

DEMONOLOGY AND DELIVERANCE #4

Introduction

Galatians 5:16-17

I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for to one another, so that you may not do the things you please.

We have seen how some of the spiritual warfare we encounter in our journey with Jesus can be demonic in nature. But much of our opposition arises from what the New Testament calls the “desires of the flesh”. We need discernment to know which is which!

So our title tonight is a question:

Flesh or Demons?

This is the critical question facing Christians who are struggling with problems in their journey with Jesus. Is my problem just in me, just in my flesh? Or am I dealing with demons?

Derek Prince

“In the spiritual realm, as in the physical, correct diagnosis is essential. So it is important to know, in confronting our own problems or those of other people, what we are dealing with. Is it (the problem) the flesh? Or is it demons? The question is of vital importance because the remedies are quite different.”

The Word of God gives us the answer...

The Biblical remedy for the flesh is crucifixion.

The Biblical remedy for demons is to cast them out.

We cannot cast out the flesh; and we cannot crucify a demon.
We cannot apply the right remedy until we know which is which!

I. Is it Flesh or is it Demons?

A. Definitions

1. We have already defined demons: A demon or evil spirit is a person without a body; it craves to enter into a person in order to express its evil nature. But what do we mean by the term “flesh”?

2. The Bible uses the term in many different ways; it does not limit the meaning to the physical dimension of “flesh and blood”.

3. In the New Testament, “flesh” refers to that still within us which is contrary to the Spirit of God. Flesh is any part of us not yet brought under the Lordship of Christ.

Galatians 5:16-17

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

a. Notice here that the flesh and the Spirit are two opposing forces that exist within a believer. The Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit who lives within us and is conforming us into the image of Christ; but the flesh is that still within us that is at war with the Holy Spirit for control of our lives.

b. The “flesh” can refer to anything in our will, our intellect, our emotions, or habits that is not under the control of the Holy Spirit.

4. **The Bible teaches us that we are triune beings:** spirit, soul and body. Even though our spirit is born again, there are areas of our mind that have not been renewed to the Word of God; there are old sin habits our bodies can still cry out for.

5. Our spirit man is the “new man” who walks in the Spirit. But the “fleshly” part of us is still subject to sins, which Paul defines as the “works of the flesh:

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

a. Here we have an unpleasant list of sins that Christians are capable of committing whenever our “flesh” is not under the control of the Holy Spirit.

b. Anyone who “practices” these sins is not a Christian; anyone who lives these things as a consistent lifestyle will not go to heaven.

c. But who among us has not occasionally committed one of these sins? (Maybe not *murder*; but what about outbursts of anger, envy or jealousy?)

6. All the sins listed here are “works of the flesh”; but some of these sins may be driven by demons.

Derek Prince

“Although the problem with sin is universal, the problem of demons is not. Many members of our fallen human race have come under the power of demons, but not all. There is a close connection, however, between sin and demons. If mankind had never sinned, we would never have been vulnerable to demons.”

7. Let me give you something simple to help you; something to remember.

ALL sins are “works of the flesh”; SOME of the sins of the flesh are driven by demons. Knowing which is which requires something the Bible calls...

B. Discernment

1. Christians desperately need discernment!

Kim Clement

“Is it psychic or prophetic? Is it demonic or physiological? Is it genuine worship or a spiritual fad? Having discernment is the key to determining the truth...the difference between success and failure.”

a. The Apostle prayed that we would abound in discernment:

Philippians 1:9-10 NASB

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

2. So just what is this thing called “discernment”?

To discern means to distinguish, to divide out or to judge
International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

a. Discernment is the ability to distinguish the difference between 2 things: to make a proper judgment.

b. Discernment is a mark of maturity in the life of those who really know the Word of God.

Hebrews 5:13-14

For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

c. “Exercise” is the Greek word “gumnazo”, from which we get the English words “gymnastics” and “gymnasium”. It means “to train”, or work out. We become mature as we train our senses to “discern” good and evil; right and wrong; and also whether something is driven by flesh or by demons!

John Bevere

“When we are mature in discernment we overcome deception.”

3. Everybody recognizes obvious evil; but discernment equips us to go deeper in our understanding.

John 7:24 NKJV

Do not judge (or discern) according to outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

(I love the New Living Translation on this)

John 7:24 NLT

Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly.”

4. It’s easy to judge the obvious; but when it comes to spiritual warfare, we need a greater gift.

Charles Spurgeon

“Discernment is not simply a matter of telling the difference between right and wrong; rather it is the difference between right and almost right.”

a. Galatians 5 lists “sorcery” as a “work of the flesh”; one of the expressions of sorcery is “divination”, which is fortune-telling or predicting the future. It’s a “work of the flesh”; but in Acts 16 it was driven by a demon:

Acts 16:16-18

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."

(On the surface, her message seemed to be right)

And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."

And he came out that very hour.

b. Paul had the discernment to see that the “work of the flesh”, in this case, was driven by demons.

c. We need to know which is which to apply the proper cure.

d. Let’s take a closer look at the remedies for flesh and demons.

II. The Remedy for Flesh and Demons

A. Crucifixion of the Flesh

1. God’s remedy for the “flesh” or the “old man” is not counseling, restoration, or rehabilitation; it is execution. Execution by crucifixion!

Romans 6:5-6

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

2. The work of Christ on the Cross was a legal, covenantal transaction: The sinless Christ took our sins, even our sinful nature, upon Himself and died. Therefore, in a LEGAL sense, we “died” with Him. *God killed us at Calvary!* He crucified our old sin nature on the Cross.

3. But we have a responsibility to appropriate the blessing by faith!

- In the same way, God legally forgave our sins at the Cross; but we had appropriate that forgiveness by faith
- The same thing applies to the crucifixion of our flesh! (Why haven't we taught more on this?)

Romans 6:11

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Other translations say-“count yourselves to be dead to sin”

Rom 6:11 NASB

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

4. God has done the work. He has “crucified” us with Christ. But we must *ratify* the work by faith! When we are tempted to do the “works of the flesh”, we must “reckon” or “consider” ourselves dead to that.

- a. Notice this is something that Christians must do for themselves!

Galatians 5:24

Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

- b. This was the testimony of the Apostle Paul:

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- c. To be crucified with Christ is what identifies true Christianity.

Derek Prince

“Crucifixion is the distinguishing mark of those who truly belong to Christ. God is not interested in our church membership or denominational labels. He looks to see if our old, fleshly way of life has come to an end at the foot of the Cross. Crucifixion is always painful, but it is the gateway to a new life.”

5. The New Testament speaks of our responsibility in another way:

Colossians 3:5-6 NIV

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: (NLT-So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you.) sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways in the life you once lived.

a. Then Paul says this...

Colossians 3:8

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

(If we do these things, don't blame it on demons!)

Colossians 3:9-10

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...

6. I cannot put a percentage on it; but it is my personal belief that most of the warfare waged against us would be won if we simply crucify the flesh.

1 Corinthians 9:26-27

This is how I run. I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself may not be disqualified from the prize."

7. The crucifixion of the flesh is the first place to begin; but what if "crucifixion of the flesh" doesn't work?

B. The Remedy for Demons: Cast Them Out!

1. What if we are suffering from a physical or mental condition, or some sinful habit or some sin listed as a "work of the flesh" and "crucifying the flesh" has not been sufficient to bring us the victory?

2. Then we may be dealing with a demon; and demons cannot be crucified; they must be cast out! But once again, we must have discernment; which is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:10

...to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

a. Some translations render it, “distinguishing of spirits”; the supernatural ability to judge the spiritual source of something.

3. Not everything is demonic; some is flesh. But if it is demonic, it is discernment that opens the door to deliverance:

Derek Prince

“Without the probe of discernment, we cannot effectively use the forceps of deliverance.”

III. Close: So Let’s Sum Up What We Have Said

A. Review: Flesh or Demons?

1. Some of the spiritual warfare we encounter in our journey with Jesus can be demonic in nature.

2. But most of our opposition arises from what the New Testament calls the “desires of the flesh”.

3. We need discernment to know which is which! Is it flesh or demons?

B. Action Items

1. Always begin with the flesh. It must be crucified. Even if there are demons at work, they can have no expression except through the flesh.

2. If you have crucified the flesh, and fulfilled all God’s requirements: repentance of sins; forgiveness of others; ask for discernment. And be careful!

John Bevere

“Be careful not to confuse a critical spirit with the spirit of discernment. They are not the same.”