

Dealing With Demons From Your Past

Don't look back—unless you need to deal with demons from your past that continue to pull you out of God's will and into sin.

Some of us have dramatic testimonies of how God delivered us from dark places into which even your typical sinner doesn't venture. But if we aren't truly free from the demonic influences that held us in bondage, we could fall back into the snare of the enemy once again. We are forgiven from our past sins, but sometimes we must deal with our past demons.

I'm a big advocate of not looking back. Unless I'm sharing my testimony to help another, I don't talk much about the past. After all, I'm a new creature in Christ. The old Jennifer has passed away. I was crucified with Christ and I am no longer living for myself. I am letting Christ live His life through me. My position in Christ is clearly spelled out in the Word of God, but that doesn't mean when I got saved I was immediately delivered from demons of the past that plagued my soul. I'm not talking about character flaws or immaturity. I'm talking about demonic strongholds like drug use that, left unchecked, would have ultimately destroyed me.

If we don't deal with the demons from our past, the devil will come at a more opportune time and try to steal, kill and destroy us. I'm not suggesting here that a relatively stable and growing Christian embark on a guided expedition in their soul to dig up something that's not really there and magnify it, or visit a deliverance minister just in case there's a demon that needs to be cast out. Doing those things can cause problems that didn't exist. Indeed, many issues are just our emotions raging and we need to learn to submit our feelings to the Word and renew our mind.

Demons from the past are often recognizable as persistent issues that hold you back from God's best. When you encounter one, it's like hitting a wall that you can't leap over, get around, dig under or break through. It's a bondage. Often, deliverance ministry is required. But even then, you have to do your part.

I believe the Holy Spirit is faithful to bring to our attention the issues that we need to deal with, if we don't already see them. He may do that one-on-one or use a trusted person in your life to point out a problem in love. When we can see a demonic stronghold, whether subtly in our thoughts or fully manifest through our actions, we need to get help. If we are well aware that demons from our past are leading us into dangerous temptations, and especially if we are falling into the trap, we need to get help. We need to deal with the demons of our past.

You've probably heard the phrase "his past came back to haunt him" or talk of a "ghost from the past." I'm not talking here about past sins people committed, renounced and repented of. That's under the blood. I'm talking about deep emotional wounds that were buried alive and didn't make it to the cross. Often times, a demon will attach itself to those old wounds and manifest through issues like fear, addiction, anger or depression. There could also be generational curses at work. What happened in our past isn't always our fault. Others can inflict deep wounds on us without any causative action on our part. Perhaps we were not equipped to deal with the fallout, so we built up protective walls or destructive habits that sabotage our relationships, our jobs, our homes and our very lives.

You've no doubt read the news headlines of prominent ministers whose "past came back" to haunt them. Some were sexually molested as children and later fell into homosexual affairs as adults. Others were addicted to drugs and alcohol and the pressure of ministry caused them to return to those spirits

for comfort and escape, only to sober up to spirits guilt and condemnation.

But let's drill down beyond the headlines into the everyday lives of believers. Let's bring this home. Dealing with demons from the past doesn't always mean dealing with sexual immorality or drug abuse. Demons from the past can simply mean resolving unforgiveness toward someone that hurt you, or seeking forgiveness from one you've hurt so you can rid yourself of the guilt that torments your mind.

So how do you deal with demons from your past? Acknowledge that there is a problem. Confront it courageously. Stop running from it. Don't deny it's there. Don't try to build your walls higher. Take off the mask you've been using to disguise the pain you are going through. That requires humility, but humility opens the door to God's grace. Get some help from trusted Christians in your life that are equipped to help you find the deliverance and healing you need in Christ. Don't worry about what other people are going to think if they know the truth. If they are discerning people, they probably already know you are struggling. Where you find yourself may not be your fault, but getting free requires you to take responsibility for your choices now.

The same old emotions may continue to come even after you deal with the demons of your past. But when Jesus sets you free by the power of the Holy Ghost, you are free indeed. Once you confront the demons from your past, you will gain a new perspective. When those old emotions, those old thoughts and temptations, come rolling back around, you will be able to recognize what is happening and respond rather than reacting to the demon's taunt. As you continue to do this, you will build your spiritual muscles and eventually the demon will give up and go bother someone else. God will meet you at the point of your decision and help you overcome the demons of your past. Victory belongs to you. Decide to walk in it.

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