
BEING RECOVERED FROM EVIL

Excerpts from “Enjoying Your Journey with God”

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THE NATURE OF EVIL

Our culture has an incomplete and inadequate definition of evil. We tend to think of it primarily in extreme terms—like serial murderers, grotesque satanic rituals, swindlers who prey on the elderly, etc. But evil exhibits itself in many other ways without looking garish or immoral. For instance, cancer is evil. So is bitterness. Evil can be obvious like a violent temper, or invisible like envy and self-pity.

The Bible portrays evil not so much as a frightening, horror-movie type power filled with suspense or terrifying images of dark-dealings and savage, blood-dripping creatures who stalk human beings. That is how Hollywood misleads the world. The true nature of evil has almost nothing to do with the beings and powers Hollywood suggests wield it.

The forces of evil are not like characters in a dramatic sci-fi novel empowered by energies that call for “special effects” and a movie camera. They are unremarkable in themselves; almost as featureless as a virus or some bacterium. Evil itself is the emptiness and wrongness brought by those creatures to a lonely and frail old man in a dingy convalescent home, strapped to an oxygen mask as he waits out the remaining weeks of his cancer-ridden life.

Evil is a thing of loss, destruction and death—abject and utter desolation. That is because evil opposes everything of God’s desire for us. Evil attempts to counter the increase God longs to give you; it protests the Lord’s creative and restorative work in the lives of His people. Evil is the lost future and lost relationship that always accompanies death—nothing more, but nothing less.

DEATH REDEFINED

Death, as the Bible defines it, is life *other than* how God intended it to be. Death in any form is the antithesis of God’s way of life—it is anti-life. Death degrades and violates and shrinks down

everything that God has declared “*very good*” (Genesis 1:31). As a read-out of evil, death’s only interest is to vandalize and blight what is good.

Deathly things lead to loss—we lose our health, our business, our friends, our minds, our hope, etc. Like an unpredictable tornado, evil and death have gathered their funnel clouds in the air and touched down at many points in our lives, leaving a swath of wreckage and confusion behind.

Just as our physical frame can come under attack from germs, toxins or injury, so too, can the other, inner parts of our life. We have been made in God’s image (see Psalm 139:1-18). We are His masterpieces—poems He has rhymed and metered with precise beauty. Since all evil sets itself in opposition to the will of God, evil forces will seek to defy and violate the Lord’s plan for and work in your life. It is here, at the very core of your God-given personality, that the *Evil Spirited*, mount their fiercest assault.

DEMONIC ASSAULT

The *evil spirited* act like sudden blasts of wind to knock us off our feet, and they can afflict, pressure, propel and manipulate areas of the human soul to respond to their impulses. Just like a rapid heartbeat can be triggered by wayward impulses from our body—causing it to beat out of sync with its intended rhythm—so, too can our soul be driven to move out of step with what God intended for it.

When any part of the human soul (i.e., thoughts, feelings, awarenesses, choices, memories, perceptions) becomes entangled by, constrained by, or ravished by the *evil spirited*, people can be said to be in bondage in the specific and particular part of their soul they are not completely free to direct their own choices and follow the course of life that they truly want to take.

Spiritual bondage can vary in degree just like any affliction of the body, but the more acute the oppression, the more able those forces are to impose their evil soulish attributes on people’s souls. Their evil will begins to erode a person’s will; their “false” memories flood a person’s recollection; their personality traits scratch and scribble themselves, like graffiti over someone’s true-self. In extreme cases, a person begins to see and hear things as a result of the demonic perceptions being pushed into that person’s consciousness.

Remember, evil mostly manifests as depletion, brokenness, confusion, barrenness and misery—not as grotesque and frightening horrors, like we see depicted by Hollywood. Bound people do not rattle chairs or spew fire from their eyes; they live with inner brokenness and skewed perceptions.

People who are constrained in their choices by evil spirits do not bite necks and vanish in darkness; instead, they loathe themselves for not being able to stop drinking or quit frequenting adult

bookstores. When the *evil spirited* ravish human beings, they do not empower those people with superhuman energies and magic— rather, they drain away a person’s hope and strength and life. Instead of being majestic, created in the image of their heavenly Father, people end up pathetic; in the likeness of the spirits that assail them.

DEMONIC MANIFESTATIONS

As false gods, the *evil spirited*, offer human beings three basic things: protection, provision and purpose. When our thoughts, emotions, choices, or willpower claim to be able to give us those three commodities, we ought to “think twice.”

The *evil spirited* that vex human beings are rarely fantastical or grotesque. Their primary ploy is not to frighten people, but to prey upon them, unnoticed like parasites. Thus, more than anything else, evil spirits affect and distort individuals’ personalities—causing people to act or think in uncharacteristic ways. When people begin acting in a way that isn’t like them, it may be a clue that spiritual forces are at work, in addition to whatever else may be going on in their life.

Demonic footholds in the soul mostly show up in subtle ways, and evil spirits feel like personality characteristics, emotions, dispositions, attitudes, or prevailing atmospheres. That is why they so often go undetected—they mask themselves behind “stray thoughts” that “sound” like our own mind; or, emotions that “seem to come out of nowhere.” They are subtle but strong suggestions; persistent points appearing low-grade but definite feelings; unexplainable moods; stubborn states of mind; single, dominant personality traits.

Demonic beings can also manifest themselves in the guise of compulsions or obsessions—driving and harassing people with uncontrollable thoughts or intense, irresistible feelings and sensitivities. Hormones, stress, and “fleshiness” can be very compelling in their own right—but ritualistic fixations, addictions, and life-limiting coercions (phobias) are often indicators that a person is battling more than just flesh and blood.

Likewise, when our minds are bombarded with negative, hopeless conclusions—propelling us toward despair with hateful, belittling remarks about ourselves or frantic, hopeless feelings about our future—it could be the litany of a demon we are hearing, and not just normal insecurity.

Additionally, demonic presences that hover at the edges of people’s soul can trouble and oppress people with unexplainable confusion or emptiness—engulfing them with mental and emotional blankness, or entangling them with a profusion of racing thoughts and emotions. These are not just the anxious thoughts related to an upcoming responsibility, or to the future, but a preoccupation and/or deadness of mind that virtually incapacitates someone from being able to live his or her life. The unstoppable stream of their consciousness floods all else and inundates

every corner of their life with its preoccupation. They are “driven to distraction”; absolutely overwhelmed by thoughts or feelings that become their only reality.

MINISTRY OF DELIVERANCE

The most significant manifestations of God’s goodness and power are His love and grace that enable us to be forgiven for our sins. What should make us rejoice most is not that demons are subject to us in Jesus’ Name—which they are—but that His Name has saved us from eternal death away from God (Luke 10:17-20).

In commissioning His disciples, Jesus gave authority and instruction for ministering deliverance from evil spirits (Matthew 10:8; Mark 3:14-15). Obviously then, demons are meant to be reckoned with in a believer’s life, and it cannot be that Jesus gave us jurisdiction over something He would prefer that we avoided.

We have the prerogative and the responsibility to alleviate people from the cruel and debilitating loads that have been forced upon them by their enemies. As surely as God raised up deliverers, judges (Judges 2:16-18) in ancient Israel to free His people from the hands of their enemies, so He has raised us up with the same assignment. Whether their taskmasters are sinful or satanic, physical or spiritual, past or present, Jesus wants people free—and He kindly entrusts us with the hands-on work to bring about that freedom.

To bury our heads in the sand, hoping evil will pass us and others by, or, to try insulating ourselves with a theology that keeps the *Evil Spirited* at bay—outside of our nation or our person—misses the main point. Jesus is our Deliverer. He is our salvation from every manner of evil.

Even though most deliverance from evil will be processes—worked out over a period of time, rather than instantaneous events—there will be times when God’s miraculous intervention in our mental/emotional/spiritual condition brings complete freedom, in *moments*. Instead of a *season of deliverance*, we experience a sudden rescue, much like the deliverance that came to us when we first opened our hearts to receive Jesus as our Savior.

Such instantaneous deliverances, like sudden healings from bodily afflictions, are miracles. They happen as a result of the power of God, but the triggering event can be a word spoken to the bound person (Matthew 8:16); scripture (Matthew 8:16); revelation of truth (John 8:32); a simple command (Mark 5:8); love (1 John 4:18); prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21); or, simply as a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit who opens blind eyes (Psalms 146:8).

CONCLUSION

Although deliverance can either extricate us from circumstances caused by evil spirits or free us from the grasp of those spirits themselves, the liberty we experience in deliverance, brings us to a very new place. It is like having the wind, or current, turn around and go the opposite direction—advancing and aiding us—rather than opposing us. That, in turn, increases our desire to celebrate and praise God.

The Lord is “*a God of deliverances,*” and to Him “*belong escapes from death*” (*Psalm 68:20*). One of the testimonies every believer can have during the course of his or her journey with Him is:

“He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” ~Daniel 6:27