
Counseling and Spiritual Warfare

Part 1: The Dangers of Deliverance

Delivered at the
Class Convention, October 20-21, 2000

***“And having disarmed the powers and authorities,
he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”***

~ Colossians 2:15

I'm pastor Geoff Kragen, a pastoral counselor specializing in severely damaged marriages, adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and lately some work with adolescents. Sepher Ministries, is a discipleship ministry which includes counseling, Bible teaching and a drama team. It is affiliated with Foothill Bible Church in Lincoln. I also serve in this area as Area Coordinator for CAPS, the Christian Association for Psychological Studies.

Today we are going to talk about spiritual warfare as it applies in counseling. But, the applications for counseling are also practical in any area of the Christian walk. Clearly, this is intended as an overview on a very complex issue. We will not be able to satisfy questions that may arise due to the restrictions of the time allotted. Therefore, my hope is you will want to explore the subject in greater depth on your own. I am including a suggested reading.

Finally, the debate, between those who hold some type of demon-deliverance approach (which for convenience I will refer to as “deliverance”) and those holding a “classical” approach to spiritual warfare, is over a secondary issue. By this I mean the topic is not one on which one’s salvation rises and falls. There are God fearing believers on both sides of the issue. But how one approaches the subject is a matter of either handling scripture consistently or going beyond its teachings and the end result of this is always potentially damaging.

There are two aspects to this presentation. The first, this session, deals with an inaccurate, therefore dangerous approach, “Deliverance.” The second session will deal with what scripture does teach about a correct way to “fight the good fight.”

BIBLICAL COUNSELING: FIRST I should take a moment to define what I mean by biblical counseling. This is simply a form of discipleship but at a more intense level than we normally think of when talking about discipling. The focus is to help people unlearn the “truths” they have believed about life and instead coming to live a life based on God’s TRUTH. This key verse I use as sort of a guideline for this approach is:

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world (truths), but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (TRUTH)” (Romans 12:2).

The underlying struggle for any client who needs counseling is to conform their thinking to God's truth in all areas of their lives. This means seeing themselves accurately, as created in God's image, His child—if a believer—and fallen, that is still caring around the old nature. It is as the individual begins to take responsibility for his or her own sins, and in dependency on God, change his/her thinking that growth and maturing occurs.

THE PROBLEM: When the client is presented with an inaccurate system of teaching then the needed process of transformation is short-circuited. This is the primary reason that the deliverance approach is negative. It is grounded in an inaccurate use of scripture. When I say this I recognize there is a wide spectrum of deliverance systems. They range from an extreme which sees demons under every bedpost to a fairly conservative approach which recognizes the need for personal responsibility, the power of the Holy Spirit, the importance of Bible study and moving beyond spiritual conflict issues to Christian service and growth.¹ Powlison gives an example of the extreme:

“ SOME PEOPLE REALLY DO SEE A DEMON behind every bush. Cynthia, a woman I counseled, once cast out demons from her toaster when it failed to work. More seriously, she and her husband Andrew had a remarkable—and remarkably destructive—way of arguing with each other. For the first five minutes they warmed up with normal person-to-person bickering. But at a certain point, when the fighting turned nasty, they shifted gears and wheeled in heavier artillery. They would bind, rebuke, and attempt to cast out demons of anger, pride, and self-righteousness from each other.

In Cynthia's words,

I saw the demon looking out of his eyes, glittering and murderous. So I said, “Demon of anger, I bind your power in Jesus' name!” then I claimed the power of Jesus' blood as my cover from all demonic assault coming through my husband.”²

At its most extreme deliverance teachings are very dangerous, especially for the client whose connection to reality is shaky at best. One therapist told me of a client who went to a deliverance ministry where the attempt was made to cast out a demon and the result was a psychotic break. Granted this is extreme, but any presentation of teachings that are not biblically sound cannot benefit the client.

THE ERRORS: I am not interested in pointing out errors of extreme positions because, hopefully, we are more likely to come in contact with the more conservative end of the spectrum.

- One major problem then is an inconsistent and illogical approach to the use of scripture. Powlison identifies two factors involved with the poor handling of scripture. He describes them as: “Fragmentation” and “Flattening.” He defines them as follows:

“ Fragmentation occurs when context is lost. ... Contexts are significant: Scripture is composed of passages within books within an Old and a New Covenant. ... God's speaking embeds particular comments and incidents within larger interpretive themes. ...

*“ The second problem—flattening—occurs when the distinctives of the particular passage are lost. What a passage means to teach us becomes obscured; some lowest common denominator blinds us to its details. ... Flattening can also occur when something is imported from outside the Bible. For example, many (deliverance) books teach that the human heart can become a haunted house of demons inherited from sinful ancestors, which is not what the Bible itself says about the human heart. The notion of ancestral spirits is a bit of occult theology read **into** the Bible, not **out** of it.”³*

Another example of this poor use of scripture is a passage that is frequently used as a “proof text” for transgenerational demon possession. The passage of course is Exodus 20:5.

“ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me ...”

The problem here is that nothing is being said about demons here or anywhere in scripture regarding transgenerational demons. In fact the principle here would seem to be best understood as saying that if there has not been repentance by the third or fourth generation, sin is so ingrained that destruction is inevitable. This truth can be observed through out the books of Joshua and Judges. So a teaching of transgenerational demon involvement leads to bondage where none actually exists.

Another example of misused scripture is the account of Job. One approach of the deliverance approach to spiritual warfare is the problem of not taking total victory, which we are entitled to, over demons and by inference Satan. Job is often used as an example. The problem here of course is God was totally in control of the situation and actually allowed Satan limited access to Job which is conveniently overlooked. God was concerned about Job’s spiritual well-being and allowed him to grow and learn a lesson from Satan’s activities.

Keep in mind that Satan is seen as being the cause of sin and therefore moral evil in the lives of believers. Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” is often presented as support for the involvement of Satan acting destructively in the life of believers. Powlison has something interesting to not about this misuse of scripture.

*“ Many argue that Paul’s “thorn in [the] flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment” him, provides a case for ongoing demon-induced suffering (2 Corinthians 12:7). This thorn was possibly a physical affliction—perhaps the problem Paul alluded to in Galatians 4:13-15. ... Satan’s messengers are particularly associated with physical sufferings. Notice how the affliction bears no relation to moral evil, but is actually used by God to **protect** Paul from moral evil. In speaking of Satan’s messenger, the passage sounds the notes of suffering, weakness, mistreatment, distress, and difficulty—not sin.”⁴*

- Another major problem in the deliverance approach to spiritual warfare is a lack of recognition of the seriousness of the fallen nature. While it correctly recognizes that in any given situation, in dependency on God we can choose not to sin. But, because we still carry the old nature, along with our new, there will be many times we chose to sin. We are in rebellion and this isn’t the product of demons, though it is certainly encouraged by them. Consider the following passages:

“ The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time” (Genesis 6:5).

“ Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults” (Psalm 19:12).

“ This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead” (Ecclesiastes 9:3).

“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. 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.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body” (Ephesians 4:17-25).

Note in all these passages the focus is on our fallen nature. And, if we are going to help clients, and ourselves for that matter, we need to understand the real issue, not demons without or within, but our own struggle with our own sinful heart.

- With the emphasis on demons we fall into one of the traps Satan sets, that is giving him too much power. Instead of focusing on God and our safety, of which I will say more next hour, there is a tendency to live in a dark and fearful world.

Elliot Miller defines the problem this way:

“Included among the problems with (a noted deliverance author’s) spiritual warfare teachings are his overstatement of the devil’s authority, including his assertion that Satan has dominion over the earth and its creatures; his overstatement of the devil’s role in the believer’s life, including his claim that gaining victory over the devil requires learning how to verbally address and “bind” him.”⁵

We’ve already note with both Job and Paul that Satan has no power, even as prince of this world, but what God allows. God is in control and additionally God loves us and He doesn’t make mistakes, which should be the source of our comfort, not some “magic” like power over Satan.

- Of course one of the most obvious problems is no matter how much truth one presents, people respond by saying “I experienced ...” Personal experience becomes the basis for evaluation truth, not scripture. Antidotal statements, a major support for deliverance theory, override the teachings of scripture. “New revelation” overrides the truth of scripture. But, the Word is to be the basis for testing all truths. It doesn’t matter what I say. It doesn’t matter what the deliverance teachers say. What matters is how does what we say match up with what God says.

“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true” (Acts 17:11).

THE DANGERS OF DELIVERANCE: Whenever one uses systems instead of God's TRUTH it makes the struggle of walking in obedience even a greater struggle than it need be. This should be self evident. After all this is what the Jesus said.

“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”” (John 8:31-32).

Elliot Miller, quoting from one of the more conservative of the deliverance teachers, gives an example how, within the counseling setting, one can hinder instead of help the client when using a faulty understanding of scripture.

“ [A woman named Anne wrote (to the quoted author) in the middle of one of his conferences:] “ I didn't know what it meant to take every thought captive. I tried to do this once, but I was unsuccessful because I blamed myself for all this stuff. I thought all those thoughts were mine and that I was the one who was doing it. There has always been a terrible cloud hanging over my head because of these issues. I never could accept the fact that I was really righteous because I didn't feel like it. Praise God it was on Satan—not me. I have worth.”⁶

Miller responds to this letter by noting:

“ There is a biblical basis for saying some of our evil thoughts are provoked by Satan (e.g., 1 Chron. 21:1; Matt. 16:23; John 13:2; Acts 5:3), but there is no biblical basis for saying all of them do (James 1:14, 4:1; Rom 8:7; 1 Pet. 2:11; Gal. 5:17). The author fails to recognize that evil can originate from ourselves (our flesh) and yet we can still gain victory over the power and guilt of sin through Christ's cross and indwelling Spirit (e.g., Heb. 9:13-14; Gal. 5:16-25). His desire to protect us from responsibility for the evil in our hearts contradicts his own emphasis that we should take responsibility and not fall into a “devil made me do it” mentality.”⁷

One last danger which I hope is rare but is extremely disturbing is the potential damage done to children by this approach to the Christian life. First the emphasis on demons instead of our security in Christ can create a great deal of fear which is never productive. But there is an even greater danger in the more extreme end of the movement. K. D. Kragen notes:

*“ Deliverance also poses a real danger to children, particularly where parents attribute their child's problem-behavior to demons. Such beliefs can result in misdirected blame and the breakdown of communication between a child and parent or counselor, especially when it is believed that it is a demon or demons speaking and in control of the child. For an horrendous example of this kind of problem, see “Spirits of Arrested Development,” Rudy LeBlanc, **The Dove**, Spring 1988, vol.1.X, pp. 19-22. LeBlanc writes, “The function of this demon is to arrest development in a young person, always bringing them back to age 13 and younger. [The demon] claims to have authority over homosexual sprits,... over sprits influencing a girl to be a tomboy to please her father, the demon will still up the desire through the sprits passed on by ancestral curses;... he is also called the chronic prince of arrested development,... claims to be sent by satan personally, has a prince and a deputy who lives in the mind of the person to make sure that they do not advance past age 13.... Those that collect dolls and stuffed animals as grown-ups are arrested in their development. They do childish things such as playing with toys on their desks when at work” (p.20).”⁸*

I have ended this session with an extreme example. But one must understand as we move away from a sound understanding of scripture there is no limit to how far from truth we can move. And, when we are talking about the client in a counseling setting, they come because

of a struggle with truth and reality. In the more extreme situation there is no telling how far off base they can get. Our job is to move them towards truth, not further away.

We do fight against Satan and his kingdom. Spiritual warfare is the reality of the Christian life. But, if we are to have victory then we must fight the battle following God's rules, not the vain imagining of men's minds. And it is to this we will speak in the next hour.

¹ Adapted from "Dr. Neil T. Anderson Freedom in Christ Ministries," CRI Statement DA080, <http://www.equip.org/free/DA080.htm>.

² Powlison, David, Power Encounters—Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1995, p. 11.

³ Ibid., p. 44-46.

⁴ Ibid., p. 108.

⁵ Miller, Elliot, "The Bondage Maker: Examining the Message of Neil T. Anderson, Part 2," CRI Statement DA082, <http://www.equip.org/free/DA080.htm>.

⁶ Miller, Elliot, "The Bondage Maker: Examining the Message of Neil T. Anderson, Part 1," CRI Statement DA081, <http://www.equip.org/free/DA080.htm>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kragen, K.D., "The New Deliverance Ministry—A Biblical Critique," p. 5., unpublished paper.

Counseling and Spiritual Warfare

Part 2: Fighting The Good Fight

Delivered at the
Class Convention, October 20-21, 2000

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our
struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world
and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes,
you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.
Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,
with the breastplate of righteousness in place,
and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.
In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith,
with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.
With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

~ Ephesians 6:10-18

In the last hour we touched on the problems with and the dangers of the “deliverance” approach to spiritual warfare. As I noted this could only be done as an overview with the hope that you will find the issues of interest enough to stimulate your further examination of the subject. But the deliverance approach is not all there is as we will see this hour.

As we can see from Paul’s comments while scripture really has very little to say about demons it has quite a bit to say about spiritual warfare and the Christian walk. In this hour we will look at what Powlison refers to as “Classic-mode Spiritual Warfare.”¹ This too, of necessity will only be a very cursory examination of the subject. You suggested reading list includes classic as well as contemporary works on spiritual warfare.

THE PROBLEM: Reality is, life is a struggle. And there is no question, as Paul notes, that it is a spiritual one. The fact one rejects, for lack of biblical support, the deliverance approach, does not mean we reject the reality of Satan and his minions. It does not mean we reject his kingdom as a major source of struggles in this life. What it does mean is we must fight the battle biblically. Ray Stedman, referring to Ephesians 6, says in his book, Spiritual Warfare:

“ The battle is not against flesh and blood. Rather, it is against the whole human race that certain principalities and powers are set. There is your problem. Paul says. Those are the enemies we are up against. And it is not just Christians who are opposed by the principalities and powers, the world rulers of this present darkness. There is Paul’s positive explanation of the struggle of life.

I hasten to say that this declaration will only be fully believed and understood by Christians. The world either distorts this to the point of ridiculousness or it rejects it as unacceptable to the intelligent mind. Superstition has taken this great revelation and distorted it, twisted it, reduced it to a ridiculous pantheon of goblins, witches, spooks, and ghouls.”²

INTRODUCTION: The importance of understanding how to fight the good fight is vital to the healing we are looking for in the counseling setting. It is also vital to our own ability to walk before the Lord as He calls us to, to allow Him to conform us to the image of Christ. We have already seen the work approach. But the best way to understand the right approach is to look at scripture, specifically this passage in Ephesians.

But first I would summarize the concept of Spiritual Warfare by saying: we are fighting the battle properly when we are living the Christian life as we are called to by the Lord. A godly life is the way we fight, not focusing on Satan and his minions, but instead as Peter when he walked on the water, simply keeping our eyes focused on the Lord.

EPHESIANS 6:10: In his introduction to this passage Stedman notes:

“ You can see this is highly figurative language. These are not entities in themselves but symbols of something real. In order to understand them we must look behind the figures to the reality. The armor is the way to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. The armor is nothing more than a symbolic description of the Lord himself. The armor is Christ and what he is prepared to be and to do in each one of us. When Paul speaks of these various pieces of armor, he is speaking of Christ and how we are to regard him—how we are to lay hold of him as our defense against the stratagems of the Devil. It is not merely Christ available to us, but Christ is actually appropriated.”³

Hodge in his commentary on Ephesians speaking on this passage notes,

“ That panoply consists —

- 1. In the knowledge and reception of the truth.*
- 2. In the righteousness of Christ.*
- 3. In the alacrity which flows from the peace of the Gospel.*
- 4. In the consciousness of salvation.*
- 5. In faith.*
- 1. In the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit.*

To obtain strength to use this armor aright, and to secure victory for ourselves and for the army of which we are a part, we should pray. These prayers should be —

- 1. Of all kinds.*
- 2. On every occasion.*
- 3. Importunate and persevering.*
- 4. By the aid of the Holy Spirit.*
- 5. For all saints.”⁴*

As you can already see the trust of this passage is not us fighting the battle but instead appropriating Christ and standing firm in Him.

VERSES 11-13: Paul tells us that the reason we need to be armored in Christ is because of the supernatural warfare, because our enemies are of Satan and his kingdom. But the battle is fought in the same way all struggles are fought in living the Christian life. He goes on to identify the specific aspects of this walk in using the picture of armor.

VERSE 14: First, we are to stand firm, immovable. We are not to stand in our own strength, but in Christ's. And we can stand by being gird in His truth. This is what we referred to last hour. The way we hold firm against attacks of the enemy is by constantly reminding ourselves of and living in God's truth. We are not to live by emotions or by the "truths" we have learned but by every truth that comes from God through His Word. Here the focus isn't on the Word itself, which is referred to momentarily, but the application of and belief in that truth. Hodge puts it this way:

*"By truth, here is not to be understood divine truth as objectively revealed, i.e. the word of God; for that is mentioned in the following verse as the sword. Nor does it mean sincerity of mind, for that is a natural virtue, and does not belong to the armor of God; which according to the context consists of supernatural gifts and graces. But it means truth subjectively considered; that is, the knowledge and belief of the truth. This is the first and indispensable qualification for a Christian soldier. To enter on this spiritual conflict ignorant or doubting, would be to enter battle blind and lame. As the girdle gives strength and freedom of action, and therefore confidence, so does the truth when spiritually apprehended and believed. Let not anyone imagine that he is prepared to withstand the assaults of the powers of darkness, if his mind is stored with his own theories or with the speculations of other men. Nothing but the truth of God clearly understood and cordially embraced will enable him to keep his feet for a moment, before these celestial potentates."*⁵

So first we can stand against attack because we stand in truth. Second Paul speaks of the "Breastplate of Righteousness." Here he is concerned with our standing, not in our own righteousness, but in Christ's. Christ's righteousness protects our hearts and therefore our emotions. Wood says:

*"In this context **dikaioisynē** ("righteousness") stands for uprightness and integrity of character. But this moral rectitude and reputation for fair dealing results directly from the appropriation of Christ's righteousness (see on Eph 5:9). The Christian's protection is not to be sought in any works of his own but only in what Christ has done for him and in him."*⁶

So, in holding on to, that is living in God's truth we are able to appropriate His righteousness and stand righteously against the enemy. Now we can continue to stand, grounded in truth and standing firm against the enemies use of our emotions to cause us to fall.

VERSE 15: Well we're dressed in a belt and breastplate, but we need to get some foot wear. This verse is a bit hard to follow and is interpreted in a number of ways, but here I like Ray Stedman's approach.

*"The third requisite is to have the feet shod with the preparation—the readiness—of a sense of peace. And the place to start is to remember who you are, what you are, and above all else, whom you have. Be strong in his strength and for his sake. Remember you belong to Christ's family. The Scripture says he is not ashamed to call us brothers. God is not ashamed to be called our God. Be strong for his sake. Let us get away from this subjectiveness all the time—"What is going to happen to me, and how do I feel?"—remembering that God has vested his honor in us. And remember, by putting on these three pieces of armor the battle is almost won. You will have very little difficulty overcoming evil if you start right there."*⁷

This is what I constantly try to pass on to my clients. If they can remember who they are in Christ and live in that truth, they will have victory in their struggles over sin and the spiritual battle. It is work and sadly many are unwilling to work at much of anything anymore.

VERSE 16: Now we consider the next item of armor. The word shield is interesting because of the way it would extinguish the arrows of the enemy. The NIV Bible Study Notes says of the Greek used, it ...:

*“ Describes the large Roman shield covered with leather, which could be soaked in water and used to put out flame-tipped arrows.”*⁸

Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon on this verse. Some of the points he made were:

“ I believe the word that is translated “shield” sometimes signifies a door, because the ancients’ shields were as large as a door. The covered the man entirely. ... As the shield enveloped the entire man, so faith envelops the entire man, protecting him from all missiles wherever they may be aimed against him. Faith protects the whole man.

*Let me also suggest that faith like a shield receives the blows that are meant for the man himself. Some Christians think that faith should enable them to escape blows—that if they had faith, everything would be peaceful and calm. ... But be armed with faith; it receives the blows. The poor shield is knocked and hammered and battered like a house exposed in time of storm. Blow after blow comes rattling upon it, and though it turns death aside, yet the shield is compelled itself to hear the cut and thrust. So must our faith do—it must be cut at, it must bear the blows.”*⁹

Growth and overcoming arrives not in the absence of battle, not in the midst of calm circumstances, but in how one depends on the Lord, appropriates the power of the Holy Spirit and the gift of salvation in the trials and struggles. We need to quite looking for comfort in our life, but for spiritual growth. **“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).**

VERSE 17: Here I want to go back to Hodge for a moment:

*“ That which adorns and protects the Christian, which enables him to hold up his head with confidence and joy, is the fact that he is saved. He is one of the redeemed, translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. If still under condemnation, if still estranged from God, a foreigner and alien, without God and without Christ, he could have no courage to enter into this conflict. It is because he is a fellow citizen of the saints, a child of God, a partaker of the salvation of the Gospel, that he can face even the most potent enemies with confidence, knowing that he shall be brought off more than conqueror through him that loved him ...”*¹⁰

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

We live in a world that is not only confused in its emotions, but also in its mind as we are secure in our salvation then we can stand firm with clarity in our minds. God gives us wisdom through His Spirit. And just as we are protect in our emotions we are also protected in our minds.

Now, all of what we have seen are defensive items. All are intended to help us stand firmly against the enemy. As you can see the focus of the battle is not primarily one of attack and

certainly not going up against Satan, battling him offensively, but instead being prepared to with stand his attack. But there is one offensive item in the whole armor of God ... and it is the Sword of Truth.

There are a number of different types of swords used by the military. This one is “*the gladius (Gr., machaira) or short two-edged cut-and-thrust sword wielded by the heavily armed legionary.*”¹¹ Truth used as a weapon is the only way we are called to go on the offense against the attacks of Satan. It was this way the Christ stood against his attacks. How did he stand? ... by saying “It is written ...”

“Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4).

“ Now, as the sword, the Word is useful both for defense and for offense. ... It both defends and protects us, but it also pierces other hearts and destroys the lies of the Devil in others besides ourselves. That is its great effect.

The Word is the only proper offense that the Christian has. He is to proclaim the truth. He does not need to defend it; he does not need to support it with long and extensive arguments. There is a place for that, but not in an encounter with those who disbelieve. He is to proclaim it, simply to declare it. As the Scripture says in Hebrews:”¹²

“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (4:12).

“ It gets below the reason and pierces the armor that has been erected against it and comes home to the heart. Thus it has power in itself.”¹³

We don't fight the battle by trying to play twenty questions with demons, by binding Satan, by using “magic and superstition.” We fight the battle by standing firm, appropriating all we have and are in Christ and attacking with the Truth of Scripture. And underlying all of this are the ...

VERSE 18: prayers of the saints. With out prayer all that has gone before is empty for it is in communion and dependency on God that we are able to use and depend on the armor he provides. Without putting on the armor, our prayers are powerless. We must put on the one and do the other.

Stedman lists three basic facts inherent to prayer adapted here:

1. *When we pray we recognize ... the existence of an invisible kingdom.*
2. *The second thing that prayer reveals is that we Christians have confidence that the kingdom of God is highly significant, that it affects our lives directly, that the visible things which occur in our world are a direct result of something that is happening in the realm of invisibility.*
3. *Third, and perhaps the most hotly contested fact by the Devil and his forces is that our prayers play a direct and essential part in bringing God's invisible power to bear on visible life. In other words, God answers prayer.*¹⁴

And so we end where we started not with ourselves, but with God. We are not called to fight, but are called to live the life that God desires to provide for us, His children. And as we live as he calls us to then we will stand firm, we will see victory over the enemy and we will be able to find peace, joy and contentment in our relationship to of Father God.

The source of our security then is not in systems, superstitions and suppositions. Instead it is in these truths.

GOD LOVES US!

GOD IS IN CONTROL!

GOD NEVER MAKES MISTAKES!

BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!

¹ Powlison, David, Power Encounters—Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1995, p. 35.

² Stedman, Ray C., Spiritual Warfare, Word Publisher, Waco, TX, 1976, p. 18.

³ Ibid., p. 68.

⁴ Hodge, Charles, An Exposition of Ephesians, The Master Christian Library, AGES Software, Albany, OR, Version 8.0 © 2000, p. 249-250.

⁵ Ibid., p. 256-257.

⁶ Wood, A. Skevington, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, "Ephesians," Zondervan Interactive Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990, Electronic text hypertexted and prepared by OakTree Software, Inc.

⁷ Stedman, p. 78-79.

⁸ NIV Study Bible Notes, The Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985, Electronic text hypertexted and prepared by OakTree Software, Inc.

⁹ Spurgeon, Charles, Spiritual Warfare in a Believer's Life, "*The Shield of Faith*," Emerald Books, Lynwood, WA, 1993, p. 153, 155.

¹⁰ Hodge, p. 260.

¹¹ Wood.

¹² Stedman, p. 108-109.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 126

Counseling and Spiritual Warfare

Part 1: The Dangers of Deliverance

Delivered at the
Class Convention, October 20-21, 2000

*“And having disarmed the powers and authorities,
he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”*
~ *Colossians 2:15*

BIBLICAL COUNSELING: The focus is to help people unlearn the “_____” they have believed about life and instead coming to live a life based on God’s _____. (*Romans 12:2*)

THE PROBLEM: When the client is presented with an inaccurate system of teaching then the needed process of transformation _____.

THE ERRORS:

- “F_____” and “F_____” (*Exodus 20:5*)

- Job

- Paul (*2 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 4:13-15*)
- The fallen nature (*Genesis 6:5; Psalm 19:12; Ecclesiastes 9:3; Ephesians 4:17-25*)
- The fearful world
- The experiential world. (*Acts 17:11*).

THE DANGERS OF DELIVERANCE: (*John 8:31-32*).

“ There is a biblical basis for saying some of our evil thoughts are provoked by Satan (e.g., 1 Chron. 21:1; Matt. 16:23; John 13:2; Acts 5:3), but there is no biblical basis for saying all of them do (James 1:14, 4:1; Rom 8:7; 1 Pet. 2:11; Gal. 5:17).¹

¹ Miller, Elliot, “*The Bondage Maker: Examining the Message of Neil T. Anderson, Part 1*,” CRI Statement DA081, <http://www.equip.org/free/DA080.htm>.

Counseling and Spiritual Warfare

Part 2: Fighting The Good Fight

Delivered at the
Class Convention, October 20-21, 2000

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our
struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world
and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes,
you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.
Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,
with the breastplate of righteousness in place,
and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.
In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith,
with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.
With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*

~ Ephesians 6:10-18

THE PROBLEM: Reality is, life is a struggle.

INTRODUCTION:

EPHESIANS 6:10:

“That panoply consists —

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

These prayers should be —

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1

VERSES 11-13:

VERSE 14:

VERSE 15:

VERSE 16: (*James 4:7*)

VERSE 17: (*Romans 8:37; Matthew 4:4; Hebrews 4:12*)

VERSE 18:

Three basic facts inherent to prayer adapted here:

1.

2.

3.

2

GOD LOVES US!

GOD IS IN CONTROL!

GOD NEVER MAKES MISTAKES!

BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!

¹ Hodge, Charles, An Exposition of Ephesians, The Master Christian Library, AGES Software, Albany, OR, Version 8.0 © 2000, p. 249-250.

² Stedman, Ray C., Spiritual Warfare, Word Publisher, Waco, TX, 1976, p. 126

Counseling and Spiritual Warfare

Delivered at the
Class Convention, October 20-21, 2000

Suggested Readings

Books

Bunyan, John, The Holy War, Emerald House Group, Lynwood, WA, 1998.

Bunyan, John, Pilgrim's Progress, Barbour & Co., 2000.

Gurnall, William, Christian in Complete Armor, Banner of Truth, 1996.

Lewis, C. S., The Great Divorce, Touchstone Books, 1996

Lewis, C. S., The Screwtape Letters, Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000.

Powlison, David, Power Encounters, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1998. **Highly Recommended!**

Spurgeon, Charles, Spiritual Warfare in a Believers Life, Emerald Books, Lynwood, WA, 1993.

Stedman, Ray C., Spiritual Warfare: Winning the Daily Battle with Satan, Discovery House Publishers, 1999.

Wiersbe, Warren, W., Classic Sermons on Spiritual Warfare, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI 1992.

Web Sources

Christian Research Institute, <http://www.equip.org>. This is a source of a significant amount of free material on the subject of Spiritual Warfare including:

Miller, Elliot, "*The Bondage Maker: Examining the Message of Neil T. Anderson, Part 1-4*," CRI Statement DA081-DA084.

Also ask for the Spiritual Warfare packet which includes a number of articles by multiple authors including Chuck Smith, Elliot Miller and others. Also consider subscribing to the Christian Research Journal.

The manuscripts for these messages are will be available for downloading from <http://www.cfdevotionals.org>. Select the Bible Study link and you will find them there along with others of my teachings.