

Deliverance is Not an Option to Set the Captives Free

Jesus won our redemption on Calvary. He took away the shame of our sin long before we were born. But we must appropriate that wholeness into our lives. We must take authority over Satan and renounce all control he might claim over us. There is still a demonic power in this world, and we have to be on guard against it. It is this power that is deceiving younger generations and swaying them away from God to the point that Gen Z is now the most atheistic generation yet. It is teaching them love of sin instead of freedom from it in Christ. It is an epidemic that most people shrug off or refuse to see as existing. The enemy wants to teach us to love our sin and be comfortable in it because He doesn't want us to know how freeing a life committed to Jesus is. He wants to keep us in bondage, and so many of us are falling for this trap.

We are even falling into this snare by who we acknowledge as powerful. A recent survey found that more Americans believe in Satan than in God. However, I don't encourage anyone to be more concerned about what the devil is doing than how God is moving in the earth. The reality is that even among Christians there is a level of satanic activity that must be dealt with if we are to live a Spirit-led life.

Most Christians seem to overlook the ministry of deliverance, but Jesus integrated it with the believer's call to evangelism in the Great Commission found in Mark's Gospel. Not only did He say, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel," but He said, "In My name they will cast out demons."

We also must be wary of strongholds and not demons alone. Bad habits often have other problems at their root, including strongholds in the mind or soul. James Robison makes the point well that strongholds are not demons. If they were, we could

cast them out. A stronghold is like a beachhead from which Satan tries to attack us. Another way to see it is as a dungeon that contains unhealthy thought patterns. At the center of any stronghold is an idea that runs contrary to the nature and character of God. This is something I go into more depth about in my new book, 'Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-Down World,' which released last week. That idea may be:

- Fear
- Insecurity
- Lust
- Greed
- Pride

Any number of "faithless" thoughts like these can form the center chamber of a stronghold. Sometimes what appears to be a sexual problem is really a stronghold of insecurity or fear.

Then there is an inner wall of reasoning and human logic. This is built when we try to fight a stronghold on human terms with arguments, intellect and analysis. The inner wall can become a barrier to getting rid of the stronghold because no matter how much we think about it, or will it away, it will not budge. As the Bible says, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts." Strongholds are supernaturally built and must be torn down by supernatural means.

An outer wall of pride also keeps us from victory. This pride sometimes leads to fear that others will find out about our problem. Perhaps this wall is built when we grow fond of the pet sin we have, or brag about it—the kind of thinking the Bible calls a "high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." If we are to be free, we cannot fear what others will think. We must be willing to throw down our pride and admit who we really are—to ourselves and to others. We

cannot fawn over or make excuses for our particular area of weakness.

Instead of encouraging those around us to sit in their sin, we must show them there is a way that leads to true life. There is a place where living waters spring forth—and that is found in the person of Jesus Christ. {eoa}

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