

COVER STORY: Can Demons Use Your Past Against You?

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The reality of freedom reminds me of a powerful verse in Amos 3:12: "This is what the Lord says: 'As a shepherd rescues from the lion's mouth only two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so will the Israelites living in Samaria be rescued, with only the head of a bed and a piece of fabric from a couch'" (NIV). What a vivid picture of the ruthless lion that seeks to capture and devour its prey—but also of the shepherd who interrupts the lion's meal and rescues from its jaws whatever remains of the sheep! The shepherd is not afraid to fight the lion. And the ultimate Shepherd, Jesus, is far better at delivering us than we are at getting ourselves into bondage. Jesus is stronger than any demon and His power to rescue is unmatched.

Jesus will rescue even two leg bones and a piece of an ear. No one is too far gone. Yes, demons are ruthless, but Jesus is relentless—He is better at delivering than demons are at destroying. Jesus delivered the man in the tombs, and He will deliver you.

No one is hopeless whose hope is in Jesus.



To order Vlad Savchuk's new book, Make the Devil Homeless, visit .

Ungodly Soul Ties

Soul ties are profound spiritual and emotional connections that bind you to another person, often influencing your thoughts, emotions and spiritual life. Although they are not demons, soul ties can open doors for demonic oppression. So, breaking these ties is a crucial step in deliverance and spiritual freedom.

Those who engage in occult and New Age practices widely acknowledge soul ties. Practitioners often describe spiritual connections that create lasting negative influence by binding individuals to others or to demonic spirits. Rituals, sexual encounters and shared traumas are common gateways to these bonds.

The Bible provides various examples. One is the relationship between a parent and a child, as seen in Jacob's attachment to his son Benjamin after Jacob's beloved wife Rachel died in childbirth. In Genesis 44, Judah pleaded with Joseph to release Benjamin, explaining that Jacob's "life [was] bound up in the lad's life" (v. 30). The bond between parent and child is natural but becomes unhealthy when it interferes with trusting God.

Another biblical soul tie is the friendship by which "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David" (1 Sam. 18:1). These two men shared a deep sense of love, loyalty and godly friendship. Spiritual unity among believers can also form healthy soul ties, as Paul writes in Colossians 2:2 about hearts being knit together in love within the body of Christ.

Sexual relationships also create powerful soul ties. In marriage, God designed a holy, lasting soul tie by which two individuals become one flesh. But some sexually formed soul ties begin in ungodly contexts. In Genesis 34, Shechem violated Jacob's daughter Dinah and remained strongly attached to her, even asking for her hand in marriage. Ungodly soul ties from premarital or extramarital sexual relationships open doors to demons.

Emotionally or physically abusive relationships can bind a person to their abuser. Similarly, controlling spiritual leaders can form manipulative and oppressive ties. This often occurs through agreements or rituals performed in the occult, creating soul ties not only to religious leaders but also to institutions and demonic forces.

Many unhealthy attachments last long after a relationship has ended. You can become obsessed with a person and even adopt their addictions, attitudes or mannerisms, as though part of their soul lives in you. Remaining in an abusive relationship and defending someone who is harming you is an abnormal attachment often fueled by (1) recurring dreams, thoughts and fantasies about the past relationship or (2) keeping certain items or gifts they gave you.

Your soul is important, and God wants you to worship Him “with all your soul” (Matt. 22:37). This is difficult if your soul is broken into pieces belonging to other people. God desires to restore your soul, as Psalm 23:3 reveals. He longs for you to walk in freedom, unbound by the chains of past relationships or sinful agreements.

Let’s always remember that demons are persistent, ruthless and opportunistic, always watching for a chance to enter our unguarded open doors. Demons thrive on our pain, weaknesses and sin. They seek to enslave us in deepening cycles of torment. But Jesus Christ is our Deliverer whose love knows no bounds. His power is unmatched, and His forgiveness is unfailing. No matter how deep our wounds, how great our mistakes, Jesus offers us freedom.

If you find yourself stuck in a cycle of emotional or spiritual bondage, remember that through repentance, you can receive restoration. The darkest battles are no match for the glorious light of Christ. Through His name every chain can break, every demon must flee and every open door can be sealed shut forever.

Illicit Sexual Encounters

Historically, sex has been a central element in pagan and occult practices, often serving to connect people with deities or spiritual power. Various cultures and traditions intertwine sexual acts with worship. Sex then becomes a sacred ritual that can bind participants to spiritual forces and create openings for demons.

It seems that ancient Israel also had temple prostitutes, as 2 Kings 23:7 suggests: "Then [King Josiah] tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image."

In Hindu Tantrism, sexual acts are used to awaken kundalini, a spiritual energy symbolized as a serpent coiled at the base of the spine. Ritual sex represents a union with cosmic forces and is believed to bring enlightenment and divine power. In modern Wiccan and neo-pagan traditions, rituals like the "Great Rite" use symbolic or actual sexual acts to represent the union of male and female divine forces. This is seen as a way to generate spiritual energy and connect with nature or supernatural realms.

In some African tribal religions, spiritual marriages (with spirits) are common. Through dreams or rituals, individuals engage in sexual acts with spiritual entities, hoping to acquire blessings or power. Similarly, Mesoamerican cultures such as the Aztecs and Mayans included sexual rites and often human sacrifices as part of their ceremonies to honor gods of fertility and agriculture.

Satanism also integrates sexual rituals into its practices, often in deliberate defiance of Christian moral values. These acts are used to invoke demonic entities, blending sex and magic as a way to gain personal power or fulfill desires.

What ties these practices together is the belief in sex as a gateway to the spiritual realm. Unfortunately, these acts

often result in spiritual bondage rather than liberation, creating soul ties and allowing demons to torment and oppress. The Bible warns us of the spiritual consequences of sexual sin, saying that “he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her” (1 Cor. 6:16). Many cases of deliverance I have seen involve people plagued by tormenting dreams or demonic oppression tied to sexual encounters.

Living a sexually pure life is a critical safeguard against demonic spirits. A condom might protect against physical disease, but it cannot shield you from spiritually transmitted demons that can be transferred through sinful sexual encounters.

I remember praying for a young man who had a demon enter him via sex with a witch. He didn't know she was a witch, but after that sexual encounter his manhood was compromised. He sought prayer because he felt something had entered him during that illicit experience. As I began to pray, a demon manifested violently. No one could restrain the man; he even broke a guitar belonging to the church. But he was finally set free from that powerful demon.

Unforgiveness and Bitterness

We have already seen how harboring unforgiveness gives demons a legal foothold. Jesus warned in Matthew 6:15, “If you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (NIV). Unforgiveness is contrary to God's nature and limits His ability to operate freely in our lives. Bitterness is like poison, and demons thrive on its destructive power.

The apostle Peter addressed Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8:22–23, saying, “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.” Simon was baptized and saved but had allowed bitterness to fester in his heart and become the root

cause of his iniquity. This demonstrates how untreated bitterness can invite demonic forces to enslave even believers.

Jesus illustrates this truth through a parable in Matthew 18:21–35. A servant who had been forgiven of an enormous debt by his master refused to forgive a fellow servant who owed him far less. As a result, the master handed him over to the torturers (v. 34), which represent demons that gained access through offense and bitterness. When we receive forgiveness from God but refuse to extend it to others, we invite demonic torment.

Betrayal can happen to us, but bitterness doesn't have to follow. To walk in freedom, we must choose to forgive those who hurt us. This involves confessing our unforgiveness, resisting the enemy through prayer and repentance, confronting the offender with love and surrounding ourselves with a community of believers who can support us. Counseling and time will help heal the wounds caused by betrayal and offense, but forgiveness is the first and most crucial step.

In Matthew 18:7, the Greek word for offense is *skandalon*, which refers to the trigger of a baited trap. When an animal attempts to snatch the bait, the trap snaps shut, catching the creature. Similarly, an offense is an enticement to destructive behavior, and it ensnares and ruins whoever takes the bait.

A few years ago, a mouse got into my office. I knew I wasn't fast enough to catch it, so I did what any good homeowner would do: I bought a mousetrap and let it do its work. I didn't force the mouse to take the bait. I wasn't even home when the poor creature was enticed. But its appetite triggered the trap, and the mouse was terminally ensnared.

Offense is the devil's bait. When someone hurts us and we take offense, the trap springs shut. Then the devil uses our anger,

grudges, bitterness and resentment to convince us that we're in control. We build walls to protect ourselves from others, but the walls isolate us. To avoid the devil's trap and further demonic influence, we must forgive quickly and refuse to let bitterness take root.

Vladimir Savchuk is a pastor, author and leader of Hungry Generation Church in Washington. He equips believers to break demonic strongholds and live victoriously. He lives with his wife, Lana, inspiring others to pursue God's power and purpose. His new book, *Make the Devil Homeless*, is available now at .