

Freedom from Destructive Spirits

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this study on *Freedom From Destructive Spirits*. This booklet is a supplement to the NYM Family Studies series.

In past years, many Aboriginal church leaders and Christian workers have been very concerned about the breakdown in families. They have seen a great need for Bible teaching in this area. A number of pastors and Christian workers started specific teaching on this subject. In 1977, a number of them began putting their family life teaching together to make a set of lessons that everyone could use.

Today, as never before in our lifetime, the family is under attack. Satan is trying to destroy the family unit as God set it up in the beginning. Through families of father, mother, and children, with the father as leader, God has worked to build individual lives, communities, churches, and nations. Today Satan is seeking to destroy these institutions by breaking apart the basic family unit as God planned it. One method he uses is evil spirits.

This booklet is written to expose the work of Satan and evil spirits, to give an understanding of how they operate in families and to point the way to freedom from their power.

FREEDOM FROM DESTRUCTIVE SPIRITS

“But thanks to be God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:57)

Just as surely as there is a God in heaven with His angels, so there is Satan with his followers, the demons, on this earth.

The Bible says that Satan is real. The Bible first speaks of him in Genesis 3. He was in the Garden of Eden. There he showed himself to Eve in the form of a snake. Satan appears often in the Bible. Revelation, the last book of the Bible, tells of his destruction. There is the prophecy that Satan and his followers will be thrown into a lake of fire as

their eternal punishment.

When Jesus was on earth, He often healed people of natural sickness. But sometimes their problems were the result of attacks from Satan and his evil powers. In these cases Jesus fought against Satan. He commanded demons to come out of people. There were demons that caused sickness. Other demons caused the body to be twisted and misshaped. Still others caused people to go insane. Some demons caused uncontrolled feelings of lust, anger, and jealousy. Jesus was not overwhelmed by these demonic occurrences when He saw them. Jesus won the final victory over Satan when He rose from the grave after His death on the cross.

SATAN AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Demons are spirit beings that obey Satan. They have no home. They wander around the earth looking for a place to live.

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.” (Matthew 12:43)

Demons do not have bodies of their own. They are always looking for a human being to live in.

Satan and his demons sometimes get a place in a person's life through a medium such as a witch doctor, medicine man, conjuror, or shaman. Demonic influence may also be transferred through spiritualistic or occult games or other practices. Spiritualistic practices are found all over the world in almost every culture. The Apostle Paul spoke against them when he rebuked the people in Athens for the many false gods in their city.

This is not to say that all traditional practices of medicine men were the work of Satan. Often they used plants and other natural substances to make healing medicines, using them as Creator God intended. So, it would be unfair to say

that all their practices were evil. How then can we tell what is evil and what is not?

SATAN'S GOALS

Satan promises knowledge and power that do not come from the God of the Bible or from His Son Jesus Christ. People the world over are attracted by this power and are willing to turn their backs on God and follow Satan. But Satan's ways are also full of mystery and fear. They do not bring the peace of mind and heart that people seek.

One of Satan's goals is to control people. He brings people into bondage (see Romans 8:15). His wish is to make people act in evil ways. Satan and his demons bring fear, lust, hatred, uncontrollable anger, jealousy, envy, pride, and stubbornness. All Christians must deal with these. But Satan also has especially strong and specific power over some people. At times it takes special wisdom to know what is normal temptation and what is a special act of Satan and his demons.

Evil spirits always try to gain power over people. In traditional religion practised among some tribes, power was very important. A witch doctor or shaman was known for his power over people. He could cause strange things to happen. His power was mysterious and brought fear to people. There were good reasons to be afraid. If the witch doctor placed a hex or a curse on a person, that person could die.

Years ago a group of Aboriginal men went to a neighbouring village to sell their furs. In that village lived some powerful witch doctors. While the trappers were there, one of them did something that upset one of the



witch doctors. This witch doctor became angry and put a curse on the man. The trappers left for home the same day. The next day while they were still on the trail, the man who had received the curse began to get sick. By the time they reached home he was very sick and immediately went to bed. His people tried everything they knew to help him, but within four or five days he died. The curse had done its work.

Practises like this are not from God, because "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7)

God hates witchcraft. **It is sin!** It is rebellion against God. In His law, God told the ancient Israelites that any witch, conjuror or shaman was to be killed. "You shall not permit a sorceress (witch) to live." (Exodus 22:18; also see Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

God also hates any other occult practices such as fortune-telling or conjuring. These do not bring glory to God but lift up Satan instead.

Satan and his demons draw people into their power by tempting them. They use something that looks good as bait. They often work through the emotions and feelings. They often do this in secret. Sometimes the person who is being controlled does not even know who is controlling him.

SATAN'S METHODS

Here are some ways that Satan and his demons work to influence people's lives.

1. **Prophecy.** They tell things that will happen in the future. In one community, medicine men were expecting and predicting a message from beyond the grave to give them directions for getting Satan's religion started again.

True spiritual wisdom is needed here. There is also prophecy which is from God in heaven. Godly prophecy always has its foundation in God's Word, the Bible. Godly prophecy always comes true at the proper time. Godly prophecy may deal with great and earthshaking matters. But it does not hide in the darkness of mystery and fear as the false prophecy of Satan sometimes does. Godly prophecy always carries with it the assurance that God is in control and that He will take care of His children.

2. **Healing.** A witch doctor with power is often expected to give healing to people. One family had a young

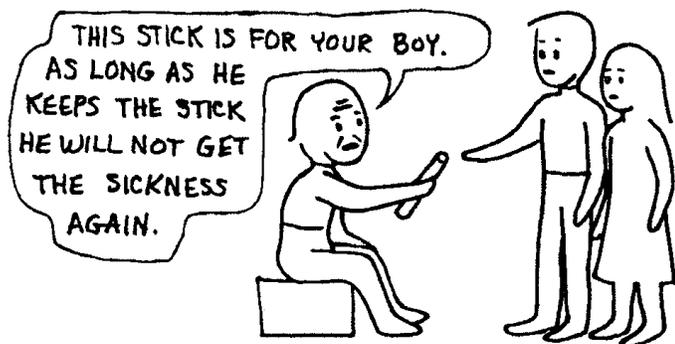
son with an illness that kept getting worse. He spent much time in the hospital but did not improve. The family brought him home and took him to the local witch doctor. The witch doctor did a drumming ceremony and then gave the boy a small stick. He told the parents that they must keep the stick at all times. If they lost the stick, the sickness would come back. The boy recovered and did not get the sickness again. Later as a young man, he became a Christian. He threw the stick away, claiming Jesus' protection over his health. He did not get sick again.

Of course God heals people physically, emotionally and spiritually. But God never uses healing as a way to get control or power over people. Healing from God is a free gift of His mercy, which He gives to whom He will.



God also gives dreams and visions at special times. But dreams and visions from God are not covered with fear and mystery. They are founded on the truth of God's Word in the Bible. With dreams and visions from God come peace and assurance of God's love. The events which follow the dream or vision will prove that it is true.

6. **Fear** is often used to gain control of people. In one village, almost everyone is afraid of the "Black Man" who walks the trails at night. While working in that village one summer, a Christian met up with this demon of fear. One night while sleeping, he was suddenly awakened. He felt that there was someone strange in the room. He was almost overcome with fear. He could not call out to others sleeping in the same room. Then he began praying, calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus and claiming the power of Jesus Christ's blood. After that the oppression of the evil spirit went away.
7. **Discouragement.** Satan likes to keep people discouraged. That way they will never be a threat to his control. Discouragement can cause people to quit and go somewhere else. The only way to win is to stand in the power of Jesus' name and resist the spirit of discouragement.
8. **Lying.** Demons are liars. Through their lies they have great power over people (*see Luke 8:29*). They try to destroy peace of mind, healthy bodies and good relationships among people.
9. **Confusion.** Demons will try to spread confusion about spiritual truth. Jesus told His disciples about this in Matthew 13:37-39. Satan sows weeds (wicked people) among the good seed (righteous people) that God has planted. This confusion can cause splits and divisions among Christians and can hurt good fellowship.



3. **Anger outbursts.** People under the influence of Satan sometimes have uncontrollable anger that drives them almost insane.
4. **Helper Spirits.** These spirits can help people do extraordinary things. They can also be protective spirits of families. One young man told how his family had a certain animal as their guardian spirit. They had a picture of the animal on the wall of their house. Whenever he got too close to the picture, he would break out in a rash.
5. **Visions and dreams.** Demons try to gain control over people through dreams and visions. One man was walking home from hunting on a winter evening. As he neared home, he saw a man walking across the path in front of him. When he reached the place where the man had walked, he could not see any tracks in the snow. He was sure it had been a *windigo* (a ghost-like evil spirit in Ojibway tradition). He rushed home and told the rest of the village what he had seen. They were very afraid, packed their belongings and fled the same night.

10. Physical Attack. Evil spirits attack people physically. These unclean spirits can cause all kinds of sexual sins such as homosexuality, perversions, and lust. This uncleanness is a result of rebellion in man's heart. God hates this kind of uncleanness (*Romans 1:24–32*) and will punish it.

Christians can resist these attacks of Satan by the power of Jesus Christ. It is never wise to play around with Satan and his demons. Their attacks should always be taken to Christ, the One who defeated Satan on the cross.

ROPES OF SIN

Christians can resist demons and send them away. In 1 Corinthians 10:20, we read that Christians are to have no fellowship with demons. In 2 Corinthians 6:14–16 is the question, “*What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.*”

Even Christians can be hindered or attacked by demons. Paul the apostle, a great preacher, said that Satan had hindered him from going to visit the Christians in Thessalonica (*1 Thessalonians 2:18*). When someone is troubled by attacks from Satan, it does not necessarily mean that he has been directly involved with demons. Sometimes there may have been some form of spiritualistic or occult practices in the family's past. “*For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me.*” (*Deuteronomy 5:9*)

Involvement with evil spirits may come from personal contact with demons or from a family contact. No matter how the contact has been made, it becomes like a rope tied to a person. Evil spirits bring bondage. The Bible speaks of ropes of iniquity and sin. “*His own sins will trap the sinful. He will be held with the ropes of his sin.*” (*Proverbs 5:22 NLV*)

Sin binds a person to the power of Satan. But thank God, these ropes can be cut by the decision of the one who is bound, by united prayer and by the blood that Christ shed for the forgiveness of sins. The Holy Spirit also helps by giving understanding.

FREEDOM

What can be done if a person is oppressed or attacked by Satan and his demons? Three simple but powerful steps can be taken.

First, freedom can begin only when the person under attack truly wants to break the power of Satan in his life. An

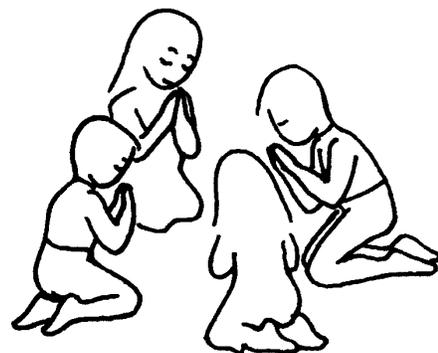
oppressed person can ask other believers to come alongside to help.

Second, the person seeking freedom should make a simple prayer of renunciation. He may pray something like this: “In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of His blood on the cross of Calvary, I renounce Satan and all his influence and hindrance upon my life and my family. Help me to walk in victory by daily trusting in the power of Your blood.”

Third, together in prayer, the rest of the group also renounces Satan in the name of Jesus, claiming freedom by the power of the blood of Christ. Sometimes they may need to pray for understanding to name the particular spirit or spirits which are troubling the person under attack, especially if the name is known to that person. It may also be helpful to fast (go without food) for a time.

Everyone who prays against an evil spirit should keep these things in mind.

1. Freedom is possible only through Jesus Christ (*see Galatians 1:3–4 and 1 John 3:8*).



2. For complete and lasting freedom, every charm and object of sorcery has to be destroyed. In Acts 19, the believers in Ephesus brought all their books of magic together and burned them.

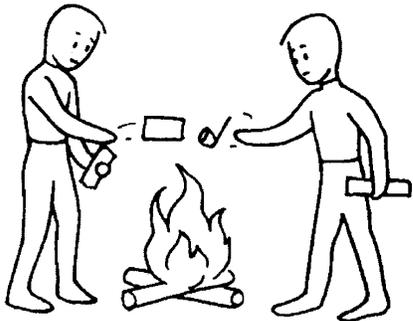
A number of years ago, an Aboriginal man was led to the Lord by a fellow believer. The new Christian had been a witch doctor and had used his power on other people. The day following his conversion, the new Christian got his friends together. He brought out his sacred objects that he had used in casting spells and curses. They all prayed over these things to break the power of Satan. They prayed to put themselves under the power and protection of Jesus Christ and His blood. Then they threw the sacred objects into the fire and burned them. That man has lived many years since then. He has been a faithful and victorious Christian. He has never been troubled by attacks from evil spirits.

His family has also been protected by the power of Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

Items that have been given ceremonial and spiritual meaning can be like “magnets” which draw demonic influence into the life and home of the person who owns them. One young Christian had a suit which he had used in ceremonial dance. On the suit were various symbols with traditional spiritual meaning. The suit was stored under his children’s bed. A number of times the children were frightened at night by strange noises in their room. After the suit was destroyed there were no more noises.

God’s Word about images and symbols such as these is:

“You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it; but you shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.”
(Deuteronomy 7:25–26)



3. Any close contacts with other people who are into witchcraft must be broken. This is especially important for a new believer. He may even have to break close contact with his family for a while until he has grown stronger in his faith.
4. It is important to fully disclose the truth about evil practices. The person seeking deliverance must confess his contact with those evil powers to his prayer group (see James 5:16). Witchcraft and the occult are hidden, secret things. Evil must be brought to light. Confession destroys Satan’s foothold.
5. There must be a definite prayer of renunciation of (saying “no” to) Satan’s power. Satan is a liar. He will continue to claim ownership even after a person has accepted Jesus as Savior.

One young man was under the power of alcohol and

suffered from D.T.’s (delirium tremens). A Christian friend prayed with him and he was miraculously delivered. The next day his friend asked him to pray and renounce the power of demonism and the curses and counter-curses that were in his family. He would not pray this prayer. Since that time, that young man has lost his healing from alcoholism and has fallen back under the power of alcohol.

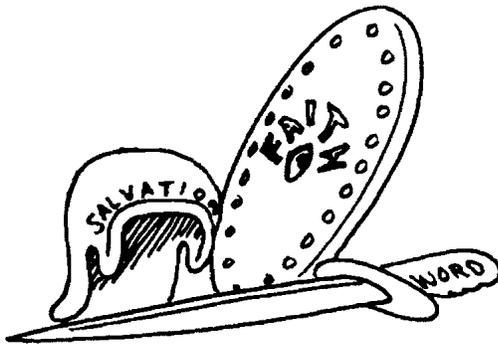
6. When someone finds true freedom, he accepts the forgiveness of sin which Jesus Christ offers. He fully believes the truth of 1 John 1:9. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*
7. Those who are helping an oppressed person find freedom need the support of a prayer group. Other Christians can pray while the counselling is going on. The prayer group should continue to pray for the person even after he finds freedom. There is always danger of the evil forces trying to win back the hold that they lost.
8. Fasting (going without food) can be a meaningful support to prayer for freedom (see Matthew 17:21 and Mark 9:29).
9. The protection of the blood of Jesus Christ is necessary. The blood of Jesus Christ which was given on the cross at Calvary will cause the demons to be afraid. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sins (see Hebrews 9:11–14).
10. There is a time for commanding the evil spirits in the name of Jesus. When a counsellor can get nowhere talking to someone who is under demon control, it may be necessary to command the demon power to leave. This should never be done without serious consideration. It should be done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 16:16–18).
11. Evil spirits can return. One who has been delivered from the power of evil spirits can be attacked again if he stops desiring victory and does not fill his life with God’s power (see Matthew 12:43–45). This is especially true if he returns to family or friends who are still involved with demonic activities.
12. Weapons of spiritual warfare are needed. Christians in warfare need the armour of God: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the shoes of the good news of peace and the sword of the Spirit (see Ephesians 6:14–17).

13. Christians must stand on the victory that Jesus Christ has already won. "I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one." (1 John 2:13)

One who has found freedom from an evil spirit must keep coming regularly to God and His Word so that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, he can grow strong as a Christian. His faith must be built on God's foundation: Bible teaching, fellowship and prayer (see Acts 2:42).

14. There must be complete surrender to Jesus Christ. If there is something in a believer's life over which he has not given Jesus full control, this leaves an opening which evil spirits can use to gain control. Everything must be given to the Lord Jesus. "...present your bodies a living sacrifice..." (Romans 12:1).

A counsellor was talking with a man who was under the power of evil spirits. The counsellor asked the voices coming from the oppressed man, "Why don't you leave him alone?" The demons replied clearly, "We have attacked him because he did not surrender his life completely to the Lord."



It is dangerous to oppose evil spirits in a light-hearted way. Even the archangels do not oppose Satan's force in their own strength. They oppose Satan under the mighty name of the Lord God. (see Jude 1:8). The Christian who surrenders himself to Jesus Christ as Lord does not have to fear. Jesus' way is the way to victory. God's Word gives hope to the believer. Through faith every believer can shout in triumph with the apostles of the early church.

- "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)
- "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)
- "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (Romans 8:37)
- "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:57)

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