

### Healing and Rebuking

I love the law. I don't love God; I love God because He obeys and loves His law. We are one because, and only so far as, I love His law.

I don't love God's power. I don't love healings and miracles. I don't love rituals and ceremonies and pomp. I don't love prophecy or calling down fire from heaven. When I was younger and more spiritually immature, those things excited and interested me some; but now, I love the law. If you've understood a fraction of what I've said in these lessons then you understand what I mean, and why.

If there is one passage to memorize in the Bible, it is **Psalms 119:97-100**. This love of the law is why I am wiser than all my teachers. This is my greatest strength, but it's also a weakness. Not technically, but in the sense we'll be discussing today, there is a problem with it. Because given a choice between a miraculous and a law-based solution, I will always choose the law-based solution.

Even when it is harder, even when it means more difficulty for myself and even when it may mean more distance between myself and God, I always side with the law. In other words, given a choice between asking God to heal my cold, and doing a natural cleanse, I will always choose the cleanse. Given a choice between asking God to heal my cancer and trying to do it myself using the laws He built into the body to heal itself, I would always try to do it myself.

This may not be the right way to go about it. I admit this freely. I have put off writing this lesson a very long time in the hopes that I could make better sense of this attitude of mine, but I haven't been able to. I can argue both sides of the point from scripture with myself and others for hours – and have often done so.

I confess this to you because you should know that I have many flaws. Loving the law can't properly be called a flaw, since teaching us to love the law is one of God's primary purposes in creating mankind. It is truly a perfect and beautiful law, and those who obey it live well (**Leviticus 18:5**).

However, there is a place when the law **should** be overruled and sins forgiven; when the power of God should be applied to pay for our sins and deliver us from the penalty of the law. The law causes wrath when it is broken (**Romans 4:15**), and without the law, sin has no power (**1 Corinthians 15:56**). Jesus was tortured and killed so that we could be forgiven for our sins, both physical and spiritual (**Isaiah 53:5**).

So I love the law. I love the judgments of God. And I know that mercy is greater than judgment (**James 2:13**). Yet, for myself, I find myself preferring to work within the law than to take advantage of God's mercy. Not for pride's sake; not because I'm embarrassed to ask for help. But because I love to use the law, and if I can use the law to correct my mistakes – even if it's the hard way – I much prefer to do so than to fall back on mercy.

Some would say this hardly qualifies as a personality flaw (while others would call me the Antichrist for what I just said), but regardless, my views on this subject don't *quite* fit all the scriptures, and it's a problem I have never solved. We are in an area where I know a great deal, but I cannot give you the final, complete answers I have given you in most of the earlier lessons.

I want to pass on to you what I know – but I cannot help but pass on my misunderstanding as well as my understanding. And so I tell you I don't have the final answer on this; I have a lot; but not all. Something is wrong, or at least incomplete. One day, God willing, I will understand what it is. So with that disclaimer made, let's get right to...

## LESSON 44 – HEALING AND REBUKING

God DOES heal today. Miracles DO happen today. I have witnessed many miracles, some by my hand. I've had many prayers answered beyond any reasonable argument, and I consider myself quite a skeptic. I don't mean God giving you pretty clouds, breaks in traffic, and songs you like on the radio; most of that is nonsense from people who desperately need to feel God's attention, whether it's there or not.

No, I mean things like diabetic shock tremors departing at a few words. I mean rip tides carrying me and a child I was responsible for helplessly out to sea suddenly being reversed and practically throwing us up on shore. I mean monstrous toothaches disappearing instantly. Things I needed being brought to me by strangers out of the blue in a matter of a few days.

Strangers being sent to help us when one of us was injured on a hiking trail on a mountain seven miles from the nearest town in the jungle of Central America after dark because I asked for it; things like that. I mean things that HAPPENED, when I needed them; I was there for all of these things and many more.

Miracles didn't die in the first century to be replaced by doctors and religion. God made promises to be kept forever, and those promises never changed, for God does not change. His words were spoken, and they will not return to Him without accomplishing what they were sent to do (**Isaiah 55:11**). But what changed, and most especially in our time, is the people. God found fault with US (**Hebrews 8:8**). And that is why miracles have slowed – not stopped, but greatly diminished – since the first century.

To make my point, read **Mark 6:1-6**. Jesus traveled all over Israel healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons; but in this place HE COULD NOT do these same things! Jesus, who had no sin and *perfect* faith, COULD NOT do them. Why? Because of THEIR unbelief. The same Man, the same faith, the same prayers – **but they didn't work there!**

God hadn't changed. Jesus hadn't changed. The only thing that had changed was the PEOPLE. But let's go to another example, **Mark 5:35-43**. Here Jesus was in a *house* full of mockers, so He put them all out of the room; taking with Him only THREE of the disciples, and the child's parents – and they alone went in, and He raised the girl from the dead. Clearly, had He allowed the room to be filled with those scoffers – even ONE (or, apparently, even the weaker disciples) – this would have been impossible, even for Him! (See also **Acts 9:36-42**).

The point I'm making is that we live in an evil time. A time so evil that none of us alive even appreciate it. Had we grown up in 1910 and been transported here, the things that go on around us would horrify us; the jokes, the songs, the dress – to say nothing of the movies! – even the religions are

unrecognizable compared with the same religions 100 years ago. We are like the frog slowly boiled in the frying pan, and “normal” to us would make Sodom blush and sicken Jezebel.

So our entire planet is like the town Jesus could do no mighty works in. Actually, worse. Jesus knew this had to happen, which is why He asked the rhetorical question “*when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*” If Jesus can’t find faith on the Earth, then it’s going to be pretty hard for any of us to do miracles on that same Earth, isn’t it?

## THE WORLD IS CALLOUSED

As I said, I’m not saying fantastic miracles don’t happen today, and are not instantly available to the true Christian when they’re needed. They are, and I’ve seen them. And to this day when I’m in a tough situation, I only have to ask to be out of it. Most of the time, at least – when it isn’t my fault and when there isn’t something I need to correct before God can do His part.

But the flashy emptying of hospitals and raising the dead to bolster the faith of a town has disappeared; at least, I’ve never seen it. And the reason is not just because of the lack of faith I mentioned above; not exactly, anyway.

Does the devil do counterfeit miracles? **Revelation 13:11-14**. Who does he deceive with these false miracles? **Verses 15-17**. Before the end – in our time – will there be MANY false preachers doing false miracles? **Matthew 24:24**. And what do these false prophets do? **2 Thessalonians 2:8-11**.

These are all end-time prophecies. Prophecies for our time, and the future. The devil’s miracles are primarily done in the SUNDAY-keeping churches, because it is Sunday-keeping that is the mark of the beast; faith-healing evangelists are among the most fiercely anti-Sabbath pseudo-Christians in the world. Now I won’t categorically say that NO ONE is ever healed by these people – although I doubt the *vast* majority of them are – because it IS possible for God to heal people in those places, if both parties manage the right balance of sincerity and faith and grace.

But I *will* say that these miracles, most of which are complete frauds, are put there to *counterfeit* the true power of God. These shows they put on TV are just that – shows. No more real than Madam Zytar the psychic or the Simpsons. Or the evening news for that matter, but that’s another story.

But worse than the simple deception, worse than leading gullible people down a false path into their false church; far worse than all of that is **getting the world calloused to the appearance of God’s power!** When you see someone’s forehead slapped on TV and they fall away backwards “healed” – and you later learn it was a scam – that hurts not only your faith in *that* “God” **but in the true God as well, when you finally meet Him.**

Being betrayed by false gods dressed up as the true God greatly harms your ability to trust the true God who is quite similar in some respects; after all, if they weren’t similar, they wouldn’t be *counterfeits* would they? Anointing someone’s head with oil is something most of the false preachers do; it’s hard to convince yourself that a similar formula is really going to work any better this time than it did last time.

Quite simply, the world is full of people like those whom Jesus had to put out of the room to heal the girl; scoffers and doubters and atheists on the one hand, who wouldn’t believe in a miracle even if they could repeat it in a laboratory; false Christians who adore a false Jesus on the other, who pray for dozens of things a day without any expectation of their prayer being answered; and spiritists and

Wiccans and hippies somewhere in the middle, who believe in the healing power of crystals and drums and full moons and dreamcatchers – and each and every one of these groups are horribly wrong.

And because of all these counterfeits, it's hard to compete. Supposing you or I were to set up a big tent or even get on TV and advertise a "heal-a-thon". Sure, lots of people would come. And supposing they were all healed; granted, some might listen. But how would you be different from all the other faith healers? How could they tell it was you, and not the other dozen people they asked to pray for them? **And would they be there for the right reasons?** For a love of truth... or a love of God's version of aspirin?

## FALSE EXORCISMS

Similarly the world is full of exorcisms. They're in the movies – hopefully not ones you watch – they're all through the false churches now and throughout history. These are not so much bad because of the utter frauds that they are, **but because they accustom you to treat the real thing lightly, and cast doubt on the truth of the spirit world.**

So before you learn the truth, you must first forget everything you ever heard about casting out evil spirits – it was all wrong. Worse than wrong, every exorcism you've ever heard about, or read about, **was probably meant to exorcise the spirit of God!** Can a false church exorcise a false spirit? **Matthew 12:26. Satan's churches don't cast out Satan's servants – his fallen angels.**

If the church carried the doctrines of antichrist, then any exorcisms they did were either completely imaginary – or else they were false ministers of false spirits casting out the true spirit of God. And possibly succeeding, for the spirit of God won't remain where it isn't wanted – not without a very good reason. **Wave a cross in God's face, the symbol of His great adversary, and God will simply leave.** And that's why that is a key part in the formula of every false Christian exorcism.

**Demons are stronger than you are, smarter than you are, and a LOT older than you are. They are not pets to play with,** creatures to reason with, nor should they be insulted and slandered; they should be respected, and when necessary, **COMMANDED.** Nothing else. If you don't feel you can do that, find someone who can; or ask God to do it. But we'll come back to that.

## BETTER THAN MIRACLES

There is something better than miracles. Not as impressive to the carnal human, but far more impressive to a mature Christian. Let me ask you a question; which is better – getting leprosy, praying to God (or going to a prophet to be healed), and having your leprosy cured... or never getting leprosy at all? **Which would you prefer?**

Not getting leprosy does not give you proof that God was behind it, true; so it doesn't give us confirmation of our faith, actions, and attitude; **but if we had confirmation, it wouldn't be faith anymore, would it? Romans 8:24-25.** *Needing* that proof shows you lack confidence in your relationship with God and thus proves you **HAVE** weak faith in the first place!

The same goes for cancer, legal hassles, car accidents, famines, robberies, and so on; God promised Israel, not to protect them from thieves – but to nip the process in the bud by making the thieves not even **DESIRE** their possessions (**Exodus 34:24**). It's far better – and *more* of a miracle – for a thief to simply not desire what's yours, than for God to strike him down with lightning as he tries to pick the lock.

Sure, it's less impressive – it's much cooler to get up in the morning and say “honey, looks like God snuffed another burglar on our doorstep last night”, and have her reply, “not again! That's the third one this month!” As I said, it's more exciting, but not better. Better to not get sick, not to *need* the flashy miracles of God in the first place, than to have them after suffering the sickness.

And that leads me back to the law. As I've said many times, the law is a large subject; it's not just “thou shalt not steal”, it also governs how and what to eat; how and what and when to grow food; how to store it and prepare it; who to share it with; how to do business, and a thousand other things. When these things are done, when ALL the statutes are obeyed, THEN God will “*put none of these diseases upon thee*” (**Exodus 15:26**).

This means if you fully obey the law, **the true miracle is that you will not NEED God's healing.** THAT is what the nations (and people) around you should be in awe over; not of God's power miraculously zapping this and that! They should be awed by the fact that you don't NEED that power, because you have such a wonderful law to *protect* you! (**Deuteronomy 4:5-9**).

And as you follow those laws, you should need God's miraculous help less all the time. Back to myself, when I was younger, I was quite foolish. Literally and spiritually. So I made a lot of foolish mistakes. I paid for some of them myself. But to pay for others would have required more than I could pay – namely, my life. Or at least, great discomfort and unhappiness. So more than I WANTED to pay.

Earlier in my Christian “career”, I needed a lot more help. I needed a lot more of that power around me to get things done, because I simply wasn't able to do it myself. I got myself in over my head on a regular basis; rushing headlong into places where angels would have wisely been afraid to go, so to speak.

But as time went on, I've grown wiser. I'm more careful about riptides. I no longer believe Costa Ricans when they say “it's just a little hike” (12 hours, 20 miles, and 7500 feet in vertical elevation later I decided “little” must mean something else there). So I get in less of these sticky situations now. They've gone from once a month to maybe once a year. I consider that progress.

But as the need for God's help has diminished, those flashy “proofs” of God's approval have also diminished. I began questioning if I was on the right path or if I was in some way in error; then I asked myself “what do I need that I don't have?” and found there really wasn't much. And then I understood this scripture: **Luke 15:11-32**. The world draws many “lessons” from this parable. And some of them are valid; some are superficial; most are just silly.

For our purposes today, I want you to read the passage and then ask yourself these questions – who had more flashy attention? Surely it was the prodigal son. **But does that mean he was more beloved by his father?** Or that he would receive a greater inheritance? Then apply those answers to us; as we love and obey the law, we will need less supernatural help. That's the whole *point* of the laws, that “*the man that doeth them shall live in them*”! (**Galatians 3:12**).

As we need less supernatural help, we also have fewer supernatural signs of God's pleasure. Thus, it may seem as if God is forsaking us when in reality, we're forsaking our sins and we simply don't need as much of His help; at least, not on that visible level. **Only our carnality would make us envious of that prodigal sinner who has such dramatic miracles happen to him when we are so blessed, we don't need them! Only a fool would desire curses just to get their Father's attention to heal them!**

## FAITH TODAY

All of that was background. It gives you a perspective on where we are today. We do not live in a time when it is a battle between the true believers and the pagan Greek gods, child-sacrificers and fire-worshippers. Then it was simple; our God versus theirs, their gods could not raise the dead; heal the sick or call fire from heaven. It was unheard of, or nearly so. So it constituted a strong proof of who was the God of Elijah and who wasn't (**1 Kings 18:30-40, 2 Kings 2:14**, etc.).

Today, we see cooler stuff than that on TV every night. We even see it passed off as real by magicians and charlatans, faith healers and Buddhist monks. And while most people *think* these are scams, there's always doubt; and compared to that, calling down fire isn't quite so impressive as it used to be; even parting the Red Sea, while still a cool trick for sure, wouldn't carry quite the weight that it did to the Egyptians.

Healing the sick means almost nothing at all, at least for these purposes. The medical profession even has a term for it, "spontaneous remission". That's doctor-speak for "we don't know why it got better, we didn't fix it; praise God... and pay us".

**Since the world is different today, our approach has to be different too.** I've belabored these points, even though there wasn't much scripture behind them, because I've never heard anyone else say these things and yet they **MUST** be understood to grasp properly how the promises of God apply to us today. But now we can get to work and start with a simple one; dealing with evil spirits.

## THE DEVIL YOU KNOW...

We've covered authority extensively in these past lessons. Now you're going to learn how it applies to the real world. The spirits God placed over the world are all of the same... well, let's call it species. One God created all these spirits (**Hebrews 12:9, John 1:3**). If you stood Michael up next to Satan, they'd look the same. Except (no offense to Michael) Satan would be more handsome (**Ezekiel 28:12**). One obeys God and one doesn't; but **from the outside you cannot tell the difference!**

But are all spirits equal in wickedness? **Luke 11:26**. So some wicked angels are "more wicked" than others. Thus, some angels are more righteous than others; for to be more wicked is to be less righteous. If this were not the case, what point would there be in judging angels? **1 Corinthians 6:3**. So these angels, some more wicked than others, some more righteous, are tasked with governing the Earth as you learned in Lesson 24 and Lesson 39. They carry God's authority to do so.

**These spirits are OVER humanity in authority.** We are made LOWER than the angels (**Psalms 8:4-5**). That means they are stronger, wiser, and more powerful than we are; and ALSO that they have more of GOD'S *civil* authority than humans do!

But when we take upon us the last name of God, we are adopted into a higher family; and given the *spiritual* authority of a son of that house. When that happens we then **OUTRANK** these spirits in all spiritual matters. How did Jesus say the spirits knew to obey the disciples? **Luke 10:20**. The disciples had names – spiritual names in the Elohim family – written in heaven, and **THAT** is what made the spirits subject to them!

Their authority over the evil spirits was a mere *side-benefit* of their names being written in the book of life! (**Philippians 4:3**). That's why Jesus said to rejoice over **THAT** fact, and not in a mere physical

side-effect, that the devils must now obey you! Those who are NOT written in this book are NOT in authority over the devils – and the devils know it! (**Acts 19:13-16**).

They knew Jesus was in that book. They knew Paul was also written there, and had authority over them. But these sons of Sceva *were not written there so they did not have to obey them! So the evil spirits treated them as rebellious inferiors which in fact they were – rebelling against the powers God had placed over them and thus rebelling against God!* (**Romans 12:1-4**).

When God writes your name in the book of life, **at that point** you are given authority over demons and “*power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over ALL the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you*” (**Luke 10:19**). This doesn’t apply to Joel Osteen and Benny Hinn. This **ONLY** applies to people whom God has written in the book of life, those who keep His commandments and follow Him wherever He goes (**Revelation 14:4**).

This writing of a new name in the book of life (**Revelation 2:17, 3:12**) most likely happens at baptism/the laying on of hands when you walk “*in newness of life*” (**Romans 6:4**). After all, a new life requires a new name. At least, spiritually speaking.

Regardless, in order to use this authority properly you must **UNDERSTAND** your role. You must know **WHY** demons exist, why they are here **and when and why you should manage them – and when you should just let them do their job without interference!**

## THE GOOD THAT DEVILS DO

We know that devils are worthy of respect; and we’ve studied the purpose the devil and his minions serve many times now. They provide deception, give God an excuse not to kill sinning mankind by allowing grace to exist, and so on. But there is one aspect we haven’t done much with; they are tools to teach us invaluable lessons... and to cull those who refuse to learn those lessons from God’s “herd”.

Why did God send evil spirits to Egypt? **Psalms 78:49**. Does God rule both the deceived and the deceiver? **Job 12:16**. Does God allow, even encourage, evil angels to deceive people? **1 Kings 22:22-23**. And why do these evil deceivers exist? **1 Corinthians 11:19**. Where do the false doctrines in these churches come from? **1 Timothy 4:1**. And who do they deceive? **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10**. In whom do these false spirits work their seditious craft? **Ephesian 2:2**. And what does the fact of a person being deceived by these false doctrines tell us? **1 John 4:6**.

The devil and his demons are our enemies, yes. But not in the sense the world believes. Not only are most of them, if not all, at least partly deceived, and thus not *pure* evil in the usual sense; but they provide an invaluable service to the would-be sons of God. They are our enemies in exactly the same way that the wolf or lion is the enemy of the flock. To back up that metaphor, read **Acts 20:29, Luke 10:3** and **1 Peter 5:8**.

Everyone who has ever watched a nature show knows who the predators attack in the herd; it is the young, the old, the maimed. On an individual level, the wolves are the enemy of that lame elk; but the wolves perform a *service* to the flock as a whole by pruning off the weak and selecting the strong. This is something God does to the church as well (**John 15:1-8**). And this is *how* He does it!

The devils exist, and are given *limited* power to hassle Christians, because their deceptions, their heresies and torments **make our weaknesses stand out!** If you are prone to a violent temper, evil

spirits will push your buttons until you learn to control it – or until you prove you cannot and God sees that you cannot be trusted ruling in His kingdom.... and pulls out His pruning shears.

If you are prone to hypertension, they will be used to put you in situations where you are at your wit's end constantly, until you either snap or learn to put your trust in Him who can actually do something about your problems. The same goes for depression, sexual appetite, mental dullness, irritability, obsessive-compulsive disorder, bipolar behavior, alcoholism and all the other moral/mental ills known to man.

If we have weaknesses, they are there to make them visible so we can weed them out; and if we can't correct them, they are there to weed US out for the good of the "herd", the Church. Should you like correction? **Proverbs 3:11-12**. Should it make you happy? **Job 5:17-18**. But what is the POINT of this correction? **Psalms 94:12**. Why are we judged? **1 Corinthians 11:32**. And the aftermath? **James 1:12**. So how do we make it stop? **Revelation 3:19**. And all of those verses are summed up in **Hebrews 12:5-15**.

So these meddling spirits, while they do it for their own sadistic purposes, actually render us a great service. If you don't like someone correcting your spelling, humbly take their correction and become a better speller.

Sooner or later, they'll have nothing left to correct, because, thanks to their nagging correction, you'll be able to spell perfectly. If you don't like devils meddling with your weak emotions such as anger, get better control over your emotions; sooner or later, they'll have nothing left to poke at (**Proverbs 16:32**).

It is vital that those who will inherit the universe have these flaws burned out of them; that is why God shakes us so thoroughly; to make sure that what remains cannot be shaken. But if it helps any, remember that the angels themselves will be shaken, too (**Hebrews 12:25-27**). Then we shall have the final judgment upon them (**1 Corinthians 6:3**).

## CASTING OUT SPIRITS

Knowing WHY they are here in the first place gives you an absolutely essential foundation without which you cannot properly rule spirits. You can blunder about and make things happen, sometimes even good things, but your development into a child of God will be much slower than if you know what you're doing.

Above it may have seemed like I never advocate commanding a spirit to depart. That's not true; the Bible talks about it all the time. But it also tells us why that spirit was there in the first place, and **specifically warns us NOT to cast out spirits that shouldn't be cast out!** Read **Luke 11:14-26**.

Several things can be learned from this, but the most obvious point is that if an evil spirit is cast out, he leaves... but after he wanders around for a time, he remembers the "home" he had where he had such fun stirring up trouble. And he returns there and finds the place swept and *GARNISHED*.

Most people don't think that through and miss the point here; what does it mean to garnish something? If you put a piece of parsley by a steak or a mint on a pillow *that makes something more attractive to the person who receives it!* This spirit was kicked out, but when he returned he found the place has been *garnished FOR HIM!* So he not only returned, but brought a party and a keg of beer with him.



The spirit was there in the first place *for a reason*. Because “*the curse causeless shall not come*” (**Proverbs 26:2**). So using your authority to force the spirit to leave someone WITHOUT removing the REASON for his presence will only make matters WORSE! Much as it says in **2 Peter 2:12-22**.

There it lays out this process in more detail; these “spoke evil of things they didn’t understand”, “count it pleasure to riot”, “eyes full of adultery” – these things could correspond today to poor choices in what you watch on TV, among other things – these people who loved their corruption, who loved to read Stephen King books, loved to revel in horror movies and shows like Stigmata, Dogma, End of Days, anything from the “Left Behind” series, and so on – these people are very easily “led into the way of Baalam”. Evil spirits love to hang out where they are being talked about, much like you and I.

So these people are easily brought into bondage by these corruptions and if they are freed and then fall back into those same bad habits... the latter end is worse than if they had never known the truth. And if you rebuke a spirit and command him to leave one of these people – if you have the authority and the faith, he will! But a few weeks or months later, when he wanders back around to drive by his old house and finds a welcome mat out front – he not only returns, but with a vengeance. I’ve personally seen this happen on several occasions. It’s a very sad thing to witness.

### SO WHEN SHOULD YOU?

All predators on this planet are built on the exact same pattern. From the nastiest devil to the simplest bacteria, everything that lives by killing or harming something else acts the same. They target the weak and helpless. They are also usually cowardly, choosing only to attack in overwhelming numbers or when victory seems assured. The strongest lion or meanest bull or most vicious dog will often turn and run if you simply make yourself taller, yell loudly and chase IT (**Leviticus 26:8** seems relevant here).

What this means is that often a new Christian – a weak “young” animal in the herd – is targeted by a powerful spirit who tries to wreak havoc in his life by poking at all of his many character flaws before he has a fair chance to correct them on his own. In many of these cases, given a chance to breathe and grow up a bit, they’d become solid Christians.

God doesn’t permit this to happen above what we can bear (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). But that doesn’t mean the process won’t be unnecessarily miserable. Strife at home, poverty, lousy jobs, flaring emotions between yourself and everyone you know – these things often happen, and very seldom have to be miserable. Usually it’s something like **Judges 9:23** or **Isaiah 19:14**. Strife stirred up by demons.

These moral weaknesses can be cured to a point where the demons can find no “place” to attack (**Ephesians 4:27**). But that takes time and it’s hard to do that WHILE fighting a hundred battles within and without. And that is where authority over spirits comes in handy.

As another example, consider pneumonia. Left unchecked, the body can almost always conquer it through its own immune system. It can slowly fight back against the billions of invading predators seeking to weed out the weak from the herd and usually win; but it’s a very long and unpleasant process. And it actually kills some people; almost always the young, elderly, and immuno-compromised people. Sound familiar? Bacteria and wolves act the same way. So do demons.

So just as the shepherd must chase off the wolves to protect the flock, and just as sometimes an antibiotic makes the experience a whole lot less miserable by chasing off the hordes of bacterial huns, there is also a time when the weak Christian needs help; when he KNOWS he has a weakness, and

doesn't need a legion of hateful spirits poking at it to fix it. Often he could work on this problem himself better without their "help".

Their presence helps to make flaws known; once the flaws are acknowledged and confessed (**1 John 1:9, Leviticus 26:40-42**, etc.), then the presence of the evil spirits is usually detrimental. *That* is when they need to be cast out; their work there is done. But if you kick them out before you know **WHY** they're there, or what it is you've done wrong to attract them in the first place, you will miss the lesson they are there to teach you; and only in the most extreme cases is that a good idea.

It's **ALWAYS** better to solve the problem yourself and chase them out by sheer force of righteousness (**Job 17:9**). Because nothing is a better proof of your having overcome your sin. That takes us back to **Luke 11**, this time to **verses 21-23**, which you'll notice is surrounded by the context of casting out spirits.

A strong man is a morally strong Christian whose "goods" – blessings from God, including a happy home and peace – are safe. But if a stronger man than he – an evil spirit, who sees some flaw to poke at – comes upon him, he can take his "armor" from him. What is this armor? **Ephesians 6:16**. And what is that armor *specifically* designed to do? **Ephesians 6:11**.

Using those scriptures to interpret Jesus' words, this "stronger man" – a wicked spirit – is able to play on the Christian's weaknesses and *take his armor!* How did Satan take Adam and Eve's armor? They **HAD** this armor! But when they **SINNED** they lost the armor of righteousness *and from that moment Satan owned them!* (**2 Peter 2:19**).

Satan did that by **preying on Eve's lusts!** (**Genesis 3:6**). And his methods haven't changed since then. Paul says in **2 Corinthians 2:11** "*we are not ignorant of his [Satan's] devices*", or as Philips translates it "*and well we know his methods*". Sadly, that statement, true then, could not be more wrong today. The rest of that verse implies that if we don't know his methods, Satan will get the advantage over us.

Satan's methods are clearly explained in the Bible, but have never to my knowledge been properly explained. Satan cannot attack you directly! He cannot call lightning bolts upon you, nor even bring a bad crop or a bad boss to bother you *without God's explicit permission!* (**Job 1-2**).

**You are IMPORTANT to God and these things will only happen for a very good reason**, only because He sees a significant character flaw in you that must be corrected – like He did with Job. And Satan goes about harassing you by preying on your weaknesses and magnifying flaws that are already there.

## BLOOD SUGAR

Since these demons are only targeting your weaknesses; fixing those weaknesses will make it much harder for them to get a foothold. One of their easiest targets is, ironically, not so much a moral weakness but a physical one caused by the universal weak health of the world today; low blood sugar.

Practically everyone is affected by it, but almost no one is aware of it. Between meals the level of sugar in the bloodstream drops. In a healthy person, it is barely noticeable, but almost no one today is truly healthy. So about 2-3 hours after a meal, the blood sugar spikes down and you get shaky, irritable, unnecessarily emotional. Your deeper emotions come out more readily, whether that's anger, tears, or depression; it just amplifies your greatest weaknesses. Then when spirits play on those weaknesses at the same time – it makes for emotional havoc and doing and saying many things you later regret.

When you're already in one of these dips, the slightest trigger can set you off into a fit of trembling rage or tears or whatever is closest to the surface. The immediate solution is simply to eat every 2 hours; it doesn't need to be much. A piece of fruit, a small sandwich, a glass of tea. Something to help stabilize your blood sugar so you'll know if it still happens, it's you that has the weakness, not your body.

In time there are other things you can do to cure this problem, among them, ironically, fasting – I used to have terrible problems with blood sugar, but I cured it by fasting regularly. But let's not get sidetracked.

## DREAMS

Another common way demons harass us is through dreams. Due to some quirks of the subconscious which you learned about in Lesson 33, this is actually one of the easiest ways for them to get to us. When Job was in Satan's power, what did he say about his dreams? **Job 7:14**. Do these nightmares sometimes serve a good purpose? **Matthew 27:17-19**.

God must permit these spirits to affect us or they can do nothing whatsoever. He guards His children well. But as you've seen, these attacks serve a purpose, and are for our own good. But I need to emphasize that having a nightmare doesn't mean you must have killed someone that day or done some equally heinous sin.

Perhaps you're merely afraid of snakes; a foolish fear which God promised we should not have (**Ezekiel 34:28**). So God sends a spirit to rub salt in that fear. The solution? Face your fear in the waking world and it will no longer plague you in your dreams. I used to have nightmares about snakes regularly as a child. Then one day I decided to face it, caught one by the tail and killed it; I've never had a nightmare about a snake since.

This doesn't mean I pick up poisonous snakes just to prove that God is protecting me; that's tantamount to leaping from the temple (**Luke 4:9**). But it means that when they're in my way and threatening me or mine, I "tread on them", for I have authority and dominion over them (**Psalms 91:13, Mark 16:18**).

The point is, examine your dreams and see what weakness is being exploited; then work on fixing it. Then "terrifying you with dreams" will no longer be fun for them; or even possible.

## EXTERNAL ATTACKS

Sometimes his attacks take the form of external problems, **but it is still an internal attack no matter what it looks like**. You cannot control the cause of those problems, **so it is your reaction to those problems that is being probed**. Paul learned his lesson; have you? **2 Corinthians 4:8-9**. Do you glory in trials, as he did? **Romans 5:3-5**.

As all verses are, these are abused and stripped of all their meaning by those who try to "love" God without keeping His commandments. But they are truly VITAL scriptures when you realize that these lessons – Satan poking you with a stick because HE believes you'll betray God – are creating MATURE FAITH in you such as you studied in Lesson 38. These things are *necessary* to weather the storms that being a king or priest in the world to come will bring. This CREATES that TRUE love of God that is shown to everyone, when you truly learn to believe that "it will work out".

That is why James also told you to ENJOY temptations in **James 1:2-4**; in the same way Peter did in **1 Peter 1:6-7** and **1 Peter 4:12-14**. In almost identical language these great men tell us the same thing Paul did; which Paul summarized excellently in **Philippians 4:11-13**.

These attacks that Satan brings upon you may be for many reasons, ranging from blatant adultery to uncontrolled rage to covetousness – or for no other reason than to make sure that you learn, in whatever state you find yourself... to be content. Whether that state is poverty, despair, or Georgia.

## HOW DEMONS COME

The KJV Bible uses the word “devil” or “devils” to describe all angels who have joined Satan’s cause. The word translated “devil(s)” in the NT comes from the Greek *diabolos*, which is complicated to translate but is usually translated as “slanderer, (false) accuser”. A more literal translation might be “he by whom others are cast down”.

In other words, *diabolos* literally means those who provide temptation and harassment and pick off the weak members of the church; just as we learned above. They are here to shake those who can be shaken from the truth (**Hebrews 12:26-27**).

The more common modern English word to describe the same creatures is “demon(s)”. In ancient Greek it meant “minor deity, lesser god”, which is valid since they are still “false gods” today. Either term works, but “devils” is seldom used in the plural today, so I usually use “demons” for the plural and reserve “devil” for their leader, Satan. But they are all angels, just angels that have chosen to uphold Satan’s rebellion against the laws of God.

Each angel and devil is unique. Just as humans are all individuals, so are they. Each has their own special vices, their own special strengths that make them who and what they are. When they are placed in charge of a region, they infuse that region with their attitude. Things like this explain why the Seattle area is famous for serial killers; New Orleans for voodoo; California for drugs.

Nevada is famous for sin of all sorts, but curiously each town tends to focus on one particular vice; prostitution, gambling, easy divorce, bars, and so on. While all are present in all towns in Nevada, each of these things stands out more in some towns than others. Because while the angel in charge of Nevada believes in sin, his underlings each favor different *types* of sin.

The point is, different places have different spirits in charge of them and as you travel, if you are sensitive to your dreams and your moods, you will find yourself more “welcome” in some places than in others. There are some places in the country where many truly evil spirits hang out.

This is primarily broad influence, a “broadcast” signal as opposed to a targeted one. Direct personal influence seems to require some sort of personal contact. For reasons I can’t explain but which I have witnessed more times than I can count, demons seldom if ever travel alone. Like a virus, they generally travel on a host and are transmitted like a contagion.

For example, after visits from a certain person, you might always have the same type of disturbing dreams. Or after talking to someone on the phone, the next few days your home is full of strife. Or by touring a “beautiful” false church, you may realize later that you’re jumpy, on edge, and at everyone’s throat. I’ve seen these things many, many times.

Sooner or later you start connecting a certain type of dream with having talked to a certain person that day. Evil spirits meet people with whom they get along, and they naturally like to hang around them. Those people aren't "possessed" in the sense people mean today, just influenced like any human friend would influence you.

I don't think there is much you can do to help the person – in my experience nothing good has come from mentioning it to them, but you must follow your own conscience. But in any case, recognizing you are "catching a spiritual cold" from a certain person makes you forewarned, and thus forearmed to watch for the signs that they are getting to your weaknesses and do something about it.

## HOW TO COMMAND THE SPIRITS

As I said up front, I love the law. I prefer to solve my problems and chase away the demons by removing the weaknesses they play on; but when you understand the problem and they are in the way, commanding them to leave – rebuking them, in Biblical terms – is appropriate.

Did you notice that Jesus gave no particular "formula" to cast out demons? (**Luke 9:1-2, Luke 10:1**, etc.). He gave the disciples **AUTHORITY** over them **and that's it!** When you give a person authority over someone else, do you tell them exactly what phrases to use when giving orders? Of course not! Not only is it impossible to cover every scenario **but there is no point!**

**Your subordinates are supposed to respect YOUR authority, because they respect HIS authority – not any special phrase or words! WHATEVER phrase you use, if you use it with the authority of God, THEY MUST OBEY!**

But remember that you are **COMMANDING** a subordinate; not pleading with well-intentioned miscreant, not reasoning with an equal, but issuing an **ORDER** in the name and by the authority of the Ruler of the universe, *their Creator!*

But neither are you railing and ranting and cursing at them; no good ruler ever needs to do that. You are making a judgment on what is best for their victims, and for them as well; and you issue that judgment firmly, sternly, and with finality in a tone that allows no argument or misinterpretation.

You can see Biblical examples of Jesus doing this in places like **Mark 9:25, Luke 9:42, Matthew 12:22-23, Mark 1:25**. Good spirits rebuke evil spirits, such as Michael in **Jude 1:9**. We see Paul doing it in **Acts 16:16-18**. Was this power given to all believers? **Mark 16:17**.

I prefer not to summarize what these verses say, because it isn't about a formula. It's about a superior using the spiritual authority of God to command the civil authority of a wicked spirit. *What* is said is not very important; what matters is **WHO** said it and whether or not you have the authority to back it up.

But if you issue a command, just remember that wicked spirits taught lawyers most of their tricks, so be careful exactly what you say and how it might be misinterpreted. They'll find loopholes if you leave any ambiguity.

And again let me remind you to make very sure your name is written in heaven before you do this. Unless you have been truly, properly baptized by full immersion into the family of God, **AND** received the laying on of hands by a minister who is *not* serving a false gospel with a false spirit and bearing the

mark of the beast, AND are diligently obeying God in everything you know – Ten Commandments, tithing, unclean meats, traveling for the holy days, EVERYTHING you know...

Unless you are doing ALL of that, the spirit might either ignore you or turn to you and say “Jesus I know, and Paul I know... but how do you spell your name again?? I don’t see it written here”, and then slap you silly and steal your clothes (**Acts 19:16**).

## MAKING THEM UNCOMFORTABLE

Just as demons love being places where they feel welcome, they don’t like being places that make them uncomfortable. Case in point is Saul. He had sinned against God, and God had taken the kingdom away from him and given it to David (**1 Samuel 15:1-16:13**). Then the spirit of God, which Saul had had as long as he obeyed God (**Acts 5:32**) left him.

And then an evil spirit came to trouble him (**1 Samuel 16:14**). God sent him this evil spirit – why? **Isaiah 28:12-13**. Just as God taught knowledge a bit at a time (**verses 9-11**), so God sends an evil spirit to remove it a bit at a time “*that they might... fall backward... and [be] taken*”. But what we’re interested in today is how Saul got relief from this evil spirit in **1 Samuel 16:15-23**.

Saul had sinned and as later events proved, Saul had not truly repented. Yet the spirit left Saul – temporarily – whenever David played music. Why? Surely they don’t hate music on principle, for look at all the clearly Satanic things that go on today in the presence of music. But for some reason, they hated THIS music. Why? Simple! *David was playing it. And what music did David play? Psalms!!*

David was a man after Jesus’ own heart (**Acts 13:22**). David’s psalms contained MANY prophecies of Christ (in fact every word in every psalm may be a prophecy of Christ, but that’s another lesson). The point is, David played psalms, no doubt some of the ones we have written in the book of Psalms, *and the evil spirit left!*

He left because he hated the idea of Christ coming; he hated the idea of God judging him; he hated the idea of men receiving salvation; and rather than listen to those things he found so offensive, he just left! **But because the problem was never fixed, because Saul had not repented of the reason the spirit was there in the first place, the spirit came back – and each time it was worse (Matthew 12:44-45).**

From that case study we can learn that demons can be chased away by things that do not involve the power of God directly commanding them; just like people, we can make them hate to be around us by the way we act or the things we say. But while that can bring temporarily relief, it doesn’t really solve the problem; and it makes it much worse if the problem is not corrected while they’re gone.

We’ll return to this subject, but first you need to study a topic that is more closely related than you might think...

## SHOULD YOU PRAY FOR HEALING?

Everyone, in every church in the world, believes in praying to God for their healing. **James 5:16** plainly commands it. But did it ever occur to you to ask the oh-so-obvious question... where is that done in the Bible?

**James 5:16** is a binding, scriptural command, yes... but can you point to **any** New Testament EXAMPLE where ANYONE actually *did* that? Think about it. Where is there ONE SINGLE CASE of ANYONE praying for a healing?

Take **Acts 3:6-8** for example. Did Peter PRAY for this man? *Where* did Peter pray saying “Oh God, if it’s Your will, we know that You can heal him – we beg You to grant him Your mercy and raise him up!” That’s how your typical prayer for healing goes, give or take. But Peter didn’t do that at all! He didn’t stop to pray, he just commanded him to rise and walk – AND HE DID!

Or what about **Mark 1:23-25**. Did Jesus pray to God to cast out the evil spirit? *Or did Jesus simply COMMAND, on His own initiative, this demon to depart?* How did He do that? **Verses 26-27**. Jesus commanded the demons with AUTHORITY. Was it His own authority, or God’s? **John 14:10**. Did the Father give Jesus the *authority* to issue these commands to evil spirits? **John 5:26-27**. Did Jesus hoard that authority, or share it with us? **Luke 9:1**. Can we exercise the same power He did? **John 14:12-13**.

The Father gave Jesus authority. That means Jesus had the *authority to make decisions!* To make JUDGMENTS about things and act upon them *WITHOUT first consulting His Father!* That’s what it MEANS to delegate authority! And Jesus then passed that SAME authority on to us *expecting us to use it as He did!*

In these examples *Jesus does not pray! He just COMMANDS*, and the Father backs up Jesus’ words as He did with Samuel (**1 Samuel 3:19**). God CONFIRMS the words of His servants (**Isaiah 44:24-26**), and what those with His authority bind on Earth, **He binds in Heaven (Matthew 16:19, Matthew 18:18)**.

I’ve already quoted the story of Jesus calming the storm several times in recent lessons to prove different points; but did you notice **Mark 4:39-41** where Jesus simply COMMANDED the storm directly? He didn’t pray about it; He just commanded it, **and even the wind and sea OBEYED HIS AUTHORITY!** Luke’s version makes it more clear in **Luke 8:25**.

HE said this *TO THE SEA!* Not to God, asking *God* to calm the sea, but He spoke directly TO THE SEA, and rebuked the WIND, and IT OBEYED immediately!

## POWER TO FORGIVE SINS

We’ve covered this before, but let’s briefly recap; what is healing? **Luke 5:18-20**. Notice how Jesus did not pray for this healing; He simply commanded it. But how did the Pharisees react? **Verse 21**. They were horrified that He didn’t pray and ask God for healing, but took it upon His own authority to heal this man! Just as any false Christian would have been horrified today! But how did Jesus respond? **Verses 22-26**.

Jesus had the power, which the Father had given Him, to forgive sins on this Earth. **Did He give us that same power? John 20:23**. And did Paul, an apostle, pass on that same power to his “children”? **2 Corinthians 2:10**. Another reason I waited this long to write this lesson is because you needed a thorough understanding of God’s chain of command and government structure to fully understand how this works.

God alone has the authority to forgive sins and the power to work miracles (**Psalms 136:4**). But God **gave** the Son His authority. Jesus then shared that authority with the true Christians; in proportion to

the responsibility He gave us, and in proportion to how well we use what He gave us, we carry His authority.

And under the NC, even the lowest member of the true church outranks the highest civil authority (**1 Corinthians 6:2-4**). Thus, while we are lower in civil authority than the angels (**Hebrews 2:6-8**), when a civil authority – an evil king, an evil spirit, a violent storm or even an offensive mountain – interferes with our spiritual activities, **the least esteemed member of the true church has God's authority to command it to cease troubling us!**

All of **Psalms 105** is worth reading in this context, because it applies to the spiritual children of Abraham – the NC children of faith. In particular, **verses 12-15** and **41-45**. This chapter is recapping some of the ways that God delivered His weak, powerless spiritual children from the mighty civil authorities around them; showing that whole kingdoms and kings were rebuked for the sake of a handful of true Christians!

So you – no matter who you are – have **absolute spiritual authority** over EVERYTHING in the domain God has given you. No civil authority will be allowed to harm you, and if one tries, you have God's blessing to command it to depart. **Without asking His permission first!**

## USING YOUR OWN AUTHORITY

Did Jesus say you would have to ask GOD to cast the tree into the ocean for you, or that YOU would COMMAND the tree YOURSELF? **Luke 17:6**. Time and time again in the Bible, EVERY example shows this same method of you COMMANDING something to be done, and it HAPPENING! Not you begging God in prayer for something, but taking God out of the loop and commanding it to be done directly!

You are *not* the source of this POWER – God is the source of the POWER, and of yourself you can do NOTHING... but you are the source of the COMMAND! Imagine that God has given you His credit card and He has AUTHORIZED you to use it for whatever you think appropriate.

It's not YOUR money. But you can spend it directly, without asking God first! Because your name is on the list of those authorized to withdraw the money! But only because God TRUSTS you to use it wisely. If you go on a spending spree and God sees a bunch of foolish charges show up on His bill, He'll cancel your card!

You – and only you – are accountable directly to God for how the authority He gave you is used. If you use it wisely, He'll give you more. If you use it foolishly, He'll lower your credit limit or cut up your card altogether! This responsibility is an awesome one to carry, and not everyone wants that responsibility.

And how you use it – like it or not – governs how much authority God will give you in the world to come. That's the REAL point of the parable of the talents in **Matthew 25:14-30** and **Luke 19:11-27**. Like the credit card analogy, God gives His servants each a set amount of money – in the second parable, one pound of gold. Roughly \$10,000 today.

This money represents, among other things, His authority that He has given to each of us. Those who use it wisely will make it grow and spread God's government – and hence, happiness and righteousness – to more people. But others will say "I don't want to be in charge! I don't want to risk making a mistake!" and refuse to exercise that authority at all.



That's certainly the SAFE way; it's a way not to make a mistake. It's a way you would act if you didn't trust God to overlook a well intentioned error. **And it's the one way that is SURE to lose you the authority of God!** For when you hide God's authority, God will hide from you! (**Jeremiah 23:33, Matthew 10:33**).

If you don't exercise God's authority when there is a real need, if you let false Christians, evil spirits, and evil powers walk all over you and yours because you don't want to invoke God's power, God will take His authority away from you and give it to someone who WILL use it and who CAN protect His children!

## HOW TO PERFORM MIRACLES

Back to **Luke 9:1** (which is worth quoting twice), Jesus gave them AUTHORITY! Authority over devils, and authority OVER DISEASES! It's that thing of AUTHORITY so many have missed! Suppose you're a building contractor, and you hire a foreman to manage your crew; and you give him AUTHORITY to make decisions; does he then HAVE AUTHORITY? Of course he does! He can hire and fire, decide whether to put a wall here or there, and make DECISIONS – decisions without consulting you! That's what authority IS – authority to make decisions ON YOUR OWN!

That foreman has the authority to COMMAND an employee to dig a ditch – it's not a request! The employee either does it or gets fired! The foreman doesn't have to ask *you* about every nail he drives or every cent he spends – if he does, what's the point in having him? You hired him so you wouldn't HAVE to make every little decision yourself! That's HIS JOB!

So, as a servant of Jesus given authority, we are to act as that foreman did – and as our example to help us do that, we are given Jesus; we are to walk as He walked (**1 John 2:6**). And how did He perform miracles? By praying, or by simply COMMANDING them to be done? **Matthew 8:5-9**.

Jesus didn't say, "I will come and *pray* for him". He said, "I will come AND HEAL HIM"! And this military man UNDERSTOOD authority! And he knew how authority WORKED! And he knew that Jesus HAD authority! He knew that Jesus had only to SPEAK THE WORD and his servant would be healed! **Again and again, PRAYER IS NOT INVOLVED IN THESE HEALINGS AT ALL!** Jesus only had to COMMAND the sickness to depart, and it would depart! And you know how the story ends (**verses 10-13**).

Are we compared to servants who were given authority, and a job to do with that authority? **Mark 13:34**. God has given us authority. And authority means the POWER to make DECISIONS for ourselves! In fact, GREATER authority, and the power to make GREATER decisions than Jesus made as a man – meaning we can do mightier things than He did! (**John 14:10**).

It means that if you COMMAND that mountain to cast into the sea – IT WILL BE CAST INTO THE SEA. Jesus plainly said so. You don't need to ask Him first! (**Matthew 21:21**). Did He say "if you pray to God, asking God to cast the mountain into the sea..."? Did He?

I belabor the point because no one on Earth seems to understand *HE DID NOT SAY TO PRAY ABOUT IT!* He said IF you have faith, then *you* can say TO THE MOUNTAIN "be removed, and cast into the sea" – and IT WILL BE DONE!

Did this also apply to illness? **Luke 4:39**. Jesus didn't pray about it! He just REBUKED the fever – just as He had rebuked the devils! Did He pray about the damsel, to raise her from the dead? **Mark 5:41**.

EVERY SINGLE EXAMPLE – every ACTUAL *example* – of healing in the New Testament was done WITHOUT PRAYER!

Well, almost. But each of the exceptions will actually PROVE this point! In **John 11:41-43**, Jesus DID pray for this man to be raised from the dead. WHY? He plainly told us! “*because of the people which stand by I said it, that THEY may believe that thou hast sent me*”.

We know from **Mark 5:41** that Jesus did not need to pray to raise the dead, and He clearly said He didn’t need to pray here. He did it so the people standing by would know that it wasn’t HIM that did the work, but that GOD had sent Him. So they wouldn’t think it was some magic of His own, but just the authority His Father gave Him that accomplished these things. He clearly said it was for THEIR sakes that He prayed, not His own, nor for the sake of Lazarus!

## SOMETIMES IT’S HARDER

Another example is in **Luke 9:38-42** and **Matthew 17:14-21**. Sometimes, the evil spirit doesn’t just leave. **Because while God’s authority is absolute and infinite... your right to command that power isn’t.** It extends as far as your righteousness and faith extends, and no further.

Jesus said they failed because of their lack of faith; as you know, faith is directly proportional to your obedience and your confidence in your righteousness. If your heart condemns you, you will not be able to cast out evil spirits – because as long as it condemns you, you cannot have faith. Without faith, you don’t have a shield to “*quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*” (**Ephesians 6:16**).

Jesus went on to say that this kind – a spirit this powerful – cannot be cast out without “fasting and prayer”. **But did Jesus stop to fast and pray before HE cast this demon out?** So clearly, it wasn’t *necessary* to fast and pray to cast out this demon... only necessary for THEM.

They often cast out devils of lesser authority with no trouble (**Mark 6:7-13, Luke 10:17**). But they didn’t have the faith, and thus the *authority that comes with faith*, to cast out THIS RANK of devil. So to get that stronger faith and greater authority, Jesus said they would need to fast and pray.

Fasting strengthens your faith by purifying your actions. And by forsaking your regular life to focus on fasting, it allows you to focus on purifying your soul as well. Thus, your conscience will condemn you less; which in turn will give you greater confidence, and thus more authority over the spirits!

But Jesus also mentioned prayer. Because if you run up against a problem you can’t solve in ANY job, you pass it up the chain of command to someone wiser, stronger, or more righteous than you. This might be another human who may have more faith and thus be able to command the spirit that you could not rule; or it may be necessary to go all the way up to God Himself.

Remember EVERY SINGLE EXAMPLE of a demon being cast out in the ENTIRE Bible is done *without* prayer – but if that doesn’t work, if your faith, righteousness, and authority are too weak, then you need to find someone, or someOne, who has more.

## GETTING THE BOSS’S HELP

But more important than the immediate problem you’re trying to solve, is the long-term goal of teaching you how to be a king in the world tomorrow. Problems come and go all the time; but those

problems come to teach us lessons. In this case, **they come to teach us how to behave righteously and use God's authority wisely on your own.**

Without His constant intervention, He needs to be able to trust you – and you need to be able to trust yourself – to make good decisions even when entrusted with absolute power. That's the key here; if you have authority to say “chillax!” to a storm and have it do so, **then it is you calming the storm on your own initiative.** By God's power *but your own authority and responsibility!*

If it was a bad decision, the blame will fall on your shoulders; but if it is a good decision, then you will be praised for using God's authority well. Either way, it's the “grown-up” thing to do. But if you pray to GOD and ask GOD to calm the storm FOR you... then it is by GOD'S authority and God's responsibility, because it was God's decision, *not yours!*

You will get none of the blame if it goes badly, because you passed the buck up to God and forced HIM to make the decision. *But you also get none of the credit for making a wise decision* because you cowardly refused to stick your neck out and make the tough calls!

God doesn't need bootlickers who seek His approval for every single decision they make. If God wanted to micromanage, *there is no reason to give anyone else any authority at all!* If He wanted to make every decision Himself, why create government at all? Like any boss, God gave authority to people so they could make decisions *for themselves* and take the burden of management off Him.

Based on scriptures I've quoted several times, God expects us to bind and loose on Earth; to forgive – or refuse to forgive – sins in His name; to know what a “sin unto death” is, and what a sin *not* unto death is! Not only so that He doesn't have to, but more importantly, *so that we learn how to make a tough decision and stand by the consequences!* That's what being a KING in the world to come is ABOUT!

Rulers make the hard decisions; they make calls that affect the lives of their subjects every day. Exercising the authority of God today is how you learn how to do that. But if, instead of commanding the spirits, commanding the winds, commanding the fevers to depart... if, instead of using your authority, you constantly pass EVERY decision up the chain of command for approval... then you're not acting on your authority at all. Ever!

You're simply a puppet unable to lift a finger without getting God's initials on the order. Burying God's talent in the sand to protect it, afraid if you make a decision for yourself you will lose it.

## WHEN YOU SHOULD GET GOD'S HELP

I came down pretty hard on that subject because it's a deep-seated problem that EVERYONE today has. But there is another side to the story; there IS a time in any job when you NEED the boss's input. When you need to ask Him to clarify His order or to make a call that is simply above your pay grade. Jethro explained this to Moses in **Exodus 18:14-24**, particularly **verse 22**.

Those “great matters” that we simply can't solve, can and SHOULD be passed on to God for His input. The priests had the *urim* and *thummim* (**Numbers 27:21**) which they used to get God's input. No one knows what they looked like, and it doesn't really matter since we don't need them. Because unlike ancient Israel, we can go boldly before the throne of grace, inside the spiritual holy of holies (**Hebrews 4:16**).

Unlike them, we can pray directly to God, and God will do what needs done. When we don't know how to best use God's authority, when we don't know what decision to make and what command to issue, **that is when we pass the problem up to God in prayer!** Just as God doesn't want a king He has to micromanage, He also doesn't want a leader who is too proud to admit when he is in over his head.

When that happens, when our understanding or authority isn't enough to solve a really tough problem on our own, whether it's a powerful demon, a strong sickness, a financial rough spot – whatever it is, if you can't solve on your own, that's when it is APPROPRIATE, NECESSARY, and GOOD to pray for help!

It is *not* good to do that for every single thing you do. But when you need help, you need help; take Peter for instance. He'd never raised the dead before. He'd seen it done, sure, but let's face it, it must be a rather intimidating thing to set your hand to do! **So he first put the faithless out of the room, and then he knelt and prayed! (Acts 9:36-42).**

Jesus didn't need to pray first. Jesus simply said to the dead "arise", and they did. But Peter didn't have the faith or experience to do it on his own. He needed help and he knew it. So he prayed – apparently by himself. We don't know what he said, but given the context it could only have been to ask God for help. But we know Peter wasn't praying OVER the dead woman, for it clearly says he prayed and THEN (after the prayer!) turned to the body and said... "Tabitha, arise".

First he prayed to God, THEN he commanded the woman to arise! This was not a prayer *for* a healing, this is a prayer *before* a healing! There is a big difference! He was seeking someone with more faith; an even *stronger* "strong man" to help him recover the blessings which were stolen (**Luke 11:22**). In this case, God.

## ANOTHER TIME TO PRAY

As an authority figure of God, most of the time your job will involve forgiving sins. This can take many forms, but since all unrighteousness is sin (**1 John 5:17**), and no curse comes without a cause (**Proverbs 26:2**), pretty much anything that involves the power of God involves judging sin, forgiving sin, or punishing sin – healing, demons, most types of miracles fall into this category.

But the one sin you cannot forgive is your own. We may be master of all we survey, but our own sins fall back on God to judge (**Colossians 4:1, Galatians 1:10**, etc.). So when you are sick, a result of your *own* sins, **you cannot forgive yourself! You do not have that authority. To get forgiveness, you must seek someone HIGHER in authority than you, someone who is QUALIFIED to judge your sins!**

And THAT at last explains why **James 5:14-15** commands us to call for the elders of the church. Those in God-given authority over us to tell us what sin caused our suffering and what we must do to repent; and with the authority to forgive, or refuse to forgive, our sins, in God's name – in His place, as if He were doing it personally.

Those elders *should* have greater faith than we; greater wisdom, righteousness, and understanding to know what we should do and how we can "go, and sin no more". And they *should* be vested with authority by God to forgive your sins on the spot, if *in their opinion* you should be forgiven.

That isn't always the case, but if it IS a true church of God, that's how it should work. Of course, the church isn't very organized today. And as I've said many times, the independent Christian is in many

ways the best type of Christian. But the price we pay for independence is not having wise elders to help us solve our problems; no human safety net to catch us when we fall.

So the next in authority over us is Jesus Himself. When that happens, we can – and should – pray to Him for forgiveness. We cannot command our own sins to be forgiven, but we CAN ask Him to forgive our sins and raise us up, as David does in **Psalms 25:18**. **Paul likewise did not command his illness to depart, but instead begged God to take it away! (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).**

Whether or not God will forgive your sins and raise you up **will depend on your faith, your repentance, the amount of grace you have, and the severity of the sin.** In Paul's case, it was caused by his pride (**verses 5-7**). That sin had not yet been overcome, as Paul admitted in **2 Corinthians 12:11**. Therefore, God did not take away the punishment. You cannot forgive a crime that is still happening because repentance has not taken place!

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Miracles are not done through prayer; not normally, anyway. Demons are invisible, but if they're causing you problems you'll usually know it. Especially now that you know what to look for. And if they're there, they're listening. And if you're fit to command them, you need only issue the order for them to leave.

But if they're bothering you in the first place, it's because you have a weakness somewhere; so you may not have the faith to order them away on your own. So you seek someone to help you; if no man is handy, and you cannot call "the elders of the church", that is when it is time to fast to bolster your faith, and pray to get God's help.

Ideally, God need not be involved. If you have His authority, you shouldn't need His personal intervention. But He's there when needed. And as I've said many times, preferably this can be solved with obedience on your own part, knowing that it is because of your own sins and weaknesses that this whole thing happened.

But when other people come to you with problems, and you identify this as the reason for their unhappiness, you need to know what to do. You've seen there is a place for evil spirits; a purpose that they serve; and a reason God hasn't banished them from the planet. And therefore, a reason that *we* shouldn't seek to banish them from the planet either, any more than we should seek to exterminate all snakes on Earth. Only the ones that get in our way or threaten those for whom we are responsible.

The same reasoning goes for sickness. It's here for a reason. How can you get the person to "go and sin no more"? How will the lesson of righteousness be best seated in their mind – by healing them, or by telling them to drink only carrot juice for two weeks?

You have a Bible; they came to you for help; so it's your responsibility to make the call. Should the person asking get God's help or not? If you're wrong, God can find someone else to heal them; so it's not the end of the world if you're wrong.

But your judgment needs to be the best you can make, because you're both practicing your leadership skills... and be tested for your potential as a king in the world to come. Learning to make these tough decisions today will be a vital survival skill you will use to lead the rest of humanity into righteousness.

Meanwhile, you are somewhere in God's chain of command. You work for Him and carry His authority which you can, and must, exercise when you feel it is appropriate. You are personally responsible for when you use this power, and when you don't. God will audit your accounts at the end of the month (so to speak) and so you need to be ready to provide receipts and explain why you did this or that.

When you command something to be done, it is done on *your* authority, and yours alone. When you rebuke a fever, it is God's power, but it is YOUR authority that made the decision. If it goes badly, you'll be to blame, not God.

But if you pray, you are asking *God* to make a decision. And while it is you that is asking, it is GOD'S authority that makes the decision! And so whether God does, or does not, heal someone or forgive their sins *it can't come back on you because you didn't make the call – He did!*

Back to your foreman analogy, when you're the foreman buying a load of shingles, if it's right your boss will be pleased; if it's wrong, he'll be annoyed. If however, you call him on the phone and say "look, I'm buying X shingles for Y price to be delivered in Z days", and then he says yes or no, either way it's HIS call and can't possibly come back on you!

To be safe, you'd run EVERY decision past your boss – but if you do that, why does he even have you? No, he WANTS you to take personal responsibility... but to make the RIGHT decisions. You're worthless to him if you can't make a decision – MOST decisions – without his help.

Most of the decisions we're asked to make are relatively unimportant, even though they seem monumental at the time. What's important is shouldering, and being comfortable with, the responsibility of administering the authority of God.

When you pray, you're asking God to make a decision because you're either too gutless or too inexperienced to make it for yourself. When you command something to be done, you're doing it on your own authority – and if it's the right call, you'll be trusted more. If it's the wrong call, you'll be given an opportunity to learn from it. If it's a REALLY wrong call, or the last in a long LIST of wrong calls, then God might simply start ignoring you altogether and take that authority away.

Either way, solving these types of problems through prayer is what you do when you're a spiritual babe. When you are mature, when you grow up as a Christian, it's time to take matters into your own hands. That's what God wants, and that's what you need – and that's how to REALLY see the power of God working around you.

I don't think I can close with a better summary than **Isaiah 50:4-10** and **Psalms 103:1-5**.

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). **This publication is not to be sold**; "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (**Matthew 10:8**).

The Bible tells us to PROVE ALL THINGS, and The Simple Answers encourages people to do just that. If you cannot PROVE what you believe, you have no right to believe it! Many of the things we print are shocking because they are different from what you've heard, but if something we say offends or upsets you, we hope you will take the time to set aside your preconceived ideas and PROVE your point from the Bible to see if you truly have been right all these years.

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