

## A Crash Course in Evangelism

# 10

## Engaging the Enemy III

Power encounters, particularly on the tactical level, are the focus of this lesson. But before we look specifically at how they operate, let's first lay down a few ground rules. First up, it's important to understand that there are two broad types of power encounter:

- Power encounters initiated by God
- Power encounters initiated by Satan

The result can and should be the same – victory over the enemy's tactics and the release of those he has held captive. But the way these power encounters begin are quite different.

### ***God-initiated power encounters***

With a God-initiated power encounter, the starting point is often supernatural insight. John Wimber describes one example of this kind of supernatural insight.

“In my own experience, I once led someone to Christ by asking him an odd question: ‘Do you know what a breech baby is?’ After receiving the Lord he said, ‘How did you know?’ ‘Know what?’ I asked. ‘That I was a male nurse in the army,’ he replied. ‘I’ve helped deliver many breech babies. Nothing you could have said to me could have made me understand any more than that.’”<sup>1</sup>

Wimber goes on to say:

“How do you include that in an evangelistic training manual? ‘First you say...then he says...’ No technique or method can teach this! This is the sovereign activity of a loving God giving spiritual insight to a yielded servant, willing to risk making a fool of himself.”<sup>2</sup>

A classic example of a God-initiated power encounter that was preceded by supernatural insight is found in the account of Paul's first missionary journey.

Seeing the Harvest

Making the Messenger

Clarifying the Message

Honing the Method I

Honing the Method II

Honing the Method III

Witnessing in Power

Engaging the Enemy I

Engaging the Enemy II

Engaging the Enemy III

Making Disciples

Reaching Your Community

**Read Acts 13:6-12**

Although we've looked at this passage briefly in the last lesson, let's run through a more detailed debriefing.

- Paul (Saul) begins proclaiming the Gospel to the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, but a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus (Elymas) tries to turn the proconsul from the faith.
- Paul has insight into the spiritual condition of Elymas and begins to speak directly to this agent of Satan.
- Whereas the spiritual warfare up till this point had been focused on a truth encounter, Paul turns the tables on the enemy and switches to a power encounter. At Paul's word, Elymas becomes blind – a fitting irony, since he was already blind spiritually and had been seeking to blind the mind of Sergius Paulus.
- Sergius Paulus, when he saw the results of this power encounter, “was amazed at the teaching of the Lord.” Notice what it was that the proconsul was amazed at. Not the power encounter itself, but the *teaching* that went with it. The true victory of this power encounter was not the blindness of Elymas, but the eventual truth encounter experienced by the proconsul.

Supernatural insight, which may take the form of a “word of knowledge,” a “word of wisdom” or a “discerning of spirits” (**1 Corinthians 12:8**), may be a precursor to either a truth encounter or a power encounter. In the case of John Wimber's example, his insight led to a truth encounter. In the case of Paul's confrontation with Elymas, his insight led to a power encounter, which in turn then led to a truth encounter.

Supernatural insight plays an indispensable role in any confrontation with the enemy. This is why, after listing the armor that the spiritual warrior must wear in order to confront a spiritual enemy, Paul makes this statement in **Ephesians 6:18**:

“And pray in the Spirit on *all* occasions with *all* kinds of prayers and requests...”

Prayer is not just a weapon of spiritual warfare. It is also the means by which the spiritual warrior keeps in touch with his headquarters. In all that we will be studying in this lesson, everything is predicated on one simple fact:

**Evangelistic Principle #24** – The key to spiritual warfare, and all evangelism, is prayer, prayer, prayer.

***Enemy-initiated power encounters***

Not all power encounters are initiated by God. Some are initiated by the enemy himself. The ministry of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel accounts, shows a number of examples of this kind of power encounter. Here is one.

**Read Mark 1:21-27**

The ministry of Jesus brought him into direct conflict with demons that afflicted lives in the first century. Even a quick scan of the Gospel accounts leaves you amazed at the number of times Jesus cast out evil spirits. The Gospel accounts record more demons being cast out than any other category of healing, miracle or supernatural event.

But the vast majority of these encounters were initiated by the enemy himself in reaction to the ministry of Christ. As you begin to move in power-oriented evangelism, similar things are likely to happen to you.

In enemy-initiated power encounters, unlike those initiated by God, Satan makes the first move. Because the enemy will seek to dictate the terms upon which the power encounter takes place, the believer needs lightning-quick wisdom to respond in a Christ-like manner. And guess what! Just like in the God-initiated power encounter, there are three indispensable items: prayer, prayer, prayer.

There is a general rule of thumb when dealing with enemy-initiated power encounters. As much as possible, *do not let the enemy set the terms of the power encounter*. You choose the time and the place of the encounter. This is because Satan, if given half a chance, will choose a midnight hour or some other inconvenient time – anything to wear down the saints. If you are able to set the time for an encounter, do so on your terms, not the enemy's.

We see an example of this in **Acts 16:16-18**. For many days, a demon-afflicted girl kept following Paul and the others and trying to steal the limelight. Yet Paul didn't act immediately. It was only when he became "so troubled" that he turned and dealt directly with the enemy. It was on Paul's terms, not the demon's.

**Evangelistic Principle #25** – As much as is possible, do not let the enemy set the terms upon which a power encounter takes place.

## Tactical Encounters – Demons

### Read Luke 11:20-22

The Bible makes no apology regarding its view that demons are real and active agents in the world today. It is only our modern scientific mindset that excludes the reality of demons. As John Wimber observes:

“Science has become the primary ideology in the Western world, replacing Christianity as the predominant religion. And, the religion of modern science is quite intolerant of views that challenge its presuppositions...To question modern scientific presuppositions is to commit heresy...”<sup>3</sup>

The Bible doesn't insist that a scientific view of the world is wrong. It just says it is incomplete. It doesn't say that all sicknesses or mental problems arise from demonic activity. It just says that some do.

The importance of recognizing a demonic source to certain ailments is underscored in the final report of the June 1982 meeting of the Consultation on the

Relationship Between Evangelism and Social Responsibility, sponsored by the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization:

“We refuse to demythologize the teachings of Jesus and his apostles about demons...Demon-possession is a real and terrible condition. Deliverance is possible only in a power encounter in which the name of Jesus is invoked and prevails.”<sup>4</sup>

### ***Drawing the limits***

The demonic dimension, though real, should never be the main focus of the believer. Some Christians get so caught up in “demonology” that demons become the focus of their lives. They embrace an extreme where they see demons lurking in every shadow. Their theology emphasizes deliverance as the primary means of Christian growth, and the practice of deliverance occupies much of their thinking, talking and living.

Basil Jackson addressed this problem back in 1976:

“Today, I believe we are seeing a most unhealthy interest in the area of demonology so that many of our evangelical friends have, in effect, become ‘demono-philiacs’ as a result of their fascination with the occult. They tend to see a demon under every tree and, thus, quite commonly today, we hear of demons of tobacco, alcohol, asthma, and every other condition imaginable.”<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, C S Lewis, in his preface to *The Screwtape Letters*, states that there are “two equal and opposite

## **Reminder**

**Luke 10:19** allegorizes “all the power of the enemy” in terms of two creatures, each describing one facet of demonic activity.

### **Serpents**

From Genesis to Revelation, the serpent has been a major symbol of Satan. In Scripture, the serpent represents cunning, trickery, wisdom (**2 Corinthians 11:3; Matthew 10:16**), lies, slander and poisonous words (**Psalms 58:4; 140:3; Revelation 12:9-10**). In **2 Corinthians 11:3**, Paul warns about the “serpent’s cunning,” the aim of which is to lead Christians “from [their] sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

### **Scorpions**

In the Bible, the scorpion symbolizes torment (**Revelation 9:10**), implacable adversaries (**Ezekiel 2:6**), cruelty and oppression (**1 Kings 12:14**). This scorpion-like power that demons exercise over many lives may involve sickness, mental illness, emotional wounds, fear and direct demonic control.

Did you notice that Satan’s two-pronged activities (deception and affliction) are countered by the Church’s two-pronged emphasis in evangelism (proclamation and demonstration)? As we saw in the last lesson, this is expressed in two equally important aspects of evangelism – the truth encounter and the power encounter.

- **Proclamation of the Message** (resulting in a truth encounter) deals with the enemy’s *serpent* tactics
- **Demonstration of the Message** (resulting in a power encounter) deals the enemy’s *scorpion* tactics

As we see, we have indeed been given authority to trample on both serpents and scorpions. This can be seen in the commission given to Paul in **Acts 26:17-18**:

“...I am sending you to them to *open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light* (truth encounter) and *from the power of Satan to God* (power encounter)...”

errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist and a magician with the same delight.”<sup>6</sup>

As Christians, we walk a tightrope between two extremes in the area of the demonic – under-emphasis and over-emphasis. But as with an acrobat, the key lies in our focal point. We are children of God, and the priority of our lives focuses on that relationship. Only secondarily, as an extension of that relationship, are we called into military encounter with the forces of evil.

Whenever you study anything about demons, always bear in mind Paul’s words in **Ephesians 5:8-14**:

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light...and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: ‘Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’”

From this, we understand that our approach to the demonic should be:

- Live as a child of the light.
- Your focus should be on pleasing the Lord.
- You must approach the demonic at arm’s length, but be prepared to expose it.
- You must not expose the demonic for knowledge’s sake, however, but rather so that God may deal with it.
- What exposes the demonic is the light of Christ.
- The purpose of exposing the demonic is so that the “sleepers” may away to a knowledge of the Gospel.

With **Ephesians 5:8-14** in mind, then, let’s explore our tactical authority in Christ.

### ***Knowing the victory***

We have already seen that Christ has given us “authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy” (**Luke 10:19**) But this must always be kept in the perspective of your relationship with God (see **Luke 10:20**). That is the real victory you have over the enemy – not the authority delegated to you, but the covenant you have entered into with God. You have turned from being “objects of wrath” (**Ephesians 2:3**) to an “objects of his mercy” (**Romans 9:23**). You have been translated from Satan’s dominion to “the kingdom of [God’s] dear Son” (**Colossians 1:13**).

**Read 1 John 4:4**

**Read 1 John 5:4-5**

## ***Dispelling the Myths***

There are also a number of myths regarding tactical encounters that must be addressed:

### **Myth #1 – You must seek out the demons**

This is not the pattern of the New Testament. We see no evidence of a “Dick Tracy” style of deliverance ministry, constantly searching out demons and casting them out. Instead, the New Testament appears to support a point-of-confrontation approach to deliverance. When the demons manifested, they were dealt with decisively there and then.

Yet today a different approach is sometimes taken – one that assumes there are demons hidden inside people and that they must be uncovered and dealt with through intensive and often long-term counselling. There are two problems with this approach:

- If you search for demons, you will find them, whether they were there originally or not! Our enemy is clever and can play a thousand games with us.
- It is counter-Gospel, since it brings the focus back on self.

The simple rule of thumb is this: If a demonic problem arises, deal with it. If the Lord reveals a demonic source to an ailment, address the demon and expel it. But don’t go looking for demons as the source of all problems. Always remember: *Anything that complicates the message of the Gospel is not the Gospel.*

### **Myth #2 – Deliverance is a distinct ministry**

Nowhere in the New Testament do you find the specialist ministry of the deliverance expert. Deliverance was something every Christian leader (and quite possibly every believer) practiced. We are ministers of the New Covenant (**2 Corinthians 3:6**), not of deliverance. Deliverance is simply part of the New Covenant.

### **Myth #3 – Demons can enter a Christian unawares**

Some in the deliverance ministry go to great lengths to make sure that they are protected against possible demonic intrusion. But is it possible for demons to invade a Christian unawares? After all, Paul writes in **Ephesians 4:27**: “...do not give the devil a foothold.”

But let’s take a look at this in context. Paul hasn’t just written: “My brothers, beware lest a demon enter you.” Instead, he writes in **Ephesians 4:21-24**:

“Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to *put off your old self*, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; *to be made new in the attitude of your minds*; and *to put on the new self*, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

He then goes on in **verses 25-32** to give practical examples of what it means to “put off your old self” and “put on the new self,” and in the midst of these instruc-

tions he says: "...do not give the devil a foothold." How do we give the devil a foothold? By not putting off the old self! If we have given the devil a foothold, what is the answer? Deliverance? No, the answer Paul gives is: Do what you were taught! Put off the old self, be made new in the attitude of your mind, and put on the new self! As always, the answer is the Gospel itself.

#### **Myth #4 – All (or most) Christians have demons**

This involves two related questions:

- **Can a Christian have a demon?** – The Bible doesn't say specifically one way or the other. Yes, it is possible that a Christian may have issues yet undealt with, and that these sin issues are a stronghold for demonic activity. If it is determined that a Christian's life harbors demonic activity, the answer is to bring him back to the basis of the New Covenant – the Gospel. Repentance, rather than deliverance, is the main means by which demonic holds in the Christian life are addressed.
- **Do the majority of Christians have demons?** – The answer to this is a definite no. This doesn't mean, of course, that Christians are immune from demonic attack. **Ephesians 6:10-17** emphasizes the continual need to be prepared to "stand against the wiles of the devil" (KJV). But the usual ways that a demon attacks is through fear, discouragement and deception. Demonic bonding (where a demon directly controls a Christian) is possible, but not necessarily common.\*

How is it possible for a Christian to have the Holy Spirit (note **Romans 8:9**), yet still be bonded with a demon? It has to do with the Gospel we preach. If we preach a partial Gospel (just enough to get people "saved"), then there may be issues left unaddressed that pass over from the old life to the new life in Christ. This may even include demonic attachments.

Let's walk through some simple facts about demonic attachment. There are three main ways through which a demon can bond itself with a person:

- **Through personal involvement in sin** – If a person has willfully exposed himself to degradation and the filth of this world, a demon can bond with that person. This demon then exhibits an ongoing compulsion to sin in that area.
- **Through exposure to generational demonic activity** – If a child is born into a family that has a demonized parent, then the child may through exposure to this demonic activity, become demonized himself. It is important to stress that this generational inheritance of demonic activity may or may not happen. In a demonized family with two children, for example, one child may become demonized while the other does not.

\* Please note that your church may have a set doctrinal statement that addresses the question of whether a Christian can have a demon. Different churches have different views on this matter. It is recommended, however, to take a pragmatic rather than a doctrinal position. In most situations, when counselling a Christian, you are seeking to share a clear revelation of the Gospel (particularly **Ephesians 4:21-24**). If a demon manifests (an enemy-initiated power encounter) or if the Lord gives insight into a demonic condition (a God-initiated power encounter), then deal with the demon authoritatively.

- **Through trauma or victimization** – In some cases where extreme mental or emotional trauma has been induced by demonic activity, or where a person has been consistently victimized by a demonized person, a demonic transference may take place.

Regardless of the reason for demonization, however, the answer remains the power of the Gospel. It is in a recognition of the finished work of the Cross that a person finds full freedom in Christ. For as Jesus declares in **John 8:32,34,36**:

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free...I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin...[But] if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

### **Myth #5 – The answer to every demonic problem is deliverance**

Once again, this is a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the demonic bond. If an unbeliever is being controlled by a demon, then the answer is direct authority – what we generally call deliverance. But if a believer is found to have a demonic bond, the answer is not commonly deliverance but repentance. Only in the most severe of demonic affliction should direct-command deliverance be used.

Is habitual sin or other habitual problems (such as “short-fuse” rage) evidence of demonization? Sometimes, but not always. Once again, discernment is needed. Take the problem of “short-fuse” rage as an example. The problem may arise from one of three sources:

- **Body** – If there are chemical imbalances in the brain, a person may fly into a rage at the slightest provocation.
- **Soul** – If a person is under extreme stress psychologically, or has repressed anger, this can express itself in sudden and even habitual rage.
- **Spirit** – If a person has bonded with a demon that specializes in rage (often called a “spirit of anger”), this will result in demon-induced rage.

When ministering to people with severe habitual problems, we must always keep in mind this body-soul-spirit continuum. This is why Paul stated, in **1 Thessalonians 5:23**:

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your *whole spirit, soul and body* be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We are whole people, not fragments sewn together. It is for this reason that the Gospel is a holistic message. By this we mean it deals with the *whole* person, not just a single part of him. It addresses a person as spirit, soul and body, bringing healing and a restored relationship with God. As Albert Wolter says, “The scope of redemption is as great as that of the fall.”<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, however, we also need discernment to understand the root cause of a problem. Is the problem rooted in a physical, psychological or spiritual cause? Our approach to the problem depends on our answer to this question.



- If the cause of a behavioral disorder is **spiritual**, this will still manifest itself in physical and psychological problems. Physically, there may be chemical imbalances. Psychologically, there may be mental disorders. But if the cause is ultimately spiritual (in other words, demonic in origin), it must be addressed on this level first, or there will be no breakthrough. Demonic problems in Christians are dealt with through either the repentance approach (truth encounter) or the deliverance approach (power encounter).
- If the cause of a behavioral disorder is **psychological**, this will still manifest itself in physical and spiritual problems. Physically, once again, there may be chemical imbalances or other bodily disorders. And spiritually, demons may make opportunistic attacks on the person, making the problem worse.
- If the cause of a behavioral disorder is **physical**, this will still manifest itself in psychological and spiritual problems. Psychologically, the person will experience mental trauma, and spiritually, once again, demons may leverage the physical disorder to their advantage.

Modern science generally recognizes only the physical cause of habitual disorders, and therefore seeks to address them with drugs.\* Even the human sciences – psychology and psychoanalysis – recognize only the psychological and physical dimensions of the problem.

Take epilepsy as another example. Is epilepsy caused by demons? The answer is, sometimes. Epilepsy may have a purely physical cause, as when an area of the brain misfires due to brain trauma or damage. But there are times when epilepsy has no identifiable physical cause. The brain is misfiring, but the reason is not known. In these cases, the cause may be spiritual and not physical.

We see this evident in Christ's dealing with a variety of health disorders.

- **Mark 9:14-26** – The boy showed classic signs of epilepsy, yet Jesus identified the cause to be spiritual, not physical. In fact, he doesn't address the demon as a "spirit of epilepsy" but as a "deaf and mute spirit." The demon primarily induced deafness and muteness, with a secondary manifestation of convulsions, particularly when near fire or water. This may have also shown a destructive tendency, for the demon was obviously seeking to bring physical harm to the boy.
- **Matthew 4:24** – "[T]hose who were ill with various diseases" include "those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed." Did you notice that only one category is assigned to demonic activity. Not all sickness is the result of a demonic bond.
- **Matthew 17:18** – In this verse, however, we see Jesus expelling a demon and the boy "was *healed* from that moment." This clearly indicates that some physical illnesses have a demonic origin.

\* The very fact that drugs can be so effective in controlling (if not curing) various disorders, such as depression, schizophrenia or psychotic episodes, shows the physical component of the problem.

But if an illness is determined to have a demonic source, how should this be handled? When the victim is a Christian, there are two ways:

- **Truth encounter** – In most cases, a truth encounter is what is needed. The Gospel for the Christian is always the same: *revelation, repentance, reality*. If a demonic bond is identified, and the Christian repents, in 9 out of 10 cases, deliverance takes place through a truth encounter, not a power encounter. Remember, the Cross has broken every bond and every curse. This is the good news for the Christian! What is now required is that the Christian take hold of this by faith and repent. At the point of repentance, the power of the Cross comes into full effect and the demonic bond is broken.
- **Power encounter** – In a few cases, however, a power encounter is needed. When should a power encounter take precedence over a truth encounter? The simple answer is: When a Christian begins manifesting a demon. At that point, take authority over the demon and cast it out. After the demon is expelled, you can then focus on a truth encounter.\*

Remember: Everything focuses on the truth encounter. What is the truth encounter? A revelation of the Gospel. It is the Gospel that is the answer to the breaking of demonic bonds. Let's do a quick review:

- **The old self has been crucified with Christ** – This is part of the once-for-all finished work of the Cross (**Romans 6:6-7**).
- **The old self is the basis of a demon's attachment to a Christian** – A demon's sole right to continued residence in a Christian's life is the old self. A demon thrives on the corruption of the old self. This is the stronghold in which it hides. But the Gospel declares that the stronghold of the old self has been dealt with once and for all. When a Christian takes a hold of this by faith, all demonic bonds are severed.
- **The new self has been created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness** – A demon has no right to the new self. This is the new creation power of God resident within the Christian, and is expressed through walking in the Spirit (note **Galatians 5:17**). As Paul declares in **Romans 8:1-2**, "through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life *set me free* from the law of sin and death."

Today, some Christians have been in a decade-long deliverance cycle. They have been on the spiritual operating table, being slowly dissected in the hope of finding the root cause of the demonic problem. But as you read the New Testament epistles, you will find that the constant emphasis is not on introspection (trying to find demons and gain release from them) but upon repentance (turning from the old way of life and turning to the power of the Spirit).

The rule of thumb with deliverance is this: If it involves multiple sessions of counselling, the need is generally one of repentance not deliverance. It is a truth en-

\* It's important to remember that there are no hard-fast rules. Every person is unique and every situation is different. Learn to work with the Lord in what he is seeking to do in each person's life.

counter, not a power encounter that is required.

### **Myth #6 – Generational sin must be dissected and broken**

This myth arises from a misunderstanding of the nature of generational problems.

#### **Read Exodus 34:6-7**

This is the scripture usually used to support a concept called “generational curses.” Notice how it says that God will punish “the children and their children for the sin of the fathers *to the third and fourth generation.*” Yet this passage doesn’t support generational curses as is often supposed. This is actually a covenantal declaration. God is proclaiming that his judgment upon sin is not limited to one generation but is extended to even the third and fourth generation (although apparently no further). This is not a basis for demonic control. It is a description of the pan-generational judgment of God.

And it is important to note that even this covenantal premise has changed. In **Jeremiah 31:29-30** (see also **Ezekiel 18:1-4**), the Lord promises:

“In those days people will no longer say, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’ Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes – his own teeth will be set on edge.”

In other words, God was overturning his prior proclamation that “he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.” The rea-

## **Dealing with Severe Disorders**

What should you do if a person has severe mental illness? If you are new in spiritual warfare, it is always best to learn with others who are more experienced.

As we have already seen, not all mental illnesses are directly caused by demons, but on the other hand, a significant proportion are. On this, Timothy Warner makes this comment:

“Psychotherapists tell horror stories of people who come to them after some zealous Christians have tried to solve complicated problems by trying to cast demons out of them. Good deliverance counselors, on the other hand, can tell the stories of those who have spent a small fortune on therapy only to discover that they could be set free by the power of God.”<sup>8</sup>

We need to understand that terms such as schizophrenia are clinical descriptions of a set of symptoms, not a description of the cause itself. As Neil Anderson points out:

“Labeling doesn’t explain anything, it is only a means of classifying symptoms. What is an hallucination? Multiple personalities? What is a person hearing when they hear voices? All these classifications come from a secular source that has no concept of God, much less the demonic.”<sup>9</sup>

Having said that, however, we must never get caught in the trap of thinking that all psychological problems are demonic in origin. As we have already seen, some such disorders can be due to chemical imbalances, mental trauma, or even physical trauma.

When dealing with severe mental disorders, it is always advisable to work with other experienced ministers of the New Covenant, and with the approval of your church’s pastoral leadership. This is an added legal and practical safeguard.

son this would happen, Jeremiah says in **31:31**, is that “I will make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”

Does demonic activity have a generational dimension? Experience indicates that this is so. But the good news of the Gospel is that these inherited curses have been broken at the Cross of Calvary (**Galatians 3:13**). Once again, the answer to generational demonization is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One Christian had been in deliverance counselling for many years. When asked how it was going, he replied, “So far I’m all the way back to the Vikings.” What he meant was that his counsellors had been digging into his past and had taken him back as far as the Vikings in an attempt to “cut off” the generational sin that gripped his life. But is this required? If any of us dig back far enough, we will find every kind of sin and atrocity imaginable, all there in our family line.

But God didn’t deal with generational sin by “cutting you off” from the sin heritage of your parents, or your grandparents, or even your great-grandparents. He doesn’t even take you back to Vikings (or, in your case, your own ancestors of disrepute). What does he do? “The ax,” says **Matthew 3:10**, “is...at the *root* of the tree.” He takes it all the way back to where the problem began. According to the Gospel, your roots to Adam himself have been cut off, and you have been transplanted into Christ. When God looks back at your family line, he sees Christ! And the demons know this too!

What should a Christian do if his family has a history of demonic activity? Go through prolonged deliverance counselling? No, Paul’s instructions remain the same: “Do what you were taught! Put off the old self, be made new in the attitude of your mind, and put on the new self!”

Now that we’ve dealt with the five main myths of deliverance, let’s look at how a tactical power encounter *should* be handled.

### ***Methods of attack***

Note that the New Testament provides no step-by-step instructions on how to cast out an evil spirit. If demonization was so rife within the Church, and the need for deliverance so widespread, you would expect more detailed instructions. But the epistles are surprisingly silent on the matter.

This means that as a general rule, you should apply the KISS principle. KISS stands for Keep It Simple, Sir! If you need to study 100 lessons on deliverance before you understand how it works, something is wrong. We don’t find that kind of instruction in the New Testament – and surely if it were that important to the ongoing mission of the Church, we would see entire epistles written on it, wouldn’t we? Instead we read this simple statement: “And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons...” (**Mark 16:17**).

In **Matthew 8:16**, we read:

“When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to [Jesus], and he drove out the spirits *with a word* and healed all the sick.”

And in **Matthew 10:8**, we find the Lord's simple instructions to his disciples:

“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons...”

Even the disciples, when they returned from their first two-by-two mission, expressed surprise at the authority they had over the demons in the name of Jesus. “Hey, this actually works!” seems to be their common reaction.

Here are a few guidelines that will help as you step out in power encounters:

- **Keep close to the Lord** – this is the “prayer and fasting” rule of **Mark 9:29**. As we have seen in previous lessons, Jesus was not meaning that there are particularly tough demons that require a set time of fasting and prayer before you can tackle them. Rather, he was meaning that prayer should be the background to all ministry. It is a lifestyle of prayer and fasting, rather than occasional prayer and fasting, that Jesus is speaking of here.
- **Ask the Lord for insight** – Understand what the Father is already doing in the demonized person's life (**John 5:19,30**). Let the Holy Spirit help you perceive the true nature and cause of the problem. There is nothing wrong with asking questions beforehand, but it's best not to turn it into a counseling session. If it does become a counselling session, then the need is more likely for repentance, not deliverance – for truth encounter, not power encounter. Always be sensitive, however, to how God is working at the time.
- **If necessary, ask the demon for its name** – This is not always required, but there are occasions when the Holy Spirit will lead you to do this (note **Luke 8:30**).
- **Act decisively** – Once you have a clear understanding of the nature and cause of the problem, then act authoritatively to drive out the demon in the name of Jesus.
- **Use a firm voice** – There's nothing technically wrong with shouting at a demon, but the volume of your voice really has nothing to do with your authority. Don't get into a shouting match with a demon. Instead, firmly apply the authority of the name of Jesus.
- **Don't let the demon take control of the power encounter** – Sometimes a demon will not immediately leave the person (note **Luke 8:28-29; Mark 9:20-25**) and using “stalling tactics.” These tactics usually take the form of arrogant proclamations, noisy demonstrations or convulsive manifestations (note **Luke 4:33-35**). Demons love turning a power encounter into a circus, because the attention centers on them. And so the simple rule is: Don't allow demons to set the terms of the power encounter. Don't get into long conversations with them. Don't let them make noisy demonstrations or manifestations. Command them to be quiet, then tell them to leave.
- **Once the demon has left, speak with the person** – The person who has formerly been demonized can tell you whether he has felt the demon go.

This kind of feedback is important.

- **Ask the Lord if there is anything more to be done** – There are times when there is more than one demon (note **Mark 5:9; 16:9**).
- **Disciple the person** – Once the person has been released from a demonic bond, he needs to be bonded properly to the Lord (note **Matthew 12:43-45**). He now needs to be instructed on what it means to put off his old self, be renewed in the attitude of his mind, and to put on the new self.

It is always important to remember that release from demonic bondage is not the aim of ministry. Discipling that person to the Lord Jesus Christ is.

One time, after driving out an unclean\* spirit, Jesus explained what happens to a person who experiences deliverance but doesn't replace the demonic presence with the presence of God. In **Luke 11:24-26**, he said:

“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

Your aim is not just to ensure that the victim's life is “swept clean and put in order.” You also need to help the victim make sure his life is not “empty,” for this is an open invitation to a re-bonding with the demon and with others too.

This is why a truth encounter should always follow a power encounter. After a person has been delivered from a demon, counselling (or, more accurately, discipling) is needed. For after the bond with the demon is broken, the bond with the Lord must be established and strengthened.

## In Summary

Your effectiveness in a power encounter is a product of three things:

- **Walking in the Spirit** – the personal level of relationship with God
- **Insight in the Spirit** – the perception level of hearing from God and seeing things as he sees them
- **Action in the Spirit** – the ministry level of acting in the authority of Christ

There are no shortcuts to this. You simply can't learn this from a book. But you can learn it in practice. Deliverance is more caught, than taught. The best way is to work with someone who has experience in deliverance, but if no such person is available, then step out confidently in the authority you have in Christ. You may learn a lot along the way (just as Jesus' disciples did – see **Mark 9:14-29**), but the authority is there for you to use in warfare evangelism.

So how can we encapsulate all we have learned about tactical power encounter in one principle of evangelism?

**Evangelistic Principle #26** – If you recognize a demon is actively obstructing the proclamation of the Gospel, or is manifesting control over a person’s life, command it to leave in the name of Jesus. This involves *seeing* the situation as God sees it and *acting* accordingly.

## Exercise #10

- **Pray** – Ask the Lord to help you to see more clearly where demonic bonds exist. Beware, however, that this doesn’t take you into an unhealthy focus on demons.
- **See** – Don’t just see the activity of demons. See also the activity of the Holy Spirit, who has been working in each person’s life long before you arrived on the scene.
- **Act** – Where the Lord reveals a demonic attachment, be prepared to act decisively, either in a truth encounter or a power encounter.

<sup>1</sup> Neil Anderson, as quoted by C Peter Wagner et al, *Wrestling With Dark Angels* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1990), p.133.

<sup>2</sup> John Wimber, quoted by C Peter Wagner et al, *Wrestling With Dark Angels* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1990), p.32.

<sup>3</sup> John Wimber, quoted by C Peter Wagner et al, *Wrestling With Dark Angels* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1990), p.34.

<sup>4</sup> Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization, *Consultation on the Relationship Between Evangelism and Social Responsibility*, quoted by John Wimber, *Power Evangelism* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> Basil Jackson, quoted by John Warwick Montgomery, editor, *Demon Possession*.

<sup>6</sup> C S Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, preface.

<sup>7</sup> Albert Wolter, *Creation Regained* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), p.57.

<sup>8</sup> Timothy Warner, as quoted by C Peter Wagner et al, *Wrestling With Dark Angels* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1990), p.106.

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