's distress, any healing will be superficial, resulting in a medicated condition rather than genuine, lasting deliverance.

“The Disciples Said to Jesus: ‘Send Her Away’” (Matthew 15:23)

The woman's Gentile background, along with her Canaanite heritage, sets her apart from the Jewish people, who were the designated recipients of the promises of God. In the Jewish worldview, salvation and divine favor were largely seen as exclusive to Israel at that time, with Gentiles often considered outside of God's covenant community. The disciples' request for Jesus to “send her away” likely reflects this exclusionary perspective.

“Jesus Said: ‘I Was Not Sent Except to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.’” (Matthew 15:24)

This statement by Jesus affirms His initial mission to the Jewish people, in accordance with the covenantal promises made to Israel. Jesus was sent to fulfill God's promises to His chosen people, the Jews, as these verses prove:

- *“He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.” (John 1:11 NLT)*
- *“Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors.” (Romans 15:8 NLT)*

- “Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions: ‘Don’t go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but only to the people of Israel—God’s lost sheep.’” (Matthew 10:5-6 NLT)

The Woman Demonstrated Her Desperation: “*Lord, Help Me!*” (Matthew 15:25)

The woman’s persistent plea exemplifies a profound demonstration of desperation and faith. Her unwavering resolve in the face of apparent rejection and her refusal to accept “no” for an answer underscores her recognition of Jesus’ authority.

Jesus Calls Her a “*Dog*” (Matthew 15:26)

In Matthew 15:26, Jesus refers to the woman as a “dog.” This term reflects the deeply ingrained ethnic and religious divisions of the time, particularly within Jewish society. Jews believed they were God’s chosen people, and as such, viewed all other races with disdain, often referring to non-Jews as “dogs”—a derogatory and contemptuous label. Jesus’ use of the term was not an expression of personal animosity toward the woman; rather, it was a reflection of the prevailing racial and religious attitudes held by many Jews at the time.

In the cultural context of first-century Judaism, the analogy Jesus uses draws on a household’s practices. In Jewish homes, it was inconceivable to give food meant for children to an animal that was despised, such as a dog. In this light, Jesus’ statement emphasizes the belief that deliverance and healing—the “children’s bread”—were meant for the Jews, not for Gentiles, whom they regarded as “dogs.”

It is important to note that the dogs Jesus refers to were not the domesticated, often beloved pets we think of today, but rather creatures considered unclean and unworthy of care or affection. By using this imagery, Jesus was effectively stating that the non-Jewish woman did not belong to the household of Israel and, as such, was not entitled to the blessings designated for God’s people. He was, in essence, reinforcing the idea that she did not deserve the “good portions” of deliverance meant for the Jews.

The Woman Wisely Responded: “*Even the Little Dogs Eat the Crumbs*” (Matthew 15:27)

Her reply is both profound and insightful. She acknowledges that healing and deliverance were primarily designated for the Jews, but in her desperation, she contends that even the crumbs from the table—symbolizing a small portion of the blessings meant for the Jews—would be sufficient for her needs. In this response, the woman demonstrates a remarkable combination of humility and wisdom.

1. **Humility and Desperation:** The woman’s desperation for her daughter’s healing drove her to a place of humility. She was willing to humble herself before Jesus, setting aside any sense of entitlement or pride in order to advocate for her daughter’s freedom.
2. **Selflessness:** Her concern for her daughter’s well-being outweighed any personal pride or embarrassment. She was willing to humble herself, even in the presence of a Jew, because her daughter’s deliverance mattered more to her than her own dignity.
3. **Focus on the Goal:** Her focus was solely on her daughter’s deliverance. She did not allow the discomfort or humiliation of her position—bowing on the ground before a Jew—to deter her from seeking the freedom her daughter desperately needed.

This passage offers a stark contrast to those who, in today’s world, refuse to fight for their own deliverance:

1. **Generational Harm:** Those who fail to seek deliverance not only harm themselves but also jeopardize the spiritual and emotional well-being of their children and future generations, locking them into cycles of bondage and despair.
2. **Pride and Stagnation:** Pride often prevents individuals from seeking help. This pride traps them in their misery and prevents them from experiencing the freedom and healing that is available through faith in Jesus. This stagnation can perpetuate a generational cycle of suffering.

Jesus Said, “*Great Is Your Faith!*” (Matthew 15:28)

This statement underscores the purpose of Jesus’ interactions with the woman—He was illustrating to the disciples and all onlookers that deliverance is accessible to anyone who has the faith to receive it. Throughout this encounter, Jesus was intentionally drawing out her faith.

- **Faith as a Prerequisite for Deliverance:** Jesus’ actions and words demonstrated that deliverance is available to all who believe. As stated in Romans 10:13, “*Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved [delivered].*” This principle is foundational to the process of deliverance, where faith plays a crucial role in receiving God’s power for healing and freedom.

In preparation for deliverance sessions, it is helpful to build the faith of individuals seeking freedom by sharing testimonies of how others have experienced deliverance, without compromising confidentiality.

Jesus’ words to the woman, “*Dear woman, your faith is great. Your request is granted,*” (Matthew 15:28 NLT) culminate in her daughter’s immediate healing. This statement not only affirms the woman’s faith but also serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of faith in the deliverance process.

Jesus Declared the Little Girl, Who Wasn't There, "*Healed.*" (Matthew 15:28)

This statement represents a long-distance miracle, as the woman had come to Jesus on behalf of her daughter, who was at home. Mark 7:30 further confirms that when the woman returned home, she found her daughter lying on a bed, freed from demonic possession and healed.

1. **Distance Is Irrelevant to Divine Power:** This account demonstrates that the effectiveness of Jesus' healing power is not limited by physical proximity. The healing occurred regardless of the geographical distance between Jesus and the child, illustrating that God's power is not confined to a specific location or direct interaction.
2. **Effectiveness of Deliverance via Remote Communication:** Deliverance has proven to be effective through various forms of remote communication, such as phone calls or video conferencing. These methods can bridge the gap when physical presence is not possible, and testimonies have shown that people can experience spiritual freedom even without being physically in the same room as the minister.
 - a. **Challenges in Remote Deliverance:** One significant challenge of phone-based deliverance is the inability to observe the individual's facial expressions or physical responses during prayer. This can make it more difficult to gauge the emotional and spiritual state of the person receiving ministry.
 - b. **Success Across Distance:** Despite these challenges, there have been instances where deliverance through video conference calls between countries has been successful, demonstrating that spiritual intervention can transcend physical barriers.
 - c. **Obstacles with Severely Demonized Individuals:** The difficulty increases when dealing with individuals who are severely demonized. In such cases, there is the potential for the person to disrupt the connection, either by breaking the communication link or resisting the session.
 - i. **Interference During Sessions:** There are instances where individuals who are severely demonized may attempt to sabotage the session. This can include actions such as pounding on their computer, shutting off the monitor, or in extreme cases, attempting to destroy the device, all of which disrupt the deliverance process. Some individuals may even struggle with the urge to physically throw the device across the room in an attempt to end the session. These behaviors highlight the intense resistance that can occur during spiritual warfare.

Lessons to Be Learned

1. **Deliverance Is a Miracle:** All deliverances are miracles. In Mark 9:38-40, Jesus identifies deliverance from demons as a miraculous act. It is a divine intervention that transcends natural understanding and manifests God's power to bring freedom and restoration.
2. **Deliverance as "*Children's Bread*":** Deliverance is described as the "*children's bread*," symbolizing a fundamental and essential part of spiritual nourishment. Bread, in this context, represents a staple of life—something foundational that sustains and enables

growth. Deliverance is not a luxury but a vital provision for the spiritual health of God's people.

3. **God's Desire for Our Freedom:** Jesus desires for us to partake in this "*bread*." Deliverance is not something to be withheld but is part of God's will for His children. It is a provision that He wants us to embrace and experience as part of our inheritance.
4. **Pursuit of Freedom:** Like the woman in the biblical account, a person must pursue freedom with persistence and determination. Her daughter's severe possession required a committed approach to Christ, demonstrating that true freedom often demands an earnest and serious pursuit of deliverance.
5. **The Tenacity of Demons:** Demons are tenacious, and the spirits in this account had likely been attached to the woman's family for generations. These spirits may have originated from ancient Canaanite practices such as infanticide and human sacrifice. Such long-standing strongholds are not easily broken, and the woman understood that deliverance would require a persistent effort to overcome these entrenched spiritual forces.
6. **The Process of Building Faith:** Jesus invested time in building the woman's faith, a crucial element of the deliverance process. Similarly, we must be willing to invest time and effort in nurturing the faith of those seeking deliverance, which may require weeks or even months of consistent engagement. Some individuals may question, "If you are truly a person of God, full of power, why can't you just command the demon to leave immediately?" However, as Paul reminds us in Ephesians 6:10-18, deliverance is often a battle that requires persistence. Spiritual battles are rarely won with a single encounter.
7. **Deliverance Is a Team Effort:** Deliverance is inherently collaborative:
 - a. **Jesus is the Ultimate Deliverer:** He came to earth to deliver people from bondage, and all deliverance is carried out under His authority.
 - b. **The Deliverance Leader:** The leader of the deliverance team must have faith, as they have witnessed the power of Jesus in previous deliverance encounters.
 - c. **The Person Seeking Deliverance:** The individual seeking freedom must be persistent and ready to fight for their own deliverance. A passive approach will not suffice when spiritual strongholds are present.
8. **Healing and Deliverance Must Work Together:** Deliverance and healing are inseparable:
 - a. **More Than Just Casting Out Demons:** Deliverance is not merely about expelling demons; it is about healing the soul of the victim and removing the strongholds that have allowed the demonic presence to persist.
 - b. **The Role of Inner Healing:** Inner healing is a crucial precursor to deliverance. The emotional and mental wounds of a person must be addressed and healed before casting out demons, or the demons will return to occupy the unhealed areas of the soul.
 - c. **Starving Demons:** In some cases, demons must be "starved out" rather than immediately cast out. Demons are attracted to the emotional wounds of a person, thriving on the lies and unresolved pain emanating from these wounds. They are drawn to the stench of spiritual decay and feed off the emotional "pus" of unresolved trauma. Identifying and exposing the lies associated with these wounds is critical in starving the demons of their influence.

- 9. Authority and Power in Deliverance:** We are called to exercise the authority and power given to us by Jesus. During deliverance, we do not ask or beg God to set people free. Instead, we act with the authority that Jesus has already delegated to us. We are to enforce His commands and carry out the work of deliverance under His power, fully trusting in His ability to bring about freedom.
-

Conclusion

In exploring the encounter between Jesus and the Canaanite woman, we discover profound lessons on faith, persistence, and the inclusivity of God's deliverance ministry. Despite cultural barriers and initial silence from Jesus, the woman's unwavering faith and humility moved Him to declare her daughter healed. This narrative challenges us to examine our own faith in seeking deliverance and underscores that God's healing power transcends ethnic, cultural, and geographical boundaries. As we continue our journey in deliverance ministry, may we emulate the woman's perseverance and trust in Jesus, knowing that great faith opens the door to miraculous intervention and lasting freedom.

Next Lesson: The Demonized Man of the Gadarenes

In our next lesson, we will take a closer look at the deeper spiritual dynamics of Jesus' encounters with demonic forces, focusing specifically on the confrontation between Jesus and the man possessed by a legion of demons in Mark 5. This powerful event reveals not only the nature of spiritual warfare but also offers vital insights into how deliverance ministry can be applied in more complex and challenging situations. As we explore this case, we'll delve into the importance of identifying and addressing multiple layers of demonic influence and how Jesus' authority is exercised to bring about complete freedom. Get ready to uncover essential principles for effectively confronting and overcoming even the most entrenched spiritual strongholds.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 6: The Demonized Man of the Gadarenes

Description

In this lesson we delve into one of the most detailed accounts of deliverance in Scripture: The Demonized Man of the Gadarenes. Found in Mark 5:1-20 and paralleled in Matthew 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26-39, this narrative vividly portrays Jesus' authority over demonic forces. The man, possessed by a legion of demons, exhibited extreme behavior and lived in isolation among the tombs. Jesus' interaction with him highlights critical aspects of deliverance ministry, including the identification of demonic influence, the supernatural strength exhibited by the possessed, and the strategic importance of knowing demons' names in the deliverance process.

This account is widely regarded as the most well-known case of deliverance in the Bible. The following key aspects of the narrative make it particularly significant and will be discussed in this lesson:

1. The man was described as “exceedingly fierce” (Matthew 8:28).
 2. He resided in isolation (Mark 5:3).
 3. Evidence of supernatural strength was displayed (Mark 5:3-4).
 4. He wore no clothes (Luke 8:27).
 5. The man engaged in self-injurious behavior, with the cutting reflecting unresolved trauma and emotional wounds (Mark 5:5).
 6. The discovery of the demons' names is highlighted as a tactical element in the deliverance process.
 7. Demons, as disembodied spirits, are personalities seeking to inhabit a body to fully express themselves (Mark 5:9).
 8. A theological issue arises when the demons request to enter a herd of swine, presenting a deeper spiritual question.
-

The Demonized Man of the Gadarenes: Mark 5:1-20, NKJV (see also Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39)

- *¹Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. ²And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, ³who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, ⁴because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. ⁵And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. ⁷And he cried out with a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with*

You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.”⁸ For He said to him, “Come out of the man, unclean spirit!”⁹ Then He asked him, “What is your name?” And he answered, saying, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”¹⁰ Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.¹¹ Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains.¹² So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.”¹³ And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.¹⁴ So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened.¹⁵ Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.¹⁶ And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine.¹⁷ Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.¹⁸ And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him.¹⁹ However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.”²⁰ And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled. (Mark 5:1-20 NKJV)

Narrative Compression / Condensed Narrative / Abridged Account

Biblical writers employed narrative compression when recording Jesus’ teachings and miracles, often summarizing extensive interactions into a few verses. This indicates that much more was spoken and done than what is explicitly recorded for us:

- *Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written. (John 21:25 NLT)*

Speculation of a Satanic Attempt to Kill Jesus

Immediately preceding this deliverance account, we observe Jesus and His disciples caught in a fierce storm on the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:35-41). The storm was so violent that the disciples feared for their lives. Jesus then rebuked the wind, commanding it to be still (Mark 4:39). Some have speculated that this storm was a demonic attempt to prevent the man’s deliverance. This incident highlights the various disruptive tactics demons use to hinder a person from taking the first steps toward deliverance:

1. Sickness, such as sudden nausea, immediately before a deliverance session, requiring an emergency room visit.
2. Life distractions.
3. Mental torment during pre-deliverance assignments.
4. Anxiety, with an inner belief that relief will come if they avoid the deliverance team.

5. Voices telling the person:
 - a. “You don’t need deliverance. You are okay. You can do this yourself.”
 - b. “Stay away from _____” (the deliverance team members).
 - c. “_____ (deliverance leader) doesn’t know what she is talking about.”
-

The Tombs (Mark 5:2)

Several aspects of this account are noteworthy:

1. There was a curse of “uncleanness” on anyone who touched a dead body (Numbers 19:11).
 2. The tombs were foul-smelling, as bodies were decomposing in small caves carved into the hillsides.
 3. The exact cause of the man’s possession remains unknown.
 4. Jesus did not approach the man and attribute his condition to mental illness; He addressed him as being possessed by a demon.
 - a. There are instances where a person may experience both mental illness and demon possession.
 - b. To suggest that demon possession in the Bible was merely a cultural explanation for mental illness is misleading. Jesus, the Son of God, identified the man as having an unclean spirit, and to claim otherwise undermines both His knowledge and authority. Denying this distinction calls into question the trustworthiness of Scripture itself. This man was demon-possessed, though he may have also had a mental illness.
 - c. Mental illness cannot be fully addressed until the underlying demonic influences are confronted.
 - d. Once demons are expelled, the healing of the mind can begin.
-

“Cutting Himself with Stones” (Mark 5:5)

This man exhibited signs of unresolved trauma, suggesting that something traumatic had occurred in his life.

1. Self-injurious behavior does not always indicate demonization, but it does reflect emotional wounds and unresolved trauma. When there is a demonic attachment, the demon often feeds off these emotional wounds.
 - a. Many demons gain initial access through the trauma that causes such wounds.
2. Cutting is often an attempt to purge or release inner pain. It may also serve as self-punishment, with the individual believing they are bad and deserving of punishment.
 - a. The physical pain and release of blood from cutting can create a euphoric “high” as it triggers the release of endorphins, providing temporary relief from inner pain.
 - b. The physical pain redirects attention away from intense emotional anguish, anxiety, trauma, or depression.

- c. Some individuals use self-injurious behavior as a coping mechanism.
 - i. This can lead to deeper emotional and spiritual bondage, including shame, secrecy, and intensified pain.
 - ii. It may also become habit-forming due to the cycle of pain and temporary relief.
 - 3. Other methods used to release inner pain include:
 - a. Scratching or pinching.
 - b. Hitting oneself with objects or fists, or banging the head.
 - c. Carving into the skin.
 - d. Burning the skin.
 - e. Pulling out hair, or even eating it.
-

“Come Out of the Man.” (Mark 5:8)

Some may assume that Jesus’ mere spoken command was enough for the demons to leave, and thus any deliverance session should follow this same pattern. However, in this account, we observe that the demon did not leave immediately after Jesus’ initial command. A conversation followed before the demon departed.

In Lesson 4, we explored the topic of speaking with demons through the account of the Demonized Man in the Synagogue (Mark 1:21-28). We need not fear stepping outside biblical boundaries by engaging in dialogue with demons, as long as there is a biblical precedent and Jesus Himself models this approach.

“Why Are You Interfering with Us?” (Matthew 8:29 NLT)

Jesus’ mission was, in fact, to interfere and set captives free, as prophesied in Isaiah 61:1-2 and reiterated in Luke 4:18-19. This mission continues to be the Church’s mandate today (Mark 16:15-20).

“Have You Come Here to Torment Us Before the Time?” (Matthew 8:29 NKJV)

Here, the demons begged Jesus not to torment them, aware of their future torment in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10). They questioned whether Jesus had come to bring their judgment ahead of the appointed time. Their knowledge of their future judgment is significant, as it can be used against them during deliverance sessions.

“What Is Your Name?” (Mark 5:9)

Jesus, as Emmanuel—God with us—was fully divine in human form, possessing omniscience. Therefore, when Jesus asked questions, it is clear that He was not seeking information for Himself, but rather for the benefit of those witnessing the interaction. His questions served to preserve the account and provide documentation for us to learn from and reflect upon. This approach is consistent in other instances, such as in Mark 9:21, where, during the deliverance of the demonized boy, Jesus asks, “*How long has this been happening to him?*” This question, like others, serves to teach and guide the observer in understanding the nature of deliverance and spiritual authority.

The Purpose for Extracting Names of Demons

At times demons will be adamantly resistant to divulging their name. It is as if when a name is given, there is more authority that can be exerted over them. This is because in biblical tradition and many ancient cultures, names were associated with power, identity, and control. To name something is to claim some form of authority over it. In the context of deliverance, when Jesus asks the demon to identify itself by name, He is not only asserting His authority over the spirit, but also demonstrating that He holds power over its identity and any legal rights it might claim to the individual. This can be particularly important in spiritual warfare, where knowing the identity of the demonic presence allows the deliverance minister to better understand what they are dealing with and what authority can be exercised.

Authority

It’s believed that once the demon’s name is revealed, it gives the deliverance minister greater insight into the nature of the spirit and the authority to command it to leave. The demon may resist revealing its name because it knows that by doing so, it may lose its grip over the person it is tormenting. The name can represent the demon’s identity and function (e.g., *spirit of fear*, *spirit of bitterness*, etc.), and once known, it opens the door for the person ministering deliverance to specifically target and expel the demon.

Legal Ground

Demons often resist giving their names because, in many instances, demons are believed to hold legal rights to occupy a person. These rights may be based on past sins, generational curses, or unrepented sin. When a demon’s name is disclosed, it may reveal the specific legal ground on which the demon is operating. For example, a demon of “*bitterness*” may be tied to unresolved emotional wounds, while a “*spirit of fear*” may be connected to a trauma or fear-based event in the person’s life. Demons are reluctant to expose these points of entry because once they are revealed, the person seeking deliverance can take action to close those doors, renounce the sin, or break the legal ground, further weakening the demon’s hold.

“My Name Is Legion; for We Are Many.” (Mark 5:9)

The concept of demon names was briefly addressed in Lesson 4 and will be explored in greater depth in future lessons. Here we will focus on the unique name “*Legion.*”

1. A legion was a military unit consisting of approximately 4,000 to 6,000 soldiers, implying that the demon was referencing the presence of many demons.
 - a. Essentially, the demon was saying, “many.”
2. Names may be used by demons to intimidate or instill fear. By using a name like “*Legion,*” demons may attempt to gain the upper hand.
 - a. Whether or not a literal legion of demons is present, the deliverance minister should proceed with the same confidence and faith as if confronting any type of demon.

Negotiations / Truces / Begging

When demonic kingdoms are broken down through the reading of Scriptures, worship, and healing of inner wounds, demons may attempt negotiations. Such behavior indicates they are operating from a position of weakness. They may try to make promises to stop the deliverance process, such as:

1. “We will all go except _____ (a specific demon).”
2. They may offer something in exchange, such as:
 1. A car, expensive items, a large church, or even to become the pope.

Unconditional surrender is the only appropriate response, as demons are never to be trusted or negotiated with.

“Send Us into the Swine.” (Mark 5:12)

The Bible does not provide explicit instructions on where to send demons when they are cast out of individuals, but several considerations can be made:

1. We know demons roam, seeking new hosts (Matthew 12:43-45).
2. Some suggest sending them to “the pit.”
3. Others suggest saying: “Go where Jesus commands you to go!”
4. Scriptures show that some demons are confined to a place of torment, as indicated in Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4.
5. Ultimately, their fate is destruction in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

“And at Once Jesus Gave Them Permission.” (Mark 5:13)

This is the only instance where Jesus grants permission to a demon’s request. This action may have been intended to teach the owners of the pigs a lesson, particularly if they were Jews. While Gentiles were likely present in the area, it is probable that most inhabitants were Jewish. Their

practice of raising and consuming pork, in violation of Mosaic law, may have opened a door for demonic influence in the region.

“For a Great Wave of Fear Swept Over Them.” (Luke 8:37 NLT)

What were they afraid of?

1. Were many others raising pigs, fearing the loss of their livelihood?
 2. Did they experience a deep conviction of sin, causing them to feel unworthy and exposed in the presence of God?
 3. Was it the overwhelming spiritual power, unfamiliar and terrifying to them, that caused their fear?
-

“And Behold, the Whole City Came Out to Meet Jesus. And When They Saw Him, They Begged Him to Depart from Their Region.” (Matthew 8:34)

It is striking that, after such a visible and powerful miracle, the people rejected what Jesus had to offer.

1. In modern times, even with repeated reports of powerful miracles, many people remain filled with unbelief or doubt.
2. These individuals acknowledged the miracle, yet still rejected Jesus:
 - a. The man was previously naked but was now *“fully clothed”* (vs. 15).
 - b. Once *“exceedingly fierce,”* he was now *“sitting”* in peace (vs. 15).
 - c. Formerly deranged, he was now *“perfectly sane”* (vs. 15).

Despite these remarkable transformations, the people did not rejoice in the miraculous healing but instead forced Jesus to leave their region.

- *“Then the whole crowd from the surrounding country of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them.”* (Luke 8:37 NKJV)
-

“Tell Them Everything the Lord Has Done for You.” (Mark 5:19)

Jesus instructed the delivered man to glorify God for the miraculous deliverance he had experienced. Should we encourage individuals to share their deliverance experiences today?

“*All Marveled.*” (Mark 5:20)

The formerly demonized man traveled to the Ten Towns, sharing with everyone, including his family, what Jesus had done for him.

1. When people are delivered from demons today, are they encouraged to publicly testify to what God has done for them?
2. The first evangelist, Mary Magdalene, is known for having been delivered from seven demons.
 - *...along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. (Luke 8:2 NLT)*
 - *“But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message. (John 20:17b–18 NLT)*

Why Isn’t the Miracle of Deliverance Widely Proclaimed?

If a person wishes to testify about what Jesus has done for them, where would they go? Who would they tell?

1. **Stigma and Misunderstanding**
 - a. Many Christians continue to associate deliverance with shame, mental illness, or superstition.
 - b. There is a fear of being labeled as strange, unstable, or overly spiritual.
 - c. People may hesitate to reveal they were once oppressed by demons, despite Scripture clearly demonstrating that Jesus offers freedom for the afflicted.
2. **Western Rationalism and Modern Psychology**
 - a. In much of the Western Church, there is a tendency to explain spiritual matters through psychological or medical lenses.
 - b. This worldview often disregards the spiritual realm, even though Jesus’ ministry frequently addressed evil spirits.
3. **Lack of Teaching and Equipping**
 - a. Many churches avoid teaching about demons and deliverance due to discomfort, lack of understanding, or fear of controversy.
 - b. As a result, believers are not taught how to discern spiritual oppression, minister deliverance, or properly testify to it.

Robbing God of His Glory / Stopping People From Seeking Freedom

In many churches, individuals who have been delivered from past struggles, such as addiction or criminal behavior, are often encouraged to share their powerful testimonies of transformation. This is a wonderful way to glorify God’s work in their lives. However, when someone is delivered from demonic oppression, the response can be quite different. Rather than embracing their testimony, there is often a reluctance to discuss such experiences. The topic can feel uncomfortable, and those sharing about deliverance may find themselves hesitant to speak out, as the subject of spiritual warfare can be difficult for some to fully understand or accept.

Conclusion

The account of the Demonized Man of the Gadarenes underscores Jesus' power to bring profound transformation and freedom from spiritual bondage. Through this narrative, we witness not only the immediate physical and spiritual healing of the man but also the community's fearful reaction to such divine authority. This lesson affirms the ongoing relevance of deliverance ministry in addressing profound spiritual afflictions and underscores the imperative for believers to engage in this ministry with faith and understanding.

Next Lesson: The Demonized Boy Who Was Deaf and Mute

Our next lesson will examine another compelling case: The Demonized Boy Who Was Deaf and Mute, as recorded in Mark 9:14-29. This narrative will reveal further dimensions of Jesus' authority over demonic forces and provide deeper insights into the complexities and spiritual dynamics of deliverance.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 7: The Demonized Boy Who Was Deaf and Mute

Description

In this lesson, we explore the account of a boy who experienced extreme symptoms, including suicidal behavior, as a result of demon possession, as recorded in Mark 9:14-29 (parallel accounts in Matthew 17:14-21 and Luke 9:37-42).

Jesus' interaction with this boy offers profound lessons on the role of faith, prayer, and fasting in deliverance ministry. The boy's condition, including being deaf and mute, was not merely a physical ailment but a spiritual affliction, demonstrating the need for a deeper understanding of the spiritual roots of certain conditions. The narrative also emphasizes the authority required for deliverance, particularly when dealing with entrenched demonic forces.

The Setting

This deliverance account took place the day after Jesus was transfigured on a mountain before Peter, James, and John (Mark 9:1-13; Luke 9:37). Since Mark's account provides the most detailed description of this event, it will serve as the primary source for this lesson.

- ¹⁴ And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. ¹⁵ Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him. ¹⁶ And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?" ¹⁷ Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. ¹⁸ And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." ¹⁹ He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." ²⁰ Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. ²² And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." ²³ Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" ²⁵ When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" ²⁶ The spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. ²⁸ And when He had come into the house, His disciples*

asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”²⁹ So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” (Mark 9:14-29 NKJV)

Context of This Account

The account begins with a large crowd gathered at the foot of the mountain, awaiting the return of Jesus and His three disciples. Upon their arrival, Jesus saw the crowd surrounding His other disciples, who were engaged in a dispute with the “scribes” (Mark 9:14). Jesus immediately inquired, *“What is all this arguing about?”* (Mark 9:16 NLT).

“Knelt Before Jesus” (Matthew 17:14 NLT)

In a moment of desperation, the father of the demonized boy urgently stepped forward, kneeling before Jesus. Ignoring the ongoing argument and the crowd around him, he did everything he could to draw Jesus’ attention to his son’s desperate need.

Desperation and Humility

The father’s approach to Jesus illustrates the attitude required for effective deliverance ministry. Unlike those who approach deliverance with a sense of entitlement, expecting a quick and effortless solution, this father demonstrated a humble and desperate need for intervention. Deliverance is not a process of convenience but one that demands genuine commitment and engagement.

“Seizes” and “Rigid” (Mark 9:18)

With Jesus’ attention focused on him, the father explains his son’s condition. The boy was not only deaf and mute, but also suicidal, as the father describes how the demon had often *“thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him”* (vs. 22).

Neurological Disorder or Demon-Possession?

The Greek word *selēniazetai*, used in Matthew 17:15 but not in Mark or Luke, literally means “moonstruck” and has been translated in various ways:

- KJV: lunatic
- NKJV, NLT, ISV: epileptic
- NIV: seizures

“Moonstruck” is an outdated term historically used to describe individuals who behaved strangely or appeared mentally disturbed, often believed to be influenced by the phases of the moon, particularly the full moon.

Jesus, however, approached this as a spiritual condition rather than a physical one.

- Jesus rebukes a demon, not a disease, indicating the root cause was spiritual, even though the symptoms resembled epilepsy.
- The consistent message across all three Gospels is that the boy’s condition was spiritually caused, not a purely neurological disorder.

Further evidence supports that this was not epilepsy:

- The boy’s actions, such as screaming and attempting suicide by throwing himself into the fire and water, indicate a spiritual influence. Epileptic seizures would not allow for suicidal behavior.
- This condition does not align with typical neurological disorders or mental illnesses. The boy had a demon, and Jesus’ actions affirmed this understanding.

Why People Consider Suicide

Individuals who contemplate suicide often do so as a means of escaping overwhelming physical or emotional pain. The desire is not necessarily to end their life, but rather to find relief from the suffering that seems unbearable.

The Disciples Couldn’t Cast the Demon Out

Despite their prior success in casting out demons (Mark 6:12-13; Luke 10:17), the disciples were unable to perform the same task in this instance (Mark 9:18). Several factors may have contributed to their failure, and examining the circumstances surrounding the event provides valuable insights into the dynamics of deliverance ministry.

1. At the base of the mountain, in Mark 9:14, the disciples found themselves disputing with the scribes. The challenging questions and arguments likely weakened their faith.
2. The disciples may also have struggled because this particular demon was of a different “kind” (Mark 9:29), requiring a different approach.
3. Both factors may have affected this situation.

“Faithless Generation” (Mark 9:19)

In the parallel accounts, of Matthew 17:17 and Luke 9:41, Jesus calls the people “faithless and perverse.” This remark is not directed solely at His disciples, but at the broader group around Him, including the crowd, the scribes, and anyone involved in the situation. While Jesus’ disciples were present and part of the event, He was speaking to the overall lack of faith displayed by the people.

The term “perverse” in this context refers to a moral distortion or corruption—a deliberate turning away from what is right or expected. In the Greek, the word used is *diastrophē*, which means a twisting or a distortion. Essentially, Jesus is addressing how the people’s hearts and minds were turned from the truth, embracing incorrect views or behaviors, particularly in their attitudes toward Him and the miraculous works He performed. The term suggests a stubbornness or rebelliousness, not just in understanding but in responding to God’s authority. Jesus’ rebuke highlights two things:

1. Faithlessness – A lack of belief or trust in God’s power, even though they had witnessed miracles and had been taught by Jesus Himself.
2. Perverseness – A moral deviation, where the people twisted their understanding of God’s works, possibly doubting or rejecting the power and purpose behind them.

While the disciples had been struggling with their own doubts, this statement is aimed more broadly at the generation that failed to recognize or accept the spiritual truth of Jesus’ ministry, despite the evidence before them.

“Bring Him to Me.” (Mark 9:19)

In Mark’s account, we observe that the demon responded violently when the boy was brought to Jesus. This reaction illustrates how demons respond to genuine spiritual authority.

1. Demons recognize when a person possesses power and authority. Many individuals experience physical afflictions, such as nausea, before and during deliverance sessions as demons attempt to hinder them. Some have been so severely afflicted that they required emergency medical attention, yet no physical cause could be found. It is often noted that these demons are unable to make eye contact with someone who carries spiritual authority.
2. This power and authority come through:
 - a. Faith – Belief in the Scriptures and the power they represent.
 - b. Obedience – Walking in close relationship with Jesus and fellow believers.
 - c. Anointing – Some have unique spiritual gifts for specific areas of ministry (see 1 Corinthians 12:29).
3. Demons reacted to the presence of Christ in the following ways:
 - a. The spirit convulsed the boy violently, throwing him to the ground (Mark 9:20; Luke 9:42).
 - b. He wallowed and writhed on the ground (Mark 9:20).
 - c. He foamed at the mouth (Mark 9:20).

“How Long Has This Been Happening to Him?” (Mark 9:21)

In this instance, Jesus asks a question He already knows the answer to. He asks for the benefit of those who would later read and learn from this account. Here are a few observations about this question:

1. If demons reacted to Jesus and His tormenting authority, why do we not see more visible demonic manifestations today? Do we possess that same authority?
2. How often do we actually challenge or confront demonic forces in our churches? The lack of such confrontation allows demons to remain comfortable. It has been noted that the safest place for a demon can be a Sunday morning church service, where their presence is rarely suspected or addressed.

“From Childhood.” (Mark 9:21)

Before engaging in deliverance ministry, it is essential to gather accurate information about the situation. In this case, the boy may have been afflicted by a generational curse and likely born mute and deaf, with a demon causing these conditions (Mark 9:25).

It is possible that someone in the boy’s family line, someone with spiritual authority over him, opened the door for this demonic affliction through their actions.

Jesus “Rebuked the Unclean Spirit” (Mark 9:25)

The Greek word “rebuked” in Mark 9:25 conveys the meaning of:

- to rebuke, sternly command, reprove, or censure.

This rebuke served as both a command and a reproof for the harm the demon had caused the child. While we may not fully understand the spiritual power inherent in a rebuke, we are called to follow Jesus’ model of ministry and apply the same authority in rebuking demons.

“Listen, You Spirit That Makes This Boy Unable to Hear and Speak” (Mark 9:25 NLT)

In this statement, Jesus explicitly identifies the demon as the cause of the boy’s deafness and muteness, as well as likely contributing to any other erratic behaviors.

- *When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. “Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak,” he said. “I*

command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!” (Mark 9:25 NLT)

Breaking Down Demonic Entrenchment

Powerful and deeply entrenched demons do not easily depart with simple commands. Even after all legal rights have been removed, they often resist, striving to retain their hold. Several methods can be employed to confront and expel these entrenched demons:

1. Speaking the name of “Jesus” (Philippians 2:10).
2. Using Scripture—declaring truth from Bible passages and making declarations about:
 - a. Jesus’ victory
 - b. The power of the blood of Jesus
 - c. The person’s true identity in Christ
 - d. Our authority as ambassadors of Christ
 - e. The miracles performed by Jesus
 - f. Satan’s defeat
 - g. Psalms
3. Singing worship songs that glorify Jesus, particularly those about the blood of Jesus.
4. Anointing with oil.
5. Asking God to judge the demons, giving them a foretaste of the Lake of Fire.
6. Breathing on the person, telling the evil spirit that it symbolizes the breath of God.
7. Taking communion.
8. Placing the Bible on the person.
9. Showing a cross—the symbol of Satan’s defeat—and placing it on the person.

NOTE: See Deliverance Manual chapters *How to Expel Demons* and *Lies During a Deliverance Session* for more resources.

Warning

These spiritual tools are not intended to torment demons for personal vengeance or drama, but rather to weaken and expel them through the authority of Jesus Christ. However, from the demon’s perspective, these tools bring torment as they are compelled to submit, lose power, and ultimately depart.

The Presence of Authority Brings Torment on Demons

When the boy with the demon was brought to Jesus, and the demon recognized His presence, we see the following reaction in Mark 9:20:

1. The boy was convulsed.
2. He was thrown to the ground.
3. He wallowed.
4. He foamed at the mouth.

“This Kind Can Come Out by Nothing but Prayer and Fasting.” (Mark 9:29)

“This kind” likely refers to a specific classification of demon. Several factors can influence the difficulty of expelling demons:

1. The length of time the demon has been attached to the family:
 - a. A demon that has only been present for a few generations may be easier to expel than one that has been entrenched for centuries.
2. If there are alternate personalities (dissociation), it may create layers that must be addressed first:
 - a. Are the alters cooperating with the demons?
3. The level of trauma experienced will often require inner healing before deliverance can take place, as demons tend to embed themselves in emotional pain.
4. Religious barriers or doctrinal perspectives may prevent freedom and need to be addressed.
5. The age of the person:
 - a. The older a person is, the deeper demons can embed themselves, strengthening strongholds.
 - b. Older individuals may also struggle more to surrender their lives to Jesus.
 - c. The longer a demon has influenced a person, the more that individual may have adopted the characteristics of the demon, agreeing with its lies and behaving in ways that align with the demon’s desires.
6. The type of demon involved:
 - a. Demons of mind control are typically more intellectual and stronger than demons that primarily affect emotions, such as a spirit of anger.
7. Additional factors:
 - a. Blood covenants.
 - b. Mental health issues, which may affect the person’s ability to focus and complete necessary tasks.
 - c. Stress levels also can affect a person’s ability to focus.
 - d. Diseases and infirmities, which may impact the physical strength required for deliverance.
 - e. Whether the person lives alone or has a caregiver who can support them in the process.

What Fasting and Prayer Does

Fasting and prayer are not merely rituals that produce results, nor is the length of time spent in prayer the determining factor. Rather, fasting and prayer provide the deliverance minister with the necessary time to think, analyze, reflect, listen, and prepare for the upcoming deliverance session. During this time, tools such as the “What Can Block a Person’s Deliverance” guide from Beautiful Feet’s Deliverance Manual can be particularly useful.

Conclusion

As this is a condensed narrative, we are not given a detailed transcript of all that occurred in this biblical account. Similarly, when conducting deliverance ministry, there is no manual that addresses every specific situation we may encounter. In these instances, we rely on Scripture as our foundational guide and then:

1. Trust the Holy Spirit for further guidance.
2. Learn from the experiences of those who have gone before us, noting what has worked and what hasn’t.
3. Step out in faith.

This approach is consistent with any ministry within the church, where there is often no specific manual to follow for each unique situation.

Next Lesson: Ministry of Deliverance till 400 A.D.

In the next lesson, we will explore the continuation of deliverance ministry following the death and resurrection of Jesus, extending through the early church period until 400 A.D. We will learn from the Early Church Fathers how deliverance ministry did not cease with the last apostle but continued with dynamic power throughout the early centuries in the Church’s development.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 8: Ministry of Deliverance Till 400 A.D.

Introduction

This lesson illustrates that the ministry of deliverance did not cease with the death and resurrection of Jesus. What we see is that it continued with dynamic power through His apostles and through those who outlived the apostles, and it continues to our current era.

Deliverance After Jesus

As previously established, Jesus formed 42 teams of two (6 pairs from the 12 disciples + 36 pairs from the 72 disciples = **42 pairs** in total), commissioning them to preach, heal, and cast out demons. Following His ascension, this ministry remained unchanged. Jesus continued to work through His disciples, and this ministry persists today through His followers.

Examples of Deliverance Through the New Testament Era

1. **Disciples of Jesus: Deliverance ministry was a regular aspect of the disciples' work after Jesus' ascension.**
 - a. *Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. (Acts 5:16 NKJV)*
2. **Evangelist Philip: As a deacon-turned-evangelist, Philip demonstrated the power of deliverance in his ministry.**
 - a. *Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. (Acts 8:7 NLT)*
3. **Ministry of Paul: Deliverance was also a central part of Paul's ministry, further confirming its prevalence among early followers of Jesus.**
 - a. *This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And instantly it left her. (Acts 16:18 NLT)*
 - i. This girl had a spirit of divination
 - ii. Greek: *pneuma pythōna*—spirit of python.
 - iii. This refers to a demonic spirit connected to fortune-telling, likely mimicking the oracle traditions of Delphi (Greek mythology influence).
 - iv. In summary, both the **Oracle** and the **Pythian Games** were integral aspects of the religious and cultural identity of **Delphi**, with both devoted to honoring **Apollo**. The Oracle provided divine guidance, while the

Games served as a celebration of Apollo's influence, particularly in the realms of prophecy, art, and competition.

- b. *God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.* (Acts 19:11-12 NLT)
4. Eleazar: Although not a biblical account, Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian (c. 37 A.D. – c. 100 A.D.), recounts the story of Eleazar, a Jewish man who delivered a person from demonic possession using a method handed down from king Solomon.¹
 - a. About Flavius Josephus:
 - i. Jesus had already died a few years before Josephus was born.
 - ii. Josephus was alive during the time of many early Christians, some of whom may have personally witnessed Jesus' ministry.
 - iii. Josephus wrote about Jesus, John the Baptist, and James, the brother of Jesus.
 - iv. His writings offer valuable non-Christian, first-century references to the early Christian movement.
 - v. He affirms the practice of deliverance remained active during his era.
 - vi. He either witnessed or knew of deliverances, including one demonstration before Roman officials.
 - vii. His view of this deliverance method was positive.
-

Deliverance in the Epistles

While the epistles don't describe or instruct deliverance explicitly, they provide a dynamic spiritual framework that supports its ongoing practice, especially as modeled by Jesus and the apostles in the Gospels and Acts.

Why Are the Epistles Silent? Possible Reasons:

1. Deliverance Was Already Well Understood
 - a. Early Christians continued the ministry of deliverance based on the model set by Jesus without needing further instruction. This practice may have been passed down through oral tradition or established as a common practice in the churches.
 - b. Several ministries carried out in the early church are not explicitly addressed in the New Testament, and even less so than deliverance ministry. For example, ministries like youth, children, and music ministries are never mentioned, nor are specific manuals provided for how to conduct them, yet no one argues against the continuation of these ministries.
2. It Was Still Happening
 - a. The Book of Acts shows that deliverance continued after Jesus (e.g., all the disciples, Philip, Paul), so it's reasonable to believe the churches were still doing it, even if not highlighted in the epistles.
3. The epistles were focused on discipleship and maturity.

- a. The epistles do not indicate that the battle with demons has ended. Instead, they emphasize growing in Christ, resisting temptation, and living in righteousness—all of which address and undermine demonic influence.
 - i. *So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* (James 4:7 NLT)
 - ii. *Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil... Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith.* (1 Peter 5:8–9 NLT)
 - iii. *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.* (Romans 16:20 NLT)
 - iv. *But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.* (1 John 4:4 NLT)
 - v. *A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil...* (Ephesians 6:10-18 NLT)

These verses provide assurance in spiritual warfare.

- We do not need to fear demons.
- Christ's presence in us is infinitely more powerful than any demon.
- Authority in deliverance flows from His indwelling presence.

Deliverance Following the Last Apostles (100 A.D. – 400 A.D.)

Now we turn our attention to deliverance as viewed through the eyes of Early Church Fathers—leaders who succeeded the apostles. The evidence reveals that deliverance not only persisted as a central element of ministry but also served as a powerful catalyst for the spread of the Gospel, effectively persuading pagan audiences of its truth.

Driving All Competition from the Field

The question among the pagans of the Roman Empire was, “Which god held the most power? Which god was the one most worthy of worship and allegiance?”

The Early Church Fathers wrote extensively about their experiences and observations, consistently emphasizing that deliverance from demon-possession was the primary tool for converting pagans. This ministry played a significant role in the transformation of the Roman Empire from paganism to Christianity.

The dramatic and observable nature of deliverance ministry provided clear evidence of divine power. Through these powerful encounters, the supremacy of the Christian God was unmistakably demonstrated, thereby displacing the rival deities of the Roman pantheon and establishing Christianity as the true faith.

Testimonies of Early Church Fathers

1. Justin Martyr (c. 100 A.D. – c. 165 A.D.)
 - a. As a disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of the apostle John, Justin Martyr wrote:
 - i. “For many demoniacs throughout the entire world, and even in your own city, were exorcised by many of our Christians in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate; and our men cured them, and they still cure others by rendering helpless and dispelling the demons who had taken possession of these men, even when they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and exploiters of incantations and drugs.”²

2. Irenaeus (c. 130 A.D. – c. 202 A.D.)
 - a. Irenaeus, like Justin Martyr, was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a direct disciple of the apostle John. He wrote the following about what he witnessed:
 - i. “Wherefore, his true disciples receiving grace from him [Jesus], perform cures in his name for the benefit of other men, according as each has received the gift. Others banish demons surely and truly, and frequently those who are delivered from such, become believers and are in the Church.”³

3. Tertullian (c. 155 A.D. – c. 220 A.D.)
 - a. Tertullian, an esteemed early Church theologian, asserted that casting out demons was not a practice limited to church leaders, but was available to any Christian. This highlights the widespread practice of deliverance in the early Church. He issued the following challenge:
 - i. “Let a person be brought before your tribunals, who is plainly under demoniacal possession. The wicked spirit, bidden to speak by a follower of Christ, will as readily make the truthful confession that he is a demon, as elsewhere he has falsely asserted that he is a god.”⁴
 - ii. “Fearing Christ in God, and God in Christ, they become subject to the servants of God and Christ. So at our touch and breathing, overwhelmed by the thought and realization of those judgment fires, they leave at our command the bodies they have entered, unwilling, and distressed, and before your very eyes put to an open shame.”⁵

4. Origen (c. 185 A.D. – c. 254 A.D.)
 - a. Origen was witness to the expulsion of demons and wrote the following regarding what he observed:
 - i. “But he [Celsus, a heretical writer] seems blatantly to misrepresent the Gospel, for they do not *get the power* [over demons] *which they seem to possess* by any *incantations*, but by the name of Jesus with the recital of the histories about him. For when these are pronounced they have often made daemons to be driven out of men, and especially when those who utter them speak with real sincerity and genuine belief. In fact, the name of Jesus is so powerful against the daemons that sometimes it is effective

even when pronounced by bad men. Jesus taught this when he said: ‘Many shall say to me in that day, In thy name, we have cast out demons and perform miracles.’”⁶

- ii. “If, then, the Pythian priestess is beside herself when she prophesies, what spirit must that be which fills her mind and clouds her judgment with darkness, unless it be of the same order with those demons which many Christians cast out of persons possessed with them? And this, we may observe, they do without the use of any curious arts of magic, or incantations, but merely by prayer and simple adjurations [commands] which the plainest person can use. Because for the most part it is unlettered persons who perform this work; thus making manifest the grace which is in the word of Christ, and the despicable weakness of demons, which, in order to be overcome and driven out of the bodies and souls of men, do not require the power and wisdom of those who are mighty in argument, and most learned in matters of faith.”⁷
- iii. “And the name of Jesus can still remove distractions from the minds of men, and expel demons, and also take away diseases; and produce a marvellous meekness of spirit and complete change of character, and a humanity, and goodness, and gentleness in those individuals who do not feign themselves to be Christians for the sake of subsistence or the supply of any mortal wants, but who have honestly accepted the doctrine concerning God and Christ, and the judgment to come.”⁸

5. Cyprian (c. 210 A.D. – 258 A.D.)

- a. Cyprian, replying to Demetrianus, the proconsul of Africa, who contended that the wars, and famine, and pestilence with which the world was then plagued, must be imputed to the Christians because they did not worship the gods, declared the following:⁹
 - i. “Oh, would you but hear and see them when they are adjured [rebuked, commanded, cast out] by us, and tortured with spiritual scourges, and are ejected from the possessed bodies with tortures of words, when howling and groaning at the voice of man and the power of God, feeling the stripes and blows, they confess the judgment to come! Come and acknowledge that what we say is true.”¹⁰
 - ii. “These, however, when adjured by us through the true God, at once yield and confess, and are constrained to go out from the bodies possessed. You may see them at our voice, and by the operation of the hidden majesty, smitten with stripes, burnt with fire, stretched out with the increased of a growing punishment, howling, groaning, entreating, confessing whence they came and when they depart, even in the hearing of those very persons who worship them, and either springing forth at once or vanishing gradually, even as the faith of the sufferer comes in aid, or the grace of the healer effects. Hence they urge the common people to detest our name, so that men begin to hate us before they know us, lest they should either imitate us if known, or not be able to condemn us.”¹¹

6. Gregory the Miracle-Worker (c. 213 A.D. – c. 270 A.D.)
 - a. Gregory’s miracles were regarded as compelling evidence that Christianity was the superior and true power. Here is but one example out of countless:
 - i. “Later, once when there was an open-air gathering in a country spot nearby and everyone was feeling astonished at his [Gregory] teachings, some lad cried out to those standing there that the Teacher was not saying these things of himself but another standing next to him was delivering the words. When the child was brought forward after the gathering had broken up, it is said that the Great One said to those present that the lad was not clean from a demon, and suddenly taking off the linen cloth that was on his shoulders and endowing it with the breath of his own mouth thus he threw it over the lad. When this happened the boy shook and cried out and fell down and was thrown about and suffered all the passions which come from demons. Then when the saint placed his hand on him and calmed the shaking, his demon flew away, and when he was normal again, he no longer said that he saw a second speaker by the saint. Now this too is one of his great marvels, that he accomplished the healing types of miracles without any special fuss; but for the deliverance from demons and the cure of bodily ills the breath from his mouth was sufficient, brought to the sufferer in a linen cloth.”¹²

7. Eusebius (c. 265 A.D. – c. 340 A.D.)¹³
 - a. Eusebius, an early Christian historian, theologian, and bishop, is often referred to as the “Father of Church History.” He wrote that, at the turn of the first century in the province of Asia:
 - i. “They [those with prophetic gifts] ... spread the seeds of salvation ... throughout the world far and wide ... The Holy Spirit also wrought many wonders as yet through them, so that as soon as the gospel was heard, men voluntarily in crowds, eagerly embraced the true faith with their whole minds.”¹⁴
 - b. Eusebius included a letter from Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch. In that letter, he mentioned the size and offices filled in the Church in Rome:
 - i. “There should be one bishop in a catholic church...; that in it (the church in Rome) there were forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolyths, *fifty-two exorcists*, readers, and janitors, and over fifteen hundred widows and persons in distress, all of whom the grace and kindness of the Master nourish.”¹⁵
 - ii. “The Exorcists...; although we find exorcism very frequently referred to by the Fathers of the second century, there seems to have been no such office until the third century, the present being the earliest distinct reference to it. In the fourth century we find the office in all parts of the Church East and West.”¹⁶

8. St. Cyril (c. 313 A.D. – 386 A.D.)

a. St. Cyril stated:

- i. “Even so, without Exorcisms, the soul cannot be cleansed; and they are divine, collected from the divine Scriptures.”¹⁷
- ii. “Then, when ye were stripped, ye were anointed with exorcised oil, from the very hairs of your head, to your feet [*The candidates undressed, anointed, baptized thrice*], and were made partakers of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ. For ye were cut off from the wild olive-tree, and grafted into the good one, and were made to share the fatness of the true olive-tree. The exorcised oil therefore was a symbol of the participation of the fatness of Christ, the charm to drive away every trace of hostile influence. For as the breathing of the saints, and the invocation of the Name of God, like fiercest flame scorch and drive out evil spirits, so also this exorcised oil receives such virtue by the invocation of God and by prayer, as not only to burn and cleanse away the traces of sins, but also to chase away all the invisible powers of the evil one.”¹⁸

The Ministry of Deliverance Continued Through the Ages

In Ramsay MacMullen’s work “Christianizing the Roman Empire” it is observed that the practice of deliverance ministry continued after the cessation of Christian persecution in A.D. 312 but showed signs of decline. During this period, despite the stability of Rome’s population, there was a noticeable decrease in the number of appointed exorcists. For instance, their count declined from fifty-two around A.D. 250 to twenty-two a few centuries later. This decline indicates a diminishing emphasis on such supernatural practices within the broader Christian community during that era.

- “Rome itself, even at the turn of the fifth to the sixth centuries, there were twenty-two exorcists.”¹⁹
- “Bishops now actually dined with Constantine himself; they used Constantius’ [Constantin’s son, and successor] palace as their headquarters. They were seen riding along provincial highways in state conveyances, bent on their high affairs, as guests of the government. All the world could behold what fantastic changes had come about in the repute and position of ecclesiastical officials. What they said now had an authority acknowledged by the emperors themselves; it hardly needed miracles to rest on. There were correspondingly fewer tales of miracles, then, and they circulated most often in remote areas.”²⁰

Constantine’s Adoption of Christianity

Constantine’s adoption of Christianity and endorsement of exorcism initially had positive implications. However, as the Church became intertwined with political authority, its spiritual influence waned, marking a shift from good intentions to detrimental consequences.

Middle Ages

Interest in deliverance was revived during the Middle Ages, though it became marked by an over-emphasis on Satan and the use of torture as a means of casting out demons.

Protestant Reformation

During the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther developed a “Ritual for Exorcism” for pastors, which became part of the baptism ceremony.

The Roman Ritual

In 1614, the Catholic Church developed the Roman Ritual, which standardized the procedure for conducting exorcisms. It was revised in 1999.

Conclusion

The ministry of deliverance, as observed in the early church and through the testimonies of the Early Church Fathers, was not only a vital practice in the spread of the Gospel but also a powerful demonstration of God’s authority over demonic forces. From the acts of the apostles to the writings of influential church leaders, deliverance remained a cornerstone of Christian ministry. Despite the challenges posed by the intertwining of church and state, and the changing dynamics of Christian practices over the centuries, deliverance continued to serve as a potent tool for conversion and spiritual transformation.

Next Lesson: The Waning of Spiritual Power and the Shifting Role of Deliverance in Church History

In the next lesson, we will explore the waning of overt spiritual power in the Romanized Church, particularly following the rise of Constantine and the establishment of Christianity as the state religion. As the church gained political influence, there was a marked shift away from the dramatic manifestations of spiritual power that characterized earlier centuries, leading to a decline in visible deliverance ministries. This transition offers a critical look at how the church’s relationship with political authority impacted its spiritual vitality and its practices of deliverance.

Notes

¹Josephus, Flavius. *Complete Works. Antiquities of the Jews; The Wars of the Jews Against Apion.* p. 563. [Link](#)

²Justin Martyr. *The First Apology*, Chapter 6, pp. 125-126. [Link](#)

³Irenaeus. *Against Heresies*, Book 2, Chapter 32, p. 77. [Link](#)

- ⁴Tertullian. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume III, Chapter 23, p. 37. [Link](#)
- ⁵Tertullian. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Chapter 23, p. 38. [Link](#)
- ⁶Origen. *Contra Celsum (Against Celsus)*. Book I, Chapter 6, pp. 9-10. [Link](#)
- ⁷Origen. *Contra Celsum (Against Celsus)*. Book VII, Chapter 4, pp. 427-428. [Link](#)
- ⁸Origen. *Against Celsus*. Book I, Chapter 67, p. 474. [Link](#)
- ⁹Cyprian. *Treatise V, An Address to Demetrianus* [written in A.D. 252]. [Link](#)
- ¹⁰Cyprian. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, Volume 5, Chapter 15, p. 462. [Link](#)
- ¹¹Cyprian. *Treatise VI, Chapter 7*, p. 467. [Link](#)
- ¹²St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. *Life and Works by Saint Gregory*, p. 75. [Link](#)
- ¹³Eusebius. *Historia Ecclesiastica (Ecclesiastical History)* was the first comprehensive chronological account of the development of early Christianity from the apostolic age up to his own time in the early 4th century, earning him the unofficial title “Father of Church History.”
- ¹⁴Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 3, Chapter 37, p. 102. [Link](#)
- ¹⁵Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*, Book VI, Chapter 43, translated by Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol. 1*, pp. 735-736. [Link](#)
- ¹⁶Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*, Book VI, Chapter 43, translated by Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol. 1*, pp. 736, footnote 2125. [Link](#)
- ¹⁷St. Cyril. *The Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril*, Introductory Lecture, Chapter 9, p. 5. [Link](#)
- ¹⁸St. Cyril. *The Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril*, Lecture 20, Chapter 3, pp. 263-264. [Link](#)
- ¹⁹MacMullen, Ramsay. *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, p. 28. [Link](#)
- ²⁰MacMullen, Ramsay. *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, pp. 113-115. [Link](#)

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 9: The Waning of Spiritual Power and the Shifting Role of Deliverance in Church History

Description

This lesson examines the decline of overt spiritual power in the Church following the Edict of Milan and the subsequent rise of institutionalization under the Roman Empire. We explore the transition of deliverance practices from the early Church through the Middle Ages, with particular focus on the misuse of deliverance and the internal corruption within the Church, which played a significant role in the emergence of the Protestant Reformation.

Introduction

From 235 to 284 A.D., the Roman Empire endured a period of profound instability known as the *Crisis of the Third Century*. This era saw political chaos, with at least 26 official emperors (not to mention many more *unofficial* emperors), exacerbated by civil wars, invasions by Germanic tribes, economic collapse, a plague, and severe depopulation. Amidst these crises, Christians were increasingly scapegoated, accused of causing the empire's misfortunes.

In response, Emperor Diocletian sought to restore order by instituting a brutal persecution of Christians, whom he blamed for undermining traditional Roman values and invoking the wrath of the Roman gods. The persecution escalated through a series of edicts, and included the destruction of churches and Scriptures, stripping Christians of their legal rights, and demanding public sacrifices to the Roman gods under the threat of torture and death.

Despite its severity, the *Great Persecution* failed to eradicate Christianity. Instead, it inadvertently solidified the resolve of the Christian community, ultimately paving the way for Christianity's recognition as a sanctioned religion of the Roman Empire. This shift marked a critical turning point in the Church's history, setting the stage for both the institutionalization of Christian practices and the eventual marginalization of deliverance ministry as a central element of Christian life.

The Edict of Milan

The Edict of Milan, issued in 313 A.D., was a pivotal political agreement made in Milan, Italy, between two Roman emperors: Constantine I (Emperor of the West) and Licinius (Emperor of the East). This agreement was actually a letter that was circulated to the governors of the Roman provinces, detailing the terms that had been reached between the two emperors.

Key Provisions in the Edict of Milan:

1. **Religious Freedom for All:** The most crucial provision granted religious freedom to all people within the Roman Empire. This meant individuals could worship any deity they pleased without fear of state interference. This explicitly included Christians, who had previously faced severe persecution.
2. **End of Persecution:** It effectively ended the systematic persecution of Christians, which had been brutal, especially under emperors like Diocletian (who reigned from 284 to 305 A.D.).
3. **Restitution of Property:** The Edict mandated the prompt return of all confiscated property (including churches, communal lands, and individual possessions) to Christian communities. Owners who had purchased this property from the state were allowed to seek compensation.

Significance for Christianity:

1. **Legalization:** The Edict made Christianity a *religio licita* (legal religion) within the Roman Empire, granting it official legal status and protection.
2. **Growth and Public Worship:** This newfound freedom allowed Christians to openly practice their faith, build churches, and organize their communities without fear of reprisal. This led to significant growth in Christian adherence and greater integration into Roman society.
3. **Paving the Way for State Religion:** While the Edict of Milan did *not* make Christianity the official state religion, it set the stage for its eventual prominence. That step happened later, in 380 A.D., with the Edict of Thessalonica, which made Nicene Christianity the official state religion of the Roman Empire and outlawed other forms of Christianity and pagan practices.

Impact on the Early Church:

The early Church's fervent spiritual power began to decline as it became more intertwined with Roman politics and power structures following the Edict of Milan. While gaining legal status, this closer relationship also introduced new challenges and influences.

The Edict of Thessalonica

The Edict of Thessalonica was a crucial decree issued in 380 A.D. by three Roman Emperors: Theodosius I (Emperor of the East), Gratian (Emperor of the West), and Valentinian II (Gratian's junior co-ruler).

Key Provisions in the Edict of Thessalonica:

1. **Making Nicene Christianity the State Religion:** This was the most significant aspect. The Edict officially proclaimed Nicene Christianity (the form affirming the Trinity and the full divinity of Christ) as the sole legitimate state religion of the Roman Empire.
2. **Condemnation of Heresy:** The Edict explicitly condemned other Christian creeds, particularly Arianism (which held differing views on the nature of Christ's divinity), as heresies.
3. **Threat of Punishment:** It threatened both divine condemnation and imperial retribution for those who rejected the Nicene Creed.

Impact:

1. **Official Christianization:** It marked the formal transformation of the Roman Empire into a Christian empire.
2. **Suppression of Other Beliefs:** While primarily targeting Arian Christians, the Edict also initiated the suppression of paganism, eventually leading to the dismantling of pagan temples and the prohibition of their practices over time.
3. **Centralization of Church Authority:** It solidified the authority of the Church, particularly elevating the standing of the bishops of Rome (like Pope Damasus I) and Alexandria (Bishop Peter), whose faiths were cited as the standard of correct belief.
4. **Foundation for Church-State Relations:** It established a powerful precedent for the close intertwining of church and state, a relationship that would profoundly influence European history for centuries to come.

In essence, the Edict of Thessalonica was a landmark decree that shifted Christianity from being merely a tolerated religion to the official and enforced state religion of the Roman Empire.

The Institutional Church: Shifting Dynamics

As the Church gained legal recognition and began to integrate more significantly into the Roman Empire's political and power structures, its character evolved. From one perspective, what was previously achieved primarily through spiritual means—such as preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, and casting out demons, largely following Jesus' model of ministry—the Church now increasingly sought to accomplish or reinforce through political influence and, at times, military endorsement.

This growing institutionalization brought greater hierarchical control. Practices like deliverance ministry, which had perhaps been more widely practiced by individuals in the early, less

organized Church, gradually came under the more centralized control of bishops and formal ecclesiastical structures.

This increased political and administrative authority, while bringing stability, also presented new challenges, leading to a decline in certain aspects of spiritual vitality and, at times, to instances of moral decay within the Church's leadership.

Manuals for Exorcism and the Shadow of the *Malleus Maleficarum*

As the Church developed its institutional structures, the need for standardized liturgical practices grew, leading to the compilation of various liturgical books. These often included formulas and rites on how to conduct exorcisms. During the Middle Ages (c. 500 to 1500 A.D.), a diverse array of such writings became recognized and were subsequently adopted, with variations, by different localities.

The *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*): A Historical Context

To provide historical context for why the ministry of deliverance has, at times, been distanced or viewed with skepticism, the notorious *Malleus Maleficarum* warrants mention.

Published in 1487 A.D., this manual on witchcraft was written by two German Dominican inquisitors, Heinrich Kramer and possibly Jacob Sprenger. It controversially claimed endorsement from a papal decree (*papal bull*), issued by Pope Innocent VIII in 1484. The *Malleus* provided detailed directives on how to identify, interrogate, and prosecute suspected witches, explicitly advocating for their execution. This document became highly influential, contributing to the tragic reality of an estimated 40,000 to 60,000 people (some estimates range up to 100,000) being executed for witchcraft in Europe between 1450 and 1750.

The *Malleus*' devastating influence extended to colonial North America, and the very phrase "witch hunt" remains a common term in American politics today. Furthermore, the broader historical impact of the Church's involvement in sanctioned religious wars, inquisitions, and the brutality of the witch hunts has led many, including modern theological institutions, to embrace a more rationalist mentality. This intellectual shift often results in seminaries and scholars distancing their teaching from anything that might accuse another of heresy or witchcraft, frequently leading to a disregard for, and even disbelief in, a literal Satan, and, consequently, a diminished emphasis on the perceived need for and practice of formal exorcisms.

The *Roman Ritual* (*Ritual Romanum*)

In the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church recognized a pressing need to standardize its liturgical practices. This was part of a broader effort to present a unified front against the theological and practical challenges posed by Protestantism. Prior to this, while the core of the Mass and sacraments remained consistent, considerable variation

existed in the specific “manuals,” prayers, and rituals used for other ministry functions—including exorcisms—across different religious orders and even among individual priests.

This pressing need for reform directly led to the Council of Trent (1545-1563), commonly referred to as the Counter-Reformation. This significant series of meetings brought together bishops and cardinals, along with other high-ranking clergy and theological experts, with the dual aim of reaffirming Catholic doctrines and enacting sweeping reforms within the Church’s discipline and administration.

The *Roman Ritual*, officially published in 1614, was a direct product of these Counter-Reformation efforts and the Council of Trent’s decrees. Its compilation represented a crucial step in the Roman Catholic Church’s broader strategy to combat the fragmentation caused by the Protestant Reformation. It established greater doctrinal clarity, clerical discipline, and, critically, liturgical uniformity across its vast global reach.

Conclusion

The historical journey from the Roman Empire’s persecution of early Christians to Christianity’s establishment as the state religion, marked by pivotal events like the Edict of Milan and the Edict of Thessalonica, profoundly reshaped the Church. This shift led to increased institutionalization and centralized control, arguably diminishing some aspects of its overt spiritual power. The rise of the *Malleus Maleficarum* vividly illustrates how a desire for control and uniformity, coupled with fear and flawed theology, could tragically distort Christian practice, leading to immense suffering and ultimately contributing to a more rationalist outlook that, in turn, marginalized the understanding and practice of deliverance ministry within much of the modern Church.

Next Lesson: Modern Views of Deliverance and the Theological Divide

As we move into the next lesson, we will explore the modern views of deliverance, including the reasons why some have distanced themselves from it. We will examine the theological and cultural divides that have shaped these perspectives, with a particular focus on the secularization of the Church. Additionally, we will delve into how different theological camps, such as Cessationists and Continuationists, approach the practice of deliverance.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 10: Modern Views of Deliverance and the Theological Divide

Description

This lesson examines modern perspectives on deliverance ministry, focusing on why certain individuals and denominations distance themselves from this practice. We will explore the theological and cultural differences that contribute to this divide, including the secularization of the Church. Particular attention will be given to how Cessationists and Continuationists approach deliverance, reflecting on the implications these views have for contemporary ministry.

St. Augustine's Views on the Ministry of Deliverance and Other Miracles

St. Augustine (354 - 430 A.D.), an influential Early Church Father from Hippo (modern-day Annaba, Algeria), at age 36, initially argued in his book *De Vera Religione (On True Religion)*, written around 390 A.D., that miracles were confined to the apostolic age and were primarily meant to establish faith, not expected to continue beyond that time.¹

- *“These miracles were not permitted to last till our times, lest the soul should always seek visible things, and the human race should grow cold by becoming accustomed to things which stirred it when they were novel.”*²

However, in his later years, at age 72, Augustine revised his position in his book *Retractions* (426 – 427 A.D.), which includes revisions and corrections to his earlier writings. In *Retractions*, he documented 70 instances of healings, miracles, resurrections, and exorcisms, asserting that these continued powerfully into his own time, with some even witnessed by him firsthand. Augustine confessed that, after encountering many credible contemporary miracles, it was impossible to deny their occurrence, and he regretted not being able to document them all.³

Thus, while Augustine initially suggested that miracles were not meant to continue after the apostolic age, he later affirmed the ongoing reality of miracles in his own era. His change of mind demonstrates his intellectual honesty and willingness to revise his beliefs.⁴

Key Reasons for Augustine's Shift:

- **Personal Experience and Witness:** Augustine was confronted with numerous accounts of miracles within his diocese and beyond, many of which he found credible and undeniable.
- **Desire to Counter Pagan Objections:** Pagans often questioned why the Christian God did not perform miracles as visibly as the gods of other religions. Augustine's documentation of contemporary miracles served to address these objections.

- **Recognition of God's Ongoing Power:** Augustine came to recognize that God's power was not confined to a particular historical period but was active and present in the world.

Augustine's *Retractions* signifies a pivotal shift in his understanding of miracles. He moved from initially limiting them to the apostolic age to acknowledging their continued presence, based on both personal observations and the testimony of others. This shift is a key point in the historical discussion of the continuation of miraculous gifts in Christianity.

Reformers and the Ministry of Deliverance

During the first five centuries, there are numerous documented accounts of the continuation of prophetic gifts, healings, and deliverances from demons. The Roman Catholic Church used these accounts to assert the validity of its doctrinal authority against the views of the Protestant reformers.

In response, the reformers sought to counter the Catholic Church's claims of ongoing miracles by asserting that such miraculous gifts were specific to the apostolic era. They advanced the doctrine of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone), emphasizing that the completion of the biblical canon rendered the foundational sign gifts unnecessary. According to the reformers, Scripture alone was sufficient as the authoritative and final revelation of God's will.

Martin Luther (1483 - 1546 A.D.)

Although Martin Luther did not develop a formal doctrine of cessationism, his writings contain significant elements that align with a cessationist understanding, particularly regarding the unique role of apostolic miracles in establishing the church and his skepticism toward contemporary claims of miracles. He emphasized the primacy of the Word and faith, which implicitly shifted the focus away from expecting widespread, outwardly spectacular miracles as seen in the early church. Later Reformed theologians built upon these themes to develop more explicit cessationist doctrines.

Luther and Deliverance Ministry

In 1523, Martin Luther wrote *The Order of Baptism*, an infant baptismal rite that included formulas for expelling demons, drawing on Roman Catholic practices (which will be discussed in a later lesson). Luther also wrote pastoral letters, offering counsel and instructions on how to deliver individuals from demon possession.

Heiko Oberman, in *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, writes:

- *Luther's world of thought is wholly distorted and apologetically misconstrued if his conception of the Devil is dismissed as a medieval phenomenon and only his faith in Christ retained as relevant or as the only decisive factor. Christ and the Devil were*

*equally real to him: one was the perpetual intercessor for Christianity, the other a menace to mankind till the end.*⁵

John Calvin (1509 - 1564 A.D.)

John Calvin, a prominent Protestant reformer, had a view and approach to deliverance that differed significantly from Martin Luther's. Though Calvin extensively referenced Augustine, mentioning his name no fewer than 387 times in *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, he sidestepped Augustine's *Retractions*.

Calvin is best understood as a cessationist:

- *“But the gift of healing disappeared with the other miraculous powers which the Lord was pleased to give for a time, that it might render the new preaching of the gospel for ever wonderful.”*⁶
- *“But in the Epistle to the Romans, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he enumerates other offices, as powers, gifts of healing, interpretation, government, care of the poor (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28). As to those which were temporary, I say nothing, for it is not worth while to dwell upon them.”*⁷

Calvin's high view of God's sovereignty shaped his understanding of spiritual matters. From Job chapters 1-2, he believed that Satan could only act within the boundaries set by God. As he stated:

- *Satan is subject to the power of God and can do nothing unless it is permitted.*⁸

Though he did believe in a literal Satan and demons, Calvin produced no liturgical process for expelling demons, and asserted that evil and temptation were dealt with through:

- Personal repentance
- Faith in God's providence
- Reliance on Scripture and prayer

Augustine's alignment with the Church in Rome, his belief that relics of the martyrs were useful in conveying power to heal, and his belief in the effectiveness of the prayers of saints in producing miracles may have been reasons why Calvin distanced himself from Augustine regarding continuationist beliefs.

B. B. Warfield's *Counterfeit Miracles*

While Luther's and Calvin's writings suggested the cessation of certain miraculous gifts, they did not fully develop a clear theological perspective of cessationism. It was later theologians, such as

B. B. Warfield in the 19th century, who systematized cessationism into a more defined theological position.⁹

History Confirms Sign Gifts in Every Age

Despite the efforts of Protestant reformers and contemporary theologians to dismiss the sign gifts, Church history provides undeniable accounts of their continued presence, as documented in *With Signs Following* by Stanley Frodsham.¹⁰

Deliverance During Times of Revival

Having researched and documented 2,514 accounts of revival (as of June 2025), we found numerous instances of demonization with the increase in the presence and power of God, particularly during times of revival.¹¹

We discovered that editors, acting knowingly and intentionally, omitted elements of these revivals because they conflicted with their doctrinal perspective, effectively rewriting history.

More Theological Distinctions

We now turn to several additional influences on the Church at large and examine how these views impact different groups' approaches to the ministry of deliverance.

A Church Infiltrated with Secular Thought

The Age of Enlightenment, which began around 1680, was a philosophical and intellectual movement that emphasized reason, individualism, skepticism toward authority (especially religious and political authority), and the promotion of scientific inquiry and human rights. This philosophy gradually infiltrated churches, becoming widespread and deeply rooted in many denominations today.

Ridicule from Higher Learning

The critical stance taken by certain scholars regarding the study of exorcism has served to deter engagement with this important topic. As noted by esteemed historians and professors, the study of exorcism is often dismissed or marginalized within academic circles. Dr. Ramsay MacMullen, a respected historian of early Christianity, highlights this sentiment, stating:

- *“They have declared the study of exorcism, possibly the most highly rated activity of the early Christian church, a historiographical ‘no-go’ area.”*¹²

Furthermore, Dr. Graham H. Twelftree, an expert in healing, exorcism, and spiritual authority, addresses the broader academic reluctance to acknowledge the reality of demons and their impact on human health. He asserts:

- *“That malevolent spiritual beings exist and that they can invade, control, and observably impair the health of an individual who, in turn, can be cured through someone purportedly forcing the spiritual beings to leave, for the vast majority of biblical scholars and theologians this is tantamount to believing in such entities as elves, dragons, and for a flat earth.”¹³*

These remarks reflect the skepticism and ridicule that scholars often face when attempting to engage with the topic of deliverance and exorcism in academic contexts. Such perspectives underscore the tension between traditional Christian teachings on spiritual warfare and prevailing academic attitudes toward the supernatural in biblical studies.

Progressive and Liberal Churches

Many progressive churches interpret the concept of spiritual warfare and deliverance in a metaphorical manner. Rather than viewing demonic forces as literal entities, they often regard them as symbolic representations of internal struggles, personal vices, or systemic injustices. For instance, “demons” may be understood as metaphors for addictions, negative behaviors, or oppressive societal structures such as racism or poverty, rather than as actual spiritual beings.

How Jesus Is Viewed for His Beliefs in Satan and Demons

Some progressive and even moderate Christians explain that the people in Jesus’ day believed in evil spirits, much like many primitive cultures today. They argue that Jesus, born into that cultural context, accepted these beliefs, as did the Gospel writers Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Moderate Christian View

William Barclay, a Church of Scotland minister and Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at the University of Glasgow, described himself as a “liberal evangelical.” He sought to strike a balance between full liberalism and rejecting the inspiration of the Bible.

In his commentary on Matthew 12:22-29, Barclay writes:

- In the middle east, it was not only mental and psychological illness which was ascribed to the influence of demons and devils; all illness was ascribed to their malignant power. Exorcism was therefore very commonly practiced — and was in fact frequently completely effective.
- There is nothing in that to be surprised at. When people believe in demon-possession, it is easy to convince themselves that they are so possessed; when they come under that

delusion, the symptoms of demon-possession immediately arise. It is certainly possible to think ourselves into having a headache, or to convince ourselves that we have the symptoms of an illness. When people under such *delusions* were confronted with an exorcist in whom they had confidence, often the *delusion* was dispelled and a cure resulted. In such cases, if those people were convinced they were cured, they were cured.¹⁴

Was Jesus Deluded?

Barclay does not follow his reasoning to its logical conclusion. If the individuals were merely under the delusion of being demon possessed, did Jesus believe in their possession as well? Or was He merely accommodating their delusion, knowing that He was addressing a mental illness rather than spiritual affliction?

Bible-Believing, Conservative, Reformed, Classical Christian Churches

Among churches that uphold traditional, conservative, and historic Christian beliefs, in contrast to progressive or liberal beliefs, there are several distinctions related to the ministry of deliverance.

1. Deny a Literal Satan and Demons
 - a. Even if a church maintains traditional Christian beliefs, it is important to note that 50% of self-identified Christians do not ascribe to the existence of a literal Satan or demons. These churches often include many individuals who hold this view.
2. A Christian Cannot Be Demonized
 - a. Those who believe a genuine Christian cannot be demonized (i.e., influenced by demonic forces) tend to view all mental illness as a result of brain disease. Consequently, they advocate for healing approaches grounded in secular mental health practices.
 - b. In this view, deliverance ministries are considered outdated and unnecessary, regarded as superstitious and medieval practices carried out by individuals uneducated in modern psychology.
3. A Christian Can Come Under Varying Degrees of Demonic Influence
 - a. Those who believe in the validity of deliverance ministry may still distance themselves from the practice due to past negative experiences, concerns about its potential for abuse, peer pressure,¹⁵ or fear of sensationalizing the ministry.
 - b. Others may approach the ministry with caution, as this form of ministry, more than others, invites mockery and criticism. This fear often leads to these churches conducting deliverance in private and avoiding open discussion of it.
4. The Cessationist and Continuationist Approach to Deliverance Ministry
 - a. Cessationist
 - i. Those who believe the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased with the last apostles, but still believe Christians can be demonized, do not engage in *power encounters* (where individuals command demons to leave). Instead, they lead those afflicted by demons through *truth encounters*, as reflected in the Scripture, “*The truth will set you free*” (John 8:32).

- b. Continuationist
 - i. Those who believe Christians can be demonized use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in deliverance ministry. These individuals not only incorporate *truth encounters*, as seen in the cessationist approach, but also engage in *power encounters* to expel demons and deliver the afflicted.

Conclusion

This lesson effectively traces the evolution of perspectives on deliverance ministry, highlighting shifts from early church practices to contemporary debates. It underscores the ongoing relevance of these discussions within theological circles, emphasizing the diversity of beliefs and practices among different denominations.

Next Lesson: Deliverance in the Roman Catholic Church

We now turn to the rich history of exorcism within the Roman Catholic Church. From the earliest centuries to modern times, the Church has maintained a robust tradition of confronting spiritual forces through the rite of exorcism. We will explore key rituals and examine how they differ from the approaches used by evangelical churches.

¹ “2119 on True Religion.” Augnet, Augustinians Australia, <http://augnet.org/en/works-of-augustine/writings-of-augustine/2119-on-true-religion/>

^{2a} Augustine. *De Vera Religione*, Chapter 25, Section 47.

<https://archive.org/details/retractationesof00elle/page/n275/mode/2up?q=miracles&view=theater>

^{2b} Burleigh, John H. S. *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 224; slide 7 in the following link: <https://maryourhelp.org/e-books/augustine-of-hippo/Augustine-early-writings.pdf>.

^{3a} “2324 Miracles.” Augnet, Augustinians Australia, <http://augnet.org/en/works-of-augustine/his-ideas/2324-miracles/>.

^{3b} Augustine. *City of God*, Book XXII, Chapter 8.

<https://www.logoslibrary.org/augustine/city/2208.html>

⁴ Augustine. *City of God*, Book XXII, Chapter 8. — Of Miracles Which Were Wrought that the World Might Believe in Christ, and Which Have Not Ceased Since the World Believed.

<https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120122.htm>

⁵ Oberman, Heiko A. *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, p. 104.

<https://www.amazon.com/Luther-Man-Between-God-Devil/dp/0300103131>.

⁶ Calvin, John. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, p. 888.

<https://www.ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/Calvin%20Institutes%20of%20Christian%20Religion.pdf>.

⁷ Calvin, John. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, p. 653.

⁸ John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion – Christian Classics Ethereal Library. See #17, or #153 in right column of this webpage: <https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.iii.xv.html>.

⁹ Warfield, B. B. *Counterfeit Miracles*.

https://archive.org/details/counterfeitmirac0000warf_s6o5/mode/2up.

¹⁰ Frodsham, Stanley H. *With Signs Following: The Story of the Pentecostal Revival in the Twentieth Century*. <https://archive.org/details/withsignsfollowi0000frod/mode/2up>.

¹¹ Some examples on the Beautiful Feet website include:

1. [1807 Mow Cop Revival](#)
2. [1824 Antwerp, New York Revival](#)
3. [1841 Ireland Revivals \(Limerick--1842\)](#)
4. [1905 India Revival](#)
5. [1930s Pennsylvania—United Brethren in Christ](#)
6. [1936 Solomon Islands Revival](#)
7. [1966 Zulu Revival](#)
8. [1984 Argentina—Carlos Annacondia](#)
9. [1994 Toronto](#)
10. [1995 Brownsville—they had 10 deliverance teams](#)
11. [1999 Mornington Island Revival](#)
12. [2006 Shillong Revival](#)

¹² MacMullen, Ramsay. *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, p. 27.

¹³ Twelftree, Graham H. *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians*, p. 25. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007.

¹⁴ Barclay, William. *Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2*, pp. 39-40.

<https://archive.org/details/gospelofmatthewv0002barc/page/38/mode/1up?view=theater>.

¹⁵ Many ministers will distance themselves because they fear the negativity from within their congregation, as well as coming from other ministers in their community and their denomination at large.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 11: Deliverance in the Roman Catholic Church

Description

This lesson explores the historical development and evolving practices of deliverance within the Roman Catholic Church. Beginning with its biblical foundations and the contributions of early Church fathers, we trace the progression of Catholic theology and exorcism practices from the early Church to the present. We also examine the impact of Vatican II on deliverance ministry, look at current diagnostic approaches to possession, and compare Catholic and Protestant perspectives on spiritual warfare.

Introduction

At the outset of this lesson, we acknowledge that the Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance adheres to Protestant theological beliefs and recognize the genuine theological differences that exist between Protestantism and Catholicism. However, our main focus here is not to compare these differences but to study the Roman Catholic Church's historical and theological approach to deliverance, which has been influential since the early centuries of Christianity. As the dominant expression of Christianity for much of this period, the Catholic Church's two-millennia-long history of exorcism provides valuable insights into the ministry of deliverance. Additionally, popular culture tends to portray exorcisms through the lens of Catholicism, with most depictions in media reflecting Catholic practices. Understanding the Catholic approach to deliverance, therefore, is essential for gaining a broader cultural perspective on this ministry. Finally, it is important to recognize that both Catholic and Protestant churches today often encounter skepticism, doubt, and outright disbelief regarding deliverance. In many cases, there is a growing tendency to seek medical and psychological explanations for symptoms that may have spiritual causes.

Historical Overview of Deliverance in the Roman Catholic Church

In previous lessons, we established that the ministry of deliverance was integral to the early Church and served as a primary tool in evangelizing the pagan Roman Empire. It was through this ministry that miracles, healings, resurrections, and deliverance from demon possession were commonly documented, particularly through the year 400 A.D.

In Lesson 9, we examined the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*), written in 1487 by Heinrich Kramer. This notorious manual, which provided directives on the execution of witches, contributed significantly to the witch hunts of the period and its association with exorcism practices. The phrase “witch hunts” continues to be widely used in modern political discourse.

Tool Against the Protestant Reformation: While the *Malleus Maleficarum* was not specifically created as a direct response to the theological challenges of the Protestant Reformation, it played a significant role in fostering the persecution of those considered religiously deviant. It contributed to an environment of religious intolerance in Europe, where accusations of heresy, including the demonization of Protestant beliefs, were sometimes accompanied by exorcisms. In some cases, little evidence was required to justify the use of torture, combined with exorcism, as a means of combating the perceived “demons of Protestantism.”

History of the *Roman Ritual (Rituale Romanum)*

An early handbook on exorcism was written by Father Girolamo Menghi in 1584, titled *The Devil's Scourge (Flagellum Daemonum. Exorcismos Terribiles)*. This document laid the groundwork for the *Roman Ritual (Rituale Romanum)*, a comprehensive collection of liturgical texts and instructions used by the Roman Catholic Church for various sacraments, ceremonies, and rituals. It includes prayers, rites, and guidelines for sacred functions such as baptisms, marriages, funerals, and other sacraments, as well as the Rite of Exorcism.

In 1614, Pope Paul V formalized the *Roman Ritual* as a unified document, standardizing the directions for sacred functions that had previously varied. Subsequent revisions of the *Roman Ritual* took place:

1. 1962 (revision under Pope John XXIII),
2. 1969-1970 (Post-Vatican II revision under Pope Paul VI),
3. 1999 (updated Rite of Exorcism under Pope John Paul II).

Father Gabriele Amorth, a renowned exorcist for the Diocese of Rome and informally known as “The Pope’s Exorcist,” noted in his book *An Exorcist Tells His Story* that the 1999 revision of the Rite of Exorcism was conducted without the input of any experienced or practicing exorcists. Some exorcists have strongly criticized the 1999 revision, claiming it significantly diluted the rite. Additionally, this revision restricted the authority to perform exorcisms, limiting it to bishops and priests appointed by them, whereas previously, any priest could conduct the ministry.

In contrast, no Protestant denomination has formalized a ritual for exorcism comparable to the *Roman Ritual*. Protestants generally approach deliverance in a more flexible, personalized manner, with less institutional structure than the Catholic Church. Their practices are often based on Scripture, personal experience, and the guidance of local church leadership, with various denominations adopting their own approaches to addressing spiritual oppression or demonic influence.

Levels of Exorcism in the Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church categorizes levels of demonic activity, with the approach to remediation varying according to the nature and severity of the experience:

1. **Temptation** – A form of demonic influence common to all humanity.
2. **Vexation** – A more intense form of temptation that goes beyond ordinary struggles, leading to greater spiritual distress.
3. **Infestation** – Often described as the presence of demons in a location, akin to a “haunted house.”
4. **Oppression** – A physical attack or force exerted on the body *from the outside*, causing physical and emotional suffering.
5. **Obsession or Preoccupation** – A psychological attack *from inside the mind*, where the victim’s mind is overtaken by intrusive thoughts from which they cannot free themselves. This is sometimes referred to as *partial possession*.
6. **Possession** – The most severe form, where a demon exerts control over both the body and the consciousness of the individual.

Protestants, due to their theological perspectives or a desire to avoid alarming those receiving ministry, often refrain from using terms like “demon-possessed” or “demonized.” Instead, they may use terms such as harassed, tormented, or oppressed, avoiding the explicit notion of a person having a demon, or being controlled by a demon.

Major Exorcism

A major exorcism is specifically reserved for individuals deemed “demon-possessed,” as outlined in the final level of demonic activity. The Catholic Church teaches that demon possession is rare; therefore, this level of exorcism is seldom performed.

1. Who Is Authorized to Conduct Major Exorcisms?
 - a. Bishops and those they appoint to the office of exorcist are authorized to conduct major exorcisms, but only after receiving formal training. Historically, training involved apprenticing under an experienced exorcist.
 - b. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese stated in a podcast on January 10, 2018, that he has never witnessed a major exorcism. His diocese covers 14 counties in northeastern Indiana, with 81 parishes.
 - i. Father Gabriele Amorth, an exorcist for the Diocese of Rome, co-founded the International Association of Exorcists (AIE) with six other priests. This organization, with 900 members from 58 countries, aims to increase the number of officially authorized exorcists worldwide and raise awareness of the growing incidence of demonic possession, which some priests and bishops had overlooked or suppressed.
 - ii. Bishop Rhoades’ statement confirms Father Amorth’s efforts to highlight the widespread reality of demonic oppression and possession. There is a growing trend to diagnose these conditions as psychiatric disorders.
 - c. Some argue that priests or any layperson who attempt a major exorcism without the bishop’s approval cannot succeed in truly liberating the afflicted, as they lack the proper authorization and spiritual authority.

2. Where Is Training of Exorcists Conducted?
 - a. The Vatican offers an official exorcist training course which includes both academic study and practical experience. Bishops may also conduct local or regional training in their dioceses.

3. When Is a Major Exorcism Conducted?
 - a. A major exorcism is only performed after the individual has undergone thorough medical and psychological evaluations. If these assessments do not explain the person's condition, a bishop may authorize an exorcism.

4. How Is a Person Diagnosed as Being Demon Possessed?
 - a. Bishop Kevin Rhoades emphasized that demon possession is so rare that one need not trouble themselves with trying to diagnose it. Bishop Rhoades also added that for an exorcism to be approved, there must be moral certainty that the person is genuinely possessed.
 - i. In contrast, Father Gabriele Amorth states unequivocally that demons will hide, and are not discovered until after an exorcism is started. Another prominent exorcist, Father Carlos Martins, says the same thing in his book, *The Exorcist Files*:
 1. "Rarely does the exorcist possess certainty of possession before beginning prayers of exorcism."
 - b. Diagnostic Indicators of Possession Include:
 - i. Xenoglossy: The ability to speak or understand languages unknown to the individual.
 - ii. Occult Knowledge: Knowledge that the person could not naturally possess.
 - iii. Superhuman Strength: Physical abilities beyond the individual's normal capacity.
 - iv. Extreme Aversion to the Sacred: Intense negative reactions to religious objects, rituals, and names.
 - v. Intense Negative Thoughts & Temptations: Overwhelming urges towards evil, blasphemous thoughts, or lewd obsessions.
 - vi. Spiritual Opposition: Difficulty with prayer, scripture, and a general resistance to spiritual matters.
 - vii. Disturbing Psychological Experiences: Vivid nightmares, terrifying visions, and a palpable sense of evil presence.
 - viii. Unexplained Physical Ailments: Persistent and undiagnosable health issues, particularly headaches, stomach/back pain, and throat pressure.
 - ix. Paranormal Phenomena: Unexplained disturbances in the environment or unusual behavior from pets sensing an unseen presence, potentially linked to occult activity.

5. What Is Involved with a Major Exorcism?
 - a. The Rite of Major Exorcism involves several key components:

- i. Litany of Saints: A prayer spoken by the exorcist, with responses from the attendees.
- ii. Reading of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).
- iii. Scriptural Readings: Passages from the Psalms and Gospels.
- iv. Deprecatory Prayers: Prayers asking God to free the individual from demonic influence.
- v. Imprecatory Prayers: Prayers calling down curses upon the demons.
- vi. Laying on of Hands.
- vii. Touching the person with the priest's stole.
- viii. Praying the Rosary.
- ix. Breathing or Blowing: Directed toward the demon.
- x. Sacred Music: Chanting or singing sacred hymns.
- xi. Making the Sign of the Cross.
- xii. Touching the Person with Religious Objects: The Bible, a crucifix, or simply holding a crucifix.
- xiii. Sprinkling with holy water on the person using an aspergillum.
- xiv. Using blessed salt, oil of exorcism, images of saints, relics of saints, bells, and incense.

Minor Exorcism

A minor exorcism addresses external demonic attacks, distinguishing it from a major exorcism, which is employed in cases of possession where the demonic influence affects the person internally.

1. Who Is Authorized to Conduct Minor Exorcisms?
 - a. A priest or deacon without permission from a bishop to conduct major exorcisms is authorized to perform minor exorcisms.
 - b. Lay individuals are also permitted to offer prayers of deliverance for those afflicted or attacked by demons.
 - i. Minor exorcisms are performed during every infant baptism and for catechumens (new converts) preparing for baptism.
 1. In deliverance sessions, Chet Swearingen may utilize a series of questions similar to those in Catholic baptism rituals, such as:
 - a. Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?
 - b. Do you reject Satan, and all his pride and all evil practices of sin?
 - c. Do you reject Satan's empty promises?
 - d. Do you reject the glamor of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin?
 - e. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

2. When Is a Minor Exorcism Conducted?
 - a. A minor exorcism is conducted when an individual experiences demonic attacks or affliction *coming from the outside* of the person.
 3. What Is Involved in a Minor Exorcism?
 - a. The process of a minor exorcism often mirrors that of a Protestant deliverance session, which involves identifying the open door, sin, curse, lie, or trauma that has facilitated the demonic oppression.
-

Using Physical Objects in Deliverance Sessions

The use of physical objects in deliverance sessions may be questioned by some Protestants. The cross, for example, serves as a symbol of Satan's defeat and an outward sign of inner faith. It represents, before the demon, the invisible faith of those present. If the individual receiving ministry holds faith in what the object represents and exercises that faith, it is believed that such faith will be manifested in the demon's abhorrence of that object.

Conclusion

This lesson demonstrates that both Catholic and Protestant churches face challenges in addressing issues of demon possession, oppression, and related matters, as well as determining the appropriate means of remediation. In both traditions there exists partial denial and avoidance of these topics, with efforts to minimize the need for exorcism or deliverance ministry. Additionally, there is a growing trend toward seeking medical and psychiatric solutions for afflictions that were previously always viewed as originating from spiritual sources.

Next Lesson: Reconciling Modern Psychology with Demonization

In the next lesson, we will examine the relationship between deliverance ministry and psychology. We will address questions such as whether the two can be reconciled, if they should coexist, and whether all mental illness diagnoses may have a demonic root or if some mental illnesses are entirely unrelated to demonic influence. Additionally, we will consider whether a non-biased diagnosis is possible in light of the Church's increasing tendency to distance itself from deliverance ministry.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 12: Reconciling Modern Psychology with Demonization

Description

In this lesson, we will explore how deliverance ministers can integrate principles of psychology into the ministry of deliverance. While we cannot expect the medical or mental health fields to widely accept the notion that demonic influences may contribute to mental or psychological disturbances, it is beneficial for us to engage with these disciplines. By examining their insights and interpreting them through a biblical worldview, we can enhance the ministry of deliverance, provided that the integrity of our biblical perspective is upheld. This approach allows for the integration of knowledge from mental health providers while remaining grounded in Scripture.

Disclaimer: This school's teachings are not a substitute for professional psychological guidance or mental health treatment when necessary. Our goal is to address any underlying demonic involvement that may be hindering the healing of the psyche, within a framework of biblical truth.

Introduction

For reconciliation between psychology and demonic influence to be effective, it is essential to establish foundational agreement. First, we must affirm the reality of Satan and demons, as their purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). Additionally, we must uphold the belief in the Bible as true and authoritative. Jesus' ministry consistently addressed both physical infirmities and demonic influences, with a clear distinction between the two. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that demons remain active today, and that casting out demons is a sign of a believer, as outlined in Scripture, which will continue until the end of the age (Mark 16:17).

The Real World

Reconciling psychology with demonic influence requires recognition of the reality that many Christians, approximately 50%, do not accept the existence of a literal Satan and demons. Additionally, a significant portion of those who do believe in such entities are often skeptical of the need for deliverance ministry within the Christian context. This raises the question: Is reconciliation between these perspectives even possible?

In Lesson 10, we explored the theological divide between progressive, liberal, conservative, cessationist, and continuationist views on deliverance. Rather than revisiting these complexities, this lesson aims to approach the issue of mental illness and demonization with honesty. It is

crucial to accurately diagnose whether an individual is experiencing a mental health condition, demonic influence, or a combination of both, as this will directly influence the nature of the ministry we provide.

Is Satanic Influence Behind the World's Evil?

When examining the state of the world, one can observe a pervasive presence of moral and social evil, including wars, abortion, murder, rape, sex trafficking, divorce, and various forms of assault. From a biblical perspective, it can be argued that Satan and his demonic forces are the ultimate perpetrators behind these manifestations of evil. Furthermore, the intensity and prevalence of such malevolent actions are expected to increase as humanity approaches the return of Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 24:12, Jesus foretells a time when *“sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold”* (NLT), highlighting the escalating moral decay in the world as a sign of the end times.

Scripture further divides humanity into two distinct categories: the children of God and the children of Satan. Satan exerts influence over those who remain in his domain, whether or not they exhibit overt demonic possession. More often, Satan's control is manifested in the spiritual blindness and deception that governs the lives of individuals who reject God.

In 1 John 3:10, *“Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God”* (NLT), we see that one's actions and spiritual alignment with God or Satan are evident. Similarly, in Ephesians 2:2, we are reminded that *“you used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world”* (NLT). This verse underscores the pervasive influence of Satan as the governing force over those who refuse to obey God.

2 Corinthians 4:4 further affirms this influence: *“Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe”* (NLT). This spiritual blindness is a powerful manifestation of Satan's control, preventing individuals from recognizing the truth of God's Word. Lastly, in 1 John 5:19, it is declared, *“We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one”* (NLT), highlighting the ongoing battle between the forces of good and evil in the world today.

In conclusion, the Bible teaches that Satan's influence is deeply embedded in the world's evil, shaping the spiritual and moral landscape of humanity. The Bible makes clear that this influence is not limited to external manifestations of evil but extends into the very hearts and minds of those who reject the truth of God.

Acknowledging the Need for the Medical and Mental Health Field

There are instances in which individuals seeking deliverance ministry will benefit from, and require, the expertise of medical and mental health professionals. This is particularly relevant when considering that demonic influence and mental illness often coexist, necessitating an approach that integrates both spiritual and medical interventions. While it is crucial to acknowledge that deliverance ministry may be viewed by some within the medical and mental health fields—particularly Christian practitioners—as an outdated or superstitious practice, it is equally important to recognize that these professionals still offer valuable insights that can contribute to an individual’s overall healing and restoration.

Psychology, while not equipped to address spiritual matters, can serve as a helpful tool for understanding the thought processes and emotional components of human behavior. Mental health professionals bring knowledge that is essential in distinguishing between spiritual affliction and psychological conditions, thereby ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive care.

It is also likely that many individuals coming to us for ministry have already undergone secular psychological counseling. In order to effectively engage with their ongoing healing process, it is important for deliverance ministers to have a basic understanding of the terminology and concepts used in psychological treatment. This foundational knowledge enables us to follow the progress of the individuals we minister to, ensuring that the ministry is both informed and compassionate.

Finally, it is essential that every individual seeking deliverance ministry acknowledges, in writing, that the ministry they are receiving is not conducted by licensed or trained therapists. Rather, it is a prayer ministry through which God alone receives the glory for any results or healing that occurs. This clarity ensures that the role of deliverance ministers is understood within the proper spiritual context.

Cursory Understanding of Mental Illnesses and Their Symptoms

Just as one does not need to be a medical doctor to understand basic diseases and the complexities of the human body, a professional background in psychology is not required to develop a fundamental understanding of mental illnesses. For deliverance ministers, acquiring this knowledge is valuable, as it improves the ability to minister effectively and sensitively to both the spiritual and psychological needs of those seeking help.

Common Mental Disorders

The following are some of the most prevalent mental disorders:

1. **Anxiety Disorders:** These include generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and specific phobias. Individuals with anxiety disorders often experience excessive worry, fear, or nervousness that can interfere with daily life.
 2. **Depressive Disorders:** This category includes major depressive disorder (MDD), persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia), and bipolar disorder. Symptoms often include feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed.
 3. **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder:** OCD involves recurring, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors (compulsions) that individuals feel compelled to perform to relieve anxiety.
 4. **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:** PTSD occurs after an individual experiences or witnesses a traumatic event. Symptoms can include flashbacks, nightmares, heightened arousal, and emotional numbness.
 5. **Eating Disorders:** These include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder. They involve abnormal eating habits and a preoccupation with body weight and shape.
 6. **Personality Disorders:** This category includes borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, and others. These disorders often involve pervasive patterns of behavior, thinking, and emotions that differ significantly from societal expectations.
 - a. **Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)** is a personality disorder characterized by intense emotional instability, fear of abandonment, and difficulty maintaining relationships. It is relatively common among individuals seeking psychological help, particularly in therapy settings.
 7. **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder:** ADHD is characterized by symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that are more pronounced than typical developmental behavior.
 8. **Psychotic Disorders:** Schizophrenia is the most common psychotic disorder, involving distorted thinking, hallucinations, delusions, and impaired functioning.
 - a. **Schizophrenia** is a serious and often chronic mental illness characterized by distorted thinking, hallucinations, delusions, and disorganized speech or behavior. While not as prevalent as anxiety or depressive disorders, it is one of the major psychotic disorders and is commonly encountered in clinical settings.
 9. **Substance Use Disorders:** These involve the excessive use of alcohol, drugs, or other substances, leading to addiction and significant impairment in daily life.
 10. **Schizoaffective Disorder:** This disorder involves symptoms of both schizophrenia (such as hallucinations and delusions) and mood disorder symptoms (such as depression or mania). It is considered relatively rare but is still a significant condition for mental health professionals to address.
 11. **Bipolar Disorder:** This mood disorder is marked by extreme shifts in mood, energy, and activity levels, with periods of mania (elevated mood) and depression. Bipolar disorder is quite prevalent, especially among adults, and is commonly treated by psychologists, often in combination with psychiatric care for medication management.
-

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)

The *DSM-5*, often referred to informally as the “Psychiatrist’s Bible,” is a comprehensive manual published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) that provides standardized criteria for diagnosing mental health conditions. It is widely utilized by clinicians and researchers in psychology, psychiatry, and related mental health fields.

Possessed States in the *DSM-5*

The *DSM-5* acknowledges certain “possessed states,” which it explains as manifestations of fragmented identities or alter personalities rather than external entities. When an individual exhibits behaviors suggestive of possession by spirits, deities, demons, animals, mythical figures, or even the spirit of a deceased person, these phenomena are interpreted as symptoms of dissociative identity disorder (DID) rather than demonic possession or spiritual influence.

Where Can Demons Be Found?

At a 2019 Christian Counselor Seminar, the keynote speaker, a Christian therapist, with a PhD, acknowledged the possibility of demon possession, but suggested that such cases would primarily be found in uneducated and less civilized nations. This implied that demonization and education cannot coexist. Having lived in one of these “uneducated and less civilized nations” for over five years as a missionary and witnessed multiple cases of demonization, I (Chet Swearingen) can attest that the most severe case of demon possession I encountered occurred in northeast Indiana in May of 2019.

Remarkable Results Ministering to Those with Dissociative Identity Disorder

While we will address dissociative identity disorder (DID) in more detail in a later lesson, it is important to briefly mention that I (Chet Swearingen) have seen remarkable success in delivering individuals diagnosed with DID. One hundred percent of the people who committed to the healing process under our ministry experienced total reintegration of their mind, and this healing occurred through prayer rather than psychological methods. Some individuals, including one person who had over 400 personalities and was studied by five major universities, were previously deemed incurable. However, with the support of their church community, we accompanied them on their journey, and their mind was restored to a single identity.

Those with DID who did not experience healing were individuals who ceased their journey when they realized that their healing would result in the loss of their diagnosis of mental illness and the associated disability benefits.

Advising Those Receiving Ministry

When beginning ministry with an individual, it is crucial to provide them with essential information regarding the process. Below are key topics to discuss:

1. **Deliverance Is Focused on the Deliverer—Jesus.** The deliverance team will pray, offer advice, coach, and give direction, but ultimately, freedom is determined by the individual and Jesus Christ, not the team members.
 - Some individuals may expect a “drive-through deliverance,” one that is quick, easy, and requires minimal effort. It is important to remember that if there is a long history of mental torment and negative thinking, healing may take time, and a shift in thought patterns will require patience.
2. **Communicate Realistic Expectations.** While some deliverances may occur quickly after one session, others—particularly for those with significant trauma—will require a more gradual process over weeks or months as dysfunctional lifestyle choices and behavioral patterns are renewed and sanctified.
3. **Inform About the Possible Need for Multiple Deliverance Sessions.** A single deliverance session rarely addresses all underlying issues. With each session, new aspects may be revealed, and further layers removed. This process is often likened to peeling an onion. For individuals with severe trauma, the healing journey may extend over years. In the longest case my wife and I (Chet Swearingen) worked with, we met with the individual for four years, holding 2-4 sessions per month. The investment proved worthwhile, and the individual frequently expresses gratitude, saying, “Thank you for not giving up on me.”
4. **Professional Counseling May Be Needed.** Inform individuals that professional counseling may be necessary in addition to deliverance ministry. Therapy can play a critical role in stabilizing an individual’s lifestyle and behavioral patterns. While prayer can lead to transformation, it is rare that a single session of prayer will fully address severe disturbances.
5. **Long-Term Christian Growth and Accountability.** Ongoing Christian growth and accountability are essential for anyone undergoing deliverance. After experiencing freedom, individuals must actively fight to maintain what they have gained, as displaced demons may attempt to return and reclaim their influence.

If the individual you are ministering to is under the care of a professional counselor or therapist, you should refrain from challenging their decisions regarding the individual’s care, especially concerning prescribed medications. If you have concerns about the treatment plan, avoid contradicting the advice provided. Instead, encourage the person receiving ministry to consult with their therapist directly and address any questions you may have with them.

The only situation in which you may oppose a counselor or therapist’s guidance is if their approach to the individual’s healing clearly contradicts a biblical worldview, particularly if they incorporate New Age, Hindu, or Buddhist practices, which may occasionally occur.

Psychological Models for Treating Mental Health

Christian counseling often draws on five therapeutic models, each derived from influential figures in psychology and psychotherapy. Just as there is no inherent issue with Christian medical doctors utilizing secular approaches to physical healing, there is also value in applying secular methods to address mental health, provided these approaches align with biblical principles. If insights can be gained from these practices without compromising scriptural truth, they should be considered for their potential benefit.

Many foundational figures in modern psychology, such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow, developed their theories of mental function and human behavior from secular perspectives, often outside the framework of a Christian worldview. These theorists, along with later influential figures like Rollo May, Viktor Frankl, and Albert Ellis, have significantly shaped contemporary understanding of the human psyche. However, a major limitation of these models is that they do not include a biblical understanding of humanity, which includes the belief in original sin, the need for spiritual forgiveness and salvation through Christ, and the possible influence of supernatural forces, like demonic powers, on people's lives.

While secular psychology offers valuable insights, the *Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance* seeks to integrate psychological knowledge in a way that supports comprehensive healing for individuals in demonic bondage. In doing so, we maintain a primary allegiance to a biblical understanding of the human condition, ensuring that the Word of God remains the ultimate authority in matters of sin, redemption, and the holistic well-being of the individual, encompassing both mental and spiritual dimensions.

Conclusion

Reconciling modern psychology with the ministry of deliverance is both necessary and beneficial, provided it is approached through a biblical worldview. While secular psychology offers valuable insights into the complexities of the human mind, it falls short by excluding spiritual factors, such as original sin, the need for redemption, and the influence of demonic forces. As deliverance ministers, we must incorporate psychological knowledge into the healing process, but it is crucial that our approach remains grounded in Scripture. By upholding the authority of the Word of God, we ensure that deliverance ministry remains true to its divine purpose, offering genuine freedom to those affected by both psychological and spiritual afflictions.

Next Lesson: Stress, Depression, Fear, and Anxiety

In the next lesson, we will briefly examine several common mental health issues that may arise in deliverance ministry. Although our exploration will be brief, it is important for deliverance

ministers to understand the symptoms and behaviors associated with these conditions. This knowledge will help you discern whether an individual is experiencing a mental health disorder, demonic influence, or a combination of both, thereby enabling a more effective and compassionate approach in your ministry.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 13: Stress, Depression, Fear and Anxiety

Description

In this lesson, we will explore several common mental health issues that may arise in deliverance ministry. While this lesson will offer a brief overview of the symptoms and behaviors associated with these conditions, the goal is to equip the student with the knowledge necessary to discern whether an individual is dealing with a mental health disorder, demonic influence, or a combination of both. This understanding will enable a more effective and compassionate approach in ministry. It is important to note, however, that unless one is a trained and licensed mental health professional, they are not authorized to diagnose mental illnesses, but they can recognize the symptoms.

Disclaimer: This school's teachings are not a substitute for professional psychological guidance or mental health treatment when necessary. Our goal is to address any underlying demonic involvement that may be hindering the healing of the psyche, within a framework of biblical truth.

Introduction – The Dual Nature of Stress

This lesson begins by exploring stress, which, while not formally classified as a mental illness, can significantly contribute to the development or exacerbation of mental health conditions. When chronic or excessive, stress can lead to psychological and physical challenges, including burnout, anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, and weakened immunity. On the other hand, when managed at moderate levels, stress can enhance focus, motivation, and resilience, fostering better performance and well-being.

Stress acts as a natural response to challenges, activating the body's "fight or flight" system to heighten alertness and improve focus. In manageable amounts, it can motivate individuals to prepare thoroughly and meet objectives that might otherwise seem overwhelming. However, to avoid the negative consequences of prolonged stress, strategies like mindfulness, exercise, and time management are essential for maintaining balance. By recognizing excessive stress and taking proactive steps to reduce it, individuals can preserve its beneficial aspects while minimizing harm.

Case Study in Stress

The following case study will illustrate how unmanaged stress can significantly impede spiritual and emotional healing in a complex situation.

In 2015, my wife and I (Chet Swearingen) conducted a deliverance interview with Alicia, a woman who came to us from a neighboring state. During that time, she told us she wanted freedom from the mental torment she had been experiencing. However, when she learned that part of the freedom process involved forgiving people—especially her mother—she never took another step toward her deliverance.

Over the next two years, Alicia's condition worsened. In July 2017, she was escorted out of a church service due to her erratic behavior, which the pastor later identified to me as demonic manifestations. My wife and I followed up with Alicia. In a meeting where her husband, Al, was also present, she shared that she had undergone Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) in 2010. Not only had it failed to help her, but it had also left her in a constant state of panic, fearing she might be forced to undergo the procedure again.

During that same meeting, Alicia informed us that she had been seeing an Amish holistic healer who used psychic abilities to diagnose people's conditions. Individuals would send him a picture of themselves, which he would read using his psychic abilities before using a pendulum to select herbal remedies intended to cure them.

As we sat there with Alicia and her husband, my wife and I began noticing the emergence of multiple personalities, as well as what appeared to be demonic entities. The situation became intense, with personalities and demons switching in and out of consciousness. We tried our best to calm her down, but there wasn't much more we could do at that moment.

After the meeting, Al told us that months prior, he had asked for the demonic force tormenting Alicia to be transferred to him so she would no longer suffer. He then felt something physically enter his stomach, and that presence remained with him, causing mental unrest. However, Alicia did not experience any relief from his sacrificial effort.

Later that same month, we met with Alicia and her husband again, and once more, her behaviors began to manifest—rapid switching between personalities and demons, frantic pacing, hand-wringing, and rapid speech. The Holy Spirit revealed that Alicia's speech was impure, characterized by constant complaining and foul language. She also shared a traumatic experience of having been date-raped after someone drugged her drink. Additionally, Alicia confessed to dealing with rejection from family members, all of which had contributed to her mental breakdown.

Over the course of sixteen face-to-face meetings, some lasting 2-4 hours, we encountered up to twenty different personalities and a similar number of demons. Despite all the attention and care we provided, no significant progress was made. What was the reason for this lack of progress?

Alicia’s primary issue was her overwhelming need to control everything around her. The sin of worry and fear drove her to try to control everyone in her life. Her constant negativity and lack of trust in her husband, doctors, and psychologists only worsened her problems.

At one of our last meetings with Alicia, the Holy Spirit revealed that her mind was like an overgrown garden full of weeds, specifically the weeds of worry that kept her in a constant state of torment. This worry had become an addiction. On top of that, the medications she was taking, meant to stabilize her mind, only numbed her and left her unable to function effectively. She couldn’t complete her assignments or make the biblical declarations necessary to break free from her cycle.

The solution for Alicia was clear. We told her that the Holy Spirit was guiding her to release all responsibilities—financial matters, work, housework, and everything else—into the hands of others so her mind could rest and recover. Unfortunately, Alicia was unwilling to do that. Her fear, worry, and need for control kept her in a frantic, agitated state, marked by pacing, hand-wringing, rapid speech, and insomnia. Eventually, she became so heavily medicated just to cope that she couldn’t function in life at all.

Conclusions Drawn from This Case Study

This case study illustrates the complex interplay between Alicia’s mental, emotional, and spiritual struggles, highlighting the role of unmanaged stress in impeding her healing process. While not suggesting that stress reduction alone would resolve all of Alicia’s challenges, it emphasizes the critical importance of effective stress management as a foundational element in the healing journey. Alicia’s failure to manage the overwhelming stress related to her need for control, compounded by unresolved emotional trauma, significantly hindered her ability to experience the peace necessary for addressing deeper psychological issues. Therefore, a comprehensive approach, which integrates spiritual, emotional, and psychological care, is essential for fostering the conditions required for genuine healing. Without addressing the root causes of Alicia’s stress—such as her persistent fear, worry, and lack of trust—the pathway to recovery remained obstructed, underscoring the necessity of a balanced, holistic approach to mental health and spiritual restoration.

Holmes-Rahe Scale

The American Institute of Stress refers to the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS), developed by Holmes and Rahe in 1967, which quantifies the impact of life changes on stress levels. The SRRS assigns “life change units” to various life events, and a score of 300 or more suggests a significantly higher risk of developing health problems within the following two years. Research estimates that individuals scoring 300 or higher face up to an 80% likelihood of experiencing health issues. However, this percentage remains an estimate, as individual health outcomes are influenced by personal circumstances and the individual’s ability to manage stress effectively.

The Holmes-Rahe Scale highlights the significant role that life stressors play in mental and physical health, a factor that deliverance ministry must consider. In addition to spiritual factors, life stressors can profoundly affect an individual's well-being, and addressing them is essential for a holistic approach in ministry, one that goes beyond focusing solely on demonic influences.

Social Readjustment Rating Scale

Life event	Life change units
Death of a spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Imprisonment	63
Death of a close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Dismissal from work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement	45
Change in health of family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sexual difficulties	39
Gain a new family member	39
Business readjustment	39
Change in financial state	38
Death of a close friend	37
Change to different line of work	36
Change in frequency of arguments	35
Major mortgage	32
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
Change in responsibilities at work	29

Life event	Life change units
Child leaving home	29
Trouble with in-laws	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Spouse starts or stops work	26
Beginning or end of school	26
Change in living conditions	25
Revision of personal habits	24
Trouble with boss	23
Change in working hours or conditions	20
Change in residence	20
Change in schools	20
Change in recreation	19
Change in church activities	19
Change in social activities	18
Minor mortgage or loan	17
Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in number of family reunions	15
Change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13
Major holiday	12
Minor violation of law	11

Deliverance Is More Than Addressing Demonic Influences

It is a misconception to view deliverance ministry as primarily concerned with addressing demonic influences. In fact, such influences constitute only a small portion—approximately ten percent—of the ministry’s overall work. The predominant focus of deliverance ministry lies in identifying the barriers within a person’s life that hinder their spiritual growth and conformity to the image of Christ. Once these barriers are identified, they can be addressed through focused intervention, allowing the individual to begin progressing in their spiritual development. In turn, the demonic influences will either dissipate on their own or diminish significantly in a short period of time.

So, what are these barriers that are commonly found?

1. Unforgiveness and the bitterness that flows from that sin.
2. Ungodly emotional attachments, often referred to as “soul ties.”
3. Curses, whether generational, imposed by authority figures, or self-spoken.
4. Overwhelming temptations.
5. Addictions.
6. Lies related to one’s identity, or those embedded in emotional wounds from past trauma.

Although deliverance ministry is not typically associated with formal counseling, it involves substantial biblical counseling, or more accurately, discipleship.

Without ongoing discipleship, the consistent practice of spiritual disciplines, and active involvement in a local church community—where the individual is known and engaged in a smaller fellowship group—the benefits of deliverance are likely to be short-lived.

Depression: Symptoms, Causes, and Remedies

It is important to emphasize that not all mental health issues are attributable to demonic influence. While demonic forces may exploit existing mental health conditions and exacerbate emotional struggles, it is crucial to recognize that depression can have various non-spiritual causes.

It is also highly important for the student to be aware of the debate surrounding the “chemical imbalance” theory, as many psychologists strongly reject that hypothesis, claiming it is a marketing narrative developed by pharmaceutical companies in the 1990s. These psychologists present evidence from recent studies showing that the “chemical imbalance” theory is not based on scientific fact. More on this in lesson 14.

Symptoms of Depression

Depression manifests in diverse ways, and it is essential to recognize its symptoms for a comprehensive understanding of the condition. Common indicators include:

- Persistent sadness
- Loss of interest
- Fatigue or low energy
- Sleep disturbances
- Appetite changes
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Thoughts of death

Causes of Depression

Beyond biological factors, depression can be influenced by various psychological and environmental elements.

Environmental Factors that Contribute to Depression

- Stresses of life
- Major life changes
- Loss of a loved one
- Financial difficulties
- Ongoing conflict
- Absence of support networks

Psychological Factors that Contribute to Depression

- Improper thought patterns
- Negative thinking
- Ruminating
- Low self-esteem
- Pessimism

Those with a Biblical Worldview Can Add These

- A deep sense of spiritual emptiness or distance from God
- Unconfessed sin or a heavy sense of guilt
- Demonic forces
- Insufficient support network or absence of a spiritual mentor
- Toxic relationships without efforts to resolve conflicts or heal emotional wounds

Beating Depression Using a Biblical Worldview

In his widely read book, *How to Win Over Depression*, authored by the influential Christian minister Dr. Tim LaHaye, three commonly employed methods for treating depression are identified:

- Drug therapy
- Electrotherapy
- Psychotherapy

However, LaHaye asserts that the most effective treatment is a fourth method:

- Spiritual therapy

LaHaye makes it clear that for most individuals, the key to overcoming depression lies in addressing thought patterns. He argues that changing negative thought patterns is essential for lasting emotional healing.

For instance, LaHaye writes:

- Thought patterns produce feelings, feelings produce actions. Therefore, any permanent reduction in depression must necessarily address the problems of thought patterns (p. 27).
- Unless the person's thinking pattern changes, this struggle against depression is bound to produce increasing degrees of erratic behavior (p. 27).
- Unless an individual is willing to face the fact that his mental attitude toward the circumstances, not the circumstances themselves, cause his unhappiness and depression, he is, in my opinion, incurable (p. 20).

LaHaye also identifies self-pity as a significant contributor to depression, stating:

- Of one thing I am certain: if the mental thinking pattern of self-pity is not arrested, the person is hopeless; the more he indulges in self-pitying thoughts, the deeper the depression becomes (p. 98).
- Some experience it more than others, depending on how much self-pity he has indulged in (p. 192).
- Many doctors want to blame our glands, body chemistry, and a host of other causes for depression, but others direct our attention to thought processes or mental attitudes—not our glands (p. 178).

LaHaye, along with many Christian mental health professionals and ministers, advocates for the memorization and recitation of Scripture as a powerful means to reverse negativity and combat the lies associated with depression, suggesting that the truth of God's Word offers a vital tool in the healing process, even alongside other therapeutic practices.

Fear and Anxiety: What Is the Difference?

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* classifies anxiety as a mental disorder, with many individuals being prescribed anti-anxiety medications. Anxiety is often found alongside other diagnosed mental illnesses, such as obsessive-compulsive disorder

(OCD) and various phobias. Given the frequent usage of the term “anxiety” and the widespread prescription of medications for it, it is important to distinguish between fear and anxiety.

Fear

Fear and anxiety, though related, represent distinct emotional responses, differing in specificity, duration, and origin. Fear is typically an immediate, acute reaction to a recognizable threat. It is characterized by an external, tangible cause, such as encountering a dangerous situation, and is generally brief, subsiding once the threat has been removed.

Anxiety

In contrast, anxiety tends to be more diffuse and anticipatory, often arising from concerns or apprehensions about future events, many of which may never occur. It is frequently triggered by internal thoughts and emotions rather than by an immediate external stimulus, and it can persist over time, potentially becoming chronic.

Differentiating Between Fear and Anxiety

While fear is an immediate, protective response to an existing threat, anxiety is a prolonged sense of unease or dread, typically centered around future uncertainties. Fear is transient, resolving once the immediate threat is removed, whereas anxiety can be persistent and interfere with daily functioning, even in the absence of clear or immediate danger. In summary, fear is specific and temporary, while anxiety is often generalized, ongoing, and rooted in internal concerns rather than external realities.

Case Study in Fear

Lydia had been raised in a Christian home and had attended church her entire life, the type of church attendance that involved three church meetings per week – Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. In addition, her family was engaged in other church activities throughout the week.

Lydia reported that at age six she had seen a demonic presence in her bedroom and felt the presence in that room continually. She told her parents what she saw in her room, and at first they dismissed her as having an overactive imagination. To prove nothing out-of-the-ordinary was in that room, Lydia’s father agreed to sleep in there. He was unable to sleep there. Lydia’s mother was also unable to sleep in that room.

To remedy the situation, their pastor and several people from the church were asked to cleanse the room, and home, from any demonic spirits. That effort seemed to help, but it left Lydia with a persistent fear of the dark.

Strangely, even though surrounded by Christian activity, Lydia was compulsively drawn to watch horror movies, which her parents permitted. These movies only exacerbated Lydia's fears. She knew they would torment her as she viewed them, as well as afterwards in her dark bedroom, yet she couldn't resist the temptation to watch them.

As she matured, married, and moved to a different state, her fears compounded. Her husband's employment required him to be gone several nights per week. With her living alone, Lydia's fears intensified to the state wherein she was unable to cope.

Early one morning, Lydia's husband returned home from his job to find Lydia sitting in a living room chair with a rifle across her lap, staring blankly across the room, nearly unable to respond. The rifle was her attempt to protect herself from whatever it was that was inducing the fear, even though she was unable to use the weapon. Recognizing the paralyzing fear, and knowing she was unable to cope alone, she was sent back to live with her parents.

Lydia's mother told her that she needed to see a psychiatrist, but Lydia defiantly stated, "I'm not crazy," and chose not to get psychiatric help.

After a week, Lydia moved in with her husband's parents, as she found that home far more comforting, with her father-in-law being a pastor.

During a subsequent church service, Lydia's father-in-law, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, received a word of knowledge about Lydia's condition. He then shared what he heard the Holy Spirit saying to him:

- "I say unto you, hang on, because we know that there is one that is out to get you. There is one that is trying to roar against you. There is one that is trying to do everything against you. I say, the One that's deep within you is greater than he who is in the world. I say to you, stand fast. For you are powerful and mighty in Him. I say unto you, stand fast. Stay true and you shall have victory."

When that revelation from God came, Lydia understood what she was really up against and who it was behind it all, and she got "fighting mad!" She wasn't going to let Satan destroy her, and in her resolve, she put her foot down and internally declared, "Satan, you want a fight, then you are going to get one."

Over the coming weeks and months, Lydia began quoting Scriptures every time she felt the fear coming on. Gradually, that fear dissipated, and she was able to move back and live with her husband again. The battles did not immediately end, but with the revelation of what she was fighting, Lydia now knew what was happening and she took action and overcame. Satan lost her, and over the years she became a very powerful warrior for the Kingdom of God.

Truth Encounter

In Lydia's case, there was no need for a deliverance session to remove any demonic influence. What was required was her determination to rely on the Word of God. By submitting herself to

God and resisting the devil, she experienced deliverance, in alignment with the teaching in James 4:7, which states, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Case Study in Anxiety

Let’s look at another prevalent mental health condition—anxiety—as experienced by Scout, a young lady of 17 years old.

At a weekly prayer gathering at our church, I (Chet Swearingen) overheard Scout nonchalantly say, in conversation with others nearby, “my anxiety is ramping up.”

After that group was done talking, I asked Scout to speak with me privately to the side. I sensitively questioned her about why she was owning anxiety, with the phrase “my anxiety”, as if it was something that belonged to her. I also inquired whether she was interested in us working with her to help alleviate that condition.

We did meet with Scout a week later, but she wasn’t open to us, at least to the level she needed to be if she was going to experience freedom from that anxiety. There was something she was holding back from us.

Several months later, we (Chet and Phyllis Swearingen) received a phone call from Scout’s distraught parents. They were requesting we meet with them and Scout, as she had slid into a catatonic state, awake, but lacking the ability to move and respond. The parents suspected that it was a demonic attack and chose the Church’s remediation over medical remediation.

On the phone, we told the parents to take their daughter to the church and we would meet them there in 30 minutes. Upon our arrival, we found Scout trembling uncontrollably, unable to express herself, and unresponsive to our questioning.

It was obvious that there were numerous factors at play in Scout’s life, and we could tell, just from the body language of the parents and Scout, that they had some unresolved issues among themselves. We then asked the parents to step out of the room, and being alone with the young lady, who was still in a catatonic state, were still unable to get her to respond, even though her eyes were open, staring blankly forward.

We then began praying, and at the same time speaking to Scout, calling for her consciousness to awaken and to fully engage. After about 15 minutes of continual effort, she began to settle down and was able to respond.

We discovered that Scout was facing multiple life decisions all at the same time, and that, coupled with her questioning her sexual identity, compounded her distraught mental state.

Lessons Learned from This Case Study

This case study illustrates that anxiety is often influenced by a complex interplay of psychological, emotional, and relational factors. In the case of Scout, unresolved relational issues, particularly her strained relationship with her parents and concerns about her future, played a significant role in exacerbating the anxiety. While it is possible that demonic forces contributed to her mental distress, the primary issue was her inability to effectively cope with these challenges, which led to a psychological shutdown as a defensive mechanism. Additionally, Scout's reluctance to openly confront and address deeper issues, such as her identity and family dynamics, further prolonged her emotional turmoil. This case emphasizes the necessity of a holistic approach in deliverance ministry, one that integrates spiritual, emotional, and psychological considerations to facilitate comprehensive healing. Individuals who are unwilling to confront and engage with their issues may remain trapped in a cycle of unresolved distress, hindering their ability to make progress toward recovery.

Conclusion

This lesson has underscored the imperative for deliverance ministers to cultivate a foundational understanding of prevalent mental health conditions including stress, depression, fear, and anxiety. While acknowledging the potential interplay between spiritual and psychological distress, the provided overviews of symptoms, contributing factors, and the illustrative case studies serve to equip ministers with a framework for discerning the multifaceted nature of individuals' struggles.

Next Lesson: Hearing Voices – Schizophrenia or Demons?

In the upcoming lesson, we will focus exclusively on schizophrenia, a complex and often misunderstood mental health disorder. Building upon our exploration of mental health challenges in Lesson 13, this session will provide essential insights for recognizing the symptoms of schizophrenia, understanding its impact on individuals, and discerning how spiritual aspects may intersect with this condition in deliverance ministry.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 14: Hearing Voices – Schizophrenia or Demons?

Description

This lesson explores schizophrenia, a mental disorder characterized by a variety of symptoms, including auditory hallucinations, delusions, and disorganized thinking. The aim is to help students recognize the signs of schizophrenia and discern whether these symptoms stem from psychological illness, demonic influence, or a combination of both. Understanding these complexities is essential for deliverance ministers as they navigate the intersection of mental health and spiritual matters.

Disclaimer: This school's teachings are not a substitute for professional psychological guidance or mental health treatment when necessary. Our goal is to address any underlying demonic involvement that may be hindering the healing of the psyche, within a framework of biblical truth.

Introduction

Many individuals undergoing deliverance ministry report hearing voices. These voices are predominantly negative, offering no comfort or kindness but instead characterized by condemnation, belittlement, deceit, and a strong urge toward self-destruction, often pushing the individual toward suicidal thoughts.

This raises a critical question: why are these voices almost always negative? Over thousands of hours of face-to-face deliverance sessions, Chet Swearingen has never encountered anyone who reported hearing kind, comforting, or even neutral voices. Psychologists may assert that a small percentage of voices heard in psychotic conditions are neutral or benign, but this has not been the case in Swearingen's extensive experience.

Moreover, individuals, unrelated to each other, from different regions and periods, consistently report hearing similar messages about the same deliverance minister:

- "Stay away from Chet."
- "He can't help you."
- "Chet doesn't know what he is doing. You will only become more depressed if you are around him."

The following section of this lesson will examine how secular psychology might explain prayer's role in these situations, but it also raises the question: how could secular psychology account for the repetition of the same messages about one deliverance minister across different people and times, in different locations?

Silencing Voices

This lesson does not claim that every voice is a demon. However, when a prayer—lasting even five minutes—can silence these voices, and not just once but on a recurring basis with different people at different times, a pattern emerges that warrants attention and further understanding.

Secular mental health professionals would likely approach these results from a psychological perspective rather than a spiritual one. They might explain the cessation of voices through prayer as potentially related to therapeutic effects such as coping mechanisms, relaxation responses, or even placebo effects. Here are a few ways they might explain it:

1. **Placebo Effect:** The power of belief and expectation can significantly influence subjective experiences, including the perception of symptoms. If individuals believe that prayer will stop the voices, this expectation itself can lead to a reduction or cessation of the voices. The act of praying, the faith instilled by the minister, and the supportive environment can all contribute to a strong placebo response. This effect is well-documented in various medical and psychological treatments.
2. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Principles:** Prayer, particularly when guided or focused, can inadvertently incorporate elements of CBT techniques used to manage auditory hallucinations.
 - a. **Distraction:** The act of focusing on prayer can divert attention away from the voices.
 - b. **Reframing:** Prayer might involve focusing on positive and calming thoughts, counteracting the negative content of the voices.
 - c. **Sense of Control:** Experiencing a reduction in voices after prayer can give the individual a sense of agency and control over their symptoms, which is a key element in managing hallucinations.
 - d. **Social Support:** The communal aspect of prayer and the support from the minister and others can reduce feelings of isolation and distress associated with hearing voices.
3. **Relaxation and Stress Reduction:** Prayer often induces a state of calmness and relaxation. Stress and anxiety are known to exacerbate psychotic symptoms, including auditory hallucinations. By reducing stress levels through prayer, individuals might experience a temporary decrease in the intensity or frequency of the voices.
4. **Focused Attention and Internal Dialogue Shift:** Prayer requires focused attention and often involves a directed internal dialogue. This mental engagement might temporarily override or compete with the neural activity underlying the auditory hallucinations. It could be a form of self-soothing or mental redirection.
5. **Spontaneous Remission or Natural Variation of Symptoms:** Mental health symptoms, including auditory hallucinations, can fluctuate in intensity and frequency naturally over time. What appears to be a direct result of prayer might, in some instances, coincide with a natural ebb in the symptom cycle.
6. **Neurobiological Explanations:** Some professionals might also consider neurobiological factors, such as changes in brain activity or neurotransmitter levels that can be influenced by religious practices or psychological interventions.

Chemical Imbalance Theory¹

The chemical imbalance theory explains that disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and other mental illnesses are caused by insufficient or imbalanced levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin or dopamine. Some consider it a marketing narrative developed by pharmaceutical companies to sell their antidepressants to restore balance to a person's brain chemistry.

For instance, the magazine *Psychology Today*, along with numerous authors such as Robert Whitaker in his book *Anatomy of an Epidemic*, debunks this theory as unscientific. Despite this, there are clinicians and researchers who argue that medications can be beneficial for many individuals when used appropriately, often in combination with other therapeutic interventions.

For the Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance, the key takeaway is to approach individuals with compassion and understanding. While acknowledging the medical information they may have received, it is important to offer a spiritual perspective as well. Being aware of the ongoing debate surrounding the chemical imbalance theory allows for a more informed and balanced approach to ministry.

Case Study: Hearing Voices - Auditory Hallucinations

After a Wednesday afternoon deliverance session, Syd—a born-again follower of Jesus—was found standing next to his truck in the church parking lot. A couple from the deliverance team, who were heading home, noticed and approached him. He shared that he had been hearing relentless voices—telling him to end his life, cursing him, and calling him worthless. He lived with paralyzing fear, with the torment being so extreme he found it difficult to even leave his home. The constant barrage of negativity in his mind became unbearable. As he repeatedly asked God for help, he heard Him say, “Go to the church.”

The couple that met him in the parking lot prayed with him and immediately scheduled an interview, followed by a deliverance session just a week later. The session turned out to be one of the most intense the team had ever experienced, with Syd rapidly switching between personalities and demons.

Though the session didn't bring immediate relief, Syd was given guidance on how to counter the lies he had been hearing, using the truth from God's Word. Before leaving, another session was scheduled.

Over the following week, Syd committed to fighting those lies with the truth of Scripture, while the deliverance team continued praying for him.

When the next session arrived, the team was bracing for a major spiritual battle. However, when they began, they were met with silence. All the demonic voices were gone, and there was no switching of personalities. Subsequently Syd joined a 12-week Freedom group, which enhanced what he had learned and experienced during his deliverance journey. Several years later, Syd is living in freedom, filled with joy, and is actively involved in his church.

Truth Encounter

In Syd's deliverance, no demons were cast out, nor was there a dramatic *power encounter*. Instead, the breakthrough came through an encounter with the truth of God's Word, which addressed the demonic lies he had internalized. This case serves as a powerful example of how *truth encounters* can effectively break the demonic oppression influencing an individual's mind.

Case Study of Auditory Hallucinations

One late afternoon, Calista pulled her car to the side of the road, completely shaken and trembling with fear. The voices in her mind were urging her to press the gas pedal all the way down, speed up, and steer into a tree. The compulsion was so strong that she was barely able to resist.

Feeling desperate, she called Chet Swearingen and explained what was happening. After listening to her, Chet began praying, and within just five minutes, the voices stopped. A follow-up interview and deliverance session were scheduled soon after.

So, what was the real issue behind Calista's struggle? Had she fallen into witchcraft or become deeply demonized? No, the root of her problem was the lies she had believed about herself—lies that built up over time. These lies became so powerful and controlling that they almost led her to take her own life.

Calista's deliverance didn't come through a *power encounter*—a dramatic exorcism with screaming or physical manifestations. Instead, it came through the quiet application of truth—a *truth encounter*. Calista learned how to take her thoughts captive and replace those lies with the truth of God's Word, which ultimately silenced the voices in her mind.

Lessons Learned

This case study closely mirrors the previous account with Syd. The truth of God's Word, when spoken with authority and faith, has the power to silence the voices in the mind.

An additional lesson, though not directly addressed in this case study, is that the renewal of the mind is a continuous process. For individuals with underlying mental health conditions, time is necessary for healing once demonic involvement is addressed. This is analogous to the healing of a broken arm: after the bone is set and cast, physical therapy is required to strengthen the

muscles and restore full mobility. Similarly, the mind often requires therapeutic intervention for complete healing and renewal.

Schizophrenia

We have ministered to several individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia, but what we discovered was that the symptoms were not the result of a mental illness, but rather demonic influence. Once the underlying inner healing took place, personalities integrated through prayer, lies were replaced with truth, and the demons were expelled, the symptoms of schizophrenia dissipated—completely!

However, there have been other cases where no demonic influence was evident, yet the symptoms of schizophrenia were still very apparent. This recognition highlighted the limitations of our deliverance ministry in addressing such conditions.

For students of deliverance, it is crucial to understand our limitations. Unless God has specifically granted the gift of healing to supernaturally restore a non-functioning brain, conditions such as schizophrenia may fall outside the scope of deliverance ministry.

We will now examine a few key symptoms of schizophrenia to help deliverance ministers more effectively recognize this illness.

1. Hallucinations (e.g., hearing voices, seeing things that aren't there)
2. Delusions (false beliefs, such as thinking one has special powers)
3. Disorganized thinking (incoherent or fragmented speech)
4. Disorganized or abnormal motor behavior (e.g., unpredictable movements, catatonia)
5. Negative symptoms (lack of emotion, reduced ability to function, social withdrawal)
6. Difficulty with concentration and memory
7. Impaired ability to perform daily tasks (e.g., personal hygiene, work)
8. Poor judgment or decision-making
9. Inability to distinguish between reality and fantasy
10. Emotional flatness or lack of expression

Some things to keep in mind while ministering to people with these symptoms:

1. Schizophrenia is potentially one of the most distressing mental disorders encountered in deliverance ministry.
2. Schizophrenia often manifests during adolescence or young adulthood.
 - a. If other family members are also affected, this may indicate genetic transmission or even a generational curse. In such cases, lead the individual through basic curse-breaking prayers to remove the effects of generational issues, and observe whether there is relief or opposition, which may suggest the presence of demonic influence.
3. The questionnaire completed by the individual when applying for ministry will often provide advanced information on underlying mental health conditions. However, deeper

issues may not surface until the deliverance session itself, and these may include matters the individual was previously unaware of.

4. Those diagnosed with schizophrenia are not constantly “out of touch with reality.” They may experience extended periods of mental clarity, lasting minutes, hours, or even weeks and months, though they will eventually return to a state of unreality.
5. If an individual begins speaking irrationally during the deliverance session, psychosis is likely occurring.
 - a. Psychosis is a mental health condition marked by a disconnection from reality. Individuals with psychosis may experience distorted perceptions, such as hallucinations (e.g., hearing voices or seeing things that aren’t there) or delusions (e.g., holding false beliefs, such as thinking they have special powers).
6. If no demonic manifestation occurs during a deliverance session, it is likely a mental health disorder is present. However, if the individual is heavily medicated, demons may remain unresponsive, as they operate through emotions, which medications often numb. In such cases, it may be difficult to bring the demons forward for interrogation or expulsion.
 - a. During the deliverance session, assess whether the voices are dissociative or demonic by their responses to scripture—the truth. Demons typically react negatively, while dissociative or schizophrenic voices often show little to no interest in theological matters.
7. If the mental condition is not determined to be biochemical or clinical, investigate potential trauma. Focus on inner healing before addressing potential demonic influence, as many mental disorders stem from the mind’s attempt to escape past traumas. These traumatic memories must be healed.
8. When individuals cannot dissociate and create alternate personalities to contain traumatic memories and the associated pain, they may construct an alternate reality to avoid these painful recollections.
9. It is possible for demons to manifest during a deliverance session, boasting about having caused the condition, even identifying itself as “Schizophrenia.”
10. The younger the individual, the greater the likelihood that deliverance will be effective. This is because demons tend to become more deeply embedded in the mental illness over time.

Case Study: “Possessed by Demons and Hitler”

Ray’s story starts when he was just two years old. He and his parents were in a car that was struck by a dump truck. The accident left Ray with brain injuries that would leave him disabled for life. He required special education and, unfortunately, was never able to learn how to read. While he had other limitations, to the outside world he appeared normal.

When Ray was 14, his parents divorced, and he moved in with his mother. By the age of 17, Ray had quit special education and fell into a routine of playing video games and eating, which led to significant weight gain.

Around the age of 22, his father regained custody of him. His father worked hard to get Ray back on track, focusing on his health and activities. By the time Ray was in his late 20s, he was living on his own, with occasional check-ins from others.

In his early 30s, Ray's mother, who had her own struggles, moved in with him. She became very controlling and started to take advantage of Ray's income from a trust fund set up after his accident.

Then, at 34, something drastic happened. Despite always being calm and quiet, Ray became enraged by his mother's constant harassment. In a fit of rage, he strangled and killed her, something that was tragically easy for the 6-foot 5-inch Ray to do.

The city's newspaper headline read:

“Man Accused of Killing Mom Told Cops He Was ‘Possessed by Demons and Hitler’”

Ray was charged with murder and sentenced to 15 years in prison. After serving three years, he was released on probation and went back to living in his own home.

Years later, Ray's father reached out to me for help. He explained that Ray was increasingly being controlled by voices, making him unmanageable.

When I first met Ray, I was struck by how quiet and calm he was, even though he was very large. He didn't come across as intimidating, but I knew that due to his brain injury and mental challenges, my approach would need to be carefully considered.

During our interview, Ray explained what the voices in his mind were telling him:

- His parents and everyone else had betrayed him.
- No matter what he did, Satan always picked on him.
- Satan claimed to be Ray's father.
- Satan wanted to torture him.
- The food he ate was actually his family.
- Jesus was bad, and the voices turned everything good into something bad.
- They made him lazy.

Because Ray couldn't read, I gave him a simple task: to repeat a phrase three times a day:
“I forgive all others. I forgive myself.”

After meeting with him three times, we saw a remarkable change. The voices stopped, and Ray began to enjoy life again. However, Ray wouldn't remove the heavy metal posters on his walls or stop listening to that type of music. He also compulsively played violent video games, all of which seemed to decrease his stability. Eventually, he returned to the state I had initially found him in.

I realized that without a godly caretaker who could be with him 24/7, Ray would struggle to live victoriously. I had to acknowledge my own limitations and trust that Ray would find the support he needed from another source.

Lesson Learned

The High Importance of Caretakers: When an individual lives alone without anyone to help them stay focused on assignments or daily spiritual devotions, making significant progress becomes exceedingly difficult, and for some, it may be nearly impossible to make any progress at all.

There may be times when it is necessary to make the difficult decision to selectively decline assistance to certain individuals, even if they are family members. Without a caretaker present to provide guidance and support, much of the effort invested may go to waste.

It has been suggested by some that Satan places such individuals in our path to drain our time and energy, preventing us from ministering to a larger number of people. While the truth of this claim remains uncertain, it is clear that Jesus desires for all people to be set free and walk in victory. However, we must be realistic about our own limitations in terms of time and skill. In these cases, it may be necessary to allow others to take on the responsibility of assisting particularly challenging individuals, while we focus on those we are more equipped to help. This brings us to the concept of “selective care” or “triage.”

Selective Care / Triage

There are times when we are unable to provide care for all individuals requesting ministry. In these instances, we must determine who we can assist and who we cannot. This decision is not made out of insensitivity, but out of a realistic understanding of our limitations.

The term “triage” originates from the French verb *trier*, meaning “to sort” or “to choose.” It was first used in the context of battlefield medicine during World War I, where medical personnel prioritized injured soldiers based on the severity of their wounds and the likelihood of survival.

This concept of categorization or sorting remains central to triage today, whether in medical settings or any other context where resources must be allocated according to urgency.

In the context of ministry, “selective care” is a more appropriate term to describe the decision to postpone care for certain individuals in order to focus on those who we are better equipped to assist and who have a higher potential for healing and deliverance.

Being selective in who is ministered to does not mean neglecting more challenging cases. Rather, it is about setting boundaries and ensuring that resources—whether physical, emotional, or time-related—are used effectively to maximize positive outcomes for both those in need and those providing help. This concept is particularly important in self-care for ministers, caregivers, counselors, and others in service roles. Without such boundaries, ongoing care can lead to burnout, hindering the ability to help others in the long term.

Compassionate Detachment / Emotional Boundaries

“Compassionate detachment” is a key concept that refers to the ability to care deeply for others while maintaining necessary emotional and physical boundaries to protect one’s own well-being. This approach enables individuals to offer care from a distance, preventing them from becoming overwhelmed by the needs of others and ensuring long-term sustainability in providing support. In essence, compassionate detachment involves balancing compassion with self-preservation. It requires recognizing when it is necessary to step back for personal health in order to continue serving others effectively in the future.

Conclusion

This lesson examined the complex issue of hearing voices, particularly as it relates to symptoms often associated with schizophrenia. Through various case studies, we explored how the application of God’s Word, referred to as “truth encounters,” can effectively address the auditory hallucinations and negative thoughts that some individuals experience. While not every case involves demonic oppression, recognizing the distinction between psychological conditions and spiritual afflictions is essential in deliverance ministry. By discerning when spiritual intervention is needed, deliverance ministers can better assist individuals in overcoming their struggles.

Next Lesson: Bipolar Disorder and Borderline Personality Disorder

In our next lesson, we will delve into two specific mental health conditions—bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder. These disorders present unique challenges, both psychologically and spiritually, and understanding their symptoms, underlying causes, and manifestations is crucial for effective ministry. In this lesson, we will examine these conditions in detail, look at real-life case studies, and learn how deliverance ministers can approach individuals dealing with these disorders while providing compassionate, biblically grounded support.

¹NOTES

- [What Causes Depression? Myths About Chemical Imbalances](#)
- [Depression Is Not a Serotonin Deficiency](#)
- [The "Chemical Imbalance" Theory: Dead or Alive?](#)
- [A Decisive Blow to the Serotonin Hypothesis of Depression](#)
- [“Chemically Imbalanced”](#)

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 15: Bipolar Disorder and Borderline Personality Disorder

Description

This lesson will review bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder symptoms and how they can be recognized. Though this school is only focusing on a few of the most common mental illnesses that will be experienced, it should be remembered that the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* lists hundreds of different mental health conditions, ranging from mood disorders and anxiety disorders to psychotic disorders, personality disorders, and neurodevelopmental disorders, among others.

Disclaimer: This school's teachings are not a substitute for professional psychological guidance or mental health treatment when necessary. Our goal is to address any underlying demonic involvement that may be hindering the healing of the psyche, within a framework of biblical truth.

Introduction

Overzealous deliverance ministers may sometimes be quick to attribute every mental disturbance to demonic influence, seeking to “cast demons out” of individuals exhibiting various psychological symptoms. However, as discussed in Lesson 13, high levels of stress can significantly impact both physical and emotional well-being, without the presence of any demonic influence. This understanding must be kept in mind when working with individuals diagnosed with mental illnesses. It is also important to remember that these mental health conditions may be exploited or even initiated by demons, but they are usually a combination of spiritual and psychological disorders.

As a deliverance minister, you will often encounter individuals who have not received psychological counseling and, as a result, have not been formally diagnosed with a mental health condition. However, this does not mean that a mental health issue is absent. While it is beyond the legal authority of non-licensed individuals to diagnose mental health disorders, they can *recognize* the symptoms of these conditions and respond appropriately based on their observations.

Bipolar Disorder and Its Symptoms

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition characterized by extreme mood swings, including periods of intense emotional highs (mania or hypomania) and profound lows (depression). These

mood shifts can last from a few days to several weeks or months and significantly impact a person's behavior, energy levels, and ability to function in daily life.

The symptoms of bipolar disorder vary depending on whether the individual is experiencing a manic, hypomanic, or depressive episode.

Manic Episode (Highs) Symptoms:

1. Increased energy or restlessness
2. Euphoric mood or excessive optimism
3. Irritability or agitation
4. Racing thoughts or rapid speech
5. Impulsive or risky behavior (e.g., spending sprees, reckless driving, sexual promiscuity)
6. Decreased need for sleep (e.g., feeling rested after only a few hours of sleep)
7. Grandiosity (having an inflated sense of self-importance)
8. Poor decision-making or inability to consider consequences
9. Hyperactivity (engaging in multiple tasks or projects at once)

Hypomanic Episode (A Milder Form of Mania):

1. Similar to manic episodes but less severe and does not cause significant problems with work or social functioning.
2. Symptoms might include high energy, racing thoughts, and talkativeness, but without the severe impairment seen in full mania.

Depressive Episode (Lows) Symptoms:

1. Sadness or hopelessness that lasts for most of the day
2. Loss of interest or pleasure in most activities (anhedonia)
3. Fatigue or lack of energy
4. Changes in appetite or weight (eating too much or too little)
5. Sleep disturbances (sleeping too much or too little)
6. Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
7. Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or remembering things
8. Thoughts of death or suicide
9. Physical symptoms like aches and pains without a clear physical cause

The following case study highlights how bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and other mental health conditions can intersect and manifest in a complex, intertwined manner. Through Ronda's journey, we will see how these disorders can overlap and how both psychological and spiritual healing are necessary for complete restoration.

Case Study of Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, and Depression

We (Chet and Phyllis Swearingen) first met Ronda in 2017, shortly after she had come out of one of her many stays at a local behavioral health center. Ronda had grown up in a very strict religious environment, almost like the Amish, where every part of her life was controlled, scrutinized, and criticized if it didn't fit within the cultural norms. That oppressive atmosphere, combined with the dysfunction in her family, really took a toll on her mental health over the

years. She ended up struggling with numerous mental health issues—schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, dissociative identity disorder, depression, and possibly other undiagnosed conditions.

During her manic episodes, Ronda would speak so quickly and frantically that sedation was often the only way to calm her down. You could see the agitation in her—she'd wring her hands, pace, and sway. Her mind would race just as fast as her speech, like a supercomputer running at full speed with no pause.

When we first held a deliverance session with her, she was totally unresponsive, caught in a deep depressive episode. She just stared ahead with glazed-over eyes. Despite our prayers, nothing seemed to reach her. But even in that moment, our hearts were filled with hope that something would change.

We met with Ronda a couple more times before she moved to a state about twelve hours away. Even with the distance, we kept in touch and continued doing deliverance sessions via Zoom. What really stood out about Ronda was her resilience. Even when she couldn't speak directly to us, we knew she was hearing our words. She applied whatever faith she had to the prayers, and that made all the difference.

Ronda and her husband lived in a home that felt incredibly oppressive—it was like you could feel it as soon as you walked in. But whenever we prayed with them over Zoom, that heaviness would lift, although it would return as soon as the call ended. Ronda even told us that she could see the demons leaving when we prayed together.

As the months passed with Zoom sessions, there were times when Ronda was so overwhelmed by the demons that she would tremble, writhe, sway, and even struggle to keep the laptop open, sometimes fighting the urge to throw it across the room. But despite everything, she was determined. That determination, that sense of desperation, was a huge part of her journey toward freedom.

Little by little, we saw the symptoms of mental illness fade. Then, after four months, we witnessed a powerful moment of healing when Jesus integrated the last of the 29 alter personalities, bringing Ronda back to wholeness. From that point on, she was of one mind—no longer dissociated. Alongside that healing, we saw Jesus deliver her from roughly the same number of demons.

Years have passed now, and Ronda has not experienced any return of dissociation, nor have any demons manifested again. Today, she's leading Bible studies and discipling other young women, a true testimony to the transformation and healing she's experienced.

Lessons Learned from This Case Study on Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder

The primary lesson derived from this case study is the importance of not allowing a diagnosis to lead a person to think that their mental illness is permanent and will require lifelong medication. In Ronda's case, this was not the outcome. She experienced significant healing and

transformation, and it is our belief that Jesus desires to set individuals free from such limitations and bondages.

Another key lesson is the necessity of a state of desperation in the healing process. Ronda's journey was defined by her desperation. She had a clear awareness of the demonic influence in her life, as she felt the presence of the demons, saw undeniable evidence of their activity, and witnessed the gradual transformation that took place with each deliverance session. This sense of urgency and recognition of the need for deliverance played a crucial role in her eventual freedom.

A further lesson is that deliverance is often a process that occurs in stages, much like peeling back layers of an onion. Emotional wounds may need healing, dissociative identities may need integration, and demonic influence may require expulsion after the foundational work has been completed. Each step plays a crucial role in restoring the individual to wholeness.

The final lesson is that Jesus is the ultimate deliverer. He desires to heal and can be fully trusted to bring about that healing. Our responsibility as ministers is to believe in His ability to heal and deliver, and to persevere in that belief without giving up.

Secular Approach for Managing Bipolar Disorder

Before addressing spiritual approaches for healing individuals suffering from bipolar disorder, it is important to first acknowledge the secular perspective on the condition. From a medical and psychological standpoint, bipolar disorder is typically regarded as a **chronic, incurable, and lifelong** condition. However, it is generally considered **manageable** with appropriate treatment.

The following are ten commonly utilized strategies to manage bipolar disorder effectively:

1. **Medication:** Consistent use of mood stabilizers, antipsychotics, or antidepressants as prescribed by a psychiatrist to regulate mood swings.
2. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** Engaging in therapy to identify and challenge negative thinking patterns and develop healthier coping mechanisms.
3. **Regular Sleep Schedule:** Maintaining a consistent sleep routine to prevent mood disruptions, as sleep issues can trigger episodes.
4. **Stress Management:** Learning stress-reduction techniques like relaxation exercises, deep breathing, and mindfulness to avoid triggering manic or depressive episodes.
5. **Psychoeducation:** Understanding bipolar disorder through education, which helps the individual and their support system recognize early warning signs and manage symptoms.
6. **Support Networks:** Engaging with family, friends, or support groups to provide emotional support and guidance throughout the treatment process.
7. **Exercise:** Regular physical activity to improve overall mood and reduce stress, which can positively affect mental health.
8. **Healthy Diet:** Eating a balanced diet to stabilize energy levels and support overall well-being.

9. **Routine and Structure:** Creating a consistent daily routine to help prevent mood swings and increase stability.
10. **Professional Monitoring:** Regular check-ins with a mental health professional to track progress, adjust treatments, and address any new symptoms.

While the secular approaches provide valuable strategies for managing bipolar disorder, they primarily focus on stabilizing the mind and emotions. However, for true healing and renewal, it is essential to address the spiritual aspect of the condition, as only God's truth can bring lasting transformation to both the mind and spirit.

Spiritual Approach for Healing Bipolar Disorder

When ministering to an individual diagnosed with bipolar disorder, whether they are currently in a manic or depressive state, it is essential to recognize that true healing and renewal of the mind can only occur as they embrace the truth of God's word. This does not dismiss the ten secular approaches to healing already mentioned, as they are undoubtedly beneficial and should never be ignored. However, for spiritual healing, the initial step may involve reading calming and comforting passages from the Bible to help stabilize the individual before encouraging them to encounter and internalize the truth, which may be in direct contradiction to the lies they are currently holding onto.

For individuals in a state disconnected from reality, it is often only the truth that can guide them back to a grounded state. Focusing on reading Scripture can be an effective starting point, and observing their reactions to these passages may offer valuable insight into their mental and spiritual state.

Is It the Mind or Demons?

Distinguishing between the mental health symptoms of bipolar disorder and potential demonic influence is not always straightforward. In some cases, it may be a blend of both psychological conditions and spiritual oppression. It is important to approach each case with discernment and not hastily assume one or the other, as both may play a role in the individual's experience.

Who Has the Bipolar Disorder?

In certain cases, the bipolar disorder may not be primarily associated with the core personality but with an alter personality. This possibility should be considered if there is evidence of dissociative identity disorder or similar conditions. If the disorder does not have a clear genetic origin, it may stem from a traumatic experience. In such instances, exploring the need for inner healing and identifying and integrating alter personalities through prayer may be necessary for the individual's recovery.

Does It Run in the Family?

The presence of bipolar disorder in multiple family members can suggest a genetic predisposition, or even a generational curse, which may be influencing the individual. In these cases, leading the person through a curse-breaking prayer may help address generational issues. The effectiveness of this process can be gauged by observing the individual's reaction—whether relief or resistance is experienced. Resistance may indicate the presence of demons that need to be addressed.

It is important to note that the removal of demons does not always automatically resolve the underlying mental health issues. Although deliverance may remove spiritual oppression, the psychological effects of the disorder may persist if the damage to the mind has already been done. Mental health healing and deliverance should be seen as complementary, not interchangeable processes.

The Role of Perseverance in Deliverance

Demons often rely on individuals giving up on cases that appear difficult or complicated. In Christian circles, there is sometimes a tendency to defer such cases to mental health professionals, with the assumption that psychiatrists and therapists will be able to address the problem.

In all of these situations, it is crucial to seek guidance from the Holy Spirit for discernment, and wisdom in navigating the complexities of both the mental health and spiritual aspects of the individual's healing process. Deliverance ministers must remain committed to the individual's healing journey, even when the process is challenging.

Borderline Personality Disorder and Its Symptoms

We now turn our attention to one of the most difficult conditions for those uneducated in psychology to identify and minister to—those suffering with borderline personality disorder. This mental illness constitutes about 10-20% of all psychiatric hospitalizations. BPD is more common than bipolar or schizophrenia, though the understanding of it is complex due to its wide range of symptoms which differ from person to person. Also, for an accurate diagnosis to be made, clinical visits extending over several years are often required. When levels of examination like that are not conducted, 30-50% of individuals with BPD get misdiagnosed. The diagnoses they receive instead, like depression, anxiety, or even antisocial personality disorder, acknowledge the stereotypically “female” nature of BPD (emotionally intense, relational difficulties).

Symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is characterized by a pattern of unstable relationships, self-image, and emotions. Here are common symptoms of BPD:

1. **Intense and unstable relationships:** Individuals with BPD often have relationships that are intense, unstable, and fluctuating between idealization and devaluation.
2. **Fear of abandonment:** A strong fear of being abandoned or rejected, often leading to frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment.
3. **Unstable self-image:** A distorted or unstable sense of self, leading to sudden changes in goals, values, or career aspirations.
4. **Impulsive behaviors:** Engaging in risky or impulsive behaviors, such as substance abuse, reckless driving, spending sprees, or unsafe sexual practices.
5. **Emotional instability:** Experiencing rapid mood swings, typically lasting a few hours to a few days, with feelings of extreme sadness, irritability, or anxiety.
6. **Chronic feelings of emptiness:** A persistent sense of boredom, emptiness, or dissatisfaction with life.
7. **Inappropriate or intense anger:** Difficulty controlling anger, which can manifest as frequent outbursts or temper tantrums.
8. **Paranoia or dissociation:** Experiencing periods of paranoia or dissociative symptoms, feeling disconnected from reality, or having trouble thinking clearly during stressful situations.
9. **Self-harming behaviors:** Engaging in self-injurious behaviors such as cutting, burning, or other forms of self-harm as a way of coping with emotional pain.
10. **Suicidal thoughts or behaviors:** Recurring thoughts of death, suicidal ideation, or actual suicide attempts.

It's important to note that symptoms can vary from person to person and not everyone with BPD will experience all of these symptoms. The intensity of symptoms can also fluctuate.

Here are some symptoms that may help with the understanding of this disorder, beyond the above symptoms:

1. A borderline person does not have the ability to emotionally regulate themselves.
2. If things are stable, they don't like it. They are not comfortable with stable environments and will try to manipulate those around them. It isn't a conscious dislike, it's just that it isn't the way they function. So they try to destabilize any attempts to order and happiness, not just with themselves, but also with others around them.
 - a. If they are in a family, it is possible that the whole family needs deliverance.
3. The affected person is almost always on the "borderline" of some kind of psychosis or unreality.
4. BPD's erratic moods, deprecating self-images, and manipulative behaviors cause instability in family dynamics.
5. Sufferers may hurt themselves as self-punishment for alleged wrongs or regularly threaten suicide as a form of seeking sympathy and manipulating others close to them.
6. While depression and bipolar disorders result in moods often lasting for weeks, and schizophrenics may be mentally unsound for months or years at a time, the person with BPD may exhibit anger and anxiety for shorter periods—sometimes a few hours, or at most one day—with switches in and out of their anger or anxiety, rapidly and frequently.
7. During these borderline phases, they may:
 - a. Self-injure, cut, pick, tic

- b. Abuse drugs or alcohol
 - c. Become sexually promiscuous
 - d. Act erratically with family members
 - e. Make irrational, impulsive decisions about their spouse, children, employer—including long-term life goals—only to switch back a short time later.
 - f. Their morals can fluctuate, even their spiritual faith, to the point of questioning their salvation.
8. A borderline person is especially vulnerable to the spirit of rejection.
 9. Sometimes spouses or children can become the object of severe attachment disorder. One moment they are attached to the loved one or the child, and the next moment they are detached.
 10. Those with BPD often exhibit signs that they have an unreasonable feeling of mistreatment or not being loved. They get clingy and refuse to be left alone. They continually manipulate and control through their moods to get that love. If they don't get the attention they long for, they go to suicidal thought to get the attention they want.

Case Study of Borderline Personality Disorder

Bree had always been the center of attention, and when she moved in with the McPherson family, it didn't take long for her to establish that. Her parents, though well-meaning, were trapped in a cycle of dysfunction and instability, which had left Bree longing for the stability and care she never had growing up. So when the McPhersons offered to let her live with them, they hoped it would provide her with a safe place to heal.

Jeff McPherson, the father of the family, understood Bree's troubled background. He knew that growing up in such an unstable environment had deeply affected her, and he sympathized with her need for constant attention and validation. Unfortunately, he failed to set firm boundaries. Bree quickly began to monopolize Jeff's time. Conversations that started with general pleasantries about the day would end up as monologues from Bree about her feelings, her experiences, her past—anything that could pull the focus back to her. Jeff, who was used to being a good listener, allowed her to dominate the dinner table discussions, wanting to do anything he could to see her experience emotional healing.

On the other hand, Alice McPherson, Jeff's wife, was growing increasingly frustrated with Bree. She had always prided herself on creating a peaceful, welcoming home for her family, but Bree's constant need for attention, her self-centeredness, and her inability to contribute to the balance of the home began to wear on Alice. Bree would challenge Alice subtly at first, making clever remarks that pushed her buttons just enough to make her uncomfortable. For example, when Alice would attempt to encourage Bree with words of advice, it was always received with feelings of judgmentalism. The tension between Alice and Bree grew slowly, but it was undeniable.

As the weeks went on, Bree began to push the family further apart. She would often act out when things didn't go her way, playing on Jeff's guilt and Alice's frustration. At times, Bree would

take a manipulative tone, speaking in a way that subtly put down the family while pretending to be seeking sympathy. It wasn't just her words, though—there were moments when it felt like something else was at play. Occasionally, her words carried something as if they weren't originating from her—like something switched. These moments were fleeting, but unsettling enough to make Alice and Jeff wonder what was truly going on. They tried to rationalize it, attributing it to Bree's emotional instability, but there were times when it felt like something darker was influencing her actions.

Eventually, the strain became too much for the McPhersons to bear. What had started as an act of kindness to help Bree was now dividing their home. The once-welcoming environment was now filled with arguments, passive-aggressive remarks, and growing resentment. After weeks of discussions, prayer, and seeking counsel from others, Jeff and Alice decided that the situation was no longer tenable. Bree was asked to leave, and she did, but not without leaving a lasting impact on the family.

Evidence of Borderline Personality Disorder in Bree

1. **Intense need for attention and validation:** Bree consistently seeks to be the center of attention and monopolizes conversations to focus on herself and her feelings. This can be linked to an unstable sense of self and a reliance on external validation, which are features of BPD.
2. **Unstable and intense interpersonal relationships:** Her relationships with Jeff and Alice are marked by instability. She initially seems to rely on Jeff for attention but creates tension with Alice. The description of her “pushing buttons” and the growing resentment suggests difficulty in maintaining healthy relationship boundaries. The account mentions her taking a “manipulative tone,” which, in the context of BPD, can stem from a fear of abandonment and a need for reassurance, rather than malicious intent.
3. **Sensitivity to perceived judgment:** Bree interprets Alice's advice as judgmentalism, indicating potential sensitivity to criticism and rejection, which is common in BPD.
4. **Acting out when things don't go her way:** This suggests difficulty regulating emotions, a core characteristic of BPD.
5. **Feelings of emptiness (implied):** Her longing for stability and care suggests a potential underlying feeling of emptiness from her unstable upbringing, which can be associated with BPD.
6. **Transient changes in her manner of speaking:** The moments where her words seemed “not originating from her” and felt “like something switched” could potentially be interpreted as brief dissociative experiences or rapidly shifting emotional states, sometimes seen in BPD under stress.
7. **History of unstable upbringing and trauma (implied):** Her parents' “cycle of dysfunction and instability” and her longing for a safe place to heal are consistent with the understanding that childhood trauma and unstable environments are significant risk factors for developing BPD.

Lessons to Be Learned from This Case Study

The McPhersons' experience with Bree highlights several important lessons, particularly for those involved in deliverance ministry. First, the importance of setting boundaries cannot be overstated. Jeff's failure to establish clear and firm boundaries with Bree allowed her to continue manipulating the family dynamic. Without boundaries, individuals with borderline personality disorder (BPD) can take advantage of the kindness extended to them, leading to unhealthy relationships that become emotionally draining and spiritually harmful.

Second, the demonic influence that was evident through Bree's actions reminds us that spiritual discernment is crucial when dealing with individuals experiencing deep emotional and mental turmoil. While BPD can cause a person to behave in a self-centered and manipulative manner, the subtle changes in Bree's voice suggest that there may have been a deeper spiritual element at work. This underscores the need for deliverance ministers to be sensitive to both the psychological and spiritual aspects of a person's struggles, especially when it seems like external influences are involved.

Third, we learn that even when someone's background is tragic and their struggles are understandable, it does not give them permission to disrupt the peace of others. The McPhersons, while compassionate, allowed Bree's need for attention to become the primary focus, which ultimately led to a breakdown in their family dynamic. This shows the importance of maintaining a balance between compassion and self-care. Deliverance ministers and families alike must remember that compassion is necessary, but it should never come at the expense of the emotional or spiritual health of others.

Lastly, the McPhersons' experience teaches us that healing is often a process that requires intervention from both the physical and spiritual realms. While therapy and emotional support are necessary for individuals with BPD, there are times when deeper, spiritual work is required to address the underlying issues. When it became clear that Bree's emotional issues were not solely psychological but had spiritual elements, the McPhersons sought counsel and prayer, but ultimately, the situation required intervention in the form of Bree leaving their home.

Ministering to Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder

These individuals, with their spinning out of control at any moment, and for relatively short periods of time, make ministry challenging. However, as with all mental disorders, the truth from God's word is always the best remedy.

1. Have the individual make confessional statements, specifically as it relates to the realities of their life, home and family.
2. Watch for any demonic resistance to these *truth statements*, as demons reside in and will attempt to keep lies embedded.
3. Conduct an inner healing approach, taking the individual to any previous moments of rejection and abandonment, especially when it occurred during childhood.

4. The person needs to be in an accountable relationship with those in the home, as well as those outside the home.
 - a. The one who is their “accountability partner” must ensure they adhere to the truth of God’s word and not the lies of demons. They must also not embrace any lie a counselor or therapist may have inserted.
5. The demons that will attempt to capitalize on BPD are:
 - a. A man-hating and controlling spirit
 - b. Rejection
 - c. Abandonment
 - d. Insecurity
 - e. Self-hate
 - f. Anti-Christ—whose purpose it is to destabilize a person’s relationship with God.

Perhaps the most challenging part of deliverance ministry is working with those afflicted by schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or borderline personality disorder. The healing process rarely goes smoothly, but the rewards can be immense as you see the person restored to healthy family relationships.

What makes ministering to these individuals so challenging is that you have to navigate between demons, dissociative states, and the particular mental illness itself.

This is why inner healing is so important. When that healing occurs, and when dissociative states are integrated, lies are exposed, and people come out of agreement with those lies, demons have nowhere else to hide.

Keys to Success in Ministering to Individuals Diagnosed with Mental Illnesses

1. **Uphold the Truth of God’s Word:** It is essential to hold the individual accountable to the truth of God’s Word, rather than the lies of Satan. This commitment to truth serves as the foundation for the healing process.
2. **Establish Submission to Spiritual Authority:**
 - a. The individual must agree to submit to the determination of reality as set by the deliverance minister. Without this agreement, effective ministry cannot proceed.
 - b. The person must acknowledge their willingness to accept, regardless of mental distress, the truths declared by the minister. They must concede that the minister’s guidance is authoritative and biblically sound.
 - c. If the individual attempts to challenge or dispute the guidance, the minister should reaffirm the established agreement:
 - i. *“As a man (or woman) of God, I am responsible for determining reality on your behalf. I am doing this for you, and you must trust that what I declare is biblically true.”*
3. **Involve Family or Caretaker Support:** The support of family members or caretakers is crucial. They must be consistent and persistent in helping hold the individual accountable and ensuring the process remains effective.

4. **Commitment to Consistent Spiritual Practices:**
 - a. Consistency in Bible reading and other spiritual disciplines is vital. In some cases, individuals may require assistance, such as having the Bible read to them or listening to an audio recording of Scripture.
 5. **Active Participation in a Local Congregation:** The individual must be integrated into a local congregation, participating actively in community life and contributing in any capacity they are able. This involvement fosters spiritual growth and accountability.
 6. **Ongoing Psychological Therapy and Medication:** Any necessary psychological therapy or medication must continue to ensure that the individual remains stabilized. These medical interventions should be maintained alongside the spiritual work of deliverance.
-

Conclusion

This lesson has underscored the importance of recognizing the complexities of mental health disorders such as bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder, while simultaneously addressing the spiritual aspects that may influence these conditions. By maintaining a balanced approach that includes both secular treatments and spiritual discernment, deliverance ministers can better support individuals on their healing journey. As demonstrated in the case studies, healing is often a multifaceted process that requires both psychological support and spiritual intervention to bring about true restoration and freedom.

Next Lesson: Satan: Who Is He?

In our next lesson, we will shift our focus to a central figure in the spiritual battle—the adversary of God, Satan. Known by various names such as the Devil, the Prince of Darkness, and the Accuser, Satan is depicted throughout the Bible as the embodiment of evil and opposition to God’s will. We will explore the different names and titles attributed to him in Scripture, as well as the roles he plays in the spiritual realm. Understanding the nature of Satan and his tactics is vital for deliverance ministers, as it equips them to recognize and resist his influence in their lives and in the lives of those they minister to.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 16: Satan: Who Is He?

Description

This lesson provides a comprehensive exploration of Satan's identity, activities, and ongoing influence, despite his ultimate defeat through Christ's victory on the cross. It underscores the importance of remaining vigilant and aware of Satan's tactics. The lesson highlights key biblical passages that affirm believers' authority over the enemy, emphasizing the need for strategic spiritual defense and the active use of God's Word in spiritual warfare. Furthermore, the lesson delves into Satan's creation, his fall, and his role in both the Old and New Testaments, offering insight into how his actions continue to challenge God's people. Through this study, believers are equipped to confront and resist Satan, recognizing their position of victory and triumph in Christ.

Introduction

At the *Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance*, our approach to ministry is Christocentric, meaning that we center our focus on Jesus. He is the focal point of our attention and the cornerstone of our lives. However, we are also repeatedly admonished to remain vigilant against Satan—though defeated by Christ's triumph on the cross—and to resist dismissing him as one who can no longer pose any threat:

- *Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.* (1 Peter 5:8 NLT)
-

Satan Is Already Defeated. Why Give Him Any Attention?

Critics of deliverance ministry may accuse its practitioners of “seeing a demon behind every bush,” often expressing disdain for this type of ministry. Yet a thorough examination of Scripture reveals that Jesus' ministry was profoundly engaged with the expulsion of demons. In fact, Jesus performed deliverance ministry in every village and city He entered, and He trained no fewer than 42 teams to carry out the same task (see Lesson 2). Furthermore, in the Great Commission, as found in Mark 16:17 and Matthew 28:18-20, we find Jesus explicitly stating that the act of expelling demons would persist until the end of the age.

Those who oppose deliverance ministry may state that with Satan being defeated through Christ's death and resurrection, Christians should not give undue attention or focus to the enemy's ongoing influence. They should focus on Christ's victory rather than becoming preoccupied with spiritual warfare. Consequently, while acknowledging the theological reality of

Satan’s ultimate defeat through Christ’s redemptive work, in upcoming lessons 17 and 20 we will address the rationale for continued vigilance and engagement with the concept of ongoing spiritual warfare, offering a reasoned and balanced perspective on this theological tension.

Strategic Occupation and Vigilant Defense

In the aftermath of military triumph, victorious forces establish strategic defenses by creating garrisons, fortifying outposts, and deploying units throughout occupied territory. These measures ensure that control is maintained over the subdued population. Should rebellion arise, these soldiers are positioned to counter any attempts to reclaim lost ground. This military analogy mirrors the spiritual battle against Satan and his forces. Though decisively defeated through Christ’s death and resurrection, Satan and his followers continue their resistance, refusing to acknowledge final defeat. They remain committed to subverting God’s people and attempting to regain lost territory. As believers, we must remain vigilant and prepared to resist these forces. In this context, Ephesians 6 outlines the spiritual armor and defense necessary to engage in this warfare, emphasizing the importance of understanding Satan’s tactics in order to maintain the victory Christ has secured.

As a military commander studies their enemy in order to secure victory, we too must understand the nature of our adversary. Just as soldiers prepare for battle by understanding their enemy’s strategies, so must we study Satan and his kingdom. By doing so, we equip ourselves to effectively overcome his schemes and walk in the ongoing victory secured by Jesus Christ.

The Screwtape Letters

In the front matter of C.S. Lewis’ *Screwtape Letters* (pg. vii), we read the following:

- “The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn.” — Martin Luther (1483-1546)
- “The devil . . . the prowde spirite . . . cannot endure to be mocked.” — Thomas More (1478-1535)

C.S. Lewis’s The Screwtape Letters (1942) is widely regarded as a seminal work in Christian literature. The book is a collection of fictional letters from Screwtape, a senior demon, to his nephew, Wormwood, who is tasked with tempting a new believer. Through these letters, Lewis presents strategies for the corruption of faith, revealing how demons exploit human weaknesses and distract Christians from their spiritual purpose. Written from a demonic perspective, the book offers valuable insights into the subtlety and persistence of spiritual opposition, making it a significant resource for understanding the nature of spiritual warfare in the Christian life.

The allegory of *The Screwtape Letters* has been widely praised for its theological depth and wit. Several reviews highlight its impact:

- One of the most clever and entertaining examinations of spiritual warfare ever written. Through the letters of Screwtape, Lewis turns the tables on temptation, inviting readers to reflect deeply on their own struggles and faith. — *Desiring God*
- C.S. Lewis’s unparalleled wit and theological depth shine in *The Screwtape Letters*. This book is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the subtleties of spiritual opposition and the grace that empowers us to overcome it. — *Relevant Magazine*
- A brilliantly crafted allegory that not only illuminates the nature of temptation but also provides a compelling call to vigilance and spiritual awareness. — *The Gospel Coalition*
- With humor and spiritual insight, Lewis’s *The Screwtape Letters* remains one of the most effective tools for understanding both the dangers of complacency in the Christian life and the ongoing battle against evil. — *Christianity Today*

Despite the praise, some critics have raised concerns regarding the book’s portrayal of temptation and the nature of spiritual opposition. For example, some argue that Lewis presents Christians as inherently vulnerable to manipulation, potentially downplaying the transformative power of grace in overcoming temptation. Others contend that the book oversimplifies the nature of spiritual warfare, focusing more on the strategies of Satan than on God’s ultimate triumph over evil.

These critiques remind us that all works, even highly regarded ones, will encounter opposition, and those engaged in deliverance ministry can expect similar challenges.

Satan: Who He Is—His Creation and His Fall

The origins of Satan can be traced back to his creation as a beautiful and exalted being, as described in Ezekiel 28:12-15. In this passage, Satan is portrayed as a cherub, a highly regarded angelic being, created with perfection in wisdom, beauty, and splendor. He was placed in a position of honor, dwelling in the Garden of Eden and having direct access to God’s presence. However, his downfall began when pride and self-exaltation took root in his heart. Despite his beauty and perfection, Satan desired to ascend to a higher throne, to become like God, and to surpass His authority. This arrogance led to his rebellion against God, resulting in his fall from grace and his eventual expulsion from the heavenly realm.

Isaiah 14:12-15 provides further insight into the heart of Satan’s rebellion, describing how he sought to elevate himself above God. Satan, referred to as “Lucifer” in this passage, was cast out of heaven due to his prideful desire to be like the Most High. He aspired to exalt his throne above the stars of God and even sought to ascend above the clouds, desiring to make himself equal to God. This passage underscores Satan’s desire for power and control, which ultimately led to his downfall. His rebellion marked the beginning of the ongoing battle between good and evil, as

Satan became the adversary of God and humanity, striving to thwart God’s divine purposes and lead humanity astray.

We find more details on the fall of Satan in Luke’s Gospel and the Revelation:

- *Then there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. And the dragon lost the battle, and he and his angels were forced out of heaven. This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels. (Revelation 12:7-9 NLT)*
- *“Yes,” he told them, “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning.” (Luke 10:18 NLT)*

Having examined Satan’s origins, let’s now turn our attention to his documented activities in the Old Testament.

Satan: His Activities in the Old Testament

Though we will not go into extensive detail about the activities of Satan in the Old Testament, we will make mention of just a few major instances where his influence and opposition to God’s plan are evident.

1. **The Fall of Man (Genesis 3):** The most significant early appearance of Satan in the Old Testament occurs in the Garden of Eden, where he tempts Eve to disobey God’s command. Through the serpent, Satan introduces sin into the world by deceiving humanity and leading them into rebellion against God. This event marks the beginning of Satan’s role in human history, causing the fall of mankind and introducing the need for redemption.
2. **Job’s Testing (Job 1-2):** In the Book of Job, Satan plays a central role in the testing of Job’s faith. Satan challenges the integrity of Job’s righteousness, claiming that he only worships God because of his prosperity. God allows Satan to test Job through various trials, including the loss of his wealth, health, and family. This narrative highlights Satan’s role in afflicting people to cause suffering and doubt, yet it also illustrates the sovereignty of God in allowing such trials for the purpose of refining faith.
3. **David’s Sin of Counting the People (1 Chronicles 21:1):** In 1 Chronicles 21:1, we see Satan inciting David to take a census of Israel, an act that led to pride and disobedience. The action, though seemingly harmless, was seen as a sin because it demonstrated a lack of trust in God’s provision and power. This instance shows Satan’s role in tempting leaders to act in ways that lead to pride and disobedience, often resulting in consequences for God’s people.

Satan: His Activities in the New Testament

The New Testament provides a detailed account of Satan’s persistent efforts to disrupt God’s redemptive plan, as evidenced through his direct confrontations with Jesus, his manipulation of

key figures in the early church, and his attempts to influence the hearts and minds of believers. Below are several key instances that highlight Satan's activities:

1. **The Temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13):** One of the most significant portrayals of Satan's activity occurs during his direct confrontation with Jesus in the wilderness. After fasting for forty days, Jesus is tempted by Satan to turn a stone into bread, to throw Himself from the temple, and to worship Satan in exchange for dominion over all the kingdoms of the world. Each time, Jesus resists these temptations by quoting Scripture, demonstrating His supreme authority over Satan and revealing how believers can likewise combat temptation through the Word of God. This episode highlights Satan's continual attempts to thwart God's plan and to tempt believers into abandoning God's will.
2. **Peter's Rebuke (Matthew 16:21-23):** In this passage, Jesus predicts His forthcoming suffering, death, and resurrection. When Peter rebukes Jesus, unable to accept the notion of Jesus' suffering, Jesus sharply responds, saying, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." (NIV) This exchange underscores Satan's ability to influence even well-meaning individuals to act contrary to God's will.
3. **Satan's Role in Judas' Betrayal (Luke 22:3-6, John 13:2):** Satan's involvement in Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus is pivotal. In Luke 22:3, it is stated that "Satan entered Judas," (NIV) prompting him to conspire with the religious leaders to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Satan's manipulation of Judas serves as a stark example of how he can influence individuals, even those within God's redemptive plan, to fulfill his own malevolent purposes.
4. **The Apostle Paul's Warning (2 Corinthians 2:11):** The Apostle Paul frequently addresses the active opposition of Satan against believers. In 2 Corinthians 2:11, he writes, "in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes." (NIV) Paul's exhortation underscores the importance of vigilance and spiritual awareness, encouraging believers to remain steadfast in their faith and avoid falling prey to the enemy's tactics.
5. **The Apostle Paul Blocked by Satan (1 Thessalonians 2:18):** Paul acknowledges the spiritual opposition he faced in his ministry, writing, "We wanted very much to come to you, and I, Paul, tried again and again, but Satan prevented us." (NLT) This admission serves as a sobering reminder that even the Apostle Paul, a prominent figure in the early church, encountered hindrances in his ministry due to Satan's opposition. This realization reinforces the understanding that, just as Satan obstructed Paul, believers today may face similar obstacles in their own spiritual endeavors.

These passages from the New Testament reveal Satan's continued efforts to deceive, tempt, and disrupt God's work in the world. Through his direct confrontation with Jesus, manipulation of His followers, and his influence on individuals within the church, Satan remains a persistent adversary, striving to hinder God's plan of redemption.

Satan: His Activities Today

This section will examine key actions Satan engages in to hinder both the Church and individual believers from fulfilling their God-given mission.

1. **Satan Plants Seeds of Confusion, Deception, and Evil:**

In Matthew 13:39, Jesus describes Satan as “the enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat.” This passage, drawn from the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, theologically underscores the reality that Satan introduces false believers within the Church, individuals who propagate destructive heresies and live unsanctified lives (see 2 Peter 2:1). His primary goal in this activity is to undermine the Church’s mission and hinder its effectiveness.

2. **God Will Use Satan to Test Us (Like Jesus and Job):**

In Luke 22:31-32, Jesus warns Peter, “Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat,” yet assures him that His intercession will strengthen his faith. This passage reveals Satan’s desire to attack and cause believers to falter, while also highlighting Christ’s role in interceding on behalf of believers, and the necessity of repentance and restoration. This aligns with the testing of faith seen in the lives of Job and Jesus, reinforcing the concept that God sometimes permits Satan’s actions for the refining of believers.

3. **Satan Accuses Us of Past Sins:**

Revelation 12:10 presents Satan as “the accuser of our brothers and sisters,” who accuses them before God day and night. Satan actively brings up past sins that have already been forgiven in an attempt to induce guilt and condemnation, preventing believers from walking in the authority granted to them. This accusation is a key tactic Satan uses to undermine believers’ confidence in their redemption.

4. **Satan Has Mighty Powers and He Is a Great Enemy:**

In 1 Peter 5:8, believers are warned to “stay alert” because “your great enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.” This warning highlights the significant threat Satan poses, as he operates with considerable power in this dark world. Ephesians 6:10-18 further illustrates the necessity of spiritual armor to resist this formidable adversary.

5. **Satan Is the Tempter:**

Paul’s concern in 1 Thessalonians 3:5 reflects the reality that Satan, referred to as “the tempter,” seeks to undermine believers’ faith during trials. Paul feared that the Thessalonian believers might have succumbed to Satan’s temptations, revealing the ever-present danger of spiritual failure. However, the promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 assures believers that God will provide a way to endure temptation, reinforcing the power of God’s faithfulness in the face of Satan’s attacks.

6. **Deception Is Satan’s Primary Tool:**

Revelation 12:9 describes Satan as “the ancient serpent” who “deceives the whole world.” This deception is not limited to individuals but extends to the entire world, with those outside of Christ being under Satan’s sway (1 John 5:19). This underscores the pervasive and insidious nature of Satan’s work. Theologically, this highlights the importance of distinguishing between truth and lies, as Satan’s deceptive influence seeks to undermine the very foundation of God’s kingdom.

Satan: His Power and Limitations

In the Book of Job, particularly chapters 1-2, it is evident that Satan operates within limitations imposed by God. Though Satan seeks to afflict and tempt, his actions are always under God's sovereign control. A similar restriction is highlighted in Luke 22:31-32, where Satan requests permission to "sift" Peter and the other disciples. This example further illustrates that Satan cannot act freely but must seek divine permission for his actions. This theological insight suggests that while Satan has influence, God's sovereignty ensures that Satan's power is restrained, although often used to refine and test the faith of believers.

The Protestant reformer Martin Luther, in his famous hymn *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, encapsulates this reality. While acknowledging Satan's immense power, Luther asserts that God remains our protector against all of Satan's attacks. The hymn includes these poignant lines:

- *For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe.*
- *His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.*
- *Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing.*

Yet, Luther offers reassurance, concluding with the powerful line:

- *One little word shall fell him.*

This comparison underscores the tension between Satan's formidable power and the overwhelming authority of God. Despite Satan's capabilities, believers can take comfort in God's ultimate victory, knowing that His authority is supreme and Satan's defeat is inevitable.

Satan's power, however, should not be underestimated. An appropriate metaphor for Satan's influence is that of a sharp knife: while the knife itself may pose little threat in a passive state, it becomes dangerous when mishandled. Similarly, Satan's power is dangerous when believers are careless or negligent in their spiritual defense. Ephesians 6:10-18 describes the necessary armor for this spiritual battle, equipping believers with the tools needed to resist his attacks.

As Satan continues to wage war against believers, the Bible offers clear instructions for resistance:

- *So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7 NLT)*
- *Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are. (1 Peter 5:9 NLT)*

Thus, while Satan remains an adversary with significant power, believers are assured of their victory through Christ's strength, provided they stand firm in faith and resist his schemes.

The Christian's Position of Victory and Triumph

Several key verses in the New Testament affirm that believers, through their union with Christ, participate in His triumph and operate from a position of victory over Satan. These passages emphasize that Christ's victory provides believers with both authority and the assurance of triumph over spiritual opposition. Below are some notable passages that illustrate this theological reality:

1. Believers Are More Than Conquerors Through Christ

This passage underscores that believers' victory over trials, including spiritual opposition, is assured through Christ's love and His triumph.

- *No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.* (Romans 8:37 NLT)

2. Christ Triumphed Over Spiritual Rulers and Authorities on the Cross

This verse elaborates on how Jesus, through His death and resurrection, triumphed over Satan and his forces. Christ's victory disarmed the spiritual powers of darkness, and believers share in this victory.

- *In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.* (Colossians 2:15 NLT)

3. Christ's Exalted Position and Authority Over All Powers

These verses emphasize Christ's authority over all powers, including Satan. As part of the body of Christ, believers are aligned with His victory and operate from this exalted position.

- *That power is the same as the mighty strength he [God] exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.* (Ephesians 1:19b-23 NIV)

4. The Holy Spirit Within Believers Is Greater Than the Power of the Enemy

This verse highlights the superior power of the Holy Spirit within believers, which empowers them to overcome Satan and the world.

- *But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.* (1 John 4:4 NLT)

5. Believers Participate in Christ's Triumphal Procession

This passage compares believers to participants in Christ's triumphal procession, symbolizing their victory and participation in the spread of Christ's victory through the proclamation of the gospel.

- *But thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. (2 Corinthians 2:14 NLT)*
6. **Jesus Gives Believers Authority Over All the Power of the Enemy**
 Jesus confers authority upon His followers, giving them dominion over Satan's power through their union with Christ.
- *Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. (Luke 10:19 NLT)*
7. **Believers Defeat Satan by the Blood of the Lamb and Their Testimony**
 Revelation 12:11 asserts that believers overcome Satan through the blood of Christ and their testimony, emphasizing that Christ's atonement secures their victory over the enemy.
- *And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die. (Revelation 12:11 NLT)*
-

Satan: His Ultimate Demise

Satan and demons are irrevocably beyond redemption and, therefore, are not to be shown mercy or pity. This principle remains applicable even during deliverance sessions, wherein demons may plead for mercy. It is important to recognize that some individuals, particularly those influenced by spiritual deception, may feel sympathy for demons, as they will often attempt to manipulate individuals by claiming they do not wish to suffer and expressing a desire to remain with their host. Believers must be vigilant, avoiding these deceptions and clearly instructing those under spiritual attack to refrain from making any agreements that would allow such spirits to remain.

The ultimate fate of Satan is depicted in Revelation 20:10, which underscores his irrevocable defeat and eternal punishment:

- *Then the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10 NLT)*
-

Further Considerations on the Nature and Tactics of Satan

Understanding the biblical designations for Satan is crucial for discerning his tactics and influence. This compilation presents the various names, titles, and descriptive terms used in Scripture to identify this adversary, providing a richer comprehension of his character and objectives.

Names:

1. **Satan:** This is his most common name, appearing frequently in both the Old and New Testaments. It means “adversary” or “opponent.” (Job 1:6-9; Matthew 4:10)
2. **Devil:** This name, primarily used in the New Testament, comes from the Greek word *diabolos*, meaning “slanderer” or “false accuser.” (Matthew 4:1; Revelation 12:9)
3. **Lucifer:** While not explicitly used as a direct name for Satan in the Bible, it comes from Isaiah 14:12, referring to the “Day Star,” “son of the morning,” which has been traditionally interpreted as Satan before his fall.

Titles:

4. **The Accuser:** Revelation 12:10 calls him “the accuser of our brethren,” highlighting his role in bringing accusations against believers before God.
5. **The Adversary:** Similar to his name “Satan,” this title emphasizes his opposition to God and humanity (1 Peter 5:8).
6. **The Enemy/The Wicked One:** Used to describe his opposition to God’s kingdom (Matthew 13:39).
7. **The Tempter:** Matthew 4:3 (1 Thessalonians 3:5) refers to him as “the tempter,” highlighting his efforts to lead people into sin.
8. **The Evil One:** This title, found in passages like Matthew 13:19 and 1 John 5:18, underscores his inherent wickedness and the source of evil in the world.
9. **The Ruler of the Demons:** In Matthew 12:24, he is called “the ruler of the demons” (sometimes Beelzebul), indicating his authority over the demonic realm.
10. **The God of this Age/World:** 2 Corinthians 4:4 refers to him as “the god of this age,” signifying his influence and control over the world system that is opposed to God.
11. **The Prince of this World/Darkness:** Jesus calls him “the prince of this world” in John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11, indicating his dominion over earthly affairs.
12. **The Prince of the Power of the Air:** Ephesians 2:2 describes him as “the prince of the power of the air,” suggesting his influence over spiritual forces.
13. **The Father of Lies:** Jesus states in John 8:44 that Satan “is a liar and the father of lies,” emphasizing his role as the originator of deception.
14. **Beelzebul/Beelzebub:** This name, found in the Gospels (e.g., Matthew 12:24), is used by the Pharisees to accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Satan’s power. Its exact meaning is debated but is often associated with a Philistine deity and linked to “lord of the flies” or “lord of dung.”
15. **Belial/Beliar:** This term, found in 2 Corinthians 6:15, is associated with lawlessness, worthlessness, and opposition to Christ.
16. **Abaddon/Apollyon:** Revelation 9:11; John 10:10 gives him these names, Hebrew and Greek respectively, both meaning “destroyer” or “the angel of the abyss.”

Descriptive Names:

17. **Anointed Cherub:** Prior to Satan’s fall, in Ezekiel 28:11-19 we read of his beauty and adornment.
18. **The Spirit Who Now Works in the Sons of Disobedience:** This descriptive phrase in Ephesians 2:2 refers to the influence of Satan on those who are not following God.
19. **The Serpent/That Ancient Serpent:** Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 identify him with the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), highlighting his role in the fall of humanity.

20. **The Great Dragon:** Revelation 12 depicts him as a powerful and destructive dragon.
21. **A Roaring Lion:** 1 Peter 5:8 compares him to “a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,” emphasizing his predatory nature.
22. **The Murderer from the Beginning:** John 8:44 also calls him a “murderer from the beginning,” linking him to violence and death.
23. **The Deceiver:** Revelation 12:9 calls him “the deceiver of the whole world,” underscoring his primary tactic of leading people astray through lies.
24. **Angel of Light:** Satan’s deceptive appearance, as he can disguise himself to appear righteous (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Conclusion

A comprehensive understanding of Satan’s identity, actions, power, limitations, and ultimate defeat, in conjunction with the Christian’s authority over him, equips believers to confront both Satan and his kingdom with greater confidence and spiritual authority.

As you minister to others, consider the following key insights regarding Satan and demons:

1. **They fear you** and will do everything in their power to prevent you from walking in the authority granted to you.
2. **Deception and lies** are their greatest weapons. They will seek to mislead you into believing that they operate from a position of greater power than you, when in fact, your authority in Christ is supreme.
3. **The Word of God is powerful**, and demons will attempt to hinder you from believing and using it against them. The strength of the Word is activated by faith—you must trust in its truth and authority.
4. **They will challenge your prayers and declarations**, attempting to sow doubt. Your success in spiritual warfare will depend on your faith—simply believe and stand firm.
5. **Remember the victory of Christ:** His death, burial, and resurrection have already defeated Satan. As a member of God’s Kingdom, you stand with the victorious Christ and have been delegated authority to use His name. As His representative, you act as His ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Next Lesson: Demons and the Kingdom of Darkness

Satan is a powerful and cunning adversary who operates from a position of authority within the kingdom of darkness. But Satan’s influence doesn’t operate alone. In Lesson 17, we will turn our focus to the demons who serve him and the larger kingdom of darkness they represent. We’ll explore who demons are, their origins, and their ongoing activities as agents of deception, destruction, and spiritual oppression. This lesson will help you understand the full scope of demonic influence and the strategies Satan employs through his kingdom to disrupt God’s plans and hinder believers.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 17: Demons and the Kingdom of Darkness

Description

In this lesson, students will explore the nature, origin, and activities of demons, as well as their role within the kingdom of darkness. We will examine the biblical understanding of demons, their rebellion under Satan's leadership, and their ongoing influence in the spiritual realm. Students will study the structure of the kingdom of darkness, the tactics demons use to deceive, tempt, and oppress individuals, and how believers can recognize and resist these forces through spiritual warfare. By the end of the lesson, students will have a deeper understanding of the spiritual dynamics at play in deliverance ministry and the authority they possess in Christ to confront demonic forces.

Origin of Demons as Viewed by Diverse Cultures and Theological Perspectives

Here are some of the main theories, including two with biblical roots, regarding the origins of demons. These reflect the diversity of perspectives on demons across history, religion, and cultural contexts, and each offers a distinct explanation for their existence and nature.

1. **Fallen Angels:** This theory is rooted in Judeo-Christian traditions and suggests that demons are angels who rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven. This idea is often associated with Lucifer's rebellion and the angels who followed him.
2. **Nephilim Offspring:** According to some interpretations, particularly in the Book of Genesis and extra-biblical sources,¹ demons are believed to be the offspring of angels (fallen or otherwise) and human women, known as Nephilim.
3. **Ancient Gods and Spirits:** In various mythologies and ancient religions, demons are seen as ancient gods, spirits, or supernatural beings that were worshipped or feared by early civilizations. These entities were often associated with specific domains like nature, war, or fertility.
4. **Psychological Manifestations:** From a psychological perspective, demons may be seen as manifestations of human psychological conditions such as mental illnesses, neuroses, or suppressed emotions. This view attributes demonic encounters to internal psychological processes rather than external spiritual entities.
5. **Cultural and Folklore Beliefs:** Different cultures have diverse beliefs about the origins of demons. Some cultures view demons as malevolent spirits of deceased individuals, ancestors, or mythical creatures that have turned malevolent over time.
6. **Symbolic or Allegorical Entities:** In some theological and philosophical contexts, demons are interpreted as symbolic or allegorical representations of human vices, temptations, or the forces of evil that challenge spiritual growth and moral integrity.

Origin of Demons from a Biblical Perspective

The Bible offers several references and explanations about the origins of demons, although it does not provide a detailed account. Here are three of the main theories carried by conservative Christians:

1. Fallen Angels (Rebellion Against God):

The most widely accepted biblical view is that demons are fallen angels who rebelled against God. This belief is grounded in passages that describe the fall of Lucifer (Satan) and the subsequent rebellion of other angels who followed him. These angels were cast out of heaven and became demons.

- a. **Isaiah 14:12-15** (NLT): This passage describes the fall of Lucifer, who sought to exalt himself above God, leading to his downfall.
 - i. *How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning! You have been thrown down to the earth, you who destroyed the nations of the world. For you said to yourself, "I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High." Instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths.*
- b. **Revelation 12:7-9** (NLT): This passage describes a war in heaven, where Satan (the dragon) and his angels fought against Michael and his angels and were defeated, being cast out of heaven.
 - i. *Then there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. And the dragon lost the battle, and he and his angels were forced out of heaven. This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.*
- c. **2 Peter 2:4** (NLT): This verse speaks of angels who sinned and were cast into hell.
 - i. *For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell, in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the day of judgment.*
- d. **Jude 1:6** (NLT): This verse mentions angels who did not keep their proper domain but abandoned their own position, leading to their punishment.
 - i. *And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment.*

2. Nephilim (Offspring of Fallen Angels and Human Women):

Some interpretations of the Bible, particularly from the Book of Genesis, suggest that demons may be the result of the union between fallen angels (often referred to as “sons of

God”) and human women. This theory is often connected to the story of the **Nephilim**—giants or mighty men mentioned in Genesis 6:1-4.

- a. **Genesis 6:1-4 (NLT)**: This passage describes the “sons of God” who took human wives, leading to the birth of the Nephilim.
 - i. *Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. The sons of God saw the beautiful women and took any they wanted as their wives. Then the Lord said, “My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.” In those days and for some time after, giant Nephilim lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.*
- b. This passage has led some scholars to propose that demons originated from the rebellious angels who mated with human women and produced a hybrid offspring. While this is a debated interpretation, it remains a traditional explanation among some biblical scholars.

3. **The Pre-Adamite Theory:**

The “pre-Adamite” theory suggests that there were humans or human-like beings who existed on Earth before the creation of Adam and Eve as described in the Bible. These beings are considered distinct from the descendants of Adam. Some proponents of this theory suggest that this pre-Adamite race was either wiped out or underwent some form of transformation, and their legacy could be connected to demons.

- a. **Genesis 1:1-2 (NLT)** is sometimes used to support this theory:
 - i. *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.*
 - ii. Advocates of the pre-Adamite theory suggest that the phrase “the earth was formless and empty” could imply a chaotic, pre-existing condition before God formed it as a habitable world for humans. Some view this as evidence of a prior civilization or race that existed before the creation of Adam and Eve.

Common Names of Demons

The following list presents a selection of prominent demonic entities. These names represent entities that are not classified as lesser demons; rather, they are powerful spiritual forces with significant influence. They often employ highly deceptive strategies to maintain their grip on those they torment, making them particularly difficult to dislodge without proper preparation and intervention.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Abaddon/Apollon | 4. Astaroth/Ashtoreth | 7. Baphomet |
| 2. Ahab | 5. Azazel | 8. Beelzebub/
Beelzebub |
| 3. Asmodeus | 6. Baal/Bal | |

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 9. Belial/Beliar | 17. Loki | 24. Python (Acts 16:16) |
| 10. Belphegor | 18. Lucifer | 25. Rahab |
| 11. Chemosh | 19. Mammon | 26. Samael |
| 12. Dagon | 20. Molech | 27. Satan |
| 13. Jezebel/Freya | 21. Nergal | 28. Tammuz |
| 14. Legion (Mark 5:9) | 22. Nimrod | 29. Thor |
| 15. Leviathan | 23. Odin | |
| 16. Lilith | | |

If any of the above demons are encountered during deliverance ministry, it is advisable to delay direct confrontation until significant preparatory work has been completed with the individual seeking freedom. There must be assurance that the following steps are fully addressed before investing time in attempting to evict these demons:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---|
| 1. Genuine repentance | 5. Renunciations | 8. Grieving process is complete ² (deaths, divorce, regrets, loss, etc.) |
| 2. Forgiveness | 6. Inner healing | |
| 3. Soul ties | 7. Alter personalities | |
| 4. Curses | | |

Once it is reasonably certain that these eight action steps have been taken, demons will often leave on their own, or they will require minimal effort to expel.

Demon Names: Associated With Their Function

The following list presents additional demons that may be encountered in deliverance ministry, though it is not exhaustive. It is important to recognize that demons possess distinct personalities, and these personalities often influence the individual they are affecting. The characteristics of these demons will manifest and interweave with the person's behaviors, emotions, and mental state.

The names that these demons present are often indicative of the core issues, strongholds, or curses that need to be addressed in the individual's life. While the specific names or functions of demons may vary, these spirits are generally believed to operate in various capacities, frequently impacting emotions, behaviors, or cognitive processes. It is crucial to understand that the fact that these demons are grouped separately from those in the previous list does not necessarily mean they will be easier to expel. In most cases, the eight preparatory steps outlined previously must be completed before full cleansing can occur.

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Addiction | 7. Blasphemy | 13. Deception |
| 2. Anger | 8. Confusion | 14. Depression |
| 3. Antichrist | 9. Cowardice | 15. Despair |
| 4. Apathy | 10. Critical Spirit | 16. Divination |
| 5. Bipolar | 11. Deaf & Dumb | 17. False Prophet |
| 6. Bitterness | 12. Death | 18. False Religion |

19. Fear	30. Laziness	41. Rejection
20. Gluttony	31. Lust	42. Schizophrenia
21. Greed	32. Murder	43. Self-Hatred
22. Hate	33. Narcissism	44. Sorcery
23. Heresy	34. Occultism	45. Stubbornness
24. Hopelessness	35. Perfectionism	46. Suicide
25. Incest	36. Perversion	47. Trauma
26. Infirmity	37. Pharisee Spirit	48. Violence
27. Insanity	38. Pride	49. Voodoo
28. Jealousy	39. Rage	50. Witchcraft
29. Lawlessness	40. Rebellion	51. Worry

Human Names

If an individual undergoing ministry manifests a “spirit” that identifies itself with a human name, such as Bob, Hank, Alan, Sandy, Jenny, or Mary, this is typically indicative of a switch to an alternate personality, a symptom associated with dissociative identity disorder (DID). It is crucial to understand that this manifestation is not a demonic presence, but rather a psychological condition. The phenomenon reflects an alter personality, and we will address this topic in greater detail in a subsequent lesson.

Demons: Their Powers

The Bible suggests a governmental order within Satan’s kingdom, though it doesn’t provide a rigid hierarchical chart. Several passages indicate a structure of authority and different levels of demonic beings operating under Satan’s leadership. Here’s a breakdown of the biblical evidence:

1. Satan as the Ultimate Authority:

- **“The god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4 NIV):** This title, ascribed to Satan by Paul, signifies his supreme influence and control over the world system that stands opposed to God.
- **“The ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11 NLT):** Jesus uses this title, signifying Satan’s dominion over earthly affairs and people of the world.
- **“The prince of the demons” (Matthew 12:24 NLT):** When the Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebul, they acknowledge Beelzebul (commonly associated with Satan) as possessing authority over other demons.

2. Subordinate Authorities – “Principalities and Powers”:

- **Ephesians 6:12 NLT:** *“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.”*
 - **Rulers:** Often translated as “principalities,” suggesting a high level of authority or rank within Satan’s kingdom.

- **Authorities:** Refers to those who possess power or jurisdiction, indicating a level of governance within the demonic realm.
- **Powers of this dark world:** Literally “world rulers of this darkness,” referring to demons with dominion over earthly systems and worldly influences.
- **Spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms:** Suggests a broader category of wicked spiritual beings operating in the unseen, spiritual realm.
- **Colossians 2:15 NLT:** *“In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.”* This verse again mentions “rulers and authorities” as entities Christ triumphed over, implying their existence and power structure.

3. Demons as Subordinate Beings:

- Throughout the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, there are numerous accounts of Jesus and the apostles casting out demons. These are clearly portrayed as beings subject to a higher authority, namely Jesus and, by extension, those acting in his name.
- The ability of demons to possess individuals and be commanded to leave demonstrates a hierarchical structure in which they operate under the authority of Satan and, ultimately, God’s dominion.

4. Analogies of Kingdoms and Armies:

- Jesus himself uses the analogy of a kingdom divided against itself not being able to stand (Matthew 12:25-26), implying that Satan’s kingdom, though evil, has a form of organization and leadership.
- The imagery of spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6, with its descriptions of armor and enemies, further suggests an organized force with ranks and strategies.

In conclusion, while the Bible doesn’t provide a detailed organizational chart of Satan’s kingdom, it consistently indicates a governmental order with Satan at the top, followed by various levels of subordinate spiritual beings often referred to as “*rulers*,” “*authorities*,” “*powers*,” and “*spiritual forces of evil*,” all operating under his dominion to oppose God and his people. The frequent interactions with and authority over demons also point to a hierarchical structure within this dark realm.

What Does This Mean for Us?

Satan seeks to possess, oppress, and control individuals in any manner possible. As he is not omnipresent, he disperses his influence through his ambassadors around the globe, as well as through various levels of demons under their authority. Being recognized as the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4; John 14:30; 16:11; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 5:19), Satan strives for control in the highest spheres of human society.

This observation has led intercessors to develop the concept of the “Seven Spheres of Influence³,” areas that require continuous prayer and vigilance to reclaim or protect from Satan’s influence. These spheres are:

1. Government

2. Family

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| 3. Religion | 6. Arts and Entertainment |
| 4. Education | 7. Business/Economy |
| 5. Media | |

By targeting these influential domains, believers aim to thwart Satan's schemes and prevent him from gaining dominion in key sectors of society.

We Can Learn from Experiences

The realm of spiritual warfare, particularly in deliverance ministry, often presents experiences that invite further reflection and understanding. Recognizing that Scripture remains our ultimate and infallible guide, certain recurring patterns emerge in deliverance sessions. These observations, while not rising to the level of biblical doctrine, may offer tentative insights into the operational dynamics of demonic activity. We present these experiential learnings with the understanding that they require ongoing discernment in light of Scripture and should only be considered insofar as they contribute to effective ministry without contravening biblical principles.

1. **Multiple Kingdoms Within Individuals:**
It is often observed that individuals under demonic influence may harbor multiple kingdoms of demons, with each kingdom being overseen by a chief demon. These demonic entities tend to organize themselves according to their kind, which can manifest as a complex hierarchy within the individual.
2. **Deceptive Strategies of Chief Demons:**
Chief demons often work covertly, remaining hidden for as long as possible while sending weaker demons to the forefront to face the brunt of prayer and spiritual warfare. As these lesser demons are exposed and expelled, it can create the illusion that complete deliverance has taken place. This deception is designed to make the individual, and sometimes even the deliverance team, believe the work is finished. In reality, the stronger, more entrenched demons may still be present and undetected, hoping that the deliverance efforts will cease before they are confronted.
3. **Demons Have Specific Assignments:**
Demons do not simply inhabit individuals for the sake of occupying a space; they take residence to fulfill specific assignments or purposes. These assignments are often part of a broader mission that extends beyond the individual host, reflecting a strategic role within the kingdom of darkness. During deliverance, demons have at times spoken through individuals, claiming they have been given direct orders from Satan and are forbidden to leave. They may assert that expulsion would result in severe punishment or torture, leading them to resist with intense determination in order to remain.
4. **Distant Demons Observing the Deliverance Process:**
Individuals undergoing deliverance have reported witnessing powerful demons standing at a distance, observing the deliverance process. These observing entities are believed to bolster the strength of the demons currently inhabiting the individual, effectively reinforcing their control over the host. Additionally, these distant demons are often

perceived to exert a threatening influence on the demon within the individual, warning it of punishment should it fail in its mission and be driven out.

5. Internal Agitation and Rebellion Among Demons:

As prayers of intercession intensify during deliverance, demons can become increasingly agitated. Weaker demons, unable to withstand the spiritual pressure, may begin to rebel against the chief demon who is striving to maintain their presence within the individual. This can lead to a kind of internal civil war within the demonic ranks. While they may start out united in resisting the prayers of God’s people, that unity can fracture under sustained spiritual assault. Such disunity weakens their collective strength and often results in their expulsion.

6. Demonic Truth and Deception:

Demons are often recognized for their propensity to deceive. However, it is also evident that demons are capable of speaking the truth. A review of Scripture⁴ reveals at least 29 instances in which Satan and demons have spoken truthfully. This demonstrates that, while their nature is primarily deceptive, it is not impossible for them to convey accurate information. However, demons typically resist revealing information, as any knowledge gained through their confessions is considered a strategic advantage to be used against them during the deliverance process.

Satanic Ritual Abuse

In *Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance - Level 2*, we devote time to reviewing case studies depicting the reality of Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA) and trauma-based mind control. For students in Level 1, we simply want to state that if you encounter a person who you suspect as having undergone these horrifying and traumatic experiences, you must not involve yourself without fully understanding the gravity of the person’s condition, as well as the toll it will take on you and your family if you intend to walk with them on their journey to freedom.

Conclusion

Several key factors can significantly enhance our confidence and security as we minister to those tormented by demons:

First: Demons are outnumbered—two to one. This is based on the fact that two-thirds of the angels remained loyal to God during Satan’s rebellion and subsequent expulsion from heaven. These loyal angels are assigned to minister on our behalf (Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 12:4). This reality reminds us that we are supported by a vast heavenly host, far outnumbering the forces of darkness.

Second: We operate from a position of Christ’s authority over Satan and all demonic entities. The concept of “territorial demons” need not instill fear, as they can be overcome through the

same spiritual principles and efforts that apply to lesser demons, albeit sometimes requiring more time and effort to fully address.

Third: Ultimately, a single angel will cast Lucifer into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:1-3). While Satan is undoubtedly more cunning than many Christians acknowledge, he is far less powerful than occultists often believe. This assures us that despite his tactics, Satan's ultimate defeat is assured and will come at the hands of God's agents.

Next Lesson: Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?

In Lesson 18, we will address several crucial questions regarding the relationship between Christians and demonic influence. We will explore whether Christians can be demon-possessed, the level of control demons can exert over believers, and how demons might gain authority and power over them. Additionally, we will define spiritual warfare, its biblical foundation, and its practical implications for Christians confronting spiritual opposition. These topics will help deepen our understanding of spiritual dynamics and prepare us for effective deliverance ministry and spiritual warfare.

Notes

¹ 1 Enoch; The Book of Jubilees; Dead Sea Scrolls

² Note one lady who lost three husbands. The bottled-up grief blocked her freedom.

³ The "Seven Spheres of Influence" are sometimes referred to by other names, depending on the context or the source. Some of the alternative names or variations for these spheres include:

1. **Seven Mountains of Influence:** This is a popular term used within Christian circles, particularly among those involved in the **Dominionism** movement. It refers to the same areas of society and emphasizes the call for Christians to engage and influence these mountains (or sectors) for God's kingdom.
2. **Seven Pillars of Society:** This term is sometimes used interchangeably with "Seven Spheres of Influence." It emphasizes the foundational role each of these sectors plays in shaping culture and society. The term "pillars" highlights their importance as structural elements within society.
3. **Seven Gates of Influence:** This term focuses on the idea of Christians influencing or "gaining access" to these areas, metaphorically referred to as gates, to bring about spiritual change.
4. **Seven Cultural Spheres:** This is another alternative name that underscores the cultural impact each of these domains has in shaping values, norms, and behaviors within society.
5. **Seven Domains of Society:** This term emphasizes the specific areas which Christians are encouraged to influence, including government, education, family, etc. It is used in various Christian teachings that aim to equip believers to engage with these societal sectors.

⁴ <https://romans1015.com/satan-and-truth/>

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 18: Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?

Description

This lesson addresses key questions about the interaction between Christians and demons. It explores whether a Christian can be demon-possessed, considering the presence of the Holy Spirit within believers, and how demons may influence Christians through oppression and temptation rather than possession. The lesson also examines how demons enter a person and the spiritual conditions that may allow them to exert control in a Christian's life, emphasizing the importance of spiritual vigilance and authority in resisting demonic influence.

Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?

Demons have the ability to invade and inhabit human bodies, which is their primary goal. By taking residence in a person, demons gain greater control over the individual than when they influence from the outside. When demons dwell within someone, the person is said to “have” evil spirits, “be with” evil spirits, or be “possessed by demons,” as seen in Mark 9:17, Luke 4:33, Mark 1:23, Mark 5:2, and Matthew 4:24. The term “possessed,” used in these verses, comes from the Greek word *daimonizomai*.

Many scholars argue that the translation, “demon possessed,” is inaccurate and suggest it should be rendered as “demonized” or “having demons,” as the word “possessed” can be misleading because it suggests complete ownership, which is not true in the case of a Christian and demons.

It is to be strongly asserted that a Christian cannot be “demon-possessed” because they belong to Christ. As the following verses prove:

- *For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. (1 Peter 1:18-19 NLT)*
- *Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NLT)*

Therefore, Christians cannot be completely possessed or controlled by demons, as they are already under the ownership of Jesus Christ.

Having unequivocally established that a Christian cannot be demon possessed, we now turn our attention to the distinct reality that believers can, indeed, experience direct demonic affliction within their physical bodies, minds, wills, and emotions, as the subsequent sections will detail.

Can a Christian “Have Demons”? Understanding Demonic Access

While the concept of a Christian being “demon possessed” is biblically untenable due to the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of our regenerated spirit, the question “Can a Christian *have demons*?” is a distinct and crucial inquiry. This distinction hinges entirely on semantics and a precise understanding of the different ways demonic entities can interact with a believer. It is universally acknowledged that demons tempt us, lie to us, and actively seek to influence our thoughts and actions. The pivotal question is: where does this influence originate, and what level of access does the demon gain? Is it purely an external projection, or can a demon establish a presence *in, on, or around* the believer?

Our understanding is that while a demon cannot possess the believer’s *spirit* (which is sealed by the Holy Spirit), the *physical body* and the *soul* (our mind, will, and emotions) remain vulnerable areas still undergoing sanctification. It is in these areas that demonic entities can indeed take up residence or exert localized control. This is not “possession” in the traditional sense of total ownership of the person’s core being, but rather a form of invasion or occupation that leads to oppression and affliction. Thus, a Christian can “have demons” in their body or soul, manifesting as ongoing oppressive thoughts, compulsive behaviors, or physical ailments, even while their spirit remains inviolable in Christ.

Can the Holy Spirit and a Demon Inhabit the Same Space?

This question often serves as a definitive argument against demons dwelling within Christians, based on the assumption that the Holy Spirit’s presence precludes any demonic presence. However, there is no direct biblical verse that states the Holy Spirit and a demon cannot inhabit the same space.

Demonic influence, in the form of thoughts, temptations, lies, and deceptions, consistently flows into the Christian’s mind, will, and emotions – their soul. To understand how the Holy Spirit and demons *can* and *do* exist within the same operational sphere, we must consider God’s omnipresence.

God’s Omnipresence and Demonic Access

God is omnipresent, existing everywhere at all times (Psalm 139:7-10; Jeremiah 23:24). If God is truly everywhere, it is theologically impossible for Him not to inhabit any space that is simultaneously occupied by evil, including demons and Satan, the source of all evil. In fact, numerous biblical passages explicitly show Satan in the very presence of God, indicating this is a

regular occurrence (1 Kings 22:19-22; Job 1:6-12; 2:1; Zechariah 3:1-2; Luke 22:31; Revelation 12:10). This demonstrates that God’s presence does not prevent the presence of evil or demons in a shared spatial reality.

Spirits Transcend Physical Boundaries

Spirits operate outside the confines of our physical world. Unlike humans, they aren’t confined to physical locations or restricted by walls, doors, or any material barriers we perceive. They don’t “fill” a space like water fills a glass; instead, they exist and interact in ways that defy our conventional understanding of physical limitations. This means their presence and influence aren’t bound by the same spatial rules that govern our bodies.

In Mark 5, we see thousands of demons dwelling inside one man (the Gerasene demoniac, also known as Legion). When an individual is in such a condition, demons are often free to come and go, conduct business elsewhere, deliver reports and messages, and then return at will. There is frequently one demon that functions as a doorkeeper, facilitating this movement.

The Christian’s Ongoing Battle: Flesh, Spirit, and Vulnerability

Most concur that even after being born again and becoming a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17), a Christian still contends with a sinful nature – an inclination toward evil. The Apostle Paul vividly describes this internal struggle in Romans 7:14-25. He also speaks of those who live “according to the flesh” (Romans 8:5-8), referring to believers who yield to their sinful nature rather than submitting to the Holy Spirit’s leading. Crucially, even in such instances, the Holy Spirit *still resides within* the believer, actively working alongside that very sinful nature to bring about sanctification.

Three Aspects of Salvation: Understanding Our Vulnerability

To fully grasp how a Christian can be influenced by demons without being demon possessed, it’s essential to understand the three aspects of our salvation and the ongoing work of progressive sanctification:

1. **Past Salvation (Justification):** This is the **once-for-all act** when God declares a believing sinner righteous through Christ’s atoning sacrifice. At the moment of conversion, we are **saved from the penalty of sin**.
2. **Present Salvation (Sanctification):** This is the **ongoing process** where the Holy Spirit transforms believers to be more like Christ, delivering us from the **power of sin** in our daily lives. We are actively *being saved* as we grow in holiness.
3. **Future Salvation (Glorification):** This is the **final aspect of salvation**, when believers receive resurrected and perfected bodies, completely free from the presence of sin and death in God’s eternal presence. *We will be saved* fully when Christ returns or we go to be with Him.

As we review these three aspects, particularly the progressive work of the Holy Spirit, it becomes clear that while the Holy Spirit works from within, our sinful nature (the flesh) still retains powerful inclinations toward evil thoughts and actions.

Here's the crucial point: it is only our spirits that are sealed by the Holy Spirit. This means a demon cannot touch or "possess" the regenerated spirit. However, the part of us still undergoing the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is our soul (mind, will, and emotions). Furthermore, our physical body also continues to experience the curse of sin, evident in the aging process and ultimately death.

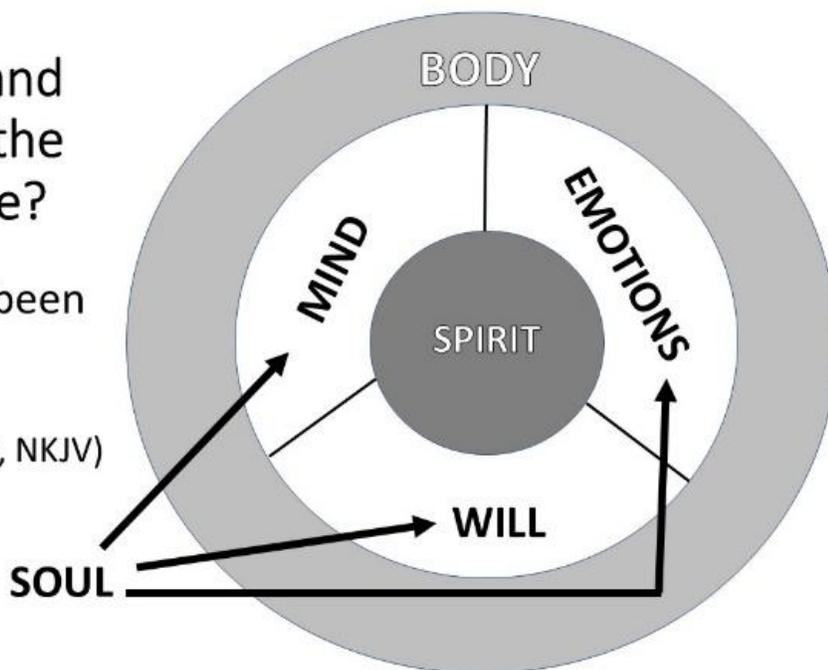
Some argue that demons cannot occupy any place God has "conquered," citing 1 John 4:4: "*You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*" (NIV) While God's ultimate victory is certain, this interpretation overlooks the reality of present sanctification. It fails to account for the areas of a Christian's life that are *still undergoing* conquest by God, particularly the soul and body.

This understanding allows us to differentiate: while the Christian's spirit is impenetrable, the body and soul, if opened through disobedience or unaddressed sin, can indeed be afflicted by and influenced, even controlled to some degree, by demons. This is not demon possession of the spirit, but a localized and conditional access gained through our own choices, which the following graphic will help illustrate.

Holy Spirit and Demons in the Same Space?

Our spirits have been "sealed."

(2 Corinthians 1:22;
Ephesians 1:13; 4:30, NKJV)



Freedom from Bondages Is Not Always Automatic

While salvation initiates a profound spiritual transformation, freedom from all demonic influence or “bondages” is not always immediate or automatic. Sometimes, the spiritual “shock” of conversion can indeed drive out demons, but this isn’t always the case.

Consider the powerful account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11). Even after Jesus miraculously resurrected Lazarus back to life, with His authoritative command, “*Loose him, and let him go*” (John 11:44 NKJV), we see that Lazarus was still entangled in grave clothes. He was given new life, yet he remained bound and needed others to physically come alongside him to set him free.

This illustrates a vital spiritual truth: just because an individual becomes a new creation in Christ and is a child of God, it doesn’t automatically mean they are entirely free from all existing bondages. How many Christians still struggle with persistent addictions or sinful behaviors long after their conversion? How many become ensnared in strongholds of unforgiveness, bitterness, or ungodly emotional attachments, making them difficult to be around?

These individuals, much like Lazarus, are alive in Christ but still need someone to come alongside them and “loose them from their grave clothes.”

This is precisely why, following conversion, it is recommended that all believers consider going through steps of deliverance, whether they perceive an immediate need or not. As Neil Anderson wisely states in his book, *Released from Bondage*:

- “What is needed is a safe means to spiritually check it out. It is no different than going to a medical doctor and having your blood and urine checked. The church needs to assume the responsibility for spiritual diagnosis and resolution.”¹

Can Demons Implant Thoughts, Impressions, and Impulses into Christians?

Regardless of one’s theological perspective, there is broad agreement that Satan and demons actively lie, deceive, and tempt Christians. This influence primarily occurs through their ability to implant thoughts, impressions, and impulses directly into the Christian’s mind (soul). Given this reality, it’s simple logic to conclude that demonic influence *can* and *does* enter the very being of a Christian. Even if we don’t yield to the temptation, believe the lie, or fall for the deception, the demonic influence has already gained a measure of access inside the Christian’s soul.

Consider Jesus’ example during His wilderness temptations (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). Satan’s voice unequivocally entered Jesus’ soul—His mind, will, and emotions. Jesus processed those words, rigorously compared them to the written Word of God, and immediately rejected them, replacing them with divine truth.

Jesus had a choice: to allow Satan's words to linger, circulate, and find a lodging place within His soul, or to promptly evict them. Christians face this same experience constantly. If we allow lies, deceit, and tempting impulses to linger, they can become like a barbed arrow that gets lodged in the mind (Ephesians 6:16). Alternatively, they can act like seeds planted, which, if not uprooted, begin to take root, grow, and control various aspects of a person's thought life and behavior.

This is precisely how demonic oppression begins. The words and impulses of demons are *shot into* the soul of the Christian, finding a pathway inside. If repentance, renunciations, and declarations are not immediately applied, this can open the Christian to further and further demonic control.

The Scriptures consistently warn us about this persistent attempt by Satan and demons to find a lodging place within the Christian's inner life:

- *But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.* (James 3:14-15 NLT)
- *We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.* (2 Corinthians 10:5 NLT)
- *Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.* (1 Timothy 4:1 NLT)
- *And do not give the devil a foothold.* (Ephesians 4:27 NIV)

The very purpose of spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:10-18) underscores this reality: why would we need protection if it were impossible for Satan's arrows to *enter* or wound us?

Biblical Examples: Demonic Influence on God's People

To gain a broader perspective on how Satan and demons can influence God's people, let's examine several biblical accounts:

King David: Influenced to Sinful Pride

Though described as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22), King David, at times, clearly succumbed to Satan's influence. Beyond his grave sins of adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11:1–12:23), the Bible explicitly states Satan caused him to conduct a census driven by pride and a desire for military might, defying God's will (2 Samuel 24:1-10; 1 Chronicles 21:1-8).

- *Satan rose up against Israel and caused David to take a census of Israel.* (1 Chronicles 21:1 NLT)

Daughter of Abraham: Bodily Affliction

Consider the woman in Luke 13:10-17, whom Jesus described as a “daughter of Abraham,” signifying her covenant relationship with God. Despite being part of God’s family, she had been “held in bondage by Satan for eighteen years,” suffering a severe physical affliction. This demonstrates that Satan can directly afflict a believer’s physical body.

Peter: A Mouthpiece for Satan

It’s highly unlikely Peter willingly or knowingly allowed Satan to speak through him in Matthew 16:22. Yet he unwittingly became a mouthpiece for demonic opposition. Jesus’ sharp rebuke wasn’t directed at Peter, but at the evil influence:

- *Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”* (Matthew 16:23 NIV)
 - Notice how Jesus looked at Peter but addressed Satan. This shows it is possible for a follower of Jesus, if not watchful, to utter words that directly oppose God’s purposes, allowing demonic impressions and thoughts to manifest outwardly.

Apostle Judas: Incremental Invasion and Betrayal

Judas was an apostle, one of the Twelve personally chosen by Jesus (Luke 6:13), who had even participated in preaching, casting out demons, and healing the sick. Yet, we see a tragic progression of demonic influence in his life. Before the Last Supper, his love for money (John 12:4-6) (which 1 Timothy 6:10 identifies as the root of all kinds of evil), created a foothold. Satan had already been at work, tempting and influencing him incrementally:

- *During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him.* (John 13:2 ESV)

This incremental influence culminated when, during the Last Supper, Satan fully entered him:

- *As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.”* (John 13:27 NIV)

Ananias: A Heart Filled with Deceit

Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, were members of the burgeoning Christian community. They sold property and brought a portion of the proceeds to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount for the ministry. However, they secretly kept back part of the money for themselves. Upon receiving the donation, Peter, empowered by a word of knowledge from the Holy Spirit, confronted Ananias. He revealed the deceit, making it clear that this lie wasn’t merely human weakness. Peter declared:

- *“...Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself.”* (Acts 5:3 NLT)

This chilling account demonstrates Satan’s profound ability to fill the heart of a follower of Jesus, influencing them to act deceitfully, lying not just to others but directly to God.

Understanding Demonic Influence: Key Takeaways

These five biblical examples powerfully illustrate the varied ways Satan and demons can influence children of God. It’s crucial to remember that these temptations and influences, while real, can be resisted:

1. **Temptation to Sin:** Satan can and does tempt and influence Christians toward sin and actions opposing God’s will (David in 2 Samuel 11; 24:1-9; 1 Chronicles 21:1-7).
2. **Physical Affliction:** Satan can afflict a Christian’s physical body (the woman in Luke 13).
3. **Oppositional Impulses:** Satan can impart impulses that lead believers to unknowingly oppose God’s plans (Peter in Matthew 16).
4. **Eroding Loyalty:** Satan can incrementally undermine a Christian’s loyalty, leading to increasing rebellion (Judas in John 13:2, 27).
5. **Filling with Deceit:** Satan has the ability to fill a believer’s heart, leading to deceitful actions and lies (Ananias in Acts 5).

How Demons Enter and Obtain a Level of Control in the Life of a Christian

To gain further insight into the nuances of demonic influence on believers, it’s illuminating to observe the evolving stance of the Assemblies of God, the world’s largest Pentecostal denomination with 86 million adherents. Their updated position on spiritual warfare reflects a more refined understanding of this critical topic.

On July 30, 2019, the General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God significantly revised its 47-year-old position paper. The original 1972 paper was famously titled, “Can Born-Again Believers Be Demon Possessed?” The new 2019 paper, titled “Spiritual Warfare and the Believer,” takes a less dogmatic approach. Crucially, it acknowledges that genuinely born-again Christians can indeed come under varying degrees of demonic control.

We present the following excerpt from their 2019 positional paper:

- “The conflict between the believer and demonic forces can be understood as a spectrum of demonic influence, ranging in the degree of domination over a person’s life and in the variety of aspects of life where demonic control has taken place. The impact of demonic powers may be slight and almost undetectable. If one repents, forsakes their sin and carnal activities, resists temptation, and calls upon the Spirit to cleanse and deliver, victory and freedom will be obtained. The extreme influence of the demonic could be called “possession” in which a person is controlled by demonic forces who manipulate the individual’s body, mind, and spirit for their destructive purposes. This extreme case of demonic control is indicative of continued movement away from, and abandonment of, a

personal relationship with Jesus; the believer should gain victory in the spiritual conflict well before this extreme and not be subject to it. While believers will engage in spiritual warfare and will be oppressed, they cannot be possessed by the demonic forces.”

Understanding Demonic Attack: The Christian’s Vulnerability and Victory

These scriptures reveal the multifaceted potential for demonic attacks on believers. Yet this knowledge should empower, not alarm, us. We are fully armed with God’s authority and spiritual armor, ensuring our protection and ultimate victory in every encounter.

Demonic Tactics: Deception

- *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. (1 Timothy 4:1 NKJV)*
- *For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14 NKJV)*

Demonic Tactics: Bewitching

- *O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? (Galatians 3:1 NKJV)*

Demonic Tactics: Hindrance

- *Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. (1 Thessalonians 2:18 NKJV)*

Demonic Tactics: Whispering Thoughts and Impulses

- *Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5 NKJV)*
- *But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. (James 3:14-15 NKJV)*

James very clearly states that a demon can gain tremendous influence in a Christian’s life by expressing itself through their soul—their mind. The evidence of this is overwhelming. How often have we heard of church-splits? Can we not categorically say that in these sad episodes—in the bitterness and envy that is displayed—there is something demonic attached?

- *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. (1 Timothy 4:1 NIV)*

This verse very clearly shows that demons can gain access to a Christian’s soul—their mind. How often do we hear of previously orthodox pastors who have had a lie enter their soul, then they believed it, and began teaching it as if it was the truth? That is how almost every cult begins. A Christian gets deceived by a demonic voice in their soul (their mind), then they get others to follow them.

- *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1 NIV)*

If there wasn’t the potential for a Christian to embrace a demonic lie which has entered into their soul, there would be no reason for such a warning in this verse.

Demonic Tactics: Traps

- *Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (1 Timothy 3:7 NKJV)*
- *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. (1 Timothy 6:9 NKJV)*

Demonic Tactics: Intensifying Temptations

- *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. (James 1:14 NKJV)*
- *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8 ESV)*
- *That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent Timothy to find out whether your faith was still strong. I was afraid that the tempter had gotten the best of you and that our work had been useless. (1 Thessalonians 3:5 NLT)*
- *The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” (Matthew 4:3 NIV)*

This warning was given to Christians. Peter’s admonition shows that if we are not watchful, the devil can devour us. If it were not possible for “the tempter” (Satan) to influence God’s people to sin, these verses would have no meaning.

Demonic Tactics: Stealing, Killing, Destroying

- *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10 ESV)*

When we are deceived, believe the lies, and succumb to fears, we get robbed, and our lives are destroyed.

Demonic Tactics: Gaining Footholds

- *In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. (Ephesians 4:26-27 NIV)*

Written to Christians, the warning is very clear evidence that it is possible for the devil to gain partial access to their life.

Demonic Tactics: Outwitting

- *Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs. (2 Corinthians 2:10-11 ESV)*

In this verse Paul said, “so that we [Christians] would not be outwitted by Satan.” When a Christian harbors unforgiveness, that is clear evidence that they have already been outwitted and have given Satan a foothold in their life.

Demonic Tactics: Wounding

- *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:10-17 NIV)*

We have been warned that spiritual warfare is a reality, and that the Christian who neglects the armament that is at their disposal does so at their peril.

What Demons Cannot Do to Christians

This lesson concludes by building our faith and confidence, reminding us that demons are ultimately limited in what they can do to a genuine follower of Jesus.

- **Demons cannot possess the spirit of a believer.** As established throughout this lesson, the Holy Spirit unequivocally indwells and seals the believer's spirit, rendering it impervious to demonic ownership.
- **Demons cannot control the will of a genuine follower of Jesus.** Satan cannot *force* you to act against the will of God. While demons can strongly influence, suggest, and tempt, your God-given free will, even its slightest exercise, remains stronger than all the power Satan can unleash. Demons can try to sway your decisions, but they cannot compel you to violate your will.
- **Demons cannot sever a believer's relationship with Christ.** While the Bible warns against being "unequally yoked" (2 Corinthians 6:14) and acknowledges that Christians can, at times, have "fellowship with darkness" through disobedience, this does not mean the demonic can break the saving bond with Jesus.

Ultimately, while spiritual warfare is a real and present struggle, the core identity and security of the born-again believer in Christ remain unassailable.

Conclusion

While a true believer in Jesus Christ cannot be demon possessed due to the Holy Spirit's indwelling and sealing of their spirit, we've clearly seen that demonic forces can and do influence, afflict, and oppress a Christian's body and soul (mind, will, and emotions). This understanding is crucial for effective spiritual warfare. By recognizing the enemy's tactics and our areas of vulnerability yet firmly standing on the truth of God's omnipresence and our unshakeable position in Christ, believers are empowered to resist demonic attacks, walk in ongoing freedom, and fully experience the abundant life Jesus came to provide.

Next Lesson: Legal Rights and Strongholds

Building on the foundational truths we've uncovered in this lesson, prepare to delve even deeper into the mechanics of deliverance ministry in Lesson 19. We'll unlock the critical concepts of **legal rights** and **strongholds**, understanding precisely how these principles interact within the ministry of deliverance. Get ready to explore the specific ways demons initially gain access to individuals, and how their lawless nature drives them to constantly rebel against divine order and attempt to circumvent spiritual authority.

Notes

¹ Anderson, Neil. *Released from Bondage*, p. 85.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 19: Legal Rights and Strongholds

Description

In this lesson we will delve into the foundational mechanics of demonic influence by exploring the critical concepts of legal rights and strongholds. Understanding these dynamics is essential for effective discernment and victorious engagement in spiritual warfare.

Introduction

This lesson constitutes a critical focal point for the deliverance minister, as it addresses the fundamental battleground for an individual's liberation—legal rights and strongholds.

Foundationally, a legal right serves as the door through which demons obtain entry into a person's life, whereas strongholds enable their sustained presence.

The central aim of deliverance revolves around addressing these two pivotal questions:

1. What specific legal right or “open door” facilitated the initial entry of the demonic presence?
2. What stronghold sustains and reinforces its residency?

Once these inquiries are resolved, a strategic plan for freedom can be methodically established. This typically involves the annulment or negation of the legal right through authoritative declarations grounded in Scripture. Subsequently, dismantling the stronghold necessitates the confession and surrender to Jesus of every emotion, feeling, and thought that maintains a person in bondage to Satan. This process entails identifying and rejecting falsehoods and replacing them with divine truth sourced from God's Word, thereby dismantling these psychological strongholds.

Common Legal Rights

This section will examine some of the most prevalent legal rights that demons use to gain access to an individual. We will explore how strongholds are formed as a result of these rights.

1. **Personal Sins, Especially Willful Sins**
 - a. Personal sins, particularly those committed with intent, are significant gateways for demonic access. Among the most influential sins are:

- i. **Sexual Sins:** Sexual immorality allows demons to attach themselves to a person through the other involved parties (1 Corinthians 6:16-17 — “One flesh”).
- ii. **Addictions:** When a person surrenders control over their life to behaviors or substances, they open themselves to demonic oppression. Examples of addictions that create vulnerabilities include:
 - 1. Pornography
 - 2. Alcohol
 - 3. Drugs
 - 4. Food
 - a. Substances that weaken a person’s natural defenses, such as drugs or alcohol, also affect their spiritual and emotional walls, leading to greater susceptibility to demonic attacks.

2. Ancestral Sins

- a. The Biblical concept of inherited sin traces back to the Garden of Eden, where the first sin of humanity was passed down to all subsequent generations.
- b. Beyond the original sin of Adam, certain sins committed by ancestors can generate curses that affect future generations.
 - i. Ancestral demons can enter an individual at conception and may retain the right to remain due to unbroken generational curses. Even after conversion to Christ, these spirits often remain hidden, operating subtly to continue their influence, as discussed in Lesson 18.

3. Witchcraft and Occult Practices:

Engagement in practices classified as witchcraft or occultism provides a direct legal right for demonic influence and activity.

- a. **Intentional Invocation and Covenants:** Many such practices, including ritualistic magic, spellcasting, or specific forms of Satanism, involve the deliberate invocation of, or the formation of, explicit or implicit covenants with non-divine spiritual entities. This direct invitation establishes a clear entry point for demonic forces to operate within an individual’s life.
- b. **Opening Spiritual Portals for Forbidden Knowledge or Power:** Practices like divination (e.g., Ouija boards, tarot reading, scrying), astral projection, or mediumship, though sometimes perceived as harmless curiosity, intentionally seek knowledge or power from sources outside of divine sanction. This deliberate pursuit of forbidden spiritual access creates open “gateways” or “portals” through which malevolent spirits can gain influence and establish strongholds.

4. Unforgiveness

The Bible is clear that forgiveness is essential for a believer’s relationship with God. If an individual harbors unforgiveness, they open themselves to demonic torment. The refusal to forgive creates a legal right for demons to torment and oppress.

5. Soul Ties

- a. Soul ties are ungodly emotional attachments formed with another person, functioning like spiritual conduits between individuals. These can develop through sexual relationships or through unhealthy emotional investments, such as excessive fantasies about someone.
- b. Soul ties can also form with those in positions of control, such as parents or employers, even if they are not directly involved in the person’s decision-making.

For instance, an individual may often think, “What would my parents (or employer) think about this decision I need to make?”

6. **Trauma and Emotional Wounds**

- a. Unhealed emotional wounds from experiences such as accidents or abuse can create spiritual vulnerabilities that demons readily exploit. Common sources of emotional wounds include:
 - i. Abandonment
 - ii. Rejection
 - iii. Sexual molestation/Rape

7. **Vows to Satan**

- a. Vows made to Satan may be either conscious or unconscious.
 - i. Individuals involved in cults or witchcraft may make deliberate, conscious vows.
 - ii. Those who dabble in occult practices for amusement or without full understanding may make unconscious vows.
- b. Christians have commonly made unconscious vows, such as statements like, “If I leave Satan alone, he will leave me alone.” Such statements only empower demonic forces, as they signal the individual’s lack of resistance.

8. **Cursed Objects**

- a. Certain physical objects may hold spiritual significance, particularly those associated with the occult or other ungodly practices. Examples include masks, rings, statues, occult literature, movies, and amulets.
- b. Family heirlooms should not be dismissed as harmless if they are known to be connected to antichristian beliefs and practices, as they may carry a spiritual curse that affects the individual or their descendants.

9. **Spoken Curses from an Authority Figure or Self-Spoken Curses**

- a. Whether spoken by an authority figure or by the individual themselves, curses can open doors to demonic oppression and mental torment.
 - i. Examples of curses spoken by authority figures include:
 1. “You will never amount to anything.”
 2. “You are stupid.”
 3. “I should have aborted you.”
 - ii. Examples of self-spoken curses include:
 1. “I wish I were dead.”
 2. “I wish I had never been born.”
 3. “I can’t do anything right.”

These common legal rights demonstrate how various actions, both personal and generational, can create open doors for demonic access and fortify strongholds in an individual’s mind. Understanding and addressing these legal rights is essential for effective deliverance ministry.

Once we understand the common legal rights that demons use to gain access to individuals, it’s important to consider how they unlawfully continue to trespass upon believers’ lives, even when no legal right exists.

Trespassers and Squatters

Satan and demons are considered lawbreakers, as they consistently seek to bypass established spiritual laws in order to gain access to areas where they have no legal right. Although they may not have any legitimate authority to occupy a believer's life, this does not prevent them from attempting to exert their influence. Much like criminals who break the law in the absence of law enforcement, Satan and demons will act unlawfully as long as they face no opposition.

In this context, demons can be likened to unlawful trespassers within the lives of believers. A trespasser is an individual who enters or occupies another person's property without permission. Similarly, demons unlawfully invade the spiritual territory of believers, but they can only remain if they are not confronted or resisted.

Through His death, Jesus Christ has redeemed the believer, granting them authority over all demonic powers and forces that would attempt to trespass upon their lives. Demons have no legal claim over a believer's body or spirit unless permission is granted. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the believer to assert their rights and defend themselves against any unlawful intrusion. As the apostle James affirms in Scripture:

- *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7 NIV)*

This verse highlights that when a believer earnestly desires the removal of demonic influence and actively resists it, demons cannot remain. The authority granted to believers through Christ ensures that they are empowered to confront and expel these spiritual trespassers.

Canceling Legal Rights

When an individual is experiencing demonic torment, they may be unaware of how the demons gained authority to afflict them or how they infiltrated their mind. In some cases, the person may never discover the exact point of entry. However, this lack of awareness does not preclude the possibility of severing legal rights and closing spiritual doors. Through the deliverance process, an individual can be guided through a series of prayers, declarations, and renunciations that serve to break every legal right the enemy holds over them.

As the individual progresses through the prescribed prayers, declarations, and renunciations, it is common for a demonic reaction to occur. This reaction serves as an indication that something connected to that particular prayer, declaration, or renunciation is being broken. The manifestation of this reaction is often felt physically by the individual and may also be recognized by the deliverance team. These physical manifestations signal that a spiritual barrier is being dismantled, and a legal right is being canceled.

Similar to curses, which will be explored in a later lesson, legal rights can be broken swiftly and decisively through a declaration of faith. This process is analogous to the forgiveness of sins, which occurs instantaneously when a person confesses their sins and consciously decides to turn away from them, as outlined in 1 John 1:9. Just as sins are forgiven and washed away in an instant through repentance, legal rights can be canceled immediately through prayer and declaration, bringing freedom to the individual in the name of Jesus.

Strongholds: Understanding Them from a Biblical Perspective

In Scripture, the term “stronghold” is used to describe fortified places of protection, such as citadels or fortified cities (e.g., Judges 9:46). These strongholds represent secure, often impenetrable, positions. Spiritually, however, strongholds refer to mental fortresses that are constructed over time through sin, deception, and false beliefs. These mental strongholds operate as barriers, preventing the individual from fully embracing the truth of God’s Word and His will for their lives.

In 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NIV), the Apostle Paul writes, *“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”* This passage underscores that strongholds are part of a larger spiritual battle. They are not merely personal struggles, but are actively opposed to the knowledge of God and the truth of His Word. Strongholds, therefore, represent deeply entrenched mental and spiritual obstacles that hinder the believer’s relationship with God.

Satan specifically targets the mind because gaining control over it enables him to influence an individual’s thoughts, emotions, decisions, and, ultimately, their spiritual trajectory. As stated in 2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV), *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”* For unbelievers, Satan blinds the mind, preventing them from perceiving the truth of the gospel. However, even believers are susceptible to the development of strongholds. When unaddressed sin, unresolved trauma, or prolonged exposure to lies remain unchecked, they create space for the enemy to entrench falsehoods in a person’s thinking. These strongholds can shape attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that keep the individual in bondage, even as they continue to walk in faith. Therefore, dismantling strongholds is a vital aspect of the believer’s spiritual growth and freedom.

List of Common Strongholds

Recognizing a stronghold is the first step to breaking free from it. Strongholds manifest as persistent negative thought patterns that resist correction and influence our speech, behavior, and overall worldview. They can also include unhealthy habits, addictions, and compulsive

behaviors. Here are some common types of strongholds and brief descriptions of how they manifest:

1. **Distorted View of God**
 - a. **Common Thoughts:** “God is distant.” “God is angry with me.” “God doesn’t care about my struggles.” “God is punishing me.”
 - b. **Description:** This stronghold constitutes the primary impediment to an individual’s mental health and spiritual wholeness, fostering an inaccurate perception of God’s nature, attributes, and intentions.
2. **Distorted View of Self**
 - a. **Common Thoughts:** “I am worthless.” “I am unlovable.” “I am a failure.” “I am not enough.” “I am beyond redemption.”
 - b. **Description:** This stronghold represents a significant barrier to personal liberation, manifesting as a struggle to internalize and believe God’s Word concerning one’s true biblical identity as a child of God. It leads to deep-rooted feelings of inadequacy and emotional suffering, distorting how individuals perceive their worth and place in God’s plan.
3. **Negative Thinking Patterns / Negativity**
 - a. **Common Thoughts:** “I am not good enough.” “I will always fail.” “I am unlovable.” “Everything is hopeless.”
 - b. **Description:** These pervasive negative thought patterns distort self-perception, fostering profound feelings of defeat and hopelessness, and can solidify into a fortified mental structure.
4. **Fear and Anxiety**
 - a. **Common Thoughts:** “I am always anxious.” “Everything is going to fall apart.” “Fear of rejection, the unknown, or death paralyzes me.” “I can’t handle this situation.”
 - b. **Description:** Fear and anxiety establish a pervasive lens through which all experiences are viewed as threatening, leading to decisional paralysis, hindering the exercise of faith, and restricting forward movement in life.
5. **Bitterness and Unforgiveness**
 - a. **Common Thoughts:** “I can never forgive.” “What they did to me is unforgivable.” “I will hold onto this resentment.”
 - b. **Description:** Bitterness poisons interpersonal relationships, and the refusal to forgive grants the adversary a foothold, resulting in persistent emotional pain and impeding spiritual freedom and reconciliation.
6. **Pride and Arrogance**
 - a. **Common Thoughts:** “I don’t need anyone’s help.” “I know better than others.” “My success is solely due to my own efforts.”
 - b. **Description:** Pride cultivates an inflated sense of self-importance or self-reliance that actively resists humility and dependence on God, preventing an individual from acknowledging their need for God’s assistance or correction.
7. **Rejection**
 - a. **Common Thoughts:** “Nobody cares about me.” “I am unworthy.” “I am not good enough to be loved or accepted.”

- b. **Description:** Feelings of rejection perpetuate cycles of isolation and insecurity, often deeply rooted in past trauma, leading to low self-esteem and a profound sense of worthlessness.
8. **Anger**
- a. **Common Thoughts:** “I’m always angry.” “Everything frustrates me.” “My anger is justified.”
 - b. **Description:** Chronic or uncontrolled anger manifests as relational strife and hostility, often masking deeper pain or unresolved issues, and can lead to destructive behavior contrary to love and peace.
9. **Control or Passivity**
- a. **Common Thoughts:** “I must control everything around me to feel safe.” or “I am powerless; I can’t do anything to change my situation.”
 - b. **Description:** An excessive need for control or, conversely, a complete lack of action, both emanate from a fundamental lack of trust in God’s sovereignty and can lead to manipulative behaviors or chronic inaction.
10. **Shame and Condemnation / Guilt and Shame**
- a. **Common Thoughts:** “I am a failure.” “I am unworthy of God’s love.” “My past actions define me as inherently bad.” “I’m too sinful to be forgiven.”
 - b. **Description:** Lingering feelings of unworthiness or condemnation trap individuals in spiritual darkness, impeding the acceptance of God’s forgiveness, grace, and mercy, and prevents them from experiencing true freedom.
11. **Addiction**
- a. **Common Thoughts:** “I can’t stop this behavior.” “I need this substance to cope or feel normal.” “This is the only thing that gives me pleasure.” “I am powerless to change.”
 - b. **Description:** This stronghold represents a compulsive bondage to substances (e.g., drugs, alcohol) or behaviors (e.g., pornography, gambling) that dominate one’s life, displacing God’s rightful authority and leading to spiritual and physical enslavement, which hinders spiritual growth and damages relationships, often leading to despair and isolation.
12. **Unbelief**
- a. **Common Thoughts:** “Can God really do this for me?” “I doubt God’s promises are true for my situation.” “God doesn’t intervene in human affairs.” “Where is God? Why hasn’t He answered my prayers?”
 - b. **Description:** Unbelief encompasses doubt or skepticism regarding God’s existence, His promises, or His power, thereby undermining faith and significantly hindering spiritual growth and the experience of divine intervention.
13. **Religious Legalism**
- a. **Common Thoughts:** “I must follow all the rules perfectly to be accepted by God.” “My salvation depends on my performance and adherence to rituals.” “I must earn God’s favor.”
 - b. **Description:** This spiritual stronghold is characterized by an excessive and often rigid focus on rules, rituals, and regulations in religious practice, frequently to the detriment of understanding the spirit of the law, genuine relationship with God, and true spiritual freedom.

14. Lust

- a. **Common Thoughts:** “I cannot control my desires.” “I cannot resist this temptation.” “I need immediate gratification for this urge.” “This will satisfy my emptiness.”
- b. **Description:** Lust involves uncontrolled desires, frequently sexual in nature, that lead to sinful thoughts or actions, actively drawing an individual away from purity and devotion to God, with the end result damaging relationships and distorting God’s design for intimacy and holiness.

15. Greed

- a. **Common Thoughts:** “I need more material possessions to be happy.” “I’m not satisfied with what I have.” “Wealth is the ultimate security.” “I deserve better than others.”
- b. **Description:** Greed is a spiritual stronghold defined by an intense and insatiable desire for increased material possessions or wealth, which can lead to covetousness, envy, dishonest practices, and persistent dissatisfaction with one’s current life circumstances.

16. Depression

- a. **Common Thoughts:** “Life is meaningless.” “I am a burden to others.” “I have no energy or motivation.” “I’ve lost interest in everything.” “There’s no hope for my future.” “I feel profoundly empty.”
- b. **Description:** This stronghold is marked by a state of pervasive low mood, a significant lack of energy, and a profound loss of interest or pleasure in activities previously enjoyed, potentially leading to chronic hopelessness, isolation, and suicidal thoughts.

17. Idolatry

- a. **Common Thoughts:** “My career is the most important thing in my life.” “My success defines me.” “This relationship defines my worth.” “My social status is my ultimate pursuit.”
- b. **Description:** Idolatry involves placing anything—be it money, relationships, career, social status, or even personal desires—above God, thereby affording it undue devotion, ultimate trust, or priority in one’s life.

18. Deception

- a. **Common Thoughts:** “God doesn’t truly love me.” “God doesn’t care about me.” “I’m hopeless.” “I can believe whatever feels right, regardless of truth.”
- b. **Description:** Deception involves the embrace of false beliefs or lies (originating from self, others, or demonic entities) that distort objective truth, leading to a denial of divine realities (e.g., God’s love) or the adoption of spiritually harmful ideologies.

These strongholds, though they manifest as persistent negative thoughts, can deeply affect all aspects of a person’s life—shaping actions, words, and relationships in ways that oppose God’s will.

The Battle in the Mind

In the section, “Canceling Legal Rights” (page 4), we noted that a legal right and curse can be broken instantaneously, with a simple exercise of our faith in God’s promises. Strongholds, however, require more determined and intentional effort to be broken and pulled down.

Keep in mind that a stronghold is like a fortress in the mind. It has been there a long time and has been enhanced by demons to keep it well defended and impervious to attacks. The stronghold may seem insurmountable, but through persistent effort, lasting weeks, months, and for some, even years, that stronghold will come down.

What can make a stronghold so resilient is that there are often emotional wounds associated with them, and those wounds take time to heal, and the lies connected to those emotional wounds have deep roots. Those roots of lies must be pulled up, and new seeds of truth must be planted. It is all part of renewing the mind, as found in Romans 12:2.

Additionally, patterns of ungodly behavior are undoubtedly still there, even after the legal right has been broken. Those behaviors are still strong and have become habits. Those habits must be broken with discipline, and under the guidance of a mentor walking with the person, they can begin to “walk out” the level of deliverance they have already achieved.

Assaulting the Fortress in the Mind: Tearing Down Strongholds

Breaking free from strongholds requires the same level of intentional effort as that of an army attacking and dismantling an enemy’s fortified stronghold. A person cannot simply allow time to pass and hope that things will improve on their own. Instead, deliberate and strategic actions must be taken to dismantle, eliminate, and replace the mental fortress. Ultimately, the responsibility for this process lies with the individual whose mind is affected. While others can offer support, encouragement, and resources, the battle for the mind is ultimately one that the person must engage in for themselves.

Below are some practical and strategic steps that can be implemented in the battle to tear down mental strongholds:

1. Awareness and Acknowledgment

- Start by prayerfully asking the Holy Spirit to reveal any strongholds in your life. Reflect on recurring negative thoughts and patterns, and seek counsel from spiritual mentors to gain insight.

2. Renewing the Mind

- **Romans 12:2** calls believers to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. This transformation involves immersing yourself daily in Scripture and replacing the lies embedded in strongholds with God’s truth.

3. **Taking Thoughts Captive**
 - **2 Corinthians 10:5** instructs us to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ. This involves actively challenging negative thoughts and replacing them with biblical affirmations.
 4. **Prayer and Spiritual Warfare**
 - Engage in fervent prayer, asking for God’s power to break down strongholds. Use the armor of God described in **Ephesians 6:10-18** to stand firm against the enemy’s attacks.
 5. **Community Support**
 - Surround yourself with fellow believers who can provide encouragement and accountability. A Christian community offers vital strength and support in the process of overcoming strongholds.
 6. **Repentance and Forgiveness**
 - Repent of any sin related to the stronghold. Forgive others who have hurt you, seeking God’s help to release bitterness and resentment.
 7. **Renunciation**
 - Verbally renounce the strongholds in your life, declaring your rejection of the lies and agreements you have made with the enemy.
-

Scriptures to Use to Break Down Strongholds

The following Scriptures are powerful for demolishing strongholds:

1. **Romans 12:2 (NIV):** *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*
 2. **Philippians 4:8 (NIV):** *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*
 3. **2 Corinthians 10:4 (NIV):** *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.*
 4. **Colossians 3:1a (NIV):** *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is.*
 5. **Romans 8:6 (NIV):** *The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.*
 6. **1 Peter 1:13 (NIV):** *Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.*
-

Understanding Generational Legal Rights and Individual Strongholds

The distinction between a “legal right” and a “stronghold” clarifies how spiritual bondage operates across generations and in an individual’s current life.

Think of a **legal right** as a spiritual permission slip that can be passed down through a family line. If ancestors engaged in practices that opened the door to demonic influence, such as specific rituals, vows, or evil acts, this created a legal right for demonic activity within that lineage. This permission continues automatically, like an inherited debt or a standing invitation, from one generation to the next. The claims made by the demonic entity are considered perpetual and will persist until that specific legal right, or the curse enforcing it, is directly confronted and nullified.

A **stronghold**, however, operates differently. While a legal right might be inherited from past generations, a stronghold requires active “renewal” or “feeding” by the current individual. This means that even if a legal right was established generations ago, the present-day person must provide some current “permission” or “cause” through their own thoughts and actions for that inherited curse to truly take root and manifest as a stronghold in their life.

For example, consider a family line where an ancestor engaged in witchcraft—performing rituals or summoning demons. This ancestral act created a “legal right” for demonic influence to exist within that family. However, for this ancient curse to truly activate and become a “stronghold” in someone living today, that individual might, for instance, begin practicing divination or exploring New Age pursuits. This present-day action then “activates” or reinforces the generational legal right, paving the way for spiritual oppression in their life.

Conclusion

In this lesson we have surveyed the twin realities that most directly shape the battleground of deliverance ministry: **legal rights** (the doors through which demonic influence gains entry) and **strongholds** (the fortified patterns of thought, wound, or behavior that sustain that influence). Understanding the difference between a right that can be canceled and a stronghold that must be torn down over time is essential for any minister who desires lasting, biblical freedom in those they serve.

Next Lesson: Spiritual Warfare and Divine Boundaries

In the next lesson we will explore the reality of spiritual warfare, a dynamic conflict between the forces of God and the forces of evil that impacts every person’s life. Through Scripture and practical application, we’ll uncover why this battle exists, how it unfolds in our minds, emotions, and daily choices, and the roles of angels, demons, and God’s common grace. By understanding these truths and embracing our personal responsibility, we’ll learn how to stand firm in faith, equipped with God’s armor and empowered by the victory Christ has already won.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 20: Spiritual Warfare and Divine Boundaries

Description

This lesson explores the biblical doctrine of spiritual warfare, emphasizing the sovereign boundaries established by God within the ongoing conflict between His kingdom and the forces of darkness. It investigates the theological rationale for the existence of this conflict, including considerations of human free will, divine justice, spiritual formation, and God's long-suffering in offering salvation. The study also examines the believer's resources—such as prayer, Scripture, and the armor of God—as essential means of spiritual resilience and victory. Additional focus is given to the role of angels, the limits God places on demonic activity, and the concept of common grace. Together, these elements provide a balanced theological framework that integrates deliverance ministry with personal responsibility.

Introduction: What Is Spiritual Warfare?

The Bible presents spiritual warfare as a cosmic conflict that has existed since the dawn of creation. This conflict involves two opposing kingdoms: God's kingdom, consisting of angels, and the kingdom of Satan, comprised of demons or fallen angels. Humanity, willingly or unwillingly, finds itself caught in the midst of this ongoing battle. The Apostle Paul succinctly describes this struggle in Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV):

- *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

Although this battle is primarily spiritual in nature, its effects are profoundly experienced in the physical and emotional realities of individuals and societies worldwide. At its core, the conflict is over the souls of mankind. God, motivated by love, actively seeks to save (Luke 19:10), while Satan, driven by hatred toward God and those made in His image, relentlessly aims to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10 NLT).

This spiritual warfare manifests in two primary ways:

1. Direct attacks on believers through temptation toward sinful behavior, doubt, and discouragement, which may result in fear, division, and oppression.
 2. Broader assaults on cultures and societies, impeding the spread of the Gospel by promoting false religions and antichrist ideologies.
-

Why God Allows the Battle to Continue

One of the most profound and frequently debated questions in Christian theology concerns why God permits the ongoing spiritual conflict between Himself and Satan. While some aspects remain mysterious, several key biblical principles shed light on God's purposes in allowing this battle to persist.

1. Free Will and Love Must Coexist

God created human beings with free will, enabling them to choose to love and obey Him voluntarily. Genuine love cannot be coerced or predetermined. The presence of Satan and the spiritual battle creates a real choice between good and evil, obedience and rebellion.

- *Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life...* (Deuteronomy 30:19 NLT)

Without an opposing force, obedience would lack meaning and become automatic. Thus, the spiritual conflict clarifies true allegiance.

2. God Is Demonstrating His Justice and Glory

The ongoing spiritual warfare provides a stage for the full revelation of God's attributes—mercy, justice, grace, holiness, and power. Through the narrative of redemption and the defeat of evil, God's glory is magnified.

- *In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls,... He does this to make the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he shows mercy...* (Romans 9:22-23 NLT)

Without evil's existence, the display of God's justice and mercy would be incomplete. For instance, the cross of Christ holds meaning only because of sin and opposition.

3. Spiritual Warfare Trains and Matures Believers

The spiritual battle actively shapes believers into mature followers of Christ. It teaches reliance on God, develops spiritual discernment, and encourages walking in divine authority.

- *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.* (James 1:2-3 NLT)

Through this process, God refines His people, using even the enemy's opposition to strengthen their faith.

4. God Provides Time for Repentance

God's patience in allowing the battle to continue reflects His desire for salvation and repentance. He delays final judgment to give more people the opportunity to turn to Him.

- *The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise... He is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. (2 Peter 3:9 NLT)*

If the conflict were to end immediately, many souls would be lost. The delay demonstrates God's mercy.

5. Victory Has Already Been Secured—We Are in the Final Phase

The outcome of the spiritual battle is already determined. Jesus Christ secured the decisive victory through His death and resurrection. The current conflict represents the unfolding of that victory until Satan's ultimate defeat.

- *In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. (Colossians 2:15 NLT)*

This situation is comparable to the period between D-Day and V-E Day in World War II: the decisive blow has been dealt, but the final surrender is still in progress.

Resources for the Battle

In the context of spiritual warfare, Scripture affirms that believers are not left defenseless. God has provided comprehensive spiritual resources—both offensive and defensive—to equip Christians to stand firm, resist the enemy, and ultimately walk in victory. Since the battle is spiritual in nature, the weapons and tools available to believers are likewise spiritual. These resources include:

1. Prayer
2. Scripture
3. Faith
4. Praise & Worship
5. Fasting
6. The Name of Jesus
7. The Blood of Jesus
8. The Power of the Holy Spirit
9. The Armor of God
10. Unity
11. Resisting Temptation
12. Discipleship and Accountability in a Community

As believers intentionally use these spiritual resources and stand in active resistance against Satan’s schemes, they are assured of God’s sustaining power and the certainty of victory.

Spiritual Warfare Brings Things into Focus

Throughout history, individuals have wrestled with deep and troubling questions about the existence of evil and suffering in a world governed by a loving and just God. These questions often emerge in response to tragedies such as war, violence, injustice, and personal trauma.

Common examples include:

1. “Why do bad things happen to good people?”
2. “Why does God allow wars to continue?”
3. “How can a loving and compassionate God permit suffering to continue?”

An informed understanding of spiritual warfare provides a meaningful framework for addressing these concerns. It reveals that human suffering and moral evil are not random or solely human in origin, but often part of a larger cosmic conflict between the kingdom of God and the forces of darkness.

When such questions are met only with oversimplified responses—such as, “God’s ways are higher than our ways,” or “We can’t understand His thoughts”—they may unintentionally undermine faith rather than strengthen it. While such statements are scripturally grounded (e.g. Isaiah 55:8–9), if used as the sole explanation, they can appear dismissive and leave sincere doubts unresolved. In some cases, this has contributed to disillusionment, and even the development of agnostic or atheistic worldviews.

By contrast, a biblical perspective on spiritual warfare acknowledges both God’s sovereignty and humanity’s role in a fallen world, while also affirming that evil is actively opposed by God and will ultimately be judged. This approach fosters a more robust, theologically grounded faith capable of confronting the complexities of real-world suffering.

The Common Grace of God

The concept of *Common Grace* refers to God’s universal kindness and benevolence extended to all people, regardless of their spiritual condition or relationship with Him. Distinct from *saving grace*, which brings eternal salvation to those who believe in Christ, common grace reflects God’s goodness manifested through the preservation of order, the provision of resources, and the restraint of evil in a fallen world.

This general grace is evident in Scripture:

1. *For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.* (Matthew 5:45b NLT)

2. *But he never left them without evidence of himself and his goodness. For instance, he sends you rain and good crops and gives you food and joyful hearts. (Acts 14:17 NLT)*
3. *The Lord is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all his creation. (Psalm 145:9 NLT)*

Divine Boundaries and the Restraint of Evil

Common grace is not limited to the physical realm; it also operates morally and spiritually to restrain evil. Through the conscience, societal norms, civil governments, and divine intervention, God maintains boundaries that prevent the full expression of wickedness. This restraint is vital in preserving social order and protecting individuals from the full effects of spiritual rebellion. God's sovereignty is evident in His limitation of both human and demonic actions. These passages illustrate this principle:

1. *Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. (Romans 2:14–15 NLT)*
2. *And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes. For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7 NLT)*
3. *“All right, you may test him,” the Lord said to Satan. “Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don't harm him physically.” All right, do with him as you please,” the Lord said to Satan. “But spare his life.” (Job 1:12a; 2:6 NLT)*
4. *In the dream God responded, Yes, I know you are innocent. That's why I kept you from sinning against me, and why I did not let you touch her. (Genesis 20:6 NLT)*

These verses underscore that both human evil and demonic influence operate within boundaries established by God's sovereign will. No action occurs without His allowance.

Common Grace and Divine Boundaries in Deliverance Ministry

In the context of deliverance ministry, the doctrine of common grace and divine boundaries is essential. Demons do not possess unrestricted freedom to inhabit, oppress, or influence individuals arbitrarily. Their activity is subject to God's sovereign limitations. As addressed in Lesson 19, demonic forces must seek legal grounds—such as unrepented sin, generational iniquity, or occult involvement—to gain access to a person's life.

Understanding this framework clarifies why deliverance ministry focuses on identifying and closing spiritual “open doors.” These legal access points are attempts by demonic forces to circumvent the protection offered through God's common grace. By exposing and revoking these rights through repentance and spiritual authority, deliverance can be effectively ministered under the lordship of Christ.

Angels and Their Role in Spiritual Warfare

This section does not attempt to provide an exhaustive study of *angelology*—the theological study of angels—but rather offers foundational insights into the role of angels in the context of spiritual warfare. Understanding their function enhances our appreciation for the broader scope of God’s involvement in the ongoing spiritual battle.

According to Scripture, angels are “*ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation*” (Hebrews 1:14b NIV). Far from being passive observers, angels are dynamic agents of God’s will, actively participating in both the defense and advancement of His purposes. While they are often recognized as messengers, their roles also encompass judgment, protection, warfare, and the execution of divine decrees.

From Genesis to Revelation, angels are seen intervening in human affairs and executing God’s justice. For example, in 2 Kings 19:35, a single angel struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night—demonstrating both power and precision. While angels do not create miracles independent of God, their actions often defy human comprehension and appear miraculous in nature. Although finite beings—limited to one location at a time—they can move with astonishing speed to fulfill divine assignments.

The Bible reveals a well-ordered hierarchy among angels. Distinct ranks such as Cherubim, Seraphim, Principalities, and Powers indicate a structured and disciplined spiritual army. Interestingly, fallen angels seem to replicate this hierarchical system in the demonic realm (Ephesians 6:12). Importantly, Scripture affirms that there are more loyal angels than fallen ones. Elisha’s words to his servant—“*There are more on our side than on theirs.*” (2 Kings 6:16 NLT)—underscore this truth. Jesus Himself stated that He could summon more than twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26:53), emphasizing the vastness and readiness of these forces.

Throughout biblical history, angels are shown to operate in full submission to God and to Christ. They never accept worship, always redirecting honor to God alone (Revelation 19:10). This posture of humility and fidelity ensures their reliability in God’s spiritual strategy. Angels’ unique functions differ from those of demons—they are not adversarial tempters or deceivers, but holy servants of God who participate in the ultimate defeat of evil. Revelation 20:1 tells us that a single angel will bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit, marking a climactic moment in the final victory over darkness.

Understanding these aspects of angelic nature and their operational roles in spiritual warfare provides practical insights into how God mobilizes heavenly beings to support His redemptive purposes on earth.

Practical Considerations About Angels and the Ministry of Deliverance

1. Deliverance Is Empowered by God, Not Angels

The power and authority necessary for effective deliverance ministry come from God

alone. Angels are not the source of power but are helpers operating under divine command.

2. **Angels Are Sent to Serve Believers**

Hebrews 1:14 identifies angels as servants of those who will inherit salvation. During deliverance sessions, it is biblically appropriate to ask God to send angels to assist, and by faith, we trust that He responds to such requests in accordance with His will.

3. **Angels Are Under God's Command, Not Ours**

While we may request God's assistance through angelic help, there is no scriptural basis for believers to directly command angels. Angels respond only to God's authority and direction, not to human orders.

Personal Responsibility

In concluding this lesson, it is important to address a perspective held by some within the Christian community: that deliverance ministry is unnecessary if believers would simply exercise personal responsibility by making full use of the spiritual resources God has already provided. According to this view, consistent engagement in prayer, Scripture reading, faith-filled living, and resisting temptation should be sufficient to overcome every form of spiritual attack. From this standpoint, those who seek help through deliverance ministry are sometimes criticized as being undisciplined, unwilling to take ownership of their spiritual growth, or looking for shortcuts to avoid the hard work of sanctification.

This argument is not without merit. Indeed, personal responsibility is a foundational principle in Christian discipleship. Believers are clearly instructed to “resist the devil” (James 4:7), “stand firm” (Ephesians 6:11), and “put to death” the sinful nature (Colossians 3:5). There is a danger in attributing every hardship or failure to demonic influence, which can lead to spiritual passivity, denial of personal faults, and avoidance of necessary personal growth.

Some individuals who misunderstand or misuse deliverance ministry may:

1. Seek an immediate solution to complex problems, treating deliverance like a “quick fix” or spiritual equivalent of a pill.
2. View ministry sessions as transactional, akin to fast food from a drive-through, rather than as part of a lifelong journey of transformation.
3. Resist personal responsibility in decision-making, instead externalizing blame for poor choices.
4. Avoid medical or psychological care when it is appropriate and needed.
5. Refrain from engaging in healthy, accountable discipleship relationships within the Church.
6. Refuse to take steps to heal broken relationships, preferring to “spiritualize” interpersonal issues.
7. Justify ongoing addictive or sinful behaviors by claiming demonic oppression, rather than seeking holistic help and engaging in the fight against temptation.

However, while such individuals do exist, they represent a small minority. In most cases, those who seek deliverance are not attempting to evade responsibility but are instead deeply aware of their spiritual need. Many have already exerted significant effort through personal devotion, yet remain in bondage due to complex spiritual dynamics, emotional trauma, or deeply rooted patterns of oppression that are difficult to break without help. Deliverance ministry, when conducted biblically and compassionately, is a way of coming alongside such individuals—offering intercessory support, biblical counsel, and spiritual partnership in their journey to freedom.

Scripture affirms that even mature believers can experience resistance that exceeds their own strength. For instance, the Apostle Paul, a man of seasoned faith and spiritual authority, wrote to the Thessalonian church:

- *For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way* (1 Thessalonians 2:18 NIV).

If Paul, despite his spiritual maturity, encountered repeated obstruction by Satan, we must not expect that all believers—especially those newer in the faith or recovering from trauma—will always be able to overcome spiritual battles alone. Paul’s experience validates the biblical reality of spiritual opposition and underscores the need for communal support.

Additionally, Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that the battle is not merely against internal struggles, but “against mighty powers in this dark world and against evil spirits in the heavenly places” (NLT). To assume that personal responsibility alone is always sufficient may underestimate the scale and intensity of spiritual warfare faced by many.

Therefore, while personal responsibility is essential, it must be integrated with humility, discernment, and a willingness to receive help from others within the Body of Christ. Deliverance ministry is not a replacement for discipleship, but a complement to it—helping individuals break free from bondage so they can grow in grace, live responsibly, and become fruitful members of Christ’s Church.

Conclusion

Spiritual warfare, when viewed through a biblically grounded lens, reveals not only the reality of conflict between the kingdoms of light and darkness but also God’s sovereign control over its boundaries. Far from being chaotic or arbitrary, this warfare serves divine purposes: testing and refining believers, demonstrating God’s justice and mercy, and allowing time for repentance before the final judgment. God has not left His people defenseless; He has provided spiritual resources such as prayer, Scripture, and the armor of God, along with angelic support and the restraining power of common grace. Deliverance ministry, then, must be understood within this broader theological context—not as a substitute for personal responsibility, but as a valid expression of Christ’s authority to set captives free. While spiritual resilience through

discipleship is vital, there remain circumstances where demonic influence persists despite sincere effort. In such cases, deliverance becomes a merciful intervention, not a spiritual shortcut.

Next Lesson: Blessings and Curses

As we conclude our study of spiritual warfare and the kingdom of darkness, we now turn to a related topic: blessings and curses. Scripture reveals that these spiritual forces can either align us with God's purposes or provide grounds for oppression when misused. In Lesson 21, we will explore biblical teachings on the nature and sources of blessings and curses—including those spoken by others, self-imposed declarations, and those issued by authority figures—as well as cultural expressions like hexes and vexes. We will also examine the principle that a curse cannot operate without cause and the redemptive truth that God can turn curses into blessings. Ultimately, believers can live in confidence, knowing they are protected and need not fear curses.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 21: Blessings and Curses

Description

This lesson thoroughly examines the biblical and societal understandings of blessings and curses. It begins by defining these concepts and exploring how cultural usage, particularly of “blessings,” often leads to semantic bleaching, diminishing their original spiritual significance. Moving beyond common parlance, the lesson then traces the first and last mentions of blessings and curses in Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, and highlights the comprehensive covenantal pronouncements found in Deuteronomy 28. Ultimately, it seeks to establish the enduring reality and impact of curses on humanity, clarifying their ancestral origins, addressing their potential effect on Christians, and reconciling biblical perspectives on both generational and individual accountability.

Introduction

Blessing: A blessing is the act of conferring or invoking divine favor, approval, or protection upon an individual, group, thing, or situation. It also refers to the direct favor, protection, provision, and grace from God, often associated with obedience to Him or being in a covenant relationship with Him.

Curse: A curse is the act of calling upon a divine or supernatural power to send injury, harm, or misfortune upon someone or something. It also denotes a consequence, often resulting from disobedience to God’s commands, leading to judgment, hardship, or the withdrawal of divine favor.

Blessings and Curses in Society

Blessings and curses are a larger part of everyday life than some imagine. For some, the word *blessing* is so overused that it seems to have no effect. In fact, people *bless* one another and often do not truly believe that a blessing is bestowed, and the utterance of the blessing is more of a societal or cultural norm.

When people bless one another habitually, without truly expecting the blessing to have any significant effect or giving it much consideration, this phenomenon is commonly referred to in linguistics as semantic bleaching.

This term describes how words or phrases lose their original intensity, literal meaning, or strong significance due to frequent use in everyday language. While the phrases still serve a social or communicative function, their deeper or original implications are “bleached” away.

In each of these, the **language of blessing has become cultural shorthand**—a social cue, a nicety, or even a filler—rather than a literal invocation of divine favor.

Blessings

Here’s a list of common ways people in Western cultures use “bless,” “blessings,” or “God bless you” where the expectation of a direct, conscious divine favor being bestowed is often absent, due to semantic bleaching or ritualistic usage:

1. **After Someone Sneezes:**
 - “Bless you” / “God bless you”
 - *Meaning:* Often said reflexively out of habit or politeness, not with conscious spiritual intent.
2. **As Parting Words or General Goodwill:**
 - “God bless” / “Blessings (to you)” / “Sending blessings”
 - *Meaning:* Used as a polite or warm way to say goodbye or as a generic sign-off in conversations, phone calls, social media messages, or letters, without much thought to its spiritual implication.
3. **Acknowledging Kindness or Expressing Affection/Sympathy:**
 - “God bless you for doing that” / “Oh, bless your heart!” / “Aww, bless him/her”
 - *Meaning:* Said to express gratitude, affection, or sympathy, often for children or when someone does something nice or helpful, with little or no direct connection to divine blessing.
4. **Commenting on a Positive Outcome or Good Fortune:**
 - “That’s a blessing!” / “What a blessing!”
 - *Meaning:* Signifies appreciation for a fortunate event or good luck, rather than a direct acknowledgment of specific divine favor at that moment.
5. **Expressions of Surprise, Exasperation, or Resignation:**
 - “Well, bless my soul!” / “Bless me!” / “Bless it”
 - *Meaning:* Used to convey surprise, disbelief, pity, mild annoyance, or resignation, often without religious or spiritual intent.
6. **In Sarcasm or Passive-Aggression:**
 - “Bless their heart...” / “God bless ’em”
 - *Meaning:* Often a way to soften criticism, express disapproval, or imply someone is naive, foolish, or misguided, clearly devoid of literal blessing intent.
7. **After Hearing About Suffering or as General Sympathy:**
 - “Bless them”
 - *Meaning:* A default sympathetic phrase with little expectation of calling on divine intervention for the suffering party.
8. **As a Rote Greeting in Religious Circles:**
 - “Blessings, brother/sister”
 - *Meaning:* Can become routine language among Christians, especially in habitual or formal settings, sometimes losing conscious spiritual intentionality.
9. **During Speeches or Public Statements:**
 - “God bless America” / “May God bless us all”
 - *Meaning:* Often used to conclude political speeches or public addresses as a traditional closer, not always with deep spiritual conviction.

10. Describing Innate Goodness or Positive Influence:

- “He’s just a blessing” / “She’s a blessing to work with”
- *Meaning*: Describes the person’s presence or character as inherently beneficial, not necessarily that they just received a specific divine favor.

Cultural Norms for Curses vs. Blessings

Even though both blessings and curses can become habits we use every day, their cultural and social rules are quite different. Milder curse words, like “damn it” said in frustration, can lose their strong original meaning, just like some blessings do. Again, **semantic bleaching** makes them more like simple expressions of emotion. However, stronger curses usually keep their direct intention to show anger, wish harm, or express strong disapproval. The social setting for saying these powerful curses is usually more serious, and they often carry more social shame or negativity compared to the casual way we use blessings. So, while phrases like “bless you” often become just polite habits, many curses are still used to strongly express feelings like anger, frustration, or contempt, rather than being a weak or meaningless wish for bad things to happen.

Common Uttered Curses

Here is a list of common curses that are uttered, often intended to wish harm, misfortune, or express strong negative emotion:

1. “Go to hell!” or “Rot in hell!”
2. “Damn you!” or “God damn it!”
3. “I hope you fail.”
4. “May you get what you deserve.”
5. “Karma will get you.”
6. “What goes around comes around.”
7. “I hope something bad happens to you.”
8. “I wish you nothing but bad luck.”

We’ve presented blessings and curses from the standpoint of societal and cultural norms; now we will look at them from purely biblical and spiritual realities.

First and Last Mention of Blessings and Curses

The “First Mention Principle” is an ideal way to study anything in Scripture. We use that approach as we look into blessings and curses.

The first blessings and curses are found in the first chapters of Genesis, where we find God first blessing the birds and sea creatures (Genesis 1:22). A few verses later, we read of God blessing Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:28). In both instances, the blessing reads the same: “*Be fruitful and multiply.*”

The first mention of a curse was when God cursed the serpent (Genesis 3:14). A few verses later, we read of God cursing the ground due to Adam's disobedience (Genesis 3:17).

The last mention of a curse is one that is spoken over anyone who adds to or takes away from the prophecy:

- *For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* (Revelation 22:18-19 NKJV)

The last mention of a blessing is found at the end of the final chapter of the Bible, where we read, *"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen."* (Revelation 22:21 NKJV)

To round out this section of "The First Mention Principle," it is necessary to comment on when all curses will be finally and in totality eradicated, and it is at the consummation of all things:

- *And there shall be no more curse.* (Revelation 22:3 NKJV)

This final verse is the proof that curses will continue, and that they are something the human race must address till the very end.

The Aaronic Blessing / The Priestly Blessing

Due to its frequent use, often used in closing church services, we make brief mention of the blessing mentioned in Numbers, which was to be used by Aaron, the High Priest, to bless the nation of Israel:

- *The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.* (Numbers 6:24-26, NKJV)

The Chapter of Blessings and Curses

Central to the Bible's teaching on divine blessings and curses, Deuteronomy 28 provides a remarkably detailed account. The chapter lays out 14 blessings (verses 1-14) and 54 curses (verses 15-68). Rather than exhaustively cover every item, this lesson will present a focused sampling to offer a concise overview of its profound scope.

Blessings

- *Your towns and your fields will be blessed. Your children and your crops will be blessed. The offspring of your herds and flocks will be blessed. Your fruit baskets and breadboards will be blessed. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be blessed.*
(Deuteronomy 28:3-6)

Curses

- *Your towns and your fields will be cursed. Your fruit baskets and breadboards will be cursed. Your children and your crops will be cursed. The offspring of your herds and flocks will be cursed. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be cursed.*
(Deuteronomy 28:16-19)

The Enduring Reality of Blessings and Curses

It's crucial to establish the biblical truth that both blessings and curses remain active and relevant today. While we acknowledge the importance of blessings, this lesson will now focus primarily on curses. In the ministry of deliverance, our aim is to guide individuals in identifying, breaking, and renouncing any curses that might still affect their lives.

Biblical Evidence That Curses Are Active

The Scriptures themselves provide strong indications that curses continue to be effective until a future, definitive time:

- First, clear commands exist against cursing, urging us to bless instead. If curses held no power, there would be no need for such explicit prohibitions:
 - *Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them.*
(Romans 12:14 NLT)
- Second, the Bible indicates that the final eradication of curses is a future, heavenly event. The fact that Revelation describes a time when curses will no longer exist confirms their present reality and ongoing influence:
 - *No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him.* (Revelation 22:3 NLT)

Having briefly examined the nature of both blessings and curses, we will now turn our attention exclusively to the topic of curses for the remainder of this lesson.

All of Humanity Has Been Cursed by God

It is an unpleasant thought, when one looks into the face of a newborn infant, to reflect upon the spiritual reality that this beautiful child has a curse resting upon it, and that this curse is a curse

of death, sentenced to unending torment in the Lake of Fire for eternity, where it will experience continual and unending agony, with no rest—unless—something is done to break that curse.

- *When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned... Yes, Adam’s one sin brings condemnation for everyone..., Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners... (Romans 5:12, 18, 19 NLT)*

The Curse Is Ancestral and Generational

The inherited sin from Adam is referred to as being an ancestral or generational curse, one that is passed down through the blood line, and it has affected and will affect every person who will ever be born. Presented here are a few more verses to establish this reality:

- *As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous— not even one.” (Romans 3:10 NLT)*
- *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. (Romans 3:23 NLT)*
- *All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else. (Ephesians 2:3 NLT)*
- *So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. (1 Corinthians 15:21-22 NLT)*

The Garden of Eden

From the preceding Scriptures, we learn that there is indeed a curse on humanity and the evidence is highly observable. From Genesis 3:14-19, we list the elements of the curse that came upon the serpent, as well as on Adam and his descendants:

1. The serpent was cursed – must crawl on its belly and eat dust all its life (v. 14)
2. Ongoing hostility between the serpent and the woman, and between her offspring and his (v. 15)
3. Pain in pregnancy and childbirth greatly increased (v. 16)
4. Desire to control husband, but he will rule over you (v. 16)
5. The ground is cursed because of you (v. 17)
6. Struggle to scratch a living from the ground all your life (v. 17)
7. Thorns and thistles will grow, though you will eat of its grains (v. 18)
8. You will sweat to eat – labor will be toilsome and exhausting (v. 19)
9. You will return to the dust from which you were made – death enters the human experience (v. 19)

As we reflect on the specifics of this curse, we are faced with the reality that this curse is still active, for we observe the following:

Aging process, with grey hair, spinal compression, wrinkles on skin, age spots, joints wear out, baldness, vision deteriorates; the list could go on.

Can Christians Be Hexed, Vexed, or Cursed?

It is common to hear Christians utter phrases like:

- “Satan, you can’t cross the blood line,” or
- “I plead the blood.”

It is almost as if those phrases have become an apotropaic utterance, an incantation, a superstitious belief, in that just saying those words will protect them from all curses or attacks by demons.

Spiritual Armor

Many Christians erroneously believe that Satan can in no way attack, afflict, or harass them in any way. That error is quickly exposed when we look at Eph. 6:10-18, and specifically vs. 16:

- *In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.* (Ephesians 6:16 NLT)

If it is impossible for Satan to “cross the blood line” by virtue of being a Christian, or by using the formula, “I plead the blood,” then the above-mentioned passage and verse have no meaning. Because the inference in Ephesians 6 is that if we do not “*Put on the full armor of God,*” we can then become vulnerable to Satan’s “*fiery arrows.*”

So the answer to the question “Can Christians be Hexed, Vexed, or Cursed?” has been answered with a “Yes” we can, if we are not clothed in the armor of God.

Demonic Powers Are Looking for an Opportunity

Jesus overcame Satan’s temptations in the desert, but that didn’t mean Satan didn’t look for more opportunities to tempt Him later.

- *When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.* (Luke 4:13 NLT)

This lets us know that we must never let down our spiritual guard. Just because a person may feel as though they are walking in victory over sin now, and that they have conquered certain addictions, doesn't mean those temptations won't return in the future.

Open Doors / Entry Points

An open door, or entry point, is any place in a Christian's life in which Satan can gain an entrance. It may be an area of neglect. It may be outright disobedience to a known commandment, or to something God has told them to do. It may be blatant and willful sin they are tolerating in their life. It may be a negative attitude. It may be that they are lazy and are not praying, reading the Bible, or fellowshiping with other Christians.

1. Satan is always lingering, prowling about.
 2. He is watching for the weak ones to attack.
 3. As your enemy, he has studied you.
 4. He knows your points of weakness.
- *Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.* (1 Peter 5:8 NLT)

The above verse was written to Christians. The admonition is to “*Stay alert!*” and to “*Watch out.*” If it isn't possible for Satan to devour a Christian, then that verse has no meaning.

An open door, or entry point, gives Satan and demons the occasion to stick their foot into the door of a Christian's life. If Satan's efforts aren't recognized right away, and his attempts immediately pushed out and the door closed, in a very short period of time demons will have gained a foothold. The foothold will become a leg, a torso, then their entire being. That foothold will then become a stronghold—a fortress—that Satan builds in your life. That is why we have been given this warning:

- *And do not give the devil a foothold.* (Ephesians 4:27 NIV)

A Curse Must Have a Cause

The Christian has a promise from God, that a curse can have no effect on us, if it isn't given a “cause,” that is, if the curse can find no entry point, or place to land, as the following verse depicts:

- *Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.* (Proverbs 26:2 NIV)
- *Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, So a curse without cause shall not alight.* (Proverbs 26:2 NKJV)

No Fear

Even with the potential for a curse to find a resting place, Christians need not live in fear, because as one walks in obedience, there is no place for fear.

- *So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* (James 4:7 NLT)
- *Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.* (1 Peter 5:9 NLT)

When we humble ourselves, resist Satan, and stand firm, we can have confidence in God's protective power:

- *But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.* (1 John 4:4 NLT)
- *We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them.* (1 John 5:18 NLT)

Other Curses in the Bible

From this sample of curses, we gain a clearer understanding of how curses can profoundly affect not only the individuals initially cursed but also their succeeding generations. Notice how in each of these instances, the curse affected not only the one being cursed, but descendants as well.

1. **Adam:** His sin initiated the **curse of sin and death** that profoundly affected and continues to affect all humanity and the created world. (Romans 5:12; Genesis 6:7)
2. **Canaan:** Cursed by his grandfather Noah to be the lowest of slaves due to his father Ham's disrespectful act (Genesis 9:25). This curse had generational implications for the Canaanite people.
3. **Those who cursed their parents:** Biblical law stipulated that anyone who cursed their father or mother was to be put to death (Exodus 21:17, Leviticus 20:9), implying a severe divine judgment upon them.
4. **Eli:** The entire ancestral line of this one High Priest was cursed because of his sin (1 Samuel 2:30-34).
5. **Achan:** This one man's sin brought a curse upon the entire nation. This resulted in loss in a war, as well as the destruction of Achan's entire family (Joshua 6:18, 7:1-26).
6. **Jehoiachin:** His sins of idolatry, injustice, and oppression brought an end to his dynasty, in that none of his sons would rise to rule (Jeremiah 22:24, 30).

- *Our ancestors sinned, but they have died—and we are suffering the punishment they deserved.* (Lamentations 5:7 NLT)

These examples clearly illustrate the enduring and often generational impact of curses in the biblical narrative. However, this raises an important question concerning personal responsibility, a topic we will now explore to reconcile seemingly contradictory scriptural accounts.

Reconciling Proverbs 26:2 and the General Curse on All Humanity

We previously mentioned Proverbs 26:2 in which a “*curse without a cause*” cannot affect a Christian who is walking in obedience to God. The question then arises, what about the general curse affecting all humanity, such as aging, illness, and death? This question is answered here:

The broader curse on humanity, traced back to the Fall in Genesis 3, affects all people regardless of personal wrongdoing. This curse includes aspects like aging, sickness, and mortality. It’s a consequence of living in a fallen world rather than a direct punishment for individual sins.

Here is how these two ideas can be reconciled:

1. **Nature of General Curse:** The curse upon humanity affects everyone universally due to the Fall, introducing suffering, decay, and mortality (Genesis 3:16-19). This condition applies to all people regardless of personal righteousness or faith.
2. **Proverbs 26:2 Context:** This proverb addresses specific, personal curses that result from wrongdoing or malicious intent. It highlights that such curses require a cause—a reason rooted in justice or wrongdoing—to be effective.
3. **Application:** While individual curses require a cause, the general curse on humanity is a consequence of sin in the world rather than specific personal sins. It affects everyone as part of the fallen human condition.
4. **Faith Perspective:** From a Christian perspective, Jesus’ redemptive work offers hope beyond the effects of the curse (Romans 5:17). Believers look forward to redemption from these effects in eternity (Revelation 21:4).

Therefore, Proverbs 26:2 emphasizes personal responsibility and justice in the context of curses, while the general curse on humanity reflects the broader consequences of sin in a fallen world. This distinction helps maintain the biblical balance between personal accountability and the universal impact of sin and its consequences.

Reconciling Generational and Individual Accountability

Having just explored how certain curses can indeed transfer across generations, we now confront what appears to be a **biblical paradox**. The Old Testament presents two seemingly conflicting series of passages concerning the transference of curses from one generation to the next. One group of texts suggests that children will suffer for their parents’ sins, while another asserts that

each individual is solely accountable for their own transgressions. To address these apparent contradictions, we begin with the foundational premise that God’s Word is infallible—incapable of error (2 Timothy 3:16)—and will examine these passages through that lens.

First Grouping: The Parent Sins and the Children Are Cursed

The following verses present the truth that children will be cursed due to the sins of the parents, and that certain sins will affect multiple generations, not only their immediate children.

1. *You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.* (Exodus 20:5 NKJV)
2. *I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.* (Exodus 34:7 NLT)
3. *He does not excuse the guilty. He lays the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.* (Numbers 14:18b NLT)
4. *One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord.* (Deuteronomy 23:2 NKJV)
5. *“Therefore, I will bring my case against you,” says the LORD. “I will even bring charges against your children’s children in the years to come.”* (Jeremiah 2:9 NLT)

The phrase, “*to the third and fourth generations*” (Exodus 20:5), along with “*even to the tenth generation*” (Deuteronomy 23:2), is believed to be a Hebrew idiom, or hyperbole (exaggeration). So when these phrases are used, it means this curse will go on forever—until it is broken. It is no different than a blessing. When a person is “blessed,” the blessing is to go on perpetually (Exodus 34:7) until a person causes the blessing to be lifted through breaking their covenant of obedience to God.

Second Grouping: Personal Responsibility for One’s Sins

We now present several verses that show that the sins of one person will not be transferred to another.

1. *Parents must not be put to death for the sins of their children, nor children for the sins of their parents. Those deserving to die must be put to death for their own crimes.* (Deuteronomy 24:16 NLT)

2. *The people will no longer quote this proverb: The parents have eaten sour grapes, but their children's mouths pucker at the taste. All people will die for their own sins—those who eat the sour grapes will be the ones whose mouths will pucker.* (Jeremiah 31:29–30 NLT; see also Ezekiel 18:2, 19–23; 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Chronicles 25:4)

Reconciling Transference and Personal Responsibility in Old Testament Theology

At first glance, the Old Testament seems to present a contradiction regarding generational consequences for sin. On one hand, texts such as Exodus 20:5 and Numbers 14:18 indicate that the sins of the parents affect their descendants “*to the third and fourth generation,*” implying a form of inherited guilt or curse. On the other hand, passages like Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:20 emphasize personal responsibility, asserting that each individual will be judged for their own sin. However, these two groupings are not truly contradictory when we distinguish between **legal guilt** and **relational or environmental consequences** of sin.

The first grouping highlights the reality that sin has **communal and generational impact**. This does not mean that God is unjustly punishing innocent children for crimes they did not commit; rather, it reflects how sin often becomes entrenched in family systems, shaping values, behavior, and spiritual openness across generations. For instance, idolatry or moral corruption may be passed down through modeling, environment, or spiritual bondage, which the Bible sometimes describes as a “*curse.*” These curses are not eternal edicts but continue “*to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me*” (Exodus 20:5)—meaning, as long as rebellion persists. Yet, God’s mercy extends “*to a thousand generations*” for those who love Him (Exodus 34:7), signaling that divine grace far surpasses generational judgment.

Conversely, the second grouping affirms that **each person stands accountable before God** for their own moral choices. This is a principle rooted in divine justice: guilt is not transferred in a judicial sense. In texts like Ezekiel 18 and Jeremiah 31, God rebukes the misuse of proverbs that imply fatalism or unjust blame-shifting. These verses correct a distorted understanding of generational sin by emphasizing that repentance breaks the cycle and that righteousness is possible regardless of one’s heritage. Therefore, what appears to be a contradiction is actually a complementary truth: while sin’s influence can linger and afflict future generations, God’s justice ensures that individuals are not condemned for another’s guilt when they turn to Him in righteousness and repentance.

Thus, Scripture teaches both the sobering reality of generational consequences and the hopeful promise of personal accountability and redemption. These truths together provide a framework for understanding generational curses within the context of God’s justice, mercy, and covenant faithfulness.

More About Curses

This lesson has laid a solid biblical foundation concerning curses, yet there is much more to come. In Level 2 of the Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance, the topic of curses goes even deeper, exploring the following topics:

1. Curses in the New Testament.
2. Does the cross lift every curse?
3. How curses can be deliberate or unintentional.
4. Unusual and unexpected types of curses.
5. How curses and demons interrelate.
6. How curses can be broken.
7. Manifestations during curse breaking.
8. Curses can jump a generation.
9. Why curses reactivate, and how to prevent that from occurring.
10. Hereditary transference of diseases, sickness, and deformities

Conclusion

This lesson has illuminated the multifaceted nature of blessings and curses, moving beyond their casual societal usage to reveal their profound biblical and spiritual realities. We have established that curses are not just historical events but continue to affect humanity universally due to the Fall, and can even influence Christians through “open doors” if spiritual vigilance is neglected. By carefully examining scriptural evidence, we successfully reconciled the promise of Proverbs 26:2—that an undeserved curse will not alight—with the pervasive, general curse on all humanity, thereby affirming both God’s justice in individual accountability and the comprehensive impact of sin. Ultimately, understanding these dynamics underscores the enduring significance of discerning and addressing curses within a framework of faith and spiritual responsibility.

Next Lesson: Inner Healing

Our next lesson will delve into the vital and profound topic of Inner Healing, exploring it as a biblically rooted process for emotional and spiritual restoration. We’ll examine how God’s transformative love and grace intersect with our deep-seated wounds, addressing past hurts and emotional scars. Through scriptural insights and practical examples, we will uncover the power of prayer, forgiveness, and surrender, learning how these open pathways to wholeness and enable believers to experience profound freedom and renewed vitality in their walk with Christ.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 22: Inner Healing

Description

This lesson delves into the crucial ministry of inner healing, specifically focusing on the remediation of emotional wounds—those deeply painful experiences that leave lasting negative impacts on our feelings, perceptions, and behaviors. We will explore how unaddressed emotional wounds can hinder spiritual growth and daily life, leading to distorted beliefs, unhealthy coping mechanisms, and strained relationships. Through biblically grounded principles and practical, Spirit-led approaches, this lesson will equip students to identify the root of emotional pain and invite God's restorative power to bring genuine, lasting healing to these inner injuries, thereby fostering wholeness and renewed life.

Disclaimer: This school's teachings are not a substitute for professional psychological guidance or mental health treatment when necessary. Our goal is to address any underlying demonic involvement that may be hindering the healing of the psyche, within a framework of biblical truth.

Introduction

The ministry of deliverance is often misunderstood and mischaracterized by many, largely due to the prevalence of readily accessible online videos portraying seemingly instantaneous deliverances, frequently accompanied by exuberant and joy-filled testimonies. This widespread portrayal can create an unrealistic expectation that deliverance is always a quick and effortless event.

However, these videos rarely capture the individual's life the next day, week, or month. Often, a person experiencing such a seemingly instantaneous "deliverance" may genuinely have had a powerful encounter with God and gained a measure of freedom. Yet, what frequently remains are **multiple layers of demonic entrenchment**, fortified by deep emotional wounds that the initial "deliverance" never addressed.

There's a common tendency among those inexperienced in deliverance ministry to seek the immediate expulsion of demons before engaging in the necessary preliminary work. They might assume that once demons are expelled, everything else will resolve itself. This approach is understandable, as inner healing can be the most challenging part of the deliverance process—it is often draining and time-consuming. Nevertheless, it is precisely this diligent work that yields profound and lasting fruit, leading to true wholeness.

An experienced deliverance minister understands that it is almost always necessary to minister inner healing before one can effectively expel all demonic influences and, crucially, *ensure they remain cast out*.

Definitions for Emotional Wounds and Inner Healing

Emotional Wound

An emotional wound is a deep and lingering psychological injury resulting from a painful or traumatic experience, or a series of such experiences. These invisible wounds profoundly affect an individual's emotional landscape, shaping their perceptions, behaviors, and relationships long after the original event has passed. Unlike a fleeting feeling of hurt, an emotional wound represents a persistent internal pain that can manifest as chronic fear, anxiety, anger, shame, guilt, or sadness. It often leads to the formation of negative core beliefs about oneself (e.g., "I am unlovable." "I am not enough."), and the development of maladaptive coping mechanisms. Left unaddressed, emotional wounds can hinder personal growth, strain interpersonal relationships, and contribute to various psychological and even physical health issues, effectively keeping a person bound by the echoes of their past.

Inner Healing

Inner healing is a process of divinely facilitated restoration for the deep-seated emotional and psychological wounds a person carries from past traumatic or hurtful experiences. While ministries may use different terms to identify it, such as emotional healing, healing damaged emotions, healing of the wounded soul (inner self/child), healing of memories, or soul healing, the core purpose remains the same.

Regardless of its specific name, inner healing is not merely a psychological coping mechanism. Instead, it is a spiritual intervention where the Holy Spirit actively ministers to the soul (mind, will, and emotions), bringing God's truth, love, and comfort into the memory of a past event. The goal of inner healing is not to erase or alter memories, but to remove the pain, lies, and negative emotional residue associated with them. This process thereby liberates individuals from their binding effects, enabling them to live in greater wholeness and freedom in their present and future. It often involves identifying the root causes of current struggles in past hurts, forgiving those who inflicted pain, and renouncing false beliefs adopted as a result of trauma.

Distinguishing Authentic Inner Healing from Counterfeit Practices

Inner healing has faced controversy due to abuses and distortions, particularly from New Age teachings that have introduced counterfeit approaches. Practices like "visionary" techniques (coaching someone to envision a new reality or memory) and "imaging" (imagining events differently than they occurred) are prime examples of these counterfeits, leading to confusion

and spiritual compromise. We must exercise extreme care to avoid both actual error and the appearance of alignment with such unbiblical methods.

The biblical foundation for inner healing is found in Isaiah 61:1 (NKJV), where Christ was sent “to heal the brokenhearted.” This ministry goes directly to the root of emotional wounds for genuine healing. Unhealed emotional wounds dramatically impede our spiritual growth and provide the enemy opportunities for harm. Satan, a master tormentor, actively exploits these hurts by “playing the video” of past painful events on a loop, and “poking that festered sore” to inflict ongoing pain and impede spiritual growth.

When ministering inner healing, our approach must remain firmly anchored in biblical truth. We invite the Holy Spirit to bring to mind the specific incident God desires to address. When a memory surfaces, our prayer is always for the Lord to heal the embedded pain, anger, fear, or other negative emotions associated with it.

Everyone experiences hurts to varying degrees, and their impact differs profoundly. What barely affects one person might devastate another. Nevertheless, all unhealed hurts invariably impede our spiritual progress. It is God’s divine will that we be completely healed and set free from every past hurt preventing us from serving Him fully. This often requires both deliverance and inner healing working together for complete restoration and wholeness.

The Importance of Healing Memories

It’s common, though often insensitive, to tell someone struggling with painful memories to “let bygones be bygones” or “just get over it.” However, for many, true release from deep-seated pain is far from simple. Something proactive must be done to free an individual from the agony tied to those memories.

Memories themselves are essentially permanent; they don’t just disappear. While some people try to bury or avoid thinking about painful memories, these memories remain active within the mind. When a memory carries significant pain, it forms an emotional injury within the soul—encompassing the mind, will, and emotions. If this emotional injury isn’t addressed and healed, it can fester into a toxic wound. The “toxins” from this unhealed wound then “leak” into daily life, profoundly affecting a person’s personality and interactions. This can lead to what’s often described as a “toxic” or “stinky personality,” terms applied to those whose emotional wounds are actively releasing “noxious poisons” that contaminate their own lives, relationships, and even impact those around them.

Indicators Showing That Inner Healing May Be Needed

Identifying the need for inner healing often involves observing persistent patterns or symptoms that have not been fully resolved by prayer alone. Here are some key guidelines indicating when inner healing may be particularly necessary:

1. **Lingering Trauma:** When a traumatic experience, past or present, has clearly left a persistent, unhealed wound within the soul or mind, continuing to exert negative influence.
2. **Persistent Spiritual Struggle:** Despite consistent counseling and engagement in spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, prayer, or regular church attendance, an individual continues to experience spiritual stagnation, emotional distress, or a sense that underlying issues remain “unfixed.”
3. **Missing or Repressed Memories:** The presence of gaps in memory, particularly concerning potentially traumatic periods, can be a significant indicator. Uncovering and processing these repressed memories can be crucial for comprehensive healing.
4. **Dysfunctional Relational Patterns:** A recurring pattern of making poor relational choices or experiencing consistent, profound difficulty in establishing and maintaining healthy relationships with spouses, friends, or close associates often points to unhealed inner wounds impacting relational capacity.
5. **Self-Abusive or Destructive Behaviors:** Repeated engagement in self-abusive or self-destructive behaviors—such as eating disorders, self-mutilation (e.g., cutting), risky sexual conduct, or suicidal thoughts—are strong signals that deep emotional healing is urgently required.

When to Administer Inner Healing

Inner healing ministry doesn't need to be conducted exclusively during a deliverance session. Sometimes it can be more effective and comfortable for the individual to receive this ministry privately, particularly when they might feel more secure without the presence of several other people.

Warnings About Administering Inner Healing Privately

This specialized ministry should only be undertaken by those who've received specific training in inner healing and are actively working towards leading deliverance sessions. When you're conducting inner healing privately, it's crucial to be aware that demons or alter personalities can emerge during the process. If you aren't comfortable or adequately equipped to address these manifestations, or if such a situation develops, immediately bring the person back to a full, present state. Then, arrange to conduct this ministry at another time, making sure others are present to assist.

How to Conduct Inner Healing

It is acknowledged that there is more than one method for conducting inner healing, through which similar results can be achieved. This lesson will present one method that has been proven to get tremendous results. We encourage students to study other methods, and glean information and practices from them, as long as there haven't been any New Age practices or concepts that have been allowed to filter into that practice.

Steps to Inner Healing

Administering inner healing requires a structured yet Spirit-led approach. Prior to initiating an inner healing session, it is highly recommended that the individual seeking healing completes the Forgiveness and Soul Tie Worksheet, as well as a Questionnaire. This preliminary work can help identify areas of unresolved pain and unhealthy attachments.

Before commencing the session, clearly explain the inner healing process to the individual. Ensure they understand what will occur and gain their consent and willingness to participate. Once clarity and understanding are established, proceed with the following steps:

1. **Preparation and Invitation:** Invite the individual to sit in a comfortable, quiet setting.
2. **Initiate with Prayer:** Ask the individual to read the "Deliverance Prayer" as found in the Beautiful Feet Deliverance Manual. This prayer serves to invite God's presence, establish spiritual authority, and set the intention for healing.
3. **Create Internal Focus:** Ask the individual to close their eyes. This helps minimize external distractions and promotes an internal focus on memories and emotions.
4. **Identify the Core Memory:**
 - a. Instruct the individual to reflect on "the worst thing that ever happened in their life." This often serves as an initial entry point to significant past trauma.
 - b. If that specific traumatic event has already been addressed and healed during previous ministry time, guide them to focus instead on the memory that is currently causing the most profound emotional pain or distress.
 - i. If there is uncertainty about a particular memory, even if ministry for its healing was received in the past, it's always wise to take the time to revisit it. This helps ensure no lingering emotional residue remains.
 - c. If no specific memory comes to mind, invite the Holy Spirit to reveal the particular memory or emotional trauma that He desires to bring healing to at this time. You might lead the individual in a prayer such as: "Lord, I sincerely desire to be healed. Please show me the specific area You want to heal in me right now."
 - d. Should the individual still struggle to recall a memory, gently bind any hindering spirits that may be obstructing the process and then invite them to pray the same prayer again. If a clear memory still does not surface after these attempts, it is advisable to conclude the inner healing attempt for that session and consider revisiting it at a later time.

5. **Re-experiencing and Giving a Detailed Description of the Memory:**
 - a. Once a memory surfaces, instruct the individual to allow that memory, like a video, of their most painful moment (or any emotional trauma) to replay in their mind. Emphasize the importance of describing everything they see, sense, feel, and hear to you, the team leader. Encourage a step-by-step, detailed description of what is taking place, even if it seems illogical or fragmented to them.
 - b. Prompt them with *open-ended questions* for clarification and avoid *leading questions* that might suggest answers or influence the memory. For example:
 - i. **Location:** “Where are you in this memory?”
 - ii. **Age/time:** “How old are you in this memory?” or “When is this taking place?”
 - iii. **Scene:** “What do you see around you? Describe the room, building, or outdoor setting.”
 - iv. **Activity:** “What are you doing in this moment?”
 - v. **Individuals Present:** “Who else is present with you?”
 - vi. **Sensory and Emotional Details:** “What specific feelings are you experiencing? Can you identify any smells, sounds, physical sensations (touch/feel), or even tastes associated with this moment?”
6. **Crucial for Healing:** At this stage, the individual may begin to release intense emotions. It is vital to affirm that this release of emotions is extremely important, as it signifies the exposure of their soul to God, allowing Him to minister to and heal the wound. If these emotions remain hidden and buried, the Holy Spirit’s healing work can be hindered.
7. **Addressing Manifestations:** Be prepared that *intense emotional release*, the emergence of *dissociated personality parts*, or even *demonic manifestations* may occur. Allow the Holy Spirit to direct your focus, prioritizing the healing of the inner wound or fragmented personality, while firmly addressing and minimizing any demonic distractions.
8. **Identifying and Renouncing Lies:** Individuals often internalize lies about themselves, others, or God, which become deeply connected to traumatic emotional events. Through compassionate questioning, help the individual identify any such lies (e.g., “They didn’t love me.” “It was my fault.” “I was the problem.” “I caused their divorce.”). One of the primary ways demonic influences maintain attachment is through these lies. A key objective is to help the individual *identify these lies* and then guide them to *come out of agreement with them*.
9. **Empowering Declarations:** Guide the individual in making verbal declarations to renounce these lies and embrace truth. Examples include:
 - a. “I refuse to allow Satan to keep that victim label on me.”
 - b. “Today, I choose to no longer be a victim, because God has made me a victor.”
 - c. “I renounce the lie that has been attached to that traumatic event.”
 - d. “I come out of agreement with Satan and with the lie he tried to insert into my mind. I pull it out now, and I replace it with the truth of God’s Word.”
10. **Caution Regarding Memory Alterations:** Some deliverance ministers may mistakenly ask individuals to visualize Jesus within a painful memory, or to imagine the memory differently, such as picturing what Jesus might have said or done in that situation. This practice crosses a critical boundary and should be avoided. We must never suggest that a memory be different from what truly occurred or coach someone to imagine it differently than what God authentically reveals. Doing so can inadvertently introduce New Age

concepts of reality manipulation. God does not “brainwash” us or remove our memories. Instead, God supernaturally removes the pain from the memory. He takes the sting out of the traumatic experience and can even “buff the scar smooth,” leaving the memory intact but disarmed of its power to inflict present pain. However, it is safe and appropriate if Jesus spontaneously appears in a memory without any coaching or suggestion from the minister.

11. **Seeking Divine Perspective:** After the individual has fully expressed the memory and the associated emotions have been released, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His perspective on the situation. Invite Him to speak to the individual directly about anything He desires to communicate regarding that memory.
12. **Receiving and Acting on Revelation:** Instruct the individual to articulate what they hear or sense God communicating. If this new revelation highlights someone they need to forgive, immediately guide them in a specific forgiveness prayer concerning that individual.
13. **Commanding Demonic Release from the Wound:** Once forgiveness (if applicable) has occurred and there is no further direct revelation, authoritatively command any demon that may have gained access through that emotional wound or trauma to release its grip. Through prayer, “pull out any hook, stake, claw,” or “break any chain, rope, cable” that these spirits are using to attach themselves to that emotional injury.
14. **Holy Spirit’s Deeper Cleansing and Healing:**
 - a. Finally, when the individual is no longer receiving specific instructions or revelation, pray for the Holy Spirit to descend to the very deepest part of that emotional wound. Ask Him to “lift out all the emotional bacteria, germs, decay” and to completely remove it.
 - b. Then, pray for the wound to be fully healed and sealed, asking the Holy Spirit to pour in His healing “oil and wine” of His comfort, peace, and restoration.
 - c. Encourage the individual to actively exercise their faith, affirming that Jesus has already taken their pain when He suffered on the cross.

This structured process should be repeated for each distinct emotional wound the individual carries. Inner healing, though profoundly impactful, can be the most challenging part of the deliverance process. It is often emotionally draining and time-consuming for both the minister and the individual. Nevertheless, it is a truly fruitful ministry, leading to profound and lasting freedom.

When Prayer Doesn’t Bring Complete Relief

It’s a wonderful truth that God often answers prayers for the removal of pain from traumatic memories, leading to complete healing for many. For these individuals, the memory no longer holds any negative sway. However, this isn’t universally the case. For those who continue to experience debilitating emotional pain despite sincere prayer, additional methods may be necessary to facilitate their relief.

This situation is much like physical healing. When prayer for a physical ailment doesn't result in complete healing, we responsibly use available medical science to treat the condition. Similarly, when inner healing of the soul (mind) through prayer alone doesn't alleviate the pain of traumatic memories, it becomes necessary to use other biblically aligned therapeutic methods to help individuals find the lasting relief they need.

A Therapeutic Approach

It is crucial to emphasize that the approach discussed here is but one component within a comprehensive process for healing painful memories. This specific therapy must be conducted in conjunction with our broader deliverance process, as complete freedom and healing often depend on addressing multiple interconnected factors.

Therapy to Desensitize Pain from Memories

This specific therapeutic process involves a technique for progressively desensitizing an individual to the emotional pain associated with a traumatic memory. The goal is to allow the individual to “watch” the painful episode as if it were a detached movie, gradually reducing its emotional impact.

Methods Used to Process the Memory:

1. **Distant Visualization:** Instruct the individual to visualize the painful episode by replaying it on a “monitor” positioned approximately 20 feet away in their mind's eye. This initial distance helps to create a sense of emotional detachment.
2. **Dissociation for Safety:** Encourage the individual to intentionally dissociate themselves from the scene. They should observe it as if they are an objective outsider who has no personal knowledge or emotional connection to the event. This allows for cognitive processing without immediate re-experiencing of overwhelming emotion.
3. **Visual Alterations (Reducing Intensity):**
 - a. **Monochrome:** Instruct them to render the “mental video” in black and white, effectively removing any vivid colors that might intensify the emotional impact.
 - b. **Blurring:** Suggest subtly blurring the screen to reduce the sharpness and clarity of the images.
 - c. **Fading:** They can also “turn up the whiteness” on the screen slightly, causing the image to fade further, making it less distinct and less emotionally potent.
4. **Reverse Playback:** If the individual is able, guide them to watch the “video” in reverse. This technique can further disrupt the linear, traumatic narrative and diminish its emotional power.
5. **Repetition for Desensitization:** Advise them to repeat this process several times until they perceive a significant reduction in the associated pain, or until the pain completely dissipates.
6. **Gradual Re-engagement:** Once the pain has significantly lessened after these initial repetitions, the individual can gradually alter the “video” parameters to slowly increase its vividness. This might involve:
 - a. Allowing the video to play out in full color with no blurring.
 - b. “Moving” the monitor closer to them.

- c. Eventually, if appropriate, attempting to watch the memory through their own eyes (re-associating), but only once the emotional intensity has been substantially neutralized.

This structured approach helps individuals process traumatic memories in a controlled manner, progressively stripping away their power to inflict ongoing emotional distress without requiring a full, potentially overwhelming, re-traumatization.

Victor or Victim: Navigating Fault and Responsibility

It is critical to distinguish between fault and responsibility when addressing inner wounds. An individual who has sustained inner wounds may not be at fault for the circumstances or actions that caused those wounds. However, they are absolutely responsible for how they choose to address and engage with the healing process in the present. While external support, encouragement, and prayer from others are invaluable, the ultimate “battle in the mind” is a personal one that each individual must ultimately face for themselves.

Some individuals may exhibit resistance to taking this responsibility, often because the healing process itself demands personal effort and a willingness to confront deep-seated pain. This resistance can manifest in several ways:

1. **Avoidance of the Process:** A reluctance to engage in the necessary work of healing due to the perceived difficulty or discomfort.
2. **Desire for Suppression:** A preference to bury or compartmentalize pain rather than addressing it directly, as confronting it can be intensely uncomfortable.
3. **Expectation of Instantaneous Fixes:** A longing for an immediate, miraculous “drive-through healing” from an anointed minister, akin to a quick, effortless solution.
4. **Secondary Gains:** An unconscious clinging to the unhealed state, which may provide attention or pity, or serve as a way to avoid the perceived demands of self-sufficiency.
5. **Reluctance to Forgive:** An unwillingness to release the burden of blaming others for past trauma and subsequent suffering. This refusal to forgive keeps the individual in a form of bondage to the ungodly actions of others.
6. **Fear of Loss of External Benefits:** In some cases, there may be an underlying fear of losing tangible external benefits, such as disability payments, if a diagnosed mental illness no longer presents symptoms after healing.

Conclusion

This lesson has illuminated the multifaceted nature of inner healing, defining it as a divinely facilitated restoration of deep emotional and psychological wounds. We’ve explored how genuine inner healing, rooted in biblical truth and guided by the Holy Spirit, critically differs from New Age counterfeits that seek to alter memories. Understanding the persistent impact of unaddressed emotional wounds, the necessity of diligent effort in the healing process, and the

unique role of an experienced minister, empowers us to participate in God's will for complete freedom. By diligently applying these principles—whether through direct Spirit-led ministry, desensitization techniques, or navigating personal responsibility—we equip individuals to break free from the past's bondage, ensuring that deliverance is not merely an event, but a pathway to lasting wholeness and a vibrant walk with Christ.

Next Lesson: Introduction to Dissociative Identity Disorder

In our next lesson, we'll explore dissociative identity disorder (DID), formerly known as multiple personality disorder (MPD). This condition is tragically more common than many realize and is regularly encountered in deliverance ministry during inner healing sessions, often when the individual had no prior awareness of having such a disorder.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 23: Introduction to Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)

Description

This comprehensive lesson systematically explores dissociative identity disorder (DID) from both a psychological and a distinct ministry-based spiritual perspective, informed by extensive practical experience. Beginning with an impactful case study that highlights the critical need for accurate discernment, the lesson provides a foundational understanding of DID as a divinely enabled coping mechanism for severe trauma, detailing its core characteristics and various states of consciousness. It then meticulously outlines subtle and overt indicators for recognizing DID in individuals, emphasizing crucial distinctions between genuine alters and demonic impersonations. Further sections delve into the diverse types of alter personalities encountered in ministry—such as silent, demon-loyal, or those held in bondage—and address significant barriers to integration, including deep-seated anger, mistrust, and hidden memories. Ultimately, the lesson champions the imperative of integration for holistic healing and stability, offering biblically grounded strategies for ministers to navigate these complex cases and facilitate the individual's journey toward freedom and wholeness.

Disclaimer: This school's teachings are not a substitute for professional psychological guidance or mental health treatment when necessary. Our goal is to address any underlying demonic involvement that may be hindering the healing of the psyche, within a framework of biblical truth.

Introduction

In early January 2021 I, Chet Swearingen, received an email from a movie producer in another country explaining that he had watched the online Beautiful Feet Deliverance Seminar, and following that, he put into practice what he learned and attempted to cast demons out of his live-in girlfriend, who was an actress.

What was astounding about this situation was that neither of these two were followers of Jesus. They had been following any spiritual impulse that had the assumed potential of bringing remediation to their deep inner turmoil, whether it be Theosophy, New Age, witchcraft, Satanism, Buddhism, or deep trances through practicing Yoga and astral projection.

This man reported that he was stuck in his process of casting demons out of his girlfriend, and that the “demons” were telling him that they weren't demons, and that they couldn't leave. The man said that the demons gave their names: “Mary,” “Sue,” “Barbara,” “Mark,” etc.

In my reply to the man, I informed him that he wasn't dealing exclusively with demons, but with alter personalities, and that they couldn't be cast out, as they were a fragmented part of his girlfriend's core personality.

When I saw the desperation and determination of these two, and after hearing God tell me that these two must be given a prioritized focus, above all others, and that I must do anything I could to get them free, Phyllis and I began a two-year journey which included two trips to that country, an uncountable number of Zoom meetings and middle of the night video calls, all of which led to the couple's salvation, deliverance, and the integration of many thousands of alter personalities.

What Is Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)?

Within the broader psychological community, dissociative identity disorder (DID), historically known as Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), is formally characterized by the presence of two or more distinct identity states or personality states that alternately take control of an individual's behavior. These states often present with differing memories, preferences, and ways of relating to the world.

From our spiritual understanding, DID/MPD represents a profound coping mechanism, often interpreted as a divinely fashioned capacity within the human mind to generate alter personalities (hereafter referred to as "alters"). This adaptive response primarily emerges following experiences of overwhelming and profound trauma. When an individual, typically a child, undergoes severe traumatic events—such as molestation, accident, abandonment, chronic abuse, or the destabilizing impact of parental divorce—their developing mind struggles to process the immense shock and distress. In response, the mind establishes a psychological partition to contain and isolate the unbearable trauma, with this partition subsequently assuming a separate identity distinct from the core personality.

This newly formed alter effectively compartmentalizes the trauma, often concealing the associated pain, memories, and emotions from the core individual. This internal dissociation creates "blocked memories," allowing the core personality to continue functioning in daily life as though the trauma had never occurred.

Characteristics of these alters can be remarkably diverse, including:

1. A distinct name.
2. A different gender or age perception.
3. Alterations in mannerisms, posture, and gait.
4. A change in voice tone, pitch, or accent.
5. Observable, distinct changes in physical qualities. For instance, observations have included alters who exhibit no need for eyeglasses, which the core person demonstrably requires, or an alter displaying signs of intoxication that immediately resolve upon spiritual intervention, restoring sobriety.

Critically, if such a dissociative adaptation does not occur in response to overwhelming trauma, the mind might be unable to adequately process or cope. This could lead to severe consequences, potentially resulting in the individual:

1. Becoming a victim of suicide.
2. Developing substance addictions as a means to numb the unbearable pain stemming from traumatic memories.
3. Experiencing severe mental incapacitation, marked by delusional escapism and various forms of psychosis.

Therefore, the formation of alters, while indicating deep trauma, can be understood as an innate, though complex, protective mechanism within the human psyche, designed to enable survival in the face of otherwise unmanageable pain.

Facilitating Healing in DID: A Ministry Perspective

There is a significant and ongoing debate within the mental health profession regarding the optimal approach to facilitating healing for individuals diagnosed with DID. Various perspectives on this complex disorder's remediation include:

1. **Coexistence and Cooperation:** Some mental health professionals advocate for teaching the various dissociated personality states (alters) to cooperate and coexist within the individual's internal system. However, from our ministry perspective, this approach can be viewed as profoundly problematic. These alter personalities frequently contribute to an individual's mental instability, often manifesting characteristics such as chronic anger, debilitating shyness, social withdrawal, various addictions and obsessions, self-destructive tendencies, or a range of other detrimental issues. While many alters genuinely believe they are assisting the core person or protecting them from further harm, their long-term impact tends to be counterproductive, leading to chronic dysfunction.
2. **Therapeutic Integration:** Another prevalent perspective suggests that true healing, or integration (the merging of the various personality states into a cohesive core identity), is indeed achievable. However, this therapeutic path is typically described as requiring extensive, long-term psychotherapy, often spanning two to five years or even longer.

In our practical experience within deliverance ministry, we have observed that this integration can frequently occur far more swiftly through focused prayer and spiritual intervention, rendering the extended years of purely psychotherapeutic discussions with various personality states unnecessary. Furthermore, a crucial understanding we have gained is that true and lasting spiritual healing often cannot commence or be fully realized until this integration of the fractured mind has been achieved.

Through **extensive ministry with individuals** exhibiting unmistakable signs of dissociation—often without any prior awareness of their condition—we have garnered critical insights. The ultimate aim of presenting these findings is to enlighten others on how to skillfully minister to individuals once they become aware of this complex condition, guiding them toward holistic integration and freedom through a biblically grounded approach.

Recognizing DID: Key Indicators in Ministry

During preliminary interviews and before commencing direct prayer in deliverance ministry, it is often possible to discern various indicators that may suggest the presence of DID. These manifestations, frequently reported by or observed in the individuals seeking ministry, can be broadly categorized as subtle or overt.

Subtle (Covert) Indicators: These signs often emerge through conversation as the individual describes their subjective experiences:

1. **Memory Fragmentation and Amnesia:**
 - a. Significant gaps in personal history, including a lack of recollection for certain periods of childhood or even larger portions of their life.
 - b. Lapses in daily awareness, such as a sudden jump in perceived time (e.g., believing it is 10 A.M. one moment and realizing it is suddenly 1 P.M. with no memory of the intervening hours).
 - c. Experiencing moments of “coming to” in the midst of an activity without recalling its initiation.
 - d. Finding oneself in an unfamiliar location with no memory of how they arrived.
 - e. Forgetting how to perform routine or highly practiced tasks like their job duties, driving, or reading.
 - f. Discovering unexplained items in their shopping cart, with no memory of how they got there.
 - g. Being informed by others about actions they have no memory of performing.
2. **Dissociative and Perceptual Disturbances:**
 - a. **Depersonalization:** A pervasive sensation of feeling detached from oneself, observing one’s own actions, thoughts, and emotions from a distance, as if watching a movie of their life (“living life in the background”).
 - b. **Derealization:** Experiencing a persistent mental fog or a dream-like state, where reality seems distorted or unreal, as if living in a haze.
 - c. **Emotional Detachment:** A profound disconnection from one’s own emotional experiences.
 - d. **Altered Perception of Time:** A subjective sensation that time passes either unusually slowly or excessively quickly.
3. **Behavioral and Emotional Dysregulation:**
 - a. **Relational Strain:** Experiencing significant and persistent stress in personal relationships, including those with spouses, friends, or close associates.
 - b. **Stress Intolerance:** Marked difficulty in effectively managing or coping with everyday stressors.
 - c. **Self-Harm:** Engagement in self-injurious behaviors such as cutting, burning, head-banging, or other forms of physical harm. This often serves as a maladaptive mechanism to externalize overwhelming inner pain and provide temporary relief from emotional turmoil.
 - d. **Co-occurring Mental Health Challenges:** Exhibiting symptoms of depression, generalized anxiety, panic attacks, or recurrent suicidal thoughts.

Overt (Obvious) Indicators During Ministry: These manifestations are often directly observable during an interview or ministry session, indicating an immediate shift in the individual’s demeanor:

1. **Abrupt Conversational Interruption:** A sudden, distinct interruption in the individual’s dialogue, often accompanied by a noticeably different voice interjecting a new opinion or expressing resistance to the ongoing process.
2. **Acute Disorientation:** Instances where the individual expresses immediate and profound confusion, questioning their current location or the identity of the minister.
3. **Shift to Child-like Behavior:** A quick and dramatic shift in voice, mannerisms, and overall demeanor to a distinctly child-like state, occasionally even resembling infantile behavior.
4. **Rapid Emotional Instability:** Quick and pronounced changes in emotional expression, such as an instantaneous shift from calmness to intense fear, anger, or overwhelming sadness.

It is paramount for ministers to understand these distinctions. It has been common for individuals, particularly those with limited or no specific training in deliverance ministry, to misidentify an alter personality as a demon and consequently attempt to cast it out. When this occurs, the alter itself can become profoundly traumatized, compelling it to retreat deeper within the person’s psyche. In doing so, it frequently takes any accompanying demonic influences with it, making the process of locating and ministering to that part of the soul exceedingly challenging in subsequent sessions.

States of Consciousness in DID

In the course of ministering to numerous individuals demonstrating symptoms of DID, we’ve observed four distinct states of consciousness that individuals may enter when alter personalities emerge and exert partial or complete control. These states, identified and defined through our ministry experiences, may use terminology that differs from that employed by the broader mental health community, yet they describe commonly experienced phenomena within DID.

1. **Blacking Out (Oblivious—amnesic switches):** In this state, an alter personality assumes executive control to such an extent that, upon the core person switching back into awareness, the core person has no recollection of their actions, words, or experiences during the alter’s time in control. These periods are often referred to by individuals as “losing time.”
2. **Co-Consciousness (Incapacitated—passive observation / back seat awareness):** In this condition, when a switch occurs to an alter, the core person enters a state of co-consciousness where they remain in the background. They are able to watch and listen to what is happening and being said, but they are completely incapacitated and unable to interfere or actively engage. It’s as if they are situated behind a non-permeable screen or partition, blocked from actively participating in the present moment.
3. **Co-Consciousness (Passive):** In a co-conscious passive state, the core person observes from the background, allowing the alter personality to take the lead in their life. While they remain passive and refrain from active participation, they retain the option to engage

or exert influence if they choose to do so, distinguishing this from the “Co-Consciousness Incapacitated” state.

4. **Fully Conscious (Active):** In this state, the core person remains in total executive control, while the alter personality remains in the background. The core person is fully aware and actively relays the alter’s thoughts, emotions, or internal communications without the alter taking direct control of the body or overt behavior.

Mysteries of the Spirit Realm and Mind

A fundamental acknowledgment for any earnest student of biblical theology is that the Scriptures do not fully unveil all mysteries of the spiritual realm. As the Apostle Paul observed regarding our current understanding:

- *Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture!* (1 Corinthians 13:9 NLT)
- He further elaborates: *Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity.* (1 Corinthians 13:12 NLT)

This inherent partiality and imperfection in our understanding of spiritual matters can frequently lead to considerable confusion, theological debate, and the emergence of diverse or unusual beliefs regarding spiritual phenomena.

Consequently, in the pursuit of spiritual warfare, encounters with perplexing phenomena, whose precise nature remains beyond full human comprehension, are common. For instance, in our ministry, we have encountered individuals deeply entangled in covert occult practices—defined as those which are shut off from view or exposure, secret, mysterious, or hidden. The revelation of such enigmatic and clandestine practices can particularly disorient ministerial students whose foundational understanding of spiritual warfare is primarily derived from theoretical texts, lacking the practical experience of confronting such profound spiritual darkness.

Similar complexities and areas of incomplete understanding characterize the intricate inner workings of the human mind. Regrettably, the Church has, to a significant extent, ceded the responsibility for the holistic healing of the mind (or soul) to the secular domain. Even within segments of the mental health profession that identify as “Christian,” there is an overwhelming reliance on secular methodologies for addressing psychological well-being. While secular mental health approaches may be compassionate, sincere, and expertly applied, their capacity to facilitate complete healing of the mind remains inherently limited without the targeted application of spiritual remedies to spiritual maladies. Indeed, in almost every case of mental illness, aside from those directly attributable to head injuries or documented neurological damage, a foundational need for spiritual intervention is often evident.

Case Study: Ministering to an Individual with Poly-Fragmented Dissociative Identity Disorder

Consider this case study, illustrating the complexities of ministering to an individual with poly-fragmented DID, harboring thousands of distinct alters, many of whom were demon-aligned: The roots of this fragmentation traced back to the earliest stages of life—before birth. The individual’s mother, a mere fourteen years old at the time, was deeply entangled in a Satanic cult. During her pregnancy, her own mother—the child’s grandmother—dedicated the unborn baby to Satan. This act of dedication initiated a demonic claim over the child’s life, and during gestation, the first alter personality was formed.

This initial alter bore the same name as the core person, symbolizing a counterfeit identity created through occult involvement. When the child reached four years of age, this alter was ritually “married” to Satan in a ceremony orchestrated by cult members. During the ritual, the alter was deceived with the promise that it would one day replace the core person and become the primary identity. From that day forward, this alter was referred to within the internal system as **“The Queen.”**

When we first encountered “The Queen” she described herself as demonized and physically bound. She claimed that snakes coiled around her hands, legs, chest, shoulders, and throat—causing an unrelenting sensation of choking and constriction. Through the authority of Jesus Christ, we ministered deliverance to her, breaking the demonic oppression and commanding the spirits to release their hold. The physical manifestations of bondage ceased, yet the deeper spiritual and psychological captivity remained.

Even after being freed from direct demonic control, “The Queen” struggled to let go of the lies that had defined her existence. She firmly believed that she had “sold her soul” to Satan and was therefore beyond redemption. This deception, deeply rooted in shame and fear, became the greatest barrier to her freedom.

Over the course of multiple ministry sessions, trust was patiently built through prayer and compassion. We continually invited Jesus to reveal Himself personally to “The Queen,” asking Him to make His presence and love undeniable to her. Gradually, as the truth of Christ’s mercy and authority penetrated her heart, “The Queen” began to renounce the lies and sever her perceived allegiance to Satan.

Her journey toward freedom was neither quick nor simple—it required persistence, spiritual discernment, and a steadfast reliance on the presence of Jesus. But as “The Queen” came to see herself not as Satan’s property, but as a person deeply loved and pursued by God, the strongholds that had bound her for decades began to crumble.

Types of Alter Personalities That May Be Encountered

Within the context of ministry to individuals with DID, various types of alter personalities may be encountered, each presenting unique characteristics and requiring specific approaches.

Silent (Mute) Alter

It isn't uncommon to encounter alters that are profoundly hesitant to communicate verbally, particularly when interacting with men. In such situations, a gentle and empathetic approach, often from a female minister, can significantly help to alleviate their fear and encourage engagement.

On occasion, alters may be encountered that genuinely don't possess the ability to speak (being pre-verbal) or steadfastly refuse to do so. This mutism often correlates with the alter's formation during infancy or very early childhood, preceding the development of verbal communication skills. In these instances, several strategies have proven beneficial: it can be effective to have another alter personality act as a spokesperson or "translator" for the silent alter. Alternatively, some success has been achieved by encouraging the mute alter to express themselves through writing or typing. Drawing pictures is yet another non-verbal method through which these alters can communicate their experiences and internal state.

At times, the inability or refusal of an alter to speak may be attributable to demonic interference. In such cases, focused prayers to bind these inhibiting spirits have often proven effective in enabling the alter to communicate verbally.

Demon-Loyal Alters: Personalities Aligned with Demons

While ministering to those exhibiting evidence of DID, ministers may encounter demon-loyal alters: personalities that have pledged allegiance to, or formed alliances with, demons. These alters can actively oppose the core person's healing and present significant challenges to the ministry process.

At times, specific alters may exhibit uncooperative behavior, often a direct consequence of forming these deceptive alliances with demonic entities. Demons are known to ensnare these alters through various false promises, such as:

- a. Assurances that the alter will ultimately replace the core person.
- b. False claims that the alter will someday be able to depart from the current individual and assume the role of the core person in an entirely different individual.
- c. Promises of acquiring power equivalent to that wielded by the demons themselves.

It is imperative that these alters be shown the deceitful nature of these demonic claims. An effective ministry approach involves requesting Jesus to manifest and reveal the true character of the demons to these alters, thereby exposing their untrustworthiness. In our experience, Jesus consistently responds to such requests, providing direct revelation to the alters.

Furthermore, it is common to encounter internal conflict or mutual distrust among alters within a system. This typically arises when some alters are diligently working to protect and assist the core person, while others have formed alliances with demons. Those aligned with demonic forces often exhibit hostile or antagonistic behavior toward the protective alters, thereby impeding their crucial role in safeguarding the core person's well-being.

When a significant number of alters express a desire to break free from demonic alliances, we encourage their collective efforts towards unity. Our ministry then involves offering prayers to bind the obstructing demons and any overtly "demon-loyal alters." Simultaneously, we instruct the "good alters" to symbolically link arms and move away from the uncooperative entities, guiding them toward the core person to merge and become one. Throughout this intricate process, we fervently pray for their complete freedom and for the thorough healing of those segments of the core person's mind, leading to holistic integration and restoration.

Angry Alters, Blocked Memories, and Barriers to Integration

When ministering to individuals with DID, encountering angry alters is a frequent occurrence. Addressing this anger effectively necessitates a thorough exploration of its underlying origins, which can often be traced to several key factors that also serve as significant barriers to full integration:

1. **Unforgiveness and Deep Inner Wounds:** A primary source of an alter's anger is frequently rooted in unresolved unforgiveness and profound inner wounds stemming from past traumas. These unhealed hurts can become deeply embedded within the alter's identity, manifesting as persistent resentment or rage.
2. **Lack of Trust in the Ministering Individual:** Alters may exhibit significant mistrust towards the minister of deliverance. This apprehension often stems from a fear that relinquishing control of the segment of the core person's mind they inhabit, and subsequently integrating, could lead to the premature release of concealed memories. The alter's primary concern in such instances is that these emerging memories possess the potential to re-traumatize the core person.
3. **Protective Instincts and Perceived Responsibility:** Alters often harbor a deep-seated belief that they are uniquely capable of protecting the core person, and they distrust that anyone else, including the minister or even the core person themselves, can offer comparable safeguarding. In these cases, the most efficacious method for demonstrating the core person's safety and protection is through prayer, specifically requesting Jesus Christ to manifest Himself directly to that alter personality. In our experience, Jesus has consistently revealed Himself to these alters, providing profound assurance that the core person will be safeguarded. Furthermore, He communicates that any potentially harmful memories held by the alter will be under His direct care, to be released only when the core person has achieved sufficient emotional strength to process them.
 - This procedure has led to accounts from alters describing how they witnessed Jesus symbolically collect all the harmful memories, perhaps placing them in a "suitcase" and taking them away. Such a revelation instills confidence in the alter,

knowing that these memories will not be carelessly exposed, thereby preparing them for integration.

4. **Fear of Annihilation (Death) Through Integration:** A common and powerful barrier is an alter's fear that integration equates to its own death or annihilation. These alters require clear and compassionate reassurance that integration is not an extinction event. Instead, it involves a return to their original, unified state—merging with the core person—a process that ultimately strengthens, stabilizes, and profoundly enhances the core person's mental well-being and identity. It is crucial to emphasize that this process leads to greater wholeness, not cessation of being.

Discerning Demonic Impersonation of Alter Personalities

In the intricate work of deliverance ministry, it is crucial to accurately discern whether an interacting personality is a genuine alter or an evil spirit impersonating an alter personality. Employing specific spiritual tests can facilitate this discernment, as demons, despite their deceptive abilities, cannot genuinely affirm biblical truth or express true benevolence towards the core individual.

To help identify the true nature of the entity you are ministering to, consider asking these questions, which can help distinguish between an alter and a spirit, even when encountering an adversarial alter.

1. “Do you love and care about [core person's name], or do you wish to harm them?”
 - a. A genuine alter, particularly one acting as a protector, will typically express a desire for the well-being and survival of the core person. Conversely, demon-loyal alters (those alters who have formed alliances with demons) will articulate a desire to inflict harm upon the core individual, as demons inherently harbor deep animosity and seek destruction.
2. “Do you love other Christians?” (Referencing 1 John 3:10-11)
3. “Do you love Jesus?” (Referencing John 14:15)
4. “Do you believe Jesus came to the earth in human form?” (Referencing John 1:14; 1 John 4:1-3)
5. “Is Jesus the Christ?” (Referencing 1 John 5:1)

It's important to note that instances have occurred where demons have provided technically correct answers to these biblical questions, but their responses were delivered in a disdainful, mocking, or otherwise insincere manner. Therefore, it is advisable to utilize follow-up questions to elicit more sincere responses and ascertain the true nature of the entity being addressed. Furthermore, demons often react negatively and manifest distress when confronted with the nature of God, particularly when attributes like the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23), or the divine qualities of goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection, love—described in 2 Peter 1:3-7—are explicitly mentioned. Visually presenting a cross or a Bible in front of a suspected demonic entity will also typically elicit a strong, negative physical or verbal response if it is indeed a demon.

Alter Personalities Impersonating the Core Person

There are documented instances where an alter personality assumes executive control over the individual and actively resists the core person's consciousness from returning. During such periods, these alters may attempt to impersonate the core person. This behavior is typically driven by several complex underlying motivations:

1. **Protection of the Core Person:** A primary motivation for an alter taking executive control is often a deep-seated desire to safeguard the core person. The alter may genuinely believe it can more effectively navigate specific situations, shield the core from perceived threats, or manage stressors that the core person is deemed unable to handle.
2. **Desire for Dominance:** In other cases, the alter personality seeks complete dominance within the system, aiming to fully supplant the core person. These alters may explicitly express a preference for the core person to merge or integrate *into them*, rather than the reverse. It is crucial to understand that the integration of a core person's personality into an alter's is not possible. Even when confronted with this truth, such alters may persist in asserting their executive control, driven by the goal of maintaining their perceived dominance.
3. **Perception of Core Person's Inadequacy:** Alters may internalize and express beliefs that the core person is unintelligent, weak, or fundamentally incapable of functioning without their influence. This perception of the core person's inadequacy significantly fuels the alter's desire to remain in control and manage the individual's daily life.

Demonic Enslavement of Alter Personalities

In the complex landscape of ministry to individuals with DID, ministers may encounter situations where demonic entities actively enslave groups of alter personalities. The primary aim of such enslavement is to conceal these alters permanently, thereby establishing a secure refuge for the demons to hide behind or within the individual's soul (mind).

When such a "prison of the mind" is located through spiritual discernment, a simple command in the authority of Christ is often sufficient to set these captives free. Once liberated, and with the demonic influences dispersed, these alters typically cooperate readily, demonstrating a willingness to integrate with the core person's mind.

Alter Personalities Held in Bondage

Beyond the enslavement of alter personalities, demons have also been observed to actively punish or torment alters as a means of maintaining their submission and control. In our ministry experiences, we've encountered alters so profoundly overcome by fear that they submitted to these demonic influences. Despite outward expressions such as pledges of allegiance to Satan or renunciations of God, it became evident that these alters' behaviors were often a desperate plea for protection from ongoing torment. Recognizing this underlying distress, we extended

assistance to these alters, regardless of their immediate verbalizations, and diligently worked to liberate them from demonic control, ultimately facilitating their integration into the core person's consciousness.

Freeing the Core Person from the Grip of a Dominant Alter Personality

In complex cases of DID, ministers may encounter a dominant alter personality that not only refuses to cooperate itself but also actively prevents other alters from cooperating and, critically, hinders the core person's consciousness from resurfacing. In such situations, it becomes necessary to directly confront and break the demonic powers enabling that alter's control.

The following steps outline an approach to dislodge such a dominant alter and restore the core person's executive functioning:

1. **Bind the Demonic Influences:** Begin by authoritatively binding any demons that are empowering or influencing the uncooperative alter. This foundational spiritual act aims to neutralize the source of the alter's resistance.
2. **Command the Alter to Step Aside:** Directly command the dominant alter to relinquish control and step aside. This is a verbal directive, asserting spiritual authority over the dissociative system.
3. **Call to the Core Person and Speak God's Word:** Continuously call to the consciousness of the core person, inviting them to resurface. Simultaneously, speak the Word of God directly to them, reinforcing truth, identity, and the power of their spiritual authority in Christ.
4. **Sustain the Process:** Be prepared for this process to take anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes, or potentially longer. Persistence is crucial as you work to help the core person's consciousness fully re-emerge and regain executive control.

When facing this type of powerful and resistant alter, it's often advisable to prevent its resurfacing during subsequent sessions, if possible. Instead, ministers should aim to speak only with the core person, addressing the uncooperative alter indirectly through the core person, thereby weakening its influence and reinforcing the core's authority.

Why Some Alters Resist Integration

With deliverance ministry often spanning multiple sessions, ministers may occasionally re-encounter an alter personality previously believed to have integrated. When directly questioned about their failure to merge with the core person as anticipated, alters often provide responses that reveal underlying complexities. These responses typically fall into categories reflecting external interference, internal mistrust, or protective concerns:

1. **Demonic Interference:** Alters may report being physically or spiritually restrained, stating, "Demons held some of us back." This aligns with the understanding that demonic entities actively resist the integration of alters, as fragmentation of the mind provides

them with cover and a more secure refuge for their activity. They actively work to maintain the mind in a fragmented state.

2. **Lack of Trust in the Minister:** A recurring reason for resistance is a profound mistrust of the minister, articulated as, “I didn’t trust you.” This specific alter doubted the core person’s safety if it were to integrate, leading it to remain distinct even when other alters successfully merged. In such scenarios, it is crucial to pray for Jesus to reveal Himself directly to the resistant alter, providing tangible assurance of the core person’s protection. In our experience, Jesus has consistently responded to such prayers by manifesting to the alter. Alters in this state may express deep-seated fears such as:
 - a. “I don’t want to die.”
 - b. “I’m lonely.”
 - c. “I’m the only one left.”
 - d. “I don’t trust.”
 - e. “In the end everyone leaves.”
 - f. “I’m going to stay till the end. I’m going to fight for [core person] till the end.”
3. **Protective Containment of Traumatic Memories:** Alters may resist integration due to their role in holding intensely painful or traumatizing memories, fearing that their release would “irreparably harm the core person.” This specific barrier and its resolution are comprehensively addressed in the preceding section titled “Angry Alters, Blocked Memories, and Barriers to Integration,” where methods for Jesus to take charge of and reveal these memories safely are discussed.

Memories: The Benefit of Uncovering Them

Memories frequently harbor deep emotional wounds, and when these wounds remain unaddressed, they tend to permeate and negatively influence an individual’s daily life. While the process of bringing these concealed memories to the surface can indeed be painful, the subsequent healing not only provides renewed emotional and spiritual strength but also significantly accelerates the path to recovery and wholeness.

It is undeniable that recalling painful memories can intensify emotional distress, and it’s often the case that circumstances may temporarily worsen before true improvement occurs once these memories emerge. Unfortunately, this temporary discomfort can lead some individuals to withdraw from the healing process, reluctant to endure the necessary pain required to ultimately achieve lasting restoration and victory.

Addressing Memories

Not every hidden memory needs to be uncovered for an individual’s complete healing. However, if there’s a specific memory that God intends to bring to the surface for healing, focused effort must be exerted to address that particular experience. The process typically involves a Spirit-led, systematic approach:

1. **Pray for Divine Revelation:** Begin by earnestly praying for God to reveal any specific memories He desires to bring to the surface for healing.

2. **Pray for Enduring Strength:** Intercede for the individual’s strength and resilience to endure the emotional discomfort or pain that may accompany the resurfacing of memories God reveals.
3. **Command Demonic Non-Interference:** Authoritatively command any demonic influences to recede and cease interference. This includes:
 - a. Commanding them not to interfere with the process.
 - b. Prohibiting them from manufacturing or implanting false memories.
 - c. Ordering them to be silent and to separate themselves from every aspect of the individual’s personality.

Finer Points About Alter Personalities

Understanding the diverse nature and behaviors of alter personalities is crucial in ministering to individuals with DID. These distinct parts of the self operate with their own internal logic and often exhibit a range of characteristics that can impact the healing process.

Here are key facets to consider regarding alters:

1. **Limited Knowledge:** Alters do not possess comprehensive knowledge of the individual’s entire life or the full internal system. Their awareness is often confined to the memories and experiences associated with their own function or origin.
2. **Varied Internal Awareness:** Alters may not perceive or be aware of one another’s existence within the internal system. Conversely, some alters may have awareness of only specific other alters, creating a complex internal dynamic.
3. **Hiding Behavior:** Alters can actively conceal themselves within the individual’s psyche, making them difficult to access during ministry sessions.
4. **Demonic Affiliation:** Some alters may have demons directly chained or “hooked” to them, indicating a deep level of spiritual entanglement.
5. **Spectrum of Allegiance:** Alters exhibit a range of dispositions towards the core person and the healing process:
 - a. Some are fully supportive, diligently working to protect and assist the core person.
 - b. Others remain neutral, not actively supporting or opposing the process.
 - c. Some are demon-loyal alters, actively aligned with demonic forces. These can deliberately mislead ministers, and even alters that initially appear supportive might be acting, deceptively, to hinder the work.
6. **Impersonation:** The spiritual landscape within DID can be highly deceptive. Demons may attempt to impersonate alters to maintain their hidden influence, and conversely, alters may attempt to impersonate demons for various reasons, including self-protection or to mislead.
7. **Interference in Deliverance:** Alters can actively run interference during attempts to cast out demons. Demon-loyal alters, in particular, can rapidly “switch” to the forefront of consciousness precisely when a demon is being cast out. This can lead ministers to mistakenly believe they are addressing a demon when they are, in fact, engaging with an alter, leading to wasted time and potential re-traumatization of the alter (as alters cannot

be “cast out”). Furthermore, some alters may be unwillingly or unknowingly forced to the front by demons; if this switch is unrecognized, the minister may again erroneously attempt to cast out an alter.

The Imperative of Integration

It is our consistent observation that leaving alters in place indefinitely, and in most cases, even as a temporary measure, fails to constitute a beneficial long-term solution, as this fragmented internal state invariably gravitates toward destabilization rather than integrated wholeness.

Conclusion

This lesson has systematically explored the multifaceted nature of DID, emphasizing its profound connection to severe trauma and its unique manifestations within a spiritual context. From the imperative of accurate discernment between alters and demonic entities to the nuanced strategies for addressing uncooperative alters, blocked memories, and the critical process of integration, we have outlined a biblically grounded approach to this complex condition. The overarching aim has been to equip ministers with the knowledge and spiritual authority necessary to navigate these intricate cases, fostering environments where profound healing, comprehensive integration, and lasting freedom are not merely aspirations but achievable realities through the power of God’s Spirit.

Next Lesson: Planning for a Deliverance Session

In our final lesson of Level 1 Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance, we will examine the process for walking a person through the ministry of deliverance, beginning with the first encounter, till the person is released to another discipleship group that will provide ongoing care and support.

Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance

Following Jesus' Model of Ministry

Level 1 – Lesson 24: Planning for a Deliverance Session

Description

This lesson addresses the essential qualifications and preparation required for individuals to effectively lead in deliverance ministry, emphasizing that while perfection is unattainable, a strong foundation of spiritual maturity, comprehensive training, and practical experience is paramount. It highlights that true readiness goes beyond theory—it requires hands-on experience, a life of holiness, and the affirmation of church leadership. The lesson then transitions into guiding the aspiring minister through the crucial process of identifying and selecting an “ideal candidate” for ministry, recognizing that effective leadership begins with discerning those who are best positioned to receive and sustain spiritual freedom.

Introduction: Am I Ready to Lead in Deliverance Ministry?

Engaging in deliverance ministry, like any form of ministry, does not require perfection from its participants. However, it demands a significant level of spiritual maturity, training, and practical experience before assuming a leadership role in conducting deliverance sessions. While classroom learning provides foundational knowledge, true readiness emerges from firsthand exposure to the complexities of human suffering and the responsibility of guiding others through spiritual healing.

Having acquired theoretical knowledge and practical skills through observation and participation, the next critical step for a new deliverance minister is selecting suitable candidates for ministry. This process involves discernment and sensitivity to identify individuals who can benefit from and are open to receiving deliverance ministry.

The Ideal Candidate for Deliverance Ministry

Although the goal is to identify the perfect candidate for deliverance ministry, the reality is that ministry should not be limited by rigid qualifications that exclude individuals who do not meet every ideal condition. Nonetheless, outlining what characterizes an *ideal candidate* can help guide discernment and set realistic expectations for effective ministry. The following characteristics describe such an individual:

1. **They Are Born Again, with Evidence of That Reality**
 - a. The primary purpose of deliverance ministry is to aid individuals in becoming more like Jesus Christ. Without a genuine relationship with God, it is impossible to facilitate lasting spiritual freedom.
 - b. If a person refuses to submit to Christ's authority, any deliverance efforts may prove harmful rather than helpful. According to Matthew 12:45, spiritual conditions can worsen when deliverance occurs without true conversion and commitment.
2. **They Are Part of a Congregation**
 - a. Deliverance should not function as a stand-alone ministry but as one part of a larger discipleship process. Being integrated into a church community ensures accountability, ongoing support, and spiritual growth.
 - b. The church serves as a place where individuals can grow in Christlikeness and be mobilized to participate in God's mission alongside others.
3. **They Are Young**
 - a. Older individuals often carry complex histories marked by prolonged emotional pain, broken relationships, habitual sin, and multiple traumas. These issues tend to complicate and slow the path toward deliverance and healing.
 - b. In contrast, younger individuals—especially those without spouses or children—may have endured significant trauma but have not yet accumulated decades of destructive behaviors or developed multiple layers of psychological and spiritual entanglements.
4. **They Are Actively Engaged in a Ministry and a Small Group Within Their Church**
 - a. Involvement in ministry and regular participation in a small group indicate a level of accountability and support that increases the likelihood of maintaining spiritual freedom.
 - b. Deliverance without discipleship is often short-lived. A supportive environment of fellow believers helps sustain progress and encourages ongoing spiritual disciplines.
5. **They Have Not Experienced Severe Trauma or Been Diagnosed With Multiple Mental Health Conditions**
 - a. The leader of the deliverance team must assess whether their team is sufficiently equipped to minister to individuals who have endured extreme trauma. In some cases, despite a lack of experience, the team may need to move forward in obedience and faith, trusting God to make up for their lack of knowledge and experience.
 - b. Time availability is another key factor. Deliverance for individuals with complex psychological issues may require sessions multiple times per week and continue over several months or even years.
6. **They Live in an Environment Where They Feel Secure and Safe**
 - a. Safety is crucial for the healing process, particularly for those who have experienced trauma. A stable environment promotes mental and emotional restoration and helps individuals internalize spiritual truths more effectively.
7. **They Do Not Live Alone**
 - a. Individuals who have a supportive spouse or who live with others who can function as caretakers are more likely to maintain their freedom.

- b. People suffering from mental illness or intense demonic oppression often struggle to sustain their deliverance on their own. In such cases, the presence of one or more caretakers can help reinforce daily spiritual disciplines and prevent immediate regression.
8. **They Are Able to Eliminate or Reduce Situations That Trigger Traumatic Memories**
- a. This often requires setting firm boundaries, which may include temporary or permanent separation from individuals who have caused past harm—even if those individuals are family members or close friends.
 - b. Triggers can come in many forms, including images, sounds, smells, or certain types of music. Awareness and proactive management of these triggers are essential for healing.
9. **They Are Able to Stand Firmly on Biblical Truth, Especially Concerning Their Identity**
- a. A foundational element in breaking free from mental torment and spiritual oppression is the ability to believe and affirm biblical truth. This includes:
 - i. Believing the truth about who God is—His character, love, and authority.
 - ii. Believing the truth about one’s own identity in Christ, as defined in Scripture.
 - b. Without a firm grasp on these truths, individuals may struggle to experience lasting freedom or to resist the lies of the enemy.
10. **They Demonstrate Desperation and Are Willing to Take Personal Responsibility**
- a. While individuals may not be responsible for the circumstances that contributed to their bondage, they are responsible for pursuing freedom. No one else can do the internal work that only they can do.
 - b. Deliverance is not a passive event. Those seeking ministry must not expect a “quick fix” or treat deliverance as though it were a drive-through service. Genuine transformation requires effort, cooperation with the Holy Spirit, and a willingness to persevere.

Once an ideal candidate is identified, the path forward begins with a structured intake process.

Initial Steps for a Deliverance Candidate

In the *Beautiful Feet Deliverance Manual*, the intake process for individuals seeking deliverance includes two distinct interviews. The purpose of the first interview is to introduce the candidate to the ministry of deliverance, explain its purpose and process, address any initial questions, and assign preparatory homework. This homework is essential in preparing the individual both spiritually and mentally for what is to come in the second interview and the deliverance session itself.

However, after years of practice and observation, it has become evident that nearly 50% of individuals who attend the initial interview do not complete their assignments and ultimately do not follow through with the process. This high attrition rate has resulted in a significant investment of time and energy by the ministry team with little return in terms of spiritual fruit.

To address this inefficiency, the process has been revised. Rather than scheduling an interview immediately, candidates are now first given their preparatory assignments. Only after they have completed these assignments are they invited to proceed with a formal interview. While this shift may not represent the ideal ministry approach, it reflects a necessary adjustment for a volunteer-run ministry that offers its services freely. By requiring candidates to take initiative early on, the ministry conserves its time and resources for those who demonstrate a sincere desire and commitment to engage in the process of deliverance.

Deliverance Ministry: How to Begin the Journey

When an individual expresses interest in receiving deliverance ministry, the process begins with self-directed preparation at home. To streamline the initial phase and ensure the candidate's commitment, all necessary materials are made immediately available either through online download or by providing printed hard copies, which may be mailed or hand-delivered depending on the candidate's needs.

The following assignments are provided as the first step in the deliverance process:

1. Forgiveness Worksheet

- a. A guided document to help the candidate identify areas of unforgiveness in their life.
- b. *Accompanied by a 6-minute online instructional video*, this exercise emphasizes the foundational role forgiveness plays in the healing and deliverance process.

2. Soul Tie Worksheet

- a. This worksheet helps the individual examine past and present relational connections that may require spiritual severance.
- b. *Accompanied by a 9-minute online explanatory video*, it introduces the biblical concept of soul ties and their potential impact on spiritual bondage.

3. Questionnaire

- a. A comprehensive form that allows the candidate to reflect on their spiritual, emotional, and personal history.
- b. This document aids the ministry team in understanding the background, needs, and concerns of the candidate prior to a deliverance session.

In addition to these resources, a **third video (4 minutes)** is provided, which outlines the candidate's personal responsibility in the deliverance process. It emphasizes that freedom in Christ is not passive, but requires intentional cooperation, persistence, and spiritual warfare on the part of the individual.

After completing the worksheets and viewing the videos, the candidate is asked to submit an **online form requesting ministry**. This form serves not only as an indication of their readiness but also as a legal and ethical acknowledgment. It confirms their understanding that the ministry is a prayer-based, volunteer-led service, and not professional counseling or mental health care conducted by licensed clinicians.

This phase ensures that those who move forward are not only informed but spiritually engaged—ready to participate with faith, accountability, and intentionality.

The Interview

The interview is a pivotal point in the deliverance process, confirming the candidate's spiritual readiness and gathering information that will shape the ministry session. The team leader must lead with discernment, compassion, and awareness of both spiritual dynamics and human behavior.

Verifying Salvation

One of the most critical responsibilities of the team leader during the interview is to determine whether the individual has a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ. Deliverance ministry is only appropriate for those who have come under the lordship of Christ, as spiritual authority is derived from one's position in Him. If the candidate has not yet received Jesus as their Savior, the team leader must present the Gospel clearly and lovingly, offering the individual the opportunity to commit their life to Christ. Only when a person is rooted in Christ can the battle for freedom be rightly fought—and won.

Ensuring the Completion of the Forgiveness and Soul Tie Worksheets

The leader should then discuss the candidate's experience working through the Forgiveness and Soul Tie Worksheets. This part of the conversation should include open-ended questions such as, "How did this process go for you?" or "Were there any difficulties as you completed these exercises?" Candidates are not required to disclose the personal details of their lists. However, it is essential that the team leader confirms that both worksheets were completed and that the candidate understands the critical role forgiveness and severing ungodly soul ties play in achieving lasting freedom.

Foundational Teaching: Open Doors, Legal Rights, and Strongholds

Before moving into the deeper aspects of the candidate's personal history, the team leader must ensure that the individual has received teaching on three foundational concepts:

1. **Open Doors:** Situations or choices that gave the enemy access to influence the person's life.
2. **Legal Rights:** Spiritual permission the enemy may have to remain due to unrepented sin, generational patterns, or unbroken covenants.
3. **Strongholds:** Deep-rooted belief systems or emotional patterns that hinder spiritual freedom.

This teaching may be delivered through a PowerPoint presentation or directly from the *Beautiful Feet Deliverance Manual*. These concepts help set the stage for deeper self-awareness and prepare the candidate for full participation in their own deliverance.

Utilizing the Questionnaire

The core focus of the interview is the *Deliverance Questionnaire*. This document provides a comprehensive overview of the candidate's background and potential areas of spiritual bondage. As the team leader reviews the responses with the candidate, they should ask clarifying questions, especially when patterns or red flags appear. This step helps identify the primary targets for ministry.

It is important to note that some individuals may want to share their entire life story. If time permits, this can be beneficial for relationship building and understanding. However, when time is limited, it is appropriate to keep the conversation focused on the content of the questionnaire. Two questions in particular warrant special attention, as the answers often reveal the root motivations and hidden wounds at the center of the candidate's spiritual struggle:

1. **Question 88: "Why are you here?"** This reveals the candidate's core motivation and perceived need.
2. **Question 97: "What is the worst thing that ever happened in your life?"** This question often uncovers significant trauma, which can be central to spiritual bondage.

Length and Sensitivity of the Interview

A typical interview lasts between 45 and 60 minutes. However, the length may vary depending on the individual's life experiences, the depth of their trauma, and the clarity of their responses.

During the interview, it is not uncommon for demonic manifestations to occur, or for *alter personalities* (also called dissociative parts) to emerge, particularly in cases of severe trauma. In such instances, the team leader should respond with calm authority, seeking only to subdue the disturbance so as to complete the interview. Deliverance or deep inner healing work should not be attempted at this stage, but appropriate notes should be made so the team can prepare for the actual ministry session.

In summary, the interview serves to confirm salvation, review vital preparatory work, provide key teachings, and gather personal information through the questionnaire. Spiritual discernment, emotional sensitivity, and pastoral wisdom are required to navigate this stage effectively and prepare for a fruitful deliverance session.

Preparing a Deliverance Session Outline Using the Questionnaire

Effective deliverance ministry begins long before the session—with prayerful preparation. The *Beautiful Feet Deliverance Session Outline Template* offers a clear, step-by-step structure that helps deliverance ministers navigate every phase with confidence and care, ensuring that no important element is overlooked.

The preparation process involves taking the completed *Deliverance Questionnaire*, along with any relevant notes from the interview, and using them to populate the template with specific details related to the candidate's history, spiritual struggles, and areas of bondage. By doing this, the team leader can create a personalized plan that addresses the unique needs of the individual receiving ministry.

Key benefits of using the template include:

- **Clarity:** The structured format helps the minister move systematically through the session, reducing the likelihood of confusion or missed steps.
- **Focus:** It keeps the session centered on the candidate's most significant issues, as identified in the questionnaire.
- **Efficiency:** Pre-planning helps manage the time effectively, especially when sessions involve complex emotional or spiritual matters.
- **Discernment:** It allows the minister to pray and reflect in advance on how to approach each area, asking the Holy Spirit for guidance.

In short, the template transforms raw information into a focused, Spirit-led ministry plan. It equips ministers with clarity and confidence—ensuring that each session is purposeful, personalized, and anchored in prayerful discernment.

The Deliverance Team

Deliverance ministry requires a well-structured team led with wisdom, discretion, and spiritual sensitivity. Each team member must understand their responsibilities and conduct themselves with integrity to ensure the ministry remains Christ-centered and effective.

Confidentiality Requirements

Team members will be entrusted with deeply personal and sensitive information, often involving shame, trauma, and painful memories. Therefore, great caution must be used in selecting team members. Absolute confidentiality is expected regarding all of the following:

1. The completed questionnaire
2. Notes from the interview
3. Notes from the deliverance session
4. All spoken or observed events during the session

Team members are never to speak about an individual's deliverance except with the team leader—and only for the purpose of supporting the ministry effort and the well-being of the person receiving help.

Team Size and Formation

While there is no fixed number required, it is recommended that deliverance sessions involve at least two people. In highly sensitive situations or sessions with children, fewer people may be

more appropriate. When the team leader meets one-on-one with a person, someone of the *same sex* should also be present if the individual receiving ministry is of the opposite sex.

Some individuals may feel inhibited in expressing emotion or sharing openly if many people are present, so discretion must be exercised in forming the team.

Intercessory Conduct During the Session

The primary role of most team members during a session is to serve as *intercessors*, praying silently or under their breath throughout the session. They are to agree in faith with the prayers of the team leader and with each declaration or renunciation made by the candidate.

While it is common to close one's eyes during prayer, team members are encouraged to keep theirs open to remain alert to any unusual behavior or spiritual manifestations.

Prophetic Protocol

Team members must be clearly instructed that their role is not to counsel or provide spontaneous prophetic words during the session. They are not present to form a prophetic presbytery, with each person present sharing prophetic words in turn.

If an intercessor receives what they believe is a word of knowledge, wisdom, or discernment from the Holy Spirit, they should write it down and discreetly pass it to the team leader. The leader will determine whether to act on the information, delay its use, or set it aside entirely.

This process helps avoid confusion, as the team leader—who has spent time preparing for the session and reviewing the candidate's background—has the best understanding of how to guide the process. Prophetic impressions are often partial and may be shaped by personal biases or limited insight. Sharing unfiltered impressions without direction can distract from the Spirit's intended flow and hinder the individual's breakthrough.

Scheduling

The deliverance session should be scheduled between the team leader and the ministry candidate first. Once the date, time, and room are confirmed, the leader may then invite team members to participate.

An efficient scheduling method is to use a shared online document (e.g., Google Docs) where invited team members can sign up to confirm their attendance. Those who cannot attend do not need to reply, eliminating the need for excessive communication.

Note-Taking

Accurate notes are essential for ongoing ministry, as many individuals require multiple deliverance sessions. Notes allow the team leader to review what occurred and prepare effectively for future appointments. Without proper documentation, details from different

sessions can become confused. This documentation not only prevents confusion but also honors the sacredness of the journey by preserving what God has begun.

Beautiful Feet provides a note-taking template that can be used on a laptop during the session to ensure important moments and themes are recorded systematically.

Seating in the Room

The ideal room setup has the candidate seated across from the team leader, with all other team members positioned behind or to the side of the candidate. This arrangement reduces distractions and helps the individual remain focused on the leader and the ministry at hand.

Spiritual & Practical Preparedness

Prayers During the Deliverance Session

Beautiful Feet has prepared written prayers to assist team leaders throughout various stages of the session. These can be especially helpful for less experienced leaders, who may choose to read them directly. More seasoned leaders may prefer to pray extemporaneously.

Arrival Time

The team leader should arrive early to ensure that the room is properly arranged, all materials are ready, PowerPoint presentations (if any) are loaded, and any worship songs are queued. Arriving “on time” leaves no margin for preparation and can result in a chaotic environment.

Since many candidates feel nervous and vulnerable upon arrival, a calm and organized atmosphere will help them feel safe and respected, laying the foundation for a fruitful ministry experience.

Opening a Deliverance Session with Clarity and Compassion

Many candidates come to their deliverance session with uncertainty or anxiety. Taking a few moments at the beginning to explain the process and set expectations helps establish trust, peace, and spiritual focus.

This includes a brief but purposeful orientation covering the following key points:

- 1. Clarify the Role of the Deliverance Team**

Explain that deliverance is ultimately a personal encounter between Jesus and the individual. The team is present to provide support and help the candidate remain focused on Christ throughout the process.

2. **Emphasize the Ongoing Nature of Deliverance**
Communicate that deliverance is not a one-time event but part of a lifelong journey. It is best carried out in partnership with a local church community that supports the individual as they grow in freedom and spiritual maturity.
3. **Prepare Them for the Format of the Session**
Briefly describe what they will experience during the session—guided prayers, declarations, and renunciations—reassuring them that team members will offer help at each step, whether the materials are presented on-screen or in print.
4. **Ask About Substance Use**
With compassion and sensitivity, ask whether they are currently using any substances—prescribed or otherwise—that may affect their emotional or mental state. This helps the team care well for the person and prepare for any potential complications.

Structured Ministry Flow for Deliverance Sessions

The following is a structured sequence of prayers, declarations, and renunciations typically followed during a deliverance session. It is important to note that demonic manifestations may occur at any point. These should be bound and silenced temporarily until the appropriate stage in the session. This approach allows the candidate to engage fully in the prayers and inner healing, weakening demonic influence along the way, making their eventual expulsion flow more easily.

1. **Opening Prayer**
The team leader begins by praying for God’s blessing and guidance, and anointing the ministry candidate with oil. If applicable, tattoos with occult or traumatic associations may be anointed as part of the prayer.
2. **Forgiveness**
Even though the individual has already completed a Forgiveness Worksheet, being in the room with a group of intercessors who have been praying for them over several days creates a different dynamic, marked by the tangible presence and power of God.
3. **Soul Ties**
As with forgiveness, soul ties should be renounced again during the session due to the heightened spiritual atmosphere.
4. **Breaking Generational and Spoken Curses**
This process should not be rushed. The candidate must speak with conviction, not as if reciting a ritual, but as an act of faith.
5. **Breaking Strongholds**
Breaking strongholds is often a process, but taking time for this step guides the ministry candidate in making bold, declarative statements that these strongholds are being torn down and will no longer be tolerated.
6. **Renunciations**
The individual is led to renounce connections with non-Christian religions, occult practices, Freemasonry, or ancestral involvement in such activities.

7. **Inner Healing**
Conduct inner healing as needed. If the content is highly personal, confirm the candidate's comfort level regarding sharing in a group setting.
8. **Alter Personalities**
Explore for alter personalities only if evidence of dissociation is present. A brief test may be performed when uncertain.
9. **Deliverance Prayer**
This comprehensive prayer leads the candidate through forgiveness, soul tie renunciations, and curse-breaking, serving as a final declaration before addressing demonic spirits.
10. **Addressing Demons**
This step is applied to every individual, regardless of what the questionnaire indicates. Experience has shown that even when there is no clear evidence of demonic torment or oppression—and little to suggest any form of attachment—something may still be present, actively working to avoid detection. Unless a spiritual authority confronts these forces, as Jesus did with the man in the synagogue (see Lesson 4), such spirits may remain hidden, continuing to hinder and oppose the person's spiritual growth and potential.
11. **Refilling of the Holy Spirit**
Pray with the candidate to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or a fresh infilling.
12. **Maintaining Deliverance**
Review pages 101-109 of the *Beautiful Feet Deliverance Manual* with the candidate. They must understand their responsibility in applying the truths and declarations contained therein.
13. **Pray a Blessing Over their Life**
Use page 96 of the *Beautiful Feet Deliverance Manual* to bless the individual, or the team leader can pray extemporaneously.
14. **Pray for Cleansing**
Pray to expel any remaining demonic presence from the room and to protect all present and their families.
15. **Report to the Pastor**
Send a brief report to the pastor concerning the care the ministry candidate received. The pastor will not want a lengthy report, just something simple and bullet pointed. Pastoral oversight ensures continuity of care and spiritual accountability.

Ongoing Freedom and Periodic Assessment

How Many Deliverance Sessions Are Needed?

A general estimate for the number of deliverance sessions a person may need is three to four. However, this number can vary significantly depending on how closely the individual aligns with the qualities of an *Ideal Candidate*, as outlined on pages 2–3 of this lesson. The further one is from the 'ideal candidate' profile, the more time and sessions may be needed for breakthrough and lasting freedom.

In some cases, an ideal candidate may complete the deliverance process in a single session. During that time, key spiritual barriers can be identified, tools for overcoming them introduced, and a path set for ongoing growth. With sufficient spiritual strength and a supportive community, such individuals may be able to continue progressing through *self-deliverance*, eliminating the need for additional formal sessions.

Should Everyone Go Through a Deliverance Session?

It is strongly recommended that every believer engage in some form of deliverance or spiritual freedom journey. This may take the form of a self-directed process, a one-on-one session with a trained team, or participation in a group setting, such as a Freedom Group.

Unlike Freedom Groups, deliverance sessions are highly individualized and focus on the totality of a person's life to identify any barriers to spiritual growth. One key distinction is that deliverance sessions include exploration for possible demonic oppression and directly address such issues through *power encounters*. In contrast, Freedom Groups focus primarily on *truth encounters*—applying biblical truths to bring inner healing and transformation.

Both approaches function similarly to an annual physical examination. Even in the absence of symptoms, medical exams are performed to detect underlying issues. Spiritually, Freedom Groups and deliverance sessions serve the same purpose—uncovering hidden spiritual conditions and recommending steps for healing. Therefore, everyone can benefit from periodically participating in some form of spiritual assessment and remediation.

Conclusion

This lesson on leading deliverance ministry emphasizes that attaining and sustaining spiritual freedom is a dynamic and multifaceted process. While personal responsibility remains essential, the lesson highlights the indispensable role of trained deliverance ministers and supportive community structures—particularly for new believers or those dealing with significant trauma. The lesson carefully details the preparation required of ministry leaders, the traits of an “ideal candidate” (while recognizing realistic variations), and a structured, compassionate method for guiding individuals through the deliverance process, from initial assignments to post-session care. Ultimately, it affirms that all believers can benefit from a spiritual freedom journey—whether self-guided, community-based, or one-on-one—as a means of identifying and removing obstacles to spiritual growth, much like undergoing a regular physical health check-up.

Next Lessons

Having laid a strong foundation in Level 1 of the *Beautiful Feet School of Deliverance*, you are now prepared to embrace more advanced information involving the ministry of deliverance.

Level 2 will equip you to discern and minister to more complex spiritual situations with greater authority, handle cases involving dissociation, and deal with extremely resistant demons.

This next phase is designed for those who are not only called to minister freedom, but who also desire to be trained as mature, Spirit-led leaders capable of equipping others. Get ready to move from foundational understanding to advanced application as we continue following Jesus' model of ministry.