

LIVE with Greg Locke: 7 Bible Proofs of Demonic Warfare

The critics of deliverance ministry most often point to this argument: They claim it is impossible for a born again Christian to suffer demonic oppression, and in their estimation, they believe the Bible itself says so.

The first verse these critics will point to is 1 Corinthians 6:19, which says believers are the “temple of the Holy Spirit,” which we absolutely are. But in the context of the passage, we see that Paul is explicitly talking about sexual immorality and is reminding us that we should never desecrate our bodies (our temples) with perversity like fornication. Moreover, verse 19 never states that such perverse contact is not possible for one who is indwelt with the Holy Spirit, just that it must never happen.

In verses 15–18, he is talking about the way we treat our bodies through idolatry and the perversity of the culture. Not one time in either of these passages does the Word of God say that a Christian cannot be under the influence of a demonic spirit. In fact, since we know that idolatry and perversity are an example of how “we wrestle” against spiritual wickedness (Eph. 6:12), we can see that such struggles are evidence that evil spirits can without question attack our minds and our bodies. In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul states it plainly:

“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing,” (Rom. 7:18-19).



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1. Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

Second Corinthians 12 records an unusual experience: Paul is called up to the third heaven and sees things that God won't even let him write about. He comes back and says in effect, "Because of the abundance of the revelations, I was given a thorn in my flesh," meaning in his body. This affliction obviously bothered him because he's on record for praying about it three times. Without giving us detail, Paul said the thorn in his flesh was "a messenger of Satan to harass me." The word messenger here is the Greek word *angelos*, which is also the word for "angel." An angel of Satan is a demon.

2. Peter's Rebuke

In Matthew 16, after Peter rebuked Jesus for saying He must go to Jerusalem to be killed, Jesus looked at Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a hindrance to Me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man" (v. 23, ESV). Was Jesus literally calling Peter, Satan? No, He was basically saying, "Peter, you are under the influence of the devil right now." Peter never would have said that otherwise. If, like Paul, Peter can be attacked by demons, so can we.

3. Ananias and Sapphira

In Acts 5, as the church abundantly grew after the day of Pentecost, we find a man named Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. This was after Pentecost, so the Holy Ghost had already fallen at this point, so this couple had been saved, filled with the Spirit and baptized.

In the text, we learn that Ananias and Sapphira sold some land and gave part of the money to the church, but that obviously wasn't the problem. The problem was that they said they had given it all. They lied, and were trying to look holier than thou because of the previous context in the story (Acts 4:36), when Barnabas (the "son of consolation") gave a large sum of money to the church and everybody responded in praise.

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Ananias was saved, and outwardly just as righteous as Barnabas and the rest of them. He more than likely started out well in his sincerity, but something got ahold of him. Peter provides the answer when he asked Ananias, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 5:3, ESV). The word filled implies oppression—something happening from the inside.

Ephesians 5:18 instructs us to "be filled with the Spirit" (the capital S always denotes the Holy Spirit), and in the account of Ananias, Peter uses the same word for "filled." So even though Ananias was filled with the Holy Ghost, he was now full of the devil. For that, he was technically speaking for the devil because he had a lying spirit in him.

Peter called it out, and Ananias dropped to the floor dead, and his wife suffered the same experience three hours later.

4. Giving Place to the Devil

Ephesians 4 has a lot to do with the flesh. The works of the flesh are opposed to the things of God, but the Bible tells us how to crucify the flesh. The biblical progression for deliverance ministry is to crucify the flesh and cast out a demon—not the other way around.

The Bible says when we're dealing with our flesh, we put away the old man, which is deceitful according to its wicked lust

(Eph. 4:22). Then we “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (v. 24) because of the blood of Jesus.

5. The Spirit of Fear

In 2 Timothy 1:7, Paul writes, “God hath not given us the spirit of fear.” When he says “us,” he’s talking to the church. In the context, he’s like a pastor talking to his sheep. Notice he didn’t call it an atmosphere or an attitude—he called it a spirit. Fear is a demonic spirit. And, as the apostle John taught us, perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:8).

So if God says to the church, “I have not given you the spirit of fear,” that would reveal that some people in the church indeed struggle with that spirit. That’s certainly what we see with our own eyes. But as the Bible says, this spirit does not come from God. It had to come from somewhere because the text says that Christians are oppressed by it, so we know it comes from the enemy.

6. Giving Heed to Seducing Spirits and Doctrines of Demons

Once again writing to Timothy, Paul says under inspiration, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1). He’s not warning us about what the godless culture is going to do.

We already know that the culture is on a collision course with destruction. We also know we can’t follow Jesus and the culture at the same time—it’s impossible. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways (James 1:8). So this isn’t a warning to the world, it’s to the church. Paul is warning us that in the last days God’s people will give heed to and be seduced by demonic spirits.

It’s hard to give heed to something that’s not talking to you,

and anything that can talk is a person (in this case, a demon). These people will not only give heed to seducing spirits but will also begin to give heed to demonic doctrines. From this we see that once you listen to a demon doctrine, you start to give in to demons.

7. Turned Aside and Taken Captive

In 1 Timothy, Paul wrote to his spiritual son, Timothy, that many of the people in the church—namely the younger widows—had “turned aside after Satan” (1:15). From that we know that they were being influenced by something that had not influenced them before. Then in 2 Timothy 2:26, referring to different people but the same context of the church, the text says they had been “taken captive” by the devil. Being taken captive means you are being manipulated and controlled by an outside source. These people were taken captive by the devil and were acting according to his will.

If you believe a demon can't oppress your flesh, you're wrong. Remember that God is omnipresent, so God's Spirit dwells with the evil of the culture, right? In fact, as David wrote under inspiration, “If I make my bed in [hell], you are there!” (Ps. 139:8, ESV). {eoa}



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