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Bondage and Deliverance (Part 3)



Spiritual Warfare - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg discusses the topic of demonic possession and bondage, emphasizing the need for caution when approaching these subjects due to the prevalence of speculation and sensationalism. While he acknowledges that certain sins may lead to physical maladies, he cautions that theories regarding demon possession should not be taken as dogmatic points. He argues that deliverance ultimately stems from repentance and reliance on the governance of God and the Holy Spirit, rather than from practices such as hypnosis or the use of drugs.

Transcript

This is our third part of our consideration of the subject of demonic possession or demonic bondage and deliverance. By the time we finish today, I hope to have covered all the points that I have on this subject, and most of which I want to talk about are about deliverance, not about possession. But in our last session, we had to end rather abruptly, as I was discussing some of the possibilities of how a person might become demonized.

The Bible, as I said, is not explicit on this. That is, you do not find a scripture that lays out as a deliberate teaching on the subject a list of ways in which people can come under the bondage of demons. But there are principles, and there are what appear to me to be hints in the scripture, and along with them, many of these theories that would be drawn from the interpretation of certain passages of scripture seem to have confirmation in fairly widespread experience of those who have had dealings with demons.

And when I talk about those who have had dealings with demons, I realize there are a lot of people running around who claim to have a great deal of knowledge and expertise on the subject of demons, and these are not necessarily the same people I'm talking about. There's, of course, the deliverance ministries out there. Some of the people in those ministries perhaps have had quite a few genuine encounters with demon-possessed people.

Unfortunately, that whole field or that whole movement has been so thoroughly tainted

by theory and guesswork and speculation and hype and sensationalism that it's hard to look to that sector for authoritative answers that can be trusted to be biblical on the subject. But when I talk about people who have had experience with demons, I'm not wishing entirely to rule out all those that would call themselves deliverance ministries, but I am aware that missionaries throughout history have encountered demon-possessed people on the mission field. And also, on somewhat rare occasions, remarkable, unmistakable cases of demon possession have been encountered in Christendom, as in the case of Pastor Blumhardt's encounter with the girl in his congregation, or I myself, although I don't go looking for them, have run into a few cases that I've been obliged to deal with.

And from such experiences, we can derive something of a pattern also, and so long as the pattern and the concepts are not unbiblical, that is, so far as they don't contradict Scripture, they should at least be consulted. They may not be as authoritative as those things that can be found in Scripture, but that doesn't mean that they are of no value or that they convey no information of interest. At the end of our last session, I was mentioning that one of the ways, probably one of the primary ways that both experience and the Bible might suggest our means by which people come into demonic bondage would be through involvement in the occult or in idolatry.

Idolatry is one of the things that God was most adamantly opposed to in the Old Testament. I mean, God was opposed to all sin, but idolatry seems to be particularly repugnant to him. And we have both the Old Testament and the New forbidding all occult activity, and idolatry and the occult are very closely linked, because the Scripture says that the idols of the heathen are actually, well, the worship of them is the worship of demons.

And it's hard to imagine how a person could involve himself in the worship of demons without laying open his soul to some degree to becoming vulnerable to control of demons at some level. And it seems to be confirmed by experience as well as suggestions in Scripture that involvement in the occult can be one of those things, maybe the principal thing, that gives an advantage to the enemy to enter and to control the life of somebody in the form of what we call demon possession. At the same time, I do not mean to suggest that all of those many demon-possessed people that Jesus ran into in Israel had all been involved in the occult.

I don't know. We don't know how rampant the occult was in Israel in the days of Christ. It probably was not very much practiced, not very widespread, and therefore there must have been many cases that cannot be attributed to this cause in the Gospels.

To what cause they are attributed, we are never told. But I mentioned, and this is one of the more difficult answers to accept, that there is a suggestion, both again in experience and possibly in Scripture, that a child might even be born demon-possessed. This being

largely because of things their parents have done.

Just as a child might be born physically handicapped because of certain sins their parents have committed, whether it's the drinking of alcohol during pregnancy or the use of crack cocaine or contracting a venereal disease or something, the sins of parents can often lead to physical maladies in their children at birth. The suggestion is made by many, and I do not find any biblical reason to discount it, and there might even be some hints to confirm it in Scripture, that children might as well be born with spiritual maladies, which they inherit from the sins of their parents. The Bible nowhere says that demon possession only comes upon people who deserve it.

And that being the case, we can't rule out the possibility that somebody might have a demon, and you can't find anything in particular they did to obtain it. It may go back to their parents, maybe their grandparents, who knows. I'm not going to lay too much stress on this.

I don't like to indulge too much in speculation on these things. But at the same time, I wouldn't want you to be wholly ignorant of the possibilities, just in case you are thrust into a situation to evaluate a case, and that may be the only explanation I would like to suggest. In fact, it is an explanation that is widely held among those who have had dealings with demons, and as I say, may well have some scriptural indicators on its side.

There are other things. Pastor Blumhart believed that the girl that he had dealings with became demon possessed because of spells or curses that were put upon her by witches. Now, Pastor Blumhart might have been wrong.

He was not around when the problems began, and he had to form his own theories from evidence available to him. He did find evidence of sacrifices and so forth, bird bones and ashes and things under the floor of the house where the haunting began and where the demonic possession gripped her. In fact, they found quite a bit of this kind of evidence.

He was suggesting that there had been witchcraft or there had been occultism practiced there, but not necessarily by her, but by others who had been in the house before or for some other reason, and we don't know how much to credit this, but all I can say is the Bible doesn't tell us very much about what curses can accomplish when a curse is put upon someone or a spell. The Bible does not incline us to believe that spells are nothing. Spells do invoke demonic powers in some kind of activity, and it is, let's just say we can't find a scriptural reason that I know of to deny that a demon might come against a person because someone who hates them is casting a spell on them.

Now, this should not frighten a Christian because, of course, Christians have a greater power available. It should frighten a Christian if a Christian is seeking to compromise, is seeking to not walk in all of the advantages and privileges that are his or hers as a Christian, but I'm assuming that real Christians, at least everyone listening to my voice,

is planning to live for God, and I don't think that anyone who's living for God has anything to fear from such things because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. On the other hand, people who are themselves compromised or otherwise vulnerable may conceivably be demon-possessed as a result of such things.

I do not have a scripture for this. Though we do find evidence in scripture that spells are cast, it is forbidden in Deuteronomy chapter 18 that anyone cast spells. We're not told exactly what spells accomplish, and so with very little biblical information on the subject, we shouldn't be too eager to rule out some of the suggestions that have come to experienced people who have dealt with demonic cases and who think they have an answer to how this came about.

We do not give them the same validity as scripture, but we, as I say, have no scriptural reason to rule them out either. There is, perhaps, some strong scriptural support for the notion that a person may become demonized as the result of bitterness and unforgiveness in their life. That is, not so much that they have committed a sin for which they're being punished, but that they have failed or refused to forgive others of sins done against them.

Of course, this unforgiveness is a sin too. But I'd like to show you some scriptures that may point that direction. In Ephesians chapter 4, I'm not telling you that this is a passage about demon possession.

I'm just saying that there may be principles found in these scriptures that could clue us in. In Ephesians chapter 4, verses 26 and 27, Paul says, Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.

Now, these things are linked in a single sentence. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. As if you do give place to the devil by allowing the sun to go down on your wrath.

I don't think the sun down is the magical element here. I think what he's saying is don't allow your wrath to smolder and to foment and to ferment in your heart over an extended period of time. Clear your heart of all such things before you go to bed at night.

If you allow these things to fester, it becomes bitterness in the heart, and it may well give place to the devil. I don't know whether Paul had the particular case I'm thinking of in mind when he said this, but there seems to be an illustration of this in the book of 1 Samuel chapter 18. Because there we have the first instance of an evil spirit coming against Saul.

And the context in which it occurred is interesting. Because in chapter 18 of 1 Samuel, David, having conquered Goliath, became the hero of the nation. And many of the

women sang his praises.

According to verse 7, the women sang as they danced and said, Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands. Verse 8 tells us then Saul was very angry, and the same displeased him. And he said, they have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands.

Now what more can he have but the kingdom? So Saul eyed David, meaning suspiciously, from that day forward. Verse 10 says, and it happened on the next day that an evil spirit from God came upon Saul. Well what's interesting here is one day Saul is angry.

And he begins to be suspicious and bitter of David. The next day, his not having repented of this wicked attitude, an evil spirit comes upon him. It sounds like he let the sun go down on his wrath.

And it may well be that by so doing he gave place to the devil. Now I acknowledge that God is the one who sent this evil spirit as a judgment against him. But there'd be no reason to deny that that would be the case in every case.

That when a person does something that opens themselves to evil spirits, that the receiving of an evil spirit from God, or we could say God permits it as a chastening, as a discipline, as a judgment, as a way of putting the squeeze on them to change. I mean we know that God uses trials and afflictions of various sorts to simply include among the list of things God might so use, either to judge or to correct a person. Apparently the Bible inclines us to believe that demon possession is one of those things that God uses.

It's yet another kind of affliction that God uses to punish or to correct, or to draw someone to repentance. But I think that the example of Saul there is a pretty good illustration in the Bible of what Paul is saying. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath, neither give place to the devil.

If you allow the sun to go down on your wrath, you are allowing an atmosphere to hang in your heart that is conducive not to God's spirit, but to another kind of spirit. We read on another occasion, Matthew chapter 18, where there was a parable Jesus told. Peter said, how many times must I forgive my brother? Seven times.

And Jesus said, no, I don't say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. And we have a parable then given about the need for forgiveness. It is so long, I will not read it all because it would take a lot of our time just to read it.

But to summarize, it is about a servant who owed a great debt to a king. The king forgave him the debt. This is a picture of a person being forgiven by God, becoming a Christian and receiving forgiveness.

Later as the parable develops, that servant went out in verse 28 and found a fellow servant who owed him actually a relatively small debt. The man begged for mercy, but this servant wouldn't forgive him. When this unforgiving attitude was reported back to the king, it says in verse 32, then his master, after he had called him, said to him, you wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you? And his master was angry and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due him. So my heavenly father will also do to you, if each of you from his heart does not forgive his brother his trespasses. Now forgiveness is the opposite of anger and bitterness and those kinds of things.

Resentment? I don't know where we could get a clearer statement of Jesus that comes more close to telling us the answer to the question we're discussing. As to how does a person come under the torment of evil spirits? Jesus said, my father will deliver you over to torturers if you don't forgive. Therefore, if a person is holding bitterness and anger and unforgiveness toward anyone, excuse me, I've got stuff in my throat, that person, I'm not saying that person will automatically come to be demon possessed, but there certainly is indication in the Bible that that person makes himself vulnerable to such and if demons are like a roaring lion going about seeing who they may devour, they may find such a person just the type who's edible, you know, just the type that they can devour.

There's an environment there for them to occupy and to exploit. Now when it comes to forgiveness, there's much teaching in the New Testament on the subject. Jesus in almost all the Gospels, certainly in Matthew, Mark and Luke, we find statements from Jesus saying that you must forgive others if you would be forgiven by God.

Only in this place do we have it actually stated that if you don't forgive, God will deliver you over to torturers. But it makes it very clear that an attitude of forgiveness toward anyone who has wronged you is an absolute essential ingredient in the Christian life, without which one doesn't just indulge in a little bit of enjoyment of a grievance, but that person actually makes themselves vulnerable to a judgment or a chastening of the Lord in the form of being delivered over to demonic forces. Now I'm not saying that's the only conceivable way to interpret that scripture.

That is, to my mind, the most natural understanding of what Jesus is saying and if you have a different interpretation, that's all right. You don't have to follow me in this. But I believe that bitterness and unforgiveness can easily be seen in the scripture as one of those things that puts a person into jeopardy of giving place to the devil in their life.

Perhaps this is how some people become demon-possessed. I would say this, that having talked to and read many people who have dealt with demon-possessed cases, this comes up almost all the time in reports, that many who have dealt with demons have said that it is because the person didn't forgive their parents or didn't forgive somebody

who did them wrong that that was when they began to have problems with the demon. And so I would think that we should notice that.

Another suggestion that has been made, and I don't know that we can really prove this biblically, it's another one that has come largely out of the realm of experience of Christians who deal with such things, but I have read that trauma can cause a person at times to be demonized. Now trauma can be caused by a traumatic experience. In fact, that's usually what happens.

The loss of, you know, a sudden loss, a crisis in the life that is not well coped with. I cannot tell you on biblical authority exactly how or if trauma plays a role here, but there are a number of persons who have documented that demonic problems began with a person in their life at a time of trauma in their life. In fact, I was talking to Chad just yesterday, and he said that when he was in college, among the things that he studied, he majored in psychology, and among the things that he studied was what's usually called multiple personality disorder, MPD.

And to my mind, MPD is nothing else but demon possession, where it is genuine. I mean, I suppose it can sometimes be fake, but there are cases that would be very hard to describe as fake. I mean, it seems to be genuinely multiple personalities living out their lives in one person.

And, you know, if this happened in biblical times, they wouldn't give it a therapeutic name, and they wouldn't even have any questions as to what was going on. And they were well aware of this phenomenon. It was called demon possession.

But those who have specialized in studying cases of MPD have noted one thing. I don't know that we could say it's been proven that this is the cause, but it is certainly telltale, because virtually everybody that has been studied who is a case of so-called MPD has suffered, or at least claims to have suffered, ritual abuse in childhood. Very frequently it's satanic ritual abuse by people who are in some satanic cult or something and abuse these children.

And it's just connected. It's connected like pancreas failures related to diabetes. You know, I mean, only not quite so universally.

I mean, I'm sure there are people who have suffered ritual abuse and have not become demon possessed. But it would appear that virtually every case, the experts who study, who concentrate on this particular so-called disorder, virtually every case is a case where the person at an earlier time in life suffered ritual abuse. And that would be traumatic.

That would put a child through excruciating trauma. And some believe that that is the cause of this disorder. That is entirely possible, it seems to me.

I can't think of any biblical reason to reject that thesis. And while I don't accept an awful lot from the realm of psychology, in terms of psychology's theories about how people will react or whatever, I mean, I don't think that everything in psychology is at all scientific. Yet, if somebody says statistically, these cases that have these particular behaviors all also have this other factor, then I won't necessarily jump to the firm conclusion that that factor caused the condition, but it becomes very suggestive.

And there doesn't seem any biblical reason to question or to doubt it. We might not believe it as strongly as if the Bible itself said so. But it's even possible that that would explain why God had the Israelites wipe out even the infants in Canaan.

Because we know that the Canaanite religions sacrificed babies and had orgies and all kinds of corruption. Any kind of abuse that's going on now is going on there, even more so sanctioned publicly in public rituals and everything. It's possible that it was a favor to those babies to have them killed and go to heaven, instead of having them raised in that society.

Or even many of them may have already suffered in such ways that there would be no cure for them before the time of Christ. Demon possession didn't really have an adequate cure before the time of Jesus, when Jesus came and bound the strongman and began to plunder his house. Only a theory.

But I'm suggesting that if you meet somebody who has multiple personalities, it is very possible, I think, that if you look into their past, that they may well have been a victim of ritual abuse also. And that is a traumatic thing. Now, I don't really know that the Bible would speak directly to the subject of trauma being a cause of demon possession.

I do know that the Bible speaks of a spirit of fear. And trauma, essentially, is a species of fear. And it says, of course, in 2 Timothy 1.7, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love and of power and of a sound mind.

Now, the term spirit of fear does not necessarily have to refer to a demon. A spirit in the Bible doesn't have to always refer to a personal spirit. A spirit of fear can simply mean an attitude of fear or a mindset of fear.

It's possible for it to mean that. But we also cannot rule out the possibility that a spirit of fear is an actual personal spirit, a demon spirit. And it may be that such a spirit afflicts people who have experienced extreme trauma.

I will not be too dogmatic on that point. I will add one other thing, though, as a possible cause of demonic possession. That is the use of consciousness-altering drugs.

Because Proverbs 25.28 says, He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls. Remember, I speculated, I think, in our last session, that probably the reason that not every non-believer even becomes demon-possessed is it

may be because the demons can only really conquer relatively weak individuals who are more vulnerable because they're just more compliant, more gullible, they have less spine, they have less determination in their lives, they have less discipline, perhaps, and people who simply are not easily governed by other personalities, whether human or otherwise, might not as easily be overcome by demons either. But those who are easily suggestible, easily manipulated and compliant to other people, that kind of personality may well also be the easiest kind for demons to overrule.

I believe, and there is still a lot that is not understood in science about the connection of the mind and the brain. You know, of course, that the mind and the brain are not the same thing, but they are very closely connected. The mind is the thought processes.

Your ideas, your thinking, your consciousness, your moods, your emotions, your opinions, your values, these are all part of your mind. What your thoughts generate and the complex of your thought processes is your mind. The brain is simply a number of cells firing electrical reactions with each other.

It's simply a physical thing, just like any other organ of your body. The brain is an organ. The mind is something that is your personality, which is not just an organ.

And it's obvious that the brain and the mind are somehow connected, but the exact way in which they are connected may never be fully understood. For example, if a person has brain damage or a chemical imbalance in the brain, or a hormonal imbalance, which is also a chemical imbalance in the brain, it can affect moods, it can affect the mind in some ways. I'm not saying that that in any sense justifies or excuses bad thoughts or bad habits or bad words coming out of people's mouths just because they have a problem with the brain, but I am saying that it's obvious that people's consciousness is affected by the state of their brain to a certain extent.

But that is not exactly the same thing as saying that the brain and the mind are the same thing. God has so constructed us that the mind is generated through the activity of the brain to a large extent. But the brain itself is merely a machine.

A man named John Eccles, who I believe won the Nobel Prize a few decades ago for his research on the brain, was quoted as saying that the brain is a machine that a ghost can run. That the brain is explainable, like a computer is explainable. Now, I don't know if anyone could explain a computer to me, because I'm not smart enough to understand even what goes on in a computer, and I doubt if I'd understand what goes on in the brain.

But those who research the brain have discovered the mechanical workings of the brain. And John Eccles said, the brain is a machine that a ghost could run, which apparently suggests that the brain is one thing, but the ghost that runs it, the spirit, is another entity which simply runs the machine. And that, you know, in a sense, biblical thinking

would tell us so too, because we are told to control our minds.

Well, who is it? How can I control my mind? I mean, my mind is me. Doesn't my mind control me? I mean, how can I control my thoughts? Obviously, there is the suggestion that there is an aspect of me, my personality, my choices, my moral commitments, and my discipline and so forth, that's part of who I am, that is capable of ruling the machine. And saying, I will think about this, but I will not think about that.

I will meditate on this, but I will avoid thinking about such things. I will not entertain these thoughts, and so forth. I mean, there is something besides the brain that is ruling the brain.

And whether we call this the soul, or whether we call this the spirit, or whether we call it the mind, or whether we call it the personality, or whether we call it whatever, we have to acknowledge that the brain is one thing, and the mind is perhaps what we should call the ghost that runs the machine. Now, since we don't fully understand how the mind and brain really interface and interact and how they control one another, we are left with some theories on this. But the Bible says that if a man doesn't control his own spirit, his own thoughts and so forth, then he is like a city broken down and without walls.

It seems that the way that God has so constructed us is that our spirit, our human spirit, with its moral commitments and opinions and values and so forth, is connected with the activity of the brain and rules the brain. But there are certain activities that seem calculated to dislodge that connection, or to loosen that connection. Some forms of Eastern meditation seem to be that way.

The attempt is to empty the mind and to not have any control over the thoughts and to just kind of break off that connection of control between the mind and the brain and just let things flow in there. Consciousness-altering drugs no doubt have a similar effect at times. The Bible says in Hosea, I think it's Hosea 4, 11, it says, speaking of alcohol, it says wine and new wine and harlotry take away the heart or captivate the heart, capture the heart, enslave the heart.

Certain consciousness-altering substances like alcohol are said to capture the heart. And it's quite obvious that a person who gives his brain over to spirits like alcohol or to more modern alternatives like LSD or other consciousness-altering drugs, that person is playing with the machine in a dangerous way. It's interesting, to me at least, how in the days when I was a teenager, when almost everyone who was not a Christian was experimenting with drugs, LSD particularly, how universally those who took LSD trips testified of the kind of revelations they got while on LSD.

They were the very same kinds of revelations that people profess to have when they're involved in transcendental meditation or other kinds of Eastern occult meditation. Namely, they felt like they're part of the one, that the universe is just all one thing, and

they're just part of it, just a cog in the wheel. And this whole Hindu, really, it's a Hindu idea called monism, that all is one, and then you're just part of the whole universe, and God is in everything, and you're God, and everything's God.

I mean, this kind of mindset which people would come off LSD trips convinced of, the very same thing that people get convinced of by Eastern meditation. It seems like some people accomplish by a drug, what other people accomplish through a discipline of an occult sort. But in both cases, it strikes me that the normal link between the human spirit and the brain is somehow being interfered with, and another ghost is getting at the helm.

Another spirit is somehow given control. The person who doesn't rule his own spirit is like a city broken down without walls. Now, in biblical times, a city broken down without walls, what's that mean? What does it mean? Cities had walls for a particular purpose, to avoid being invaded by their enemies.

If the city was broken down without walls, it was subject to invasion. It was subject to the control of others. And when Solomon says, if you don't rule your spirit, you are like a city broken down without walls, he's saying, if you don't rule it, someone else will.

If you don't rule your own mind, if you don't have self-control of your thoughts, then you're likely to be invaded by someone else who will rule it. Now, again, I admit I'm extrapolating from these concepts, but these are principles stated in scripture, that if a person uses a drug that in any way diminishes their capacity to rule their own thoughts, it seems to me that person is in danger. I will not say that all such people become possessed.

There are many people who took 100 hits of LSD and never became demon possessed. I'm not sure why, but there are people who have also, I think, become possessed by use of such drugs. And what I've suggested at this point are simply drugs that are no-nos, you know, abusive alcohol and LSD and crack cocaine and heroin and things like that.

Those are all very bad things and all Christians agree those are wrong. There are certain mind-altering drugs that are quite approved in our society and even in the church. So long as it's the psychiatrist who prescribes them, I'm amazed how many Christian parents will allow the world, or even a Christian who's been trained by the world, to say that their child has ADD and allow them to put the child on Ritalin.

Ritalin is chemically almost indistinguishable from crack, or not crack, but from cocaine, generally. Cocaine and Ritalin are almost chemically identical. They're both a very addictive form of speed.

It just so happens that some children, their physiology is such that if you give them speed, it slows them down. It has sort of the opposite reaction that it has on most

people. I've heard this, of course, before any of this research came out, I've heard for decades that some kids, if you give them caffeine, it slows them down.

You know, caffeine's a stimulant to most people, but it has a paradoxical effect on some people. There are some people whose chemistry has the opposite reaction. And there are children who, if you give them speed, it slows them down.

Now, since these kids are pretty speedy kids, their parents and their teachers are awfully glad to have them slowed down. The only problem is, at what price? At what cost? Slow them down by getting them addicted to cocaine? Well, it seems like there'd be better ways, you know? I mean, one might say, in such cases, cocaine isn't dislodging this child's spirit from his controller's mind, but actually enhancing it, allowing the kid to have some more control. But I don't trust myself.

You can make your own decision. I don't trust any mental state that has to be managed by a consciousness-altering drug. I can't trust that as something that is a spiritual improvement.

It seems to me that the Bible places full responsibility on every individual for their behavior, for their moods, for their thoughts. It is, of course, much more difficult for some people than others to control their thoughts, either because they're very weak and undisciplined, or because they may be strapped with something of a handicap from the beginning. There certainly are people whose chemistry, or whose temperament, or whatever, makes them more susceptible to, maybe, depression, or hyperactivity, or some other thing.

The solution for which, now, almost even all Christians are agreed on, is just give them a drug for that. That fixes it. However, those are things that may really represent challenges for a person that other people may not have to face.

I mean, some people, I will admit it, some people have a chemical, or physiological, or personality difference, something that's different about them from most people, that makes it harder for them. But I guess, in my life, I've been able to define struggles that are harder for me than they are, apparently, for some other people. I also know of struggles that other people have that aren't very hard for me.

Everyone has their own set of challenges. The problem in our society is that when we define a person's particular challenge, that which keeps them from being able to keep their mind on the subject, that which keeps them from being able to really control themselves easily, where other people find it more easy to do, that which inclines them toward anxiety, or toward panic, or toward depression, or toward anger, or whatever, or toward hyperactivity, when we define that, instead of saying, OK, now we know what your challenge is going to be. This is your area where you've got to conquer.

This is the area that you've got to do a special spiritual work there. Here's the area where you really need to bring your mind under the governance of God and under the power of the Holy Spirit. This is your challenge, and I admit it'll be a harder challenge for you than for some other people, although they may have other challenges that are harder for them than you have in some other areas.

But the point is, instead of saying, OK, now we know where your spiritual struggle is going to be, we say, no problem. We've got medications for that. And so we alter the mind, and it seems to me that people who alter their minds with these, they do just that.

They alter their mind, and they to some degree have less real control over their minds than before. It may seem like they have more control because certain functions of the brain are deadened. Certain neurotransmitters are interrupted and so forth.

And therefore, a person who's had really unpleasant behavior suddenly becomes quite tolerable to be around, because they're partially vegetabilized or something. They're in a chemical straitjacket. And hey, this guy's not hard to be around at all anymore.

We like this. Keep the drugs coming. And we call that a cure.

It's not a cure. It's a management tool. It's like a straitjacket that's invisible.

You can take it internally. It's a mental straitjacket. But that doesn't mean that you've really improved that person spiritually.

In fact, you may be doing them harm spiritually, because they are not governing their own mind. They have no rule over their own spirit. They've given that rule to a drug.

And while I think some people can do that without becoming demonized, I just think that anything that would make me more vulnerable, anything that would take from me the responsibility and the ability to govern my thoughts, even if I have difficulties in certain areas. You know what? There have been times in my younger life where sexual temptations and so forth were a very large struggle. And while I knew that most men had them, I wasn't sure that I had them more than most.

Although I didn't succumb, it was a tremendous struggle. And I heard that there's in England a drug they give to sexual criminals in jail. They call it a chemical castration drug.

It actually, I guess, deadens all the hormonal things. And they were talking about using it in this country, but there were people rising up against it because they saw it as a cruel thing to do to a prisoner is to deaden his sexual passion. It's a funny thing.

I guess that's how Christians and non-Christians are different. To me, I always thought it would be a merciful thing if someone could deaden my sexual passion. But I guess in the

world they consider that to be cruel and unusual punishment.

And so they haven't approved the use of that drug in this country, I guess. But I remember thinking, boy, that would be a real nice thing to be able to do, just take a pill and no more temptations in that area. But that's not the solution God has provided.

And even if that pill could be bought over the counter at Bi-Mart in the pharmacy section, I wouldn't buy it. Not that it wouldn't bring a tremendous amount of relief from certain struggles, but God allows those struggles for me to learn to wage war. God teaches my hands to war.

And he does so by bringing struggles. It's God who is sovereign over these things, over what struggles I have and what struggles I don't have, and it's he who enables me or intends to overcome these struggles. But I can surrender the struggle to a drug now, in some cases, in some kinds of struggles.

And I do not think it's a wise thing to do myself. I won't say it's always a sin, although I'm not sure it isn't, because when Paul lists the works of the flesh, you remember in Galatians chapter 5 where he says, those who do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God, one of the things he lists there is that which I think in our New King James is probably translated sorcery. The word in the Greek is pharmakia.

And you would immediately recognize that the word pharmakia is related, it's related like an ancestor is related to a descendant, to the word pharmacy. It is the root of the word pharmacy. And pharmakia, frequently translated sorcery in the Bible, actually has to do with the use of consciousness-altering substances for occult rituals.

Now, although Christians who might take an antidepressant or some other kind of a drug to manage their moods or whatever, they may not be doing it for occult purposes. I'm not sure that the individual has the right or the power to say, well, I'm going to do the same thing that was done by these occult practitioners, but I'm just not going to do it for occult purposes. Might as well say, I'm going to use a Ouija board to find the will of God, I'm not going to consult demons with it.

I don't think that's in our power to do, to use occult methods, which taking consciousness-altering drugs throughout history has always been an occult thing to do. Smoking peyote or whatever is things that the shamans have always done. Taking various drugs that come from natural herbs and flowers and things like that has always been done by witches and occultists and so forth.

Now, if we do it because it's not a witch, but a medical doctor who's prescribing it, I'm not sure that it's up to us to say, well, I'll do this, but I won't engage demons. That these things were done specifically to invite demons, historically, throughout history, by those who practice the occult, I don't know that we have the freedom to say, well, we will

practice these same occult things, but we will just not associate it with occultism. We'll associate it with mental health or something like that.

Well, that's taking a risk I personally would never want to take with my children, and I would never allow them to have such things, if it were in my power to keep from them. Anyway, these are some of the ways that I think we could suggest, some of them directly from Scripture, some of them extrapolated from ideas that seem to be taught in Scripture, some of them strictly out of the realm of experience. All these suggestions, therefore, don't carry the exact same weight, but these are, I think, helpful, I hope, in giving some idea how some people come into the state of demonic bondage.

Yes, ma'am? I'm glad you mentioned hypnosis. I think hypnosis is another thing a little bit like consciousness-altering drugs. Hypnosis has always been practiced in the realm of the occult.

Nowadays it's practiced in psychology and even churches. Many churches have psychologically trained counselors on their staff who sometimes will use hypnosis. I have to admit, I don't understand what goes on in hypnosis.

Of course, everyone is aware of hypnosis, and there's all kinds of caricatures of it too, you know, about telling someone he's a chicken, jump off a ledge. I mean, from what I'm told, you can't really do that with hypnosis to people. I don't know, you hear different things.

But I will say whatever hypnosis is, it seems to have effect on the spiritual nature. And it's quite clear that a hypnotist is controlling, in some measure, the thinking of the patient. That's what hypnosis is for.

I had a school teacher, actually, a social psychology teacher in high school. He actually was a professing Christian, and he might even be a Christian, but he was a little mixed up in some stuff that Christians shouldn't be in, I think. But he was a counselor also.

He had private practice as well as teaching at school, and he practiced hypnosis. And he told me and others that hypnosis was just an extension of the concept of suggestibility, you know, and that if you suggest something, some people easily believe it and act according to the suggestion. Other people are more skeptical or whatever.

And he said that proneness to hypnosis varies on the scale of suggestibility. If a person is very suggestible, they are more easily hypnotized. If someone is not very suggestible, they're not easily hypnotized.

It's quite clear that a hypnotic trance, or whatever that may be, puts a person at the mercy, to some degree, of someone else. Now, there may be limits to the things that a hypnotist can make a person do against their will, and that's what this teacher told me. He says that a hypnotist could never make you do something while under hypnosis that

you would be opposed to doing otherwise.

But I'm not sure if that's true or not. I mean, I just don't know enough about hypnosis. I will say this.

Hypnosis is probably included in Deuteronomy 18. I think the King James used the word charmers. But modern commentators would use the word hypnotist.

Let me see what it says here. Deuteronomy 18, verse 10 says, There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft or a soothsayer, one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. It seems to me like the King James in one of those places... Verse 11 says there's a charmer.

Charmer in the King James, okay. But one who conjures spells, is that the first one? Yeah, the first one. Okay, yeah.

I have heard some commentators say that a charmer is actually a hypnotist. I don't know if that's true or not, but I will say this. Jesus never practiced hypnotism, and the apostles didn't, and there may have been good reason for that.

I guess my theory is that we are given in Scripture all things necessary for life and godliness. Every problem, every spiritual problem that human beings can have existed in the time of Christ, as now, and Christ and the apostles had ways of dealing with those problems. And their ways were adequate for every problem.

Therefore, when you find a human problem, a mental or spiritual problem that someone faces today, I believe you can go back to Scripture and say, is there any kind of a parallel? Is there any kind of a case in Scripture where there's this category of problem dealt with? And if so, what was the method of cure? And you never find the apostles resorting to hypnosis, or consciousness-altering drugs, or other things, which many Christian psychologists and psychiatrists would recommend today. I think that hypnosis probably is a dangerous practice, spiritually. Now, since demon possession, when it is present, doesn't always manifest itself in insanity, and there are various ways in which demon possession manifests itself in Scripture, some of which are very subtle, and some of which may not even be noticed a lot of the time.

We can't even be sure that Christians who say, well, I used those drugs, or I was a patient of hypnosis, or I practiced the occult, or I did this or that, but I didn't get demonized, it's not always all that clear to what degree a person may have come, even partially, under the influence of demons. All I can say is that when it comes to demons, Christians should stay as far on the other side of the road as they can get from those practices which put them in the devil's backyard. He that is born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one touches him not.

But if you don't keep yourself where you're supposed to be, and you go experimenting with things that you're told not to experiment with, or even things that are in the same category, even if they're not mentioned specifically, but they seem to be of the same sort, and things that Jesus never taught or practiced, or his disciples never taught or practiced, I'd say you're taking risks, and I don't think they should be taken by a Christian. Now, I want to move along to how does a person obtain deliverance? We've, to some measure, conjectured how they become demonized. We're not left with quite so much conjecture as to how they get delivered, fortunately.

The Bible doesn't give us so many clear teachings on how a person gets demonized, but there's fairly clear, at least anecdotal information, as well as principles taught on how one can be free from demonization. And perhaps the reason the Bible gives us more data on this than on the other is because it's more important for us to know. It's more important for us to know how one can be free, whether it's yourself or someone you're ministering to.

Now, it says in James 4, 7, as we pointed out before, resist the devil and he will flee from you. But resisting the devil, what does that mean? How do you resist the devil? Well, let's consider a demonized person. Let's, just for the sake of setting a scene here, let's say that you're dealing with a person who's demonized.

What should you do? What should you consider that they must do? What steps have to be taken? What ground has to be covered in order for that person to be released? Well, interestingly, when Jesus met demonized people, we don't see a lot of procedure. We just see Jesus saying, come out. And the demons came out.

Same thing when the apostles did. But that doesn't mean that some ground hadn't been covered spiritually already. Let me suggest to you, there are two considerations when it comes to delivering someone from demons that I think have to be taken into consideration.

One is that there may be reasons, grounds, that the devil has for controlling that person. And those grounds would have to be removed. If the devil has a legal right to rule that person's life, I don't think you can just go in there and cast him out.

Even Jesus didn't cast out every demon he met, as far as we know. There were still demon-possessed people around after he left. He did cast out, and he didn't heal everyone he met either.

I mean, there were sicknesses that remained after he left. And the apostles, in some cases, dealt with some of them. And we might well assume that there were cases that didn't get dealt with either by Jesus or the disciples.

But we know that there are times when a demon is there for a reason. Whether it is a

judgment from God on a person, and they need to get right with God, or whether it is not. Maybe they are born with it, or maybe they suffered trauma and they are just a victim of it.

However it got there, in some cases, whatever grounds a demon has to be present may need to be dealt with. In Proverbs 26, I take this statement I just made largely from a consideration of this. Proverbs 26, in verse 2, says, Like a flitting sparrow, or like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight.

Now what that means, apparently, is that a curse or a spell that is put upon a person will not alight upon them if it has no grounds, if it has no cause. A curse without a cause will not hit its mark. Now we are talking about a person who has already suffered from it.

But what this suggests is that a curse can only really fall upon a person and affect them if there are grounds for it, if there is a cause for it. And therefore inquiry ought to be made, it seems to me, as to why this person has a demon, and whether some business has to be done with God, between that person and God, in order to get this thing removed. At the very least, it seems that repentance, if the person has sinned, if the person has been involved in the occult, if the person has been using drugs or whatever, and something they have done that is clearly sinful, has brought this condition upon them, then repentance is, to my mind, an obvious first stage.

Now I realize that Jesus didn't go up to the demon possessed and say, repent, and then I'll cast the demon out. But we do have teaching in Scripture that the devil who keeps people in captivity often does so until they repent. In Acts chapter 8, where Simon the sorcerer was being exposed by Peter, in Acts 8.22, Peter said, Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you, for I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.

Now Peter doesn't say that the man is demon possessed, although the guy is a sorcerer, he may well have been demon possessed. Whether in a state that we call demon possession or some other kind of bondage to the enemy, the man was bound. The man had spiritual bondage in his life and he was told to repent, because he was sinning.

And this sin had to be dealt with before the bondage could be removed. Now there may be people who are demonized through no fault of their own, as I said, in which case calling them to repent may not be a prerequisite of their deliverance. But if somebody has become demonized as a result of sin in their life, repentance is called for.

In 2 Timothy, we've read this verse already, I think most of the verses I'm going to call your attention to we've read at some point already in this series. 2 Timothy 2 says that the servant of the Lord must correct those in opposition and teach them so that it says in verse 25, if God perhaps will grant them repentance so that they may know the truth and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been

taken captive by him to do his will. Spiritual bondage, captivity, requires, at least in certain cases, that repentance of sin first happen.

Now I do not believe that every case of demonization is exactly the same, because there may be different causes of it. There may be different procedures or different things called for in getting it out, but I just want to leave no stone unturned. If a person has given grounds to the enemy to occupy them, then it seems to me they must repent and obtain forgiveness from God if they are to be free from that.

They have to pull the rug out from under the devil so he has no grounds for being there. Also, I believe that forgiving others is something they must do. The devil may have grounds to be there because they are unforgiving.

Jesus himself taught this, and therefore since Jesus taught that unforgiveness can be the cause of being delivered over to torturers, it follows that they must forgive. This has become a fairly routine part, I think, of many people's activities who are ministering to the demon-possessed, is persuading them to check and see if there's anyone they are not forgiving, and see to it that they do. Some of the people that may need to be forgiven may not even be around anymore, may be dead.

A lot of people hold grudges against deceased people, and sometimes say, well, I can't forgive them because they're dead. Well, if the person is alive and you forgive them, there is reason in many cases to go to them and make reconciliation, but if the person is dead, still for your own sake, in your relation with God, you need to forgive them. Jesus said, when you stand praying, forgive if you have ought against anyone, that your Father in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

This had nothing to do with you interacting with them, it has to do with you forgiving them as you stand praying so God can forgive you. And even if you cannot go and make amends with somebody who you've held long-standing grudge against because they're no longer alive, you still must forgive them, you still must release that. Now, some have illustrated this in a helpful way, I think, because a lot of people feel that forgiveness is a feeling.

And you might say, well, I want to forgive them, but I just can't, I just have these bad feelings toward that person. And I can't control my feelings. Well, true, it may be, in some cases you can't fully control your feelings.

If I'm under torture, I might wish I could control my feelings in such a way that I feel no pain, but I don't have that option open to me. Our feelings are not always at our command, but our thoughts are and our will is. And forgiveness is an act of the will.

It is as if, for example, I borrowed \$100 from you and I wrote out an IOU. It's an IOU, \$100, signed Steve Gregg, and I gave you this IOU. And then it turned out that I fell into

extreme poverty and was never able to pay you that \$100.

Now, you could hold that IOU against me as long as you want, and justly so, because I really owe you that. But if you said, I've decided to forgive that debt, and you tear up the IOU as an act of saying, I don't hold this against you anymore. The debt is canceled.

You might still have moments where you wish you had that \$100. You might even have times where the feeling comes that I was a pretty lousy guy to borrow \$100 and not pay it back. But at the same time, you have to say, but the IOU, I've torn it up.

It's been forgiven. It's an objective fact that the debt is canceled because I have forgiven the debt. I may have recurring feelings from time to time about it.

But as an act of my will, I have said, I will and I do forgive. And insofar as any emotions to the contrary bombard me about such things, I have to remind myself, that's a past debt. That's forgiven.

That's no longer an issue. And your feelings eventually will conform to your will if you hold out. That is, if you stick by your decision.

Eventually, feelings will be brought around to conform to it. Maybe not immediately. But forgiveness is essential.

It is not optional. And it seems to me that persons who are demonized should not neglect this thing. That they should realize that there may be someone they need to forgive.

Because their failure to do so may be the very thing giving grounds to the enemy to be there. So we've got repentance from sin, forgiving others. And there's one other thing I think that probably the Bible indicates.

And that is renouncing sin and occult involvement. Especially if any particular sin is known or any occult involvement has been going on that may have been the cause. To actually verbally renounce it.

To destroy everything that you have that is related to it. We read in Acts chapter 19 that there was a tremendous move of God in Ephesus when Paul was there. Special miracles were done and so forth.

And there was a great converting of people out of the worship of Diana, the occult goddess. And what they did, we're told, is they burned all their paraphernalia. They renounced outwardly all their dealings with the cults and the occult.

It says in Acts 19 verses 18 and 19, And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them and it totaled 50,000 pieces of silver.

If a person has been brought into bondage by the practice of pornography, and they've got a bunch of magazines in the attic. I actually heard of an actual case, I forget who told this, but it was not too long ago I heard of it. A minister was counseling a man who had a serious problem in the area of pornography.

And the man seemed to get victory for a while but would fall back into it. And actually the man had a somewhat extended period of victory over it. But it came up in a counseling session once that the man still had his pornographic magazines in a box in the attic.

He wasn't looking at them anymore but they were in the attic in the box. The pastor said, why in the world do you have those there? He said, well I spent so much money on them I can't bring myself to destroy them. I spent so much money on all these videos and these magazines and these books.

And of course the pastor made it clear to him that he's never going to be really free while those things are there in the attic. He's got to destroy them. And he did.

But a lot of people have invested a great deal in their sinful habits. And once repenting they need to be renounced and you need to disconnect yourself from all of them. We had a student here about two years ago.

I don't remember what it was that triggered this. Just the Lord I guess convicted him because I don't remember teaching anything related to what he did. But he just decided that his CD collection was very dishonoring to God.

He had a lot of CDs. I believe there was about \$1,100 worth of CDs he tossed in the dumpster out here one day after one of our lectures. And I don't even remember that we lectured anything related to it.

I think God just convicted him about it at some point and he dumped his CDs in. He told me specifically he had about \$1,100 in it. One of the people on staff here had a very expensive comic book collection.

I mean a collector's comic book. So I mean first issues of, you know, comic books sometimes can be worth hundreds or maybe even thousands of dollars some editions. And yet I believe from what I understand that person destroyed them all, threw them away because they were, he thought, a connection with his old life and so forth.

And some people say, boy is that ever stupid. You got all that money sucked in there and you just toss it in the garbage. Well, the Bible doesn't indicate that it was stupid for these people to take all their occult books and it gives the value of them.

They were worth 50,000 pieces of silver. I've read somewhere how much that was worth, but I forget what the amount was. But the point is it was expensive.

There's a lot of monetary value there going up in smoke, but it was the right thing to do. These were the things that connected these people with their occult past. And a person I believe should, if they've been involved in the occult or in some other specific thing that defines how their bondage came about, I believe that biblically they should verbally renounce it.

And if they have any paraphernalia or things belonging to it, they should destroy them, not sell them. Some people think, well, I'll just take these down to the used bookstore and I'll sell these things. No, don't do that.

I mean, that's just prolonging the life of those demonic influences. You need to get rid of them. And it says here, these people came confessing, that is verbally, telling their deeds and destroying their stuff.

This I take to be often necessary. Now I will confess that the passage before us is not talking specifically about demon possession, but it is talking about involvement in some of those things that are related to demon possession. And we do read in verses before this that there were many demons going out of people, so much so that it's in the same chapter we read about the sons of Sceva deciding to try some of this Jesus stuff in their practices.

Of casting out demons. I mean, there are a lot of people being delivered from demons in Ephesus at this time. And the fact that they were renouncing their occultism and burning their books and so forth may well have been one of the factors that helped to further this deliverance campaign along.

So we have some of these basic things. If there are grounds, if the demons have grounds for being there, then you've got to remove the grounds. If it's sin, repent.

If it's lack of forgiveness, then forget. If there's been occult involvement or some specific bondage that is easy to see as the source of the problem, then I think renouncing it, destroying things like that. I've heard of many cases of persons who were going through exorcism, going through deliverance, and there were some demons that just weren't coming out.

And finally it turned out that the person was carrying in their pocket some kind of a trinket or a charm or something that they were putting a lot of their confidence in, they were very emotionally attached to or something. And it wasn't until they destroyed that that actually the final deliverance came. Because they're hanging on to something from the occult.

If you're hanging on to your demon, I don't see how the demon can be made to leave by a third party asking it to. If it's there by your invitation, I don't think anyone has the authority to override your invitation. Just like God would like everybody to be saved, but

he doesn't even force people against their will to be saved.

I don't think he forces anyone against their will to be delivered from demons either. There are people who like their demons. Occasionally demons are very scary to have around, but other times they give people powers.

Fortune telling powers, occult powers. People who have these powers sometimes like them, sometimes want to hold on to them. And I personally don't believe that even a Christian, I don't even think Jesus himself ever cast demons out of someone who wanted those demons to stay.

I'll say maybe a little more about that in a moment. But that's the first thing we have to consider with reference to deliverance. If there are grounds for the demon being present, given by the person himself, then that person needs to repent, renounce, forgive, or whatever it is it takes to undo those grounds.

To take away those legal grounds, as it were, that the devil may have for controlling them. The second part, after consideration of that, is the actual casting out of the demon. Now, I believe the person in a sense has to call on the name of the Lord.

Or at least, it doesn't hurt. It says in Joel 2.32, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And the word saved there also means delivered.

Sometimes it's translated that way. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be delivered. Calling on Jesus, calling out, you know, oh Jesus.

You know, I've heard many cases, including the case that Pastor Bloomheart records. And cases of friends of mine who went under strong demonic attack were instructed, just call on Jesus. The woman that Lester Sumrall delivered in Manila, who was in jail in protective custody, and he cast the demon out of her.

He told her, he said, the demons will probably try to come back, but if they do, just call on Jesus. And sure enough, the next day the demons did come back and try to possess her. But she just called out the name of Jesus and they fled.

Now I'm not saying that there's some magic in the word Jesus. Because a person who doesn't even know or love Jesus or isn't trusting in Jesus can use that word all they want, even in blasphemy. And that doesn't necessarily scare the demons away.

But if a person is truly calling on the Lord, I believe even if you just, if a person could just utter the name, in calling out the name of the Lord Jesus, in a true petition for deliverance, that that brings deliverance. I have known many people, perhaps some are here, although they haven't told me so, and other people here I don't think have told me about this, but I have over the years known many people who have not known each other, who in passing have told me of experiences they've had in the night, which seem

strangely similar to each other, so much so that I've decided this must be a rather common phenomenon. And that is people say they've woken in the night and felt like someone was on top of them, but no one was visibly there.

They could feel a weight like a person on top of them, and sometimes even like choking them. But they were just oppressed in a sense that they could physically feel like there was a person holding them down, almost crushing the breath out of them, and they'd wake up and they'd be startled and they couldn't see anyone, but it was as if there was someone there in all respects, except they couldn't see them. And in many cases these were Christians, and they'd begin to call on the name of the Lord, and it would go away when they'd call on the name of Jesus.

In some cases it was very difficult even to call on the Lord verbally because they were being choked or whatever, but as they finally got the name of Jesus out, the oppression left. I've heard this from so many people. I mean, over the years I'm sure I've heard it from half a dozen to ten different people.

I mean, I never asked people if they had this experience. They've just in passing or someone sharing nonchalantly that they've had these experiences. This is not uncommon apparently for some people.

I've never had the experience. But what I find common to all of them is that when they finally call on the name of Jesus, it goes away. Now this is not probably a case of demon possession, but it's clear that demonic powers cannot resist a sincere cry of the oppressed for mercy and for deliverance from Jesus Christ.

It is by calling on the name of the Lord that deliverance comes. Now, I believe, and I'm going to have to steal some of my thunder from the next point, but maybe I'll just take that point now, although I haven't finished with the one I'm on. When we ask, why is it some people are not delivered, one of the answers I give is, I'm not sure everyone wants to be.

And I don't believe that Jesus ever delivered anyone from demons who had not initiated the encounter themselves. That is to say, the demon possessed came to him or manifested themselves to him or were brought to him by their parents if they were little children. But Jesus didn't go out hunting for demons.

He didn't go looking for the demon colonies so he could go catch all the demons out of everyone there. He just went about his business, and as demon possessed people came to him, he delivered them. You'll never find a case of Jesus initiating the encounter with a demon possessed person.

And what that tells me is that Jesus didn't bother, perhaps he didn't think it would do any good, to go out and find demon possessed people who weren't already motivated to

come to him for help. Everyone that Jesus delivered came to him first, suggesting, although it doesn't say it in so many words, but it suggests to me that these people were already desirous to be helped. Even the man of the tombs who had a legion of demons, when he saw Jesus in the distance, ran up to Jesus and worshipped Jesus and said, have mercy on me.

I mean, I've heard people say, well, if a person is demon possessed, then they have no control over themselves. Well, I don't know of anyone in the Bible that was more demon possessed than the man who had a legion. But even so, he retained enough of his own will, maybe only momentarily, that God permitted him to run up and seek mercy from Jesus and he received deliverance.

But you don't ever find a case in the Bible of Jesus casting demons out, or the apostles casting demons out of a person who did not, they initiated the encounter, which suggests that they wanted help. How many demon possessed people who didn't want help didn't get any? I don't know. Paul didn't go looking for them, it would seem.

Jesus didn't go looking for them. And I say that because some might say, well, Steve, you say they have to call on the name of the Lord, but we don't find that in the stories in Jesus. We don't find always these demon possessed coming and calling on the name of the Lord.

We just see Jesus, we just hear that he cast them out with the word. Yeah, but more happened than is recorded. And the very fact that they came to him may, in essence, imply that they were calling on his name, calling on him for deliverance, that's why they came.

And I believe that a person desiring deliverance will probably not be delivered if their desire is to be delivered simply because they've had enough of this demon, they're tired of it, and it's scary and tormenting, and their life is messed up, and they really would rather be happier than they are now, and they'd like to be free of that. But they don't really want to call on Jesus, they don't really want to come to the Lord. They don't really have any interest in committing themselves to Christ, they just, there are people who'd like to be free of the annoyance of their bondage, but they're not real interested in taking on a new bondage, that is slavery to Jesus Christ.

And I don't think that anyone can expect Jesus to deliver them unless they come sincerely desiring help, and desiring it on his terms, calling on him as Lord, turning to him, not only to rescue them from their current condition, but also to be their Savior and Lord. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, Joel says, or delivered. Another factor is, of course, a word of authority from Christ.

Now, in the Gospels, I won't turn to these cases because of the shortage of our time, but we've looked at many of them, and we know there, if you've read the Gospels, you know

there are many more. We find that when Jesus confronted demons, he commanded them to come out. And when Paul confronted demons, he commanded them in the name of Jesus to come out.

It's obvious that the authority of Jesus Christ, and a command from him, or one speaking with his authority, was required. So that in addition to the victim seeking deliverance and calling on the Lord in their own heart, and maybe with their own mouth too, there needs to be, at least in the cases recorded in Scripture, there needs to be somebody, Jesus or someone in his authority, commanding the demon to come out. Fortunately, Christians have the name of Jesus, have the authority of Jesus, to give those commands just as he did.

So we have the authority of Christ. We've seen several times already Mark 16, 17, Jesus said, In my name they shall cast out demons, meaning in the name of Jesus, in the authority of Christ. We see Paul doing that in Acts 16, 18, speaking to the spirit in the woman saying, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.

And we of course see many cases in the Gospels of Jesus himself just giving the command to come out. Now, I have heard of many cases of deliverance where the person ministering didn't so much give a command, but they just prayed for the person. And in some cases that was effective.

I don't know if that's the biblical pattern, but apparently it works in some cases, just to pray and ask God to deliver them. I've read of missionaries doing this and of people actually being delivered through the prayers of the missionaries, or prayers of the Christian ministering. But while I will not deny that that could work, and I wouldn't forbid that that would be a procedure followed, that is not really the procedure of Scripture.

Jesus did not pray God deliver these people, he just commanded the demons to come out, because he had the authority to tell them what to do. Likewise, Paul and those that we read of doing the same things in the Scripture, they didn't pray that God would cast them out, they commanded in Jesus' name. As Jesus' agents, they did what Jesus would have done in the situations, they'd come out, in the name of Jesus I command you to come out, and it worked.

So I would always recommend biblical methodology over others that may seem to work. It seems that the biblical pattern is to give the command in the name and the authority of Jesus Christ. And it's really that simple.

Casting out demons seems to consist of those two things, the person calling sincerely out on the Lord for deliverance, and the person ministering to them, commanding in the name of Jesus. Now, anyone who's encountered demon-possessed people may well have had an experience that makes it seem like I'm oversimplifying things. Because you may have had an experience, I have, I know, and I know of others who have, where you end

up trying all night to get the demon to come out.

It's not just so easy, you come out in the name of Jesus and you walk away, it's all done. I mean, there are definitely times when the demons will argue back. Jesus even had the case where the demons continued to dialogue and try to negotiate with him after he told them to leave.

And Christians, not in the Bible, we don't have any examples of this in the Bible, but people in modern times have often found themselves telling the demons to come out, and the demons try to negotiate a different kind of settlement. Or the demons argue, or say, I won't come out, or whatever. Then you move into an extra-biblical situation where, well, now what do I do? I told it to come out, it didn't come out, what do you do then? As far as I'm concerned, you've got to keep waging war.

And there may be reasons why the demon didn't come out when it should have. And I'd like to suggest a couple of them. One reason that the demons may not come out, even when you have given the command, may be a failure on the part of the person.

See, I've given you two things that are necessary for deliverance. One is the person must call on the name of the Lord, that means they need to want to be delivered. The other is that you have to speak in the name of Christ.

It's a defect in one of these two things, usually, I think, that may cause the demons not to come out, when the person really doesn't want to be delivered. They love darkness. Someone else called you in because a loved one wants this person delivered, but the person doesn't really want to be delivered.

They like the attention they're getting. They like the powers they're exhibiting. They like whatever it is about it.

They just don't have an interest in being saved. They just don't have an interest in following Christ. They don't have any interest in calling out on Jesus.

And you can probably command that demon until you're blue in the face. I suggest you probably never get it out, unless that person can be persuaded to be agreeable to it. And I'm not sure that it's easy, when you're dealing with a demon-possessed person, to persuade someone to be agreeable.

I think there's two kinds of people who are in trouble. The kind who want out of trouble, and the kind who don't mind being in trouble. And the ones who want out are the ones you can help.

The ones who don't, I'm not sure that any amount of hollering and shouting and arguing and burning incense or any of that kind of stuff is going to make that demon come out. And that's one reason I think that sometimes deliverance doesn't happen when you'd

expect it to happen. The other thing, of course, is a defect in the other needed thing, the authority of Christ.

Sometimes the person speaking, trying to minister deliverance, doesn't have the authority. The sons of Sceva were a good example of that. Now, they weren't even Christians, and that's why they didn't have the authority.

But I believe that even true Christians can sometimes lack authority, if they have little faith, or if they have unrepentant sin in their life or whatever. I think there are times when they are not spiritually in the position to really stand in the name of Jesus and wage war. If a Christian has secret sin, the demons sometimes know about that.

I wouldn't want to confront a demon-possessed person and try to cast out if I had secret sin in my life, because it's going to be shouted from the rooftops. I've heard of many cases where the demons began to expose the sins of the person that was seeking to cast them out verbally and loudly. And the demons were right and knew what they were talking about.

I think that sin in the life of the person who is seeking to minister kind of neutralizes any authority they may seek to have. They're not walking in the authority of Christ, even in their own life, much less to the advantage of anyone else. Also lack of faith.

We know that when the disciples couldn't cast a demon out of the boy, in Matthew 17, verses 20 and 21, they asked, why couldn't we cast it out? Now, they were Christians, and they had cast out demons on earlier occasions, in other situations, when Jesus had sent them out as the Twelve in the Seventy. But Jesus said to them that you couldn't because of unbelief. Your faith wasn't great enough.

We know that James says that if anyone doesn't have faith, he should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. And faith is necessary for success in spiritual warfare. You might have the authority of Christ available to you, but through lack of faith you might not have the authority.

You may not be walking in that authority. And that's the same context where Jesus also talked about this kind doesn't come out, but by prayer and fasting. I believe that a casual approach to your Christian walk, where you expect instant results, and you don't care to pray much, you don't care to fast much, you don't care to get your own life in order, but you just kind of want to have victory and you want to help others.

It's not going to work. You've got to walk as Jesus walked. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked, it says in 1 John 2, 6. And if you are walking as Jesus walked, if you are a true representative of Christ, if you are resisting sin in your own life, if you are trusting, if you have faith, if you are praying, if you are fasting, if you are living a disciplined spiritual life, then I suggest that you are walking in

the kind of authority that is necessary in those kinds of encounters.

But short of those kinds of things, you may be a Christian but not have any authority at all, because your authority is dissipated by your own compromise. And so I think that on occasions where the demons don't come out when you would expect them to, there's one of two defects. Either the person is not calling on the name of the Lord himself, the possessed does not want deliverance very badly, or not on the right terms, and therefore it doesn't ever come.

Or, on the other hand, the person who is ministering doesn't have the authority, is not speaking with real authority. They might use the name of Jesus, but it sounds hollow on their lips to the demon, because he knows that that person isn't really living in the authority of Christ. And so these are the reasons, it seems to me, why it doesn't happen.

Now, I will say this. There are cases, known cases, where people were literally delivered from demons, and they walked in freedom for all, and then they became possessed again. And if we ask, why is that? I think there may be two answers suggested by Scripture.

One is that given by Jesus in Matthew 12, verses 43 through 45. Matthew 12, 43 through 45, where Jesus said, when a demon goes out of a man, it goes looking for another home. If it doesn't find one, it comes back to the same home and brings back more.

If he finds it, it's cleaned up and empty. In other words, the heart that he left is still vacant. The demon went out, but no one moved in.

Jesus has not come to occupy all the space in there. And if a person isn't fully devoted to Christ, after they've been delivered from demons, I think that they are subject to reinfestation, you know, another outbreak. It's obvious that if a person was subject to demons in the first place, only total commitment to Christ can keep them not vulnerable to repossession.

They might be repossessed. And therefore, lack of devotion or lack of total commitment to Christ might be one of the reasons why some people come back into bondage again after they've been delivered. Another might be that they simply fail to conduct themselves according to the scriptural teaching on spiritual warfare.

And that may be how they got possessed in the first place. They didn't wage war. They didn't walk in the Spirit.

They didn't have the armor of God. And they didn't wrestle. They weren't vigilant and sober.

All those things the Bible tells us to do. Neglect of spiritual warfare is no doubt what gives the devil the advantage all the time. Whenever Christians neglect spiritual warfare,

that's when they're giving the devil more of his way and without challenge.

So I think that sometimes people who've been delivered of demons get possessed again because either a lack of total devotion to Christ on their part, leaving a vacancy in their spirit for that demon to come back and reoccupy, or on the other hand, it may well be, as the scripture would suggest, the lack of spiritual warfare in their lives. They just don't take it seriously enough and they don't fight it. And you've got to realize we're not in a playground.

We're in a battleground here. This world is not a playground. We want it to be.

We want to just be holy enough just to get by and make sure we don't go to hell so many times, but we don't want to really struggle like a warrior out in the trenches. I mean, that's kind of uncomfortable. But we must.

Paul said, Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We really have to realize we're in a battle and live like we're in a battle. And even if it's an invisible battle and everyone else thinks you're shadowboxing and there's no real enemy there, you know better.

You've been informed. Now, this is about all that I have time to say on the subject of demon possession and deliverance. I hope I've covered all the important points, and of course some of them we've had to go a little bit beyond Scripture to try to even answer questions.

And I hope that you will make a distinction in your own mind between the authority of an answer that comes directly from Scripture and the authority of an answer that does not. But even answers that don't come directly from Scripture may well give some light. So we'll stop there, and we have only one more lecture in this series, and we'll close it up in our next session.