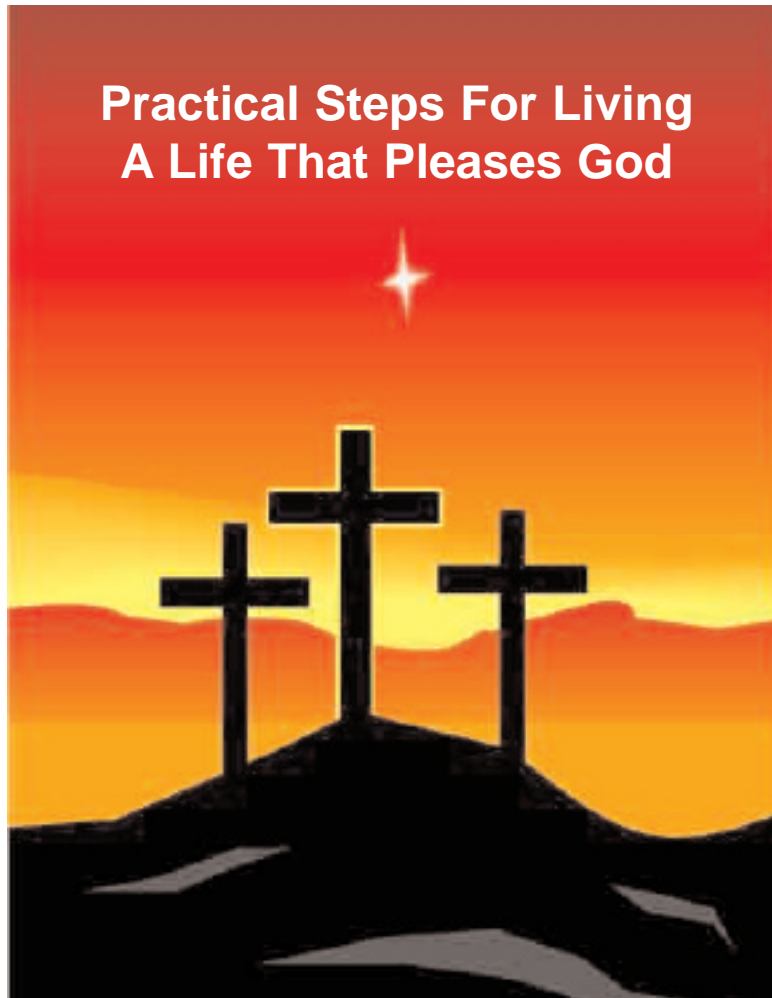


Lifebytes

21. Freedom In Jesus Video Series (Part 1) Certain Of What We Do Not See

The Battle For Your Soul



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The Battle For Your Soul

In this last Lifebyte segment of ***Certain of What We Do Not See***, we want to discuss the battleground on which spiritual warfare is being waged against the followers of Jesus. This is a spiritual battle over who'll influence your SOUL, which is your mind, will, and emotions. Will it be the Holy Spirit or the devil?

There's an important connection you'll make in the spiritual battle around you. **First**, the more you understand the reality of what's arrayed against you, the more you'll gratefully APPRECIATE the sacrificial accomplishment of our Lord Jesus.

Second, you'll increasingly DEPEND ON the presence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit to KEEP transforming your character into the likeness of Jesus.

But, don't ever lose sight of the fact that the whole issue of spiritual warfare is over who'll control your mind, will and emotions. If you're a follower of Jesus, you have responsibilities in this war. You need to keep focusing on eternal values and ways in which you can lovingly walk out your obedient trust.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

The words "*set your hearts*" literally mean "*to seek with your will and affections*". You're commanded to seek our Lord Jesus with all the devotion and earnestness you can muster.

Many times we're assured in the

Scriptures that if we seek Him with all our heart, He WILL be found by us.

The command to "*set your minds*" literally means, "*to set your mind in a CERTAIN WAY.*" It implies intense pursuit that includes both your mind and your emotions. You can't just ponder the CONCEPT of things above. You need to aim your mental purpose toward HEARTFELT OBEDIENCE to what you're commanded.

(See Newsletter 1997-03 "Salvation Leads to Action")

Now let's consider what Satan's trying to do within your soul. As we mentioned in an earlier Lifebyte, one of his most powerful strategies is **DECEPTION**.

Paul's heart was wounded that his beloved Corinthian family in Jesus might have yielded to Satan's deception.

I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3).

If the Corinthian followers of Jesus could be deceived, we today can be deceived as well, if we're not alert.

Christians Can be Demonized.

True? or False?

As you read the title to this section, "Christians can be demonized. True? or False?", what was your initial response? MANY Christians are afraid that demons might influence or control them.

Over the centuries this fear has prompted a number of denominations to embrace a satanic lie that "Christians *can't* be influenced by demons!" The

false assumption behind that statement gives Satan an unchallenged foothold in the souls of so many followers of Jesus.

Let's clarify an important interpretation from the Bible. This concerns the Greek word, "***daimonizomenoi***" (die-mun-ees-OM-en-oy).

This term is used in Scripture to describe the INFLUENCE of evil spirits in the lives of individuals. Almost as a satanic ploy, it's often mistranslated as "demon POSSESSION."

For example, most translations state that "*many who were **demon-possessed** were brought to [Jesus], and he drove out the spirits with a word*" (Matthew 8:16).

When Jesus was in the region of the Gadarenes, two men called "**demon-possessed**" came to Him from the tombs. (Matthew 8:28)

And again, a man who was blind and mute (Matthew 12:22) is referred to as "**demon-possessed**" by the translators.

In each case the word "*daimonizomenoi*" is inaccurately translated "demon-POSSESSED."

This mistranslation conjures up a totality of demonic ownership and control that's more encompassing than the word really means. Demon-POSSESSION would indicate no free will, which isn't the case.

The more literal rendering of this word is "demon-IZED". A demonized person may be afflicted, agitated, influenced or tormented in some way by a demon or demons.

A good way for us to understand demonization is through the English word "cauterize." To cauterize a wound means that you sear it to keep it from becoming infected. A hot iron is applied to an open wound to stop the bleeding.

If you're a follower of Jesus, you have responsibilities in this war. You need to keep focusing on eternal values and ways in which you can lovingly walk out your obedient trust.

It's only the WOUND that's cauterized, not the whole person! And the injured person is certainly not cauter-POSSESSED!

In the same way, demonization means the particular effect or impact of a demon on a CERTAIN AREA of someone's soul. That area is one that ISN'T under the control of the Holy Spirit, so it's fair game for Satan. As with cauterizing, the deeper the "wound" of sin, the greater the "effect" of the demonization.

The most severe case of demonic activity reported in Scripture takes place in the man from the region of the Gerasenes. (See Mark 5:1-20.) Even with a "legion" of demons plaguing him, this man had enough free will to RECOGNIZE JESUS AND RUN TO HIM.

Now that you understand that the Bible is NOT talking about "demon POSSESSION", you can better realize that demons affect CERTAIN AREAS of your mind, will, and emotions that you've yielded to them through habitual sinful disobedience.

Demons, or unclean spirits as the Bible often calls them, can also interfere with the normal function of our bodies, as with the demonized man who was blind and mute (Matthew 12:22).

You can see the DIFFERENCE between a demonized person compared to the traditional understanding of someone who is "demon-possessed".

We'll deal with this a whole lot more in Part 2 of our **Freedom In Jesus series, Demolishing Strongholds.**

Demons affect CERTAIN AREAS of your mind, will, and emotions that you've yielded to them through habitual sinful disobedience.

The Process Of Demonization Of Your Soul

Demonic influence can create problems that are spiritual, emotional, and even physical. The difference of influence is a matter of DEGREE.

A SEVERELY demonized person suffers long-standing and frequent periods of demonic manifestations.

A MILDLY demonized person may have only short bouts of agitation.

Again, we'll deal with this topic much more in Part 2 of this series, **Demolishing Strongholds**. But, right now we want to introduce you to HOW demonic activity, a very real feature of the unseen realm, takes place in your soul.

The first inroads are made through your body. The temptation to sin most often comes through one or more of your five senses. When you realize that the temptation you encounter is NOT something Jesus would think, say or do, your soul is in conflict.

At this point, the temptation enters your soul through your physical senses' input.

- Within the soul, that is, your mind, will, and emotions, is your individual personality.
- Within your mind, will and emotions are your needs, desires and motivations.

Your soul receives the temptation from your body. And because your soul is the arena that's open to demonic activity, a battle begins.

God's Word commands you to RESIST the temptation, or flee from it! In fact, we are to TAKE CAPTIVE EVERY THOUGHT to make it obedient to Christ.

If you don't, you'll not only give in to it and sin, but you'll also open yourself up to demonic influence, oppression, and captivity of a vulnerable area of your soul if this sin becomes HABITUAL.

HABITUALLY GIVING WAY TO TEMPTATION in particular areas of your soul will prevent you from responding to God. You won't be able to receive from Him in the way He intends. His love and truth will be blocked out by the demonic stronghold that the demons establish in your soul.



You can go through a lot of religious activities and programs, but you won't experience intimate relationship with God. And those areas of your soul that are blocked by a demonic stronghold will quench the work of the Holy Spirit.

Habitually giving way to temptation in particular areas of your soul will prevent you from responding to God. You won't be able to receive from Him in the way He intends.

Entertaining Demons In Your Mind

You'd be amazed how many Christians entertain demons in their mind! Many followers of Jesus listen more to the tantalizing or self-justifying voices of demons than they do to God's Spirit.

(See: Newsletter 1999-02 "Counterfeit Church")

Why is this? One reason is because they've been taught that as "Christians", the devil can't do anything to them. They think this because of the mistranslation of *daimonizomenoi*.

We agree that they can't be demon-POSSESSED. But as we've shown, they can be DEMONIZED to varying degrees. If YOU want to live free in Jesus, you must be aware that you CAN be demonized!

Another reason is that many who call themselves "Christian" are just plain ignorant when it comes to the unseen forces arrayed against them. A careful look at Paul's words to his people in Corinth gives us a clearer picture of the choices we must make in our soul.

*The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be **participants with demons**. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the **cup of demons too**; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the **table of demons**. Are we trying to **arouse the Lord's jealousy**? Are we stronger than he? (1 Corinthians 10:20-22).*

Paul wrote this passage to FOLLOWERS OF JESUS. What was he warning them about when he cautioned them, "*I do not want you to be participants with demons*"?

The Greek term that's translated "communion" in the King James Version and "participation" in the NIV is "*koinonia*". From this word we get the term "fellowship".

Paul was EMPHATIC when he counseled them, "*I do NOT want you to be participants with demons.*" Let's rephrase this: "***I don't want you FELLOWSHIP-PING with demons!***"

What do YOU think it means for YOU to PARTICIPATE with demons? What is it that you do that has YOU FELLOWSHIPING with demons? Paul warned that people who drink of the Lord's cup or share in His covenant, CAN'T mix that holiness with ways that are demonic. That would be SPIRITUAL ADULTERY.

If you want to live according to the world, your flesh and Satan, you can't partake of the table of Jesus.

A vital principle here applies to you entertaining demons in your SOUL, which encompasses your mind, will and emotions.

This principle pertains to WHO is really ruling your soul — Satan or the Holy Spirit. Let's reword part of Paul's passage to the Corinthians:

"You can't entertain thoughts of Jesus and thoughts influenced by demons at the same time.

The Lord and demons can't occupy your soul together.

You'll become like whomever you allow to participate in your thoughts and actions."

Remember, your soul is the battleground for the unseen world going on around you. You can LIVE FREE in union with Jesus to serve His purposes. Or, you can be DEMONIZED by the devil and

live in darkness in a particular area or areas of your soul. The choice is yours.

This concludes Part 1 of our ***Freedom In Jesus*** series. If you AREN'T experiencing the love and freedom promised you by Jesus, please get our video and workbook, ***Demolishing Strongholds***.

Living free to EXPERIENCE our Lord's love and to FREELY AND FRUITFULLY SERVE HIM is what being a follower of Jesus is all about. He's not looking for you to slog along out of obligation, or for you to feel good about your own obedience and become self-righteous.

The INTENSITY of loving service for His Kingdom is reflected in a Hebrew wordplay in John chapter 6 that doesn't come across in English*. After reminding His hearers about the bread from heaven that sustained the lives of their ancestors in the wilderness, Jesus refers to HIMSELF as the bread from heaven that gives life:

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world (John 6:51).

The Hebrew word for bread, *lechem* (leh-HEM), sounds much like the Hebrew salute to life, *L'chaim* (leh-HIME). Jesus is the bread that gives life to the world. How He stirred up agitation among the blood-abstaining Jews when He called for those who trusted in Him to "eat His flesh" as the bread that brings life!

Yet that command was a wordplay as well. In Hebrew, the language in which Jesus taught, His command to "eat" this bread of life would have been *lacham* (lah-HAHM). *Lacham* doesn't mean to nibble but to *devour* — to devour with intense hunger His sacrificial life in order to have eternal life! And, to walk with that same intensity in His commands and ways.

That's why He clarified several verses later (6:63) that He was speaking about the SPIRIT. His words about devouring the "bread of life" that brings eternal life were a SPIRITUAL TRUTH.

With the same fervor He commands His followers to "drink His blood" — *shathah* (shah-TAH) — to drink deeply, becoming filled with the life He brings!

May this word picture of the BREAD (*lechem*) of LIFE (*l'chaim*) being internalized with INTENSE DESIRE (*lacham*) spur you on to loving obedient trust in your own pilgrimage with the Lord of life!

(*We gratefully acknowledge Bodie and Brock Thoene's research for these insights.)

We've developed the ***Jesus In Your Home*** and ***Freedom In Jesus*** video series so that your life will be AVAILABLE for our Father's purposes — to bear FRUIT THAT LASTS, and to BRING HIM GLORY. Knowing and living the truth as God wants it understood by you is your only path to spiritual freedom.

"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).