

## Walking in Freedom After Deliverance

Have you been delivered from unclean spirits? Praise the Lord! Deliverance is a valid ministry of the Holy Spirit's anointing in the Church today. The Body of Christ is engaged in spiritual warfare with the powers of evil: *For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* (Ephesians 6:12) A great portion of Jesus' own earthly ministry was devoted to casting out unclean spirits and this authority was passed on to believers in Jesus. (Mark 16:17)

Walking in the Spirit after you experience deliverance is essential in order to keep a person free. The fact is that satan is determined to rob us of our freedom and every other good thing we have from God. We must learn to stand our ground by means of the weapons that are at our disposal. (Ephesians 6:14-17)

It may be that the unclean spirits from which you are now free have been oppressing you for a very long time. In such cases you can expect several weeks (even up to a year at times) after deliverance during which the Lord will gradually heal your mind and emotions. The Holy Spirit is always gentle and doesn't give us more than we can handle at a given point in time. But no matter how long it takes, He always finishes the work He has begun in us. Regardless of what happens, remember that Jesus in fact won victory of you nearly two thousand years ago. The devil can only try to get you to doubt this truth or convince you to give up your freedom voluntarily. Don't be defeated by negative thoughts, emotions, or circumstances. Remember, you are a winner, not a loser! God's Word says, *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.* (Romans 8:37)

In order to avoid the enemy's snares, it helps to recognize some of his strategy. Four typical methods of attack encountered by people after deliverance can be outlined as follows:

1. The Scriptures say that satan is the father of lies. Even though they are now outside of you, unclean spirits may still talk to you. Don't accept any thoughts, such as ideas of guidance, as coming from the Lord unless they a) line up with Scripture, b) give you peace, and c) are part of normal Christian behavior. The Holy Spirit never contradicts the Bible, never creates chaos within us, and never tells us to do strange (i.e., weird) things. Typically, lies from the enemy's routine might sound like this: "You haven't been delivered" or "It wasn't real" or "It wasn't complete," and similar negative thoughts, such as "You cannot keep your freedom" or "The demons are still inside you" or "God demands that you do such-and-such a thing or else." Don't believe these suggestions that you are still in bondage and that you can never be free. They are lies. Make your stand on the Word of God. *He whom the Son sets free is free indeed.* (John 8:36)
2. One meaning for the word 'satan' is 'accuser.' You may find yourself feeling guilty for having had unclean spirits or for your past sins. Remember that all your sins and failings are under the cleansing of Jesus' Blood, and God has put them out of memory. On the other hand, you may be told that you're too weak to resist the devil, you're failing God, or you're just a lousy person in general. The trick behind these lies (and the ones discussed above) is getting you to focus on yourself instead of Jesus. No matter what we are or have been, Jesus is perfect and He loves us. Remember that your strength comes not from your own faithfulness but rather from your faithful Lord. *But I for my part rely on your love, Yahweh; let my heart rejoice in Your saving help.* Psalm 13:5) Relax in God's full salvation for you. The name of 'Jesus' actually means 'God-saves' and not 'Man-must-save-himself'!

3. The enemy may try to intimidate you with demonstrations of his power. Don't be frightened if things seem to go wrong for you for a while or if some symptoms from before deliverance seem to reappear. Remember this: If Satan was as powerful as he claims to be, he would have swept us all away a long time ago. The reason that we're still here is that his power is in fact very limited. There is only one all-powerful person and He is the same God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who sends us the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. In other words, we're on the winning side.
4. You may find yourself tempted with old habits of behavior that don't fit in with the Christian life as God has designed it to function victoriously. The devil has a way of making the old times seem rosy to us, just as he tricked the Israelites in the desert into missing the "leeks and onions" that had left behind in Egypt. Or course, Satan forgot to mention the misery and the slavery that went along with those tasty onions. Don't become nostalgic about the past by keeping your eyes on the future as you prepare to enter God's promised land for you. Jesus didn't come to take good things away from you but rather to bring you real life: *I come that you might have life and have it in abundance.* (John 10:10) Put your trust in Jesus and you will have the desire of your heart. (Psalm 37)

Recognizing the enemy's strategy is helpful but does not win the battle for us. It is even more important that you learn and practice some positive principles that will enable you to gain ground quickly and hold it. The following five points are easy to remember and will help you tremendously:

1. **Focus your attention on Jesus.** Jesus' blood is the most powerful protection in the universe. Moreover, Jesus came and shed his very Blood because He loves you. Confess the fact that Jesus loves you, and repeat the following prayer every morning both in your heart and out loud: "Lord, I cover my mind, emotions body, soul and spirit, with the precious Blood of Jesus." Talk to Jesus every day sharing the good things and the bad with Him (your disappointments or areas where you may have failed to say the right things or to make the right choices). You can be sure He will not leave you. *And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...*" (Revelations 12:11)
2. **Allow the Holy Spirit to have His way with you.** Pray in tongues frequently and in faith. Don't get into bondage to legalistic time constraints, but aim for 5 - 15 minutes a day. Let the Holy Spirit show you negative attitudes, habits, feelings and behavior patterns that need to be changed. The Holy Spirit is God's power given in order for you to become like Jesus. He will show you things through the Bible, through other people and through your experiences, *Pray all the time asking for what you need, praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion.* (Ephesians 6:18) *But when the Spirit of Truth comes He will lead you into the complete truth, since He will not be speaking from Himself but will only say what He has learned; and He will tell you of things to come.* (John 16:13)
3. **Immerse yourself in the Scriptures.** The Bible is the written Word of God. The Word of God is a living thing that works in us even when we may not understand or comprehend fully what we are reading. Read as much as you can. Again, you need God's Word in your heart and mind, but don't become a slave to the clock. (Some well-meaning Christians have said, "I will read 10 [or 20] pages of my Bible every day" but soon discovered they had not grasped or understood what they rushed through.) Set realistic goals – for instance, a few chapters from the New Testament Gospels each day and perhaps one chapter from Proverbs / Psalms – but if the Holy Spirit "stops" you (i.e., you find a particular account or chapter calling for more attention), stop and take time to meditate, even if that uses up your time for the day. If you find such a reading schedule impossible, then concentrate on memorizing a verse from Scripture each day, constantly repeating it to yourself. Select verses that seem to apply to you and you may begin with some of the verses quoted in this article. *If you make my Word your home*

*you will indeed be my disciples, you will learn the truth and the truth will make you free. (John 8:31)*

4. **Tell the devil and his unclean spirits in Jesus' name to go away and leave you alone.** Make it clear that you intend to follow Jesus no matter what. Above all, don't argue with the enemy and entertain his suggestions and challenges because you can't beat him that way. Instead, clear your mind by gently praising Jesus. *Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)* Speak the name of Jesus frequently.
5. **Hang on to other Christians.** The Christian walk is not a solo performance. You will need other people in a Christian Fellowship to support you and edify your faith. This is nothing to be ashamed of but rather is God's preferred way. Jesus ministers through his body. *Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)*

If you practice these five FAITH principles, your post-deliverance problems will be minimal and your progress steady. Remember that God will not abandon you and don't be discouraged by any failures. Thank the Father for sending Jesus and anointing Him with the Holy Spirit to bring us out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light. *He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And He closed the book and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him as He began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:17-21)*