

HOW DEMONS OPERATE

By Win Worley

The question always arises, "How do you know if a person is demonized?" Those who question persons engaged in deliverance work often ask, "How can I know if I have a demon?"

We must not underestimate the enemy or think that he necessarily seeks to produce gross or crude behavior. He may, indeed, do that; but it is not always the case. An evil spirit does not always appear as an ugly and repulsive habit, characteristic, or trait. It has been said that demons "burrow, like termites, into our lives until they ultimately bring about rot and weakness." Their work is hidden but their effects are serious and ultimately devastating. The enemy does his very best work when he is able to accomplish his purposes secretly, buried deep in the personality, and often under religious guises.

Dr. Zoller states that, "Demons are persons above all else and differ just as persons on earth do. They have traits, preferences, likes and dislikes and they seek out persons with similar tendencies and when they enter, they immediately burrow into the deep recesses of the personality and attempt to disguise themselves to convince the person and others who know him that the traits and attitudes and actions they promote are in reality coming from the person himself and not from them.

Demons know immediately whether you are a born-again believer or whether you are not. They know those who have a head belief; they know those whose names are written in God's Book of Life and who have the seal of God in their foreheads. They know what suggestions to evil you will accept and which you will reject and they act accordingly." ¹

A demon cannot ordinarily enter your body until you open the way for him to do so (except in the event of physical, mental or psychological shock, or in cases where demons have gained a foothold in a family line and are able to perpetuate their work in the next generation). Jesse Penn-Lewis writes that believers are open to attacks by evil spirits "because they have in most cases unwittingly fulfilled the conditions upon which evil spirits work. Such attacks are the outcome of yielding to the sins of the flesh, or any sin which gives the evil spirits a hold in the fallen nature." ²

¹ From *Demons, Their Origin, Their Work, Their End* by Dr. John Zollar, copyright 1972 by Christ for Everyone, New Era, MI 49446. Used by permission. p. 21.

² From *War on the Saints*, by Jesse Penn-Lewis, 1973 by Thos. E. Lowe, Suite 1500, 2 Penn Pl., NY, NY 10001. Used by permission. p. 69.

"Because their knowledge of the devil's character and methods of working is limited and circumscribed, many true children of God only recognize 'temptation' when the nature of the thing presented is visibly evil and *according to their limited knowledge of evil*, so they do not recognize the Tempter and his temptations when they come under the guise of natural or physical or lawful and apparent 'good.'

Because the thoughts of God's people are governed by ignorance and limited knowledge, they call the works of God of the devil; and the works of the devil, of God, and they are not taught the need of learning to discern the difference between the 'unclean and the clean' (**Ezekiel 44:23**) nor how to decide for themselves what is of God, or what is of the devil . . . Neither do all believers know that they have a choice between good and good, i.e., between the lesser and the greater good; and the devil often entangles them here."³

Robert Peterson points out that, "The method of deception is varied to suit the special circumstances of the victim. But whatever plan is used, Satan and his emissaries persevere until the end is achieved and the deceived becomes ensnared. Defeat for the Satanic powers comes only when the believer recognizes the peril and is on guard against it."⁴

All Christians are anxious that their walk with the Lord be buttressed with experiences that will serve to verify the facts of the Scriptures. The gift of the discernment of spirits is very necessary, lest the devil begin to give us "religious" experiences which counterfeit the real thing. Only by the Word of God can these things be evaluated -- not by a piecemeal "proof-text" approach, but rather by seeking the whole counsel of the Scriptures.

Trust the Lord for understanding and plunge into God's Word. But if you come up with singular and radical "new" revelations and insights that are foreign to the people who have led you to the Lord and have nurtured you spiritually, you will do well to take a wait-and-see attitude. Develop a day-by-day study of the Bible, and remember that the Lord Jesus never coerces or forces, but gently leads. He is never harsh or curt with the trusting believer, but is loving and patient.

In this same vein Robert Frost writes: "The Lord impressed us to be careful in our pursuit of signs, lest we become misguided by the false signs of the enemy. We were cautioned about shifting our faith from God's greatest sign (Jesus) to that of earthly things. Our confidence was to rest primarily upon our Good Shepherd rather than on some method of determining God's will."⁵

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 227.

⁴ From *Are Demons for Real?* By Robert Peterson, copyright 1968 by Overseas Miss. Fellowship, Moody Press, Chicago. Used by permission. p. 94.

⁵ From *The Overflowing Life* by Robert Frost, copyright 1971 by Logos International, Plainfield, NJ 07060. Reprinted by permission. p. 87.

Mrs. Penn-Lewis cautions, "If the believer ceases to use mind, reason, will, and all his other faculties as a person, and depends upon voices and impulses for guidance in every detail of life, he will be 'led' or guided by evil spirits feigning to be God."⁶ "Supernatural visions and manifestations are a fruitful source of revenue to deceiving spirits . . . especially when the believer relies upon, and quotes more from these experiences than the Word of God; for the aim of the wicked spirit is to displace the Word of God as the rock-ground of the life."⁷

Because we have been born again, we must not assume that we are thereby automatically protected from the power of evil spirits, nor are we necessarily delivered from them. A.J. MacMillan writes: "By believing lies of the enemy (doctrines of demons), the mind becomes blinded and the will becomes increasingly under the control of the unseen forces, until the personality is quite swayed by them. The will becomes so influenced by false conceptions injected into the mind that it cannot respond to the presentation of the truth . . . There has been in some manner a surrender of the will which is not realized by the victim . . . The objection is frequently made that a true child of God cannot be brought thus under the control of the enemy. Experience disproves this, for even spiritual believers and earnest successful workers have suffered, some of them never coming to the place of complete deliverance."⁸

We, as Christians, have many precious promises which are ours potentially but which have not yet been possessed, as a matter of fact. The children of Israel were given the land of promise by divine fiat while they were yet in the wilderness. They then had to *act* upon God's Word. So we also have wonderful provisions from God, not yet fully appreciated or appropriated; and therefore, not yet actually experienced.

In God's dealings with Israel, the land was theirs entirely; but it was under the control of trespassers and wrongful occupants who "squatted" on the land. Giants in the land had to be vanquished, and this was done by the spiritual power given as they acted in faith. In like manner, the territory held by the demons in a person's life must be wrested from the control of those wrongly occupying it. Sometimes "legal action" is necessary to break their hold, such as the renunciation of sin, curses, past alliances, and transactions by which they were allowed access penetration, and tenancy or possession.

A. J. MacMillan believes that, "Upon pastors and evangelists rests; the greatest measure of responsibility for the instruction of the flock of God. It is in a special way theirs to discern the

⁶ Penn-Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁸ From *Modern Demon Possession* by A.J. MacMillan, copyright by Christian pub., Harrisburg, Pa. 17101. Used by permission. p. 12.

signs of the enemy working and to deliver their people. It is theirs also to teach and to warn of the perils which threaten the spiritually minded."⁹

There is no way to avoid dealing with demons. If one attempts to ignore them, they will not go away. They will intensify their activities. The more completely you are involved with following the Lord Jesus, the more you will encounter these beings as spiritual opponents. As you become more knowledgeable about their workings, they will become more apparent in their defiance of you; and the scope of your victory in Christ will be enlarged over the enemy.

I speak, of course, of outward opposition chiefly. At the same time, the spirits assigned to hinder you covertly will become more devious seeking to catch you off guard and unawares. That is why we need to maintain a day-by-day, hour-by-hour walk with the Lord in the light of His Word. There must be a total commitment of oneself to Christ. Memorizing and meditating on the Scriptures is an effective way to put up barriers against the inroads of the enemy.

Romans 10:17 -- "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God," and this is a faith walk all the way!

". . . and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him."
(Ecclesiastes 10:8).

Into the makeup of every individual I am convinced that God has built a defense against the unseen world. It acts as a sort of fence or hedge (**Job 1:10**) around our minds, bodies, and spirits to keep us from perceiving or seeing that which exists in the spiritual dimension. This is wholly for our good, because the unprotected person peeking into the spirit realm can be seriously damaged by such contact. There seems to be several ways in which this protective fence can be lowered or breached by Satan's demon spirits. As Derek Prince so aptly states: "The devil is no gentleman. He slips in on the slightest pretext but must be kicked out in the name of Jesus."

Dr. Maxwell Whyte, one of the pioneers in the battle of modern day deliverance, states flatly that any person who has ever gotten mixed up in drugs, alcohol or immoral sex is definitely demonized; and there is no doubt about the need for deliverance in such cases.

Peterson lists "Three forms of sin which constitute an invitation to the demon to have possession: Idolatry is first, for idolatry is the sin of rebellion against the revealed way of worshipping God. 'There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shall thou worship any strange god' (**Psalm 81:9; Deuteronomy 13:6-11**). Possession often takes place just when the idolater is consorting with sorcerers . . . A second ground for demon possession is the sin of fornication and adultery (**Leviticus 20:10; Ephesians 5:3**). No other sins have caused so much grief to the human race as these. In one case it was a violent temper outburst which brought on the bout

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

with the demons . . . Drunkenness and drug addiction also open the door for the entrance of demons."¹⁰

"Idolatry may not be suited for deceiving the so-called 'enlightened' people who regard it as humbug and superstition . . . Satan's deception becomes more subtle as he deals with the educated, religious heathen."¹¹

There is no department of a person's being that demons are incapable of affecting if they have the opportunity -- whether physical, mental, emotional or psychological. It may be seen in the New Testament how pronounced the effects of evil spirits were in imposing sickness and bodily disabilities of a great variety upon their victims.

What we have learned from experience in dealing with demons, Mrs. Penn-Lewis has summed up well: ". . . They (demons) bury themselves in the very structure of the human frame, some acting directly upon the organs or appetites of the body, others upon the mind or intellect, sensibilities, emotions and affections, and . . . more immediately upon the spirit . . . They especially locate themselves in the spinal column, nervous system and deepest nerve centers, through which they control the whole being; from the ganglionic nerve center located in the bowels, the emotional sensibilities, and all organs affected by them, to the cerebral nerve center in the head, the eyes, ears, neck, jaws, tongue, muscles of the face, and delicate nerve tissues of the brain."¹²

This explains why, in many cases of deliverance, we have seen eyes and ears improved to a marked degree, many pains of various sorts and intensities cease, and emotional problems eased. In dealing with drug addicts particularly, there is necessity to ferret out the spirits that have hidden themselves in the bone marrow and thus affect the bloodstream adversely.

There are also spirits that come in with drugs which attack the reproductive area and unless checked will sometimes work to produce offspring who are deformed and/or retarded. In the case of sexual sin, it is always wise to check spirits of venereal disease, even though the person may never have manifested any signs of the disease.

If a person dabbles with psychic phenomena (spiritism; séances levitation; necromancy; fortune-telling of any kind; horoscopes and astrology; Ouija boards; witchcraft whether black or white; sorcery fetishes; charms; eastern religions; Zen Buddhism; transcendental meditation; karate; yoga; I Ching; reincarnation; ESP; telepathy hypnosis; the writings of mystics and

¹⁰ Peterson, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹² Penn-Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

psychics such as Jeanne Dixon, Edgar Cayce, and others) he can expect to be invaded by these spirits.

As his defenses are dropped by his meddling curiosity, occult spirits can, and will, enter in and establish themselves. These are the spirits which travel to the third and fourth generations through the parents (inheritance) because consorting with them breaks the first commandment by contacting another god. A curse from God results (**Deuteronomy 18:9-12 and Exodus 20:3-5**).

In the beginning, the experimenter with psychic phenomena can control when and to what degree he becomes involved with the occult spirits. However, as he continues on, lured deeper into the mysteries of the spirit world by clever adversaries, his God-given defenses are forced down again and again. Increasingly the demons have free access and control. Before long they will exercise their capricious whims upon the unwitting victim and make a slave-victim of him, driving him even deeper into the mire of sin and slavery.

They will force him down every path that will cause him to open up to ever increasing spiritual depravity. They may be able systematically to destroy his self-respect, destroy his personal and family life, and afflict him with many hurtful and destructive desires and hungers. In time, Spirits of infirmity and sickness will also be brought to attack him to further weaken him. Demons are not satisfied with mere compliance to their wishes; they work to reduce their victim to a helpless state, filled with mental and physical anguish almost beyond man's ability to endure.

According to Mrs. Penn-Lewis, "The suffering caused by evil spirits can be (1) *spiritual*, by causing acute suffering in the spirit, injecting 'feelings' to the spirit, repugnant or poignant; (2) *soulish*, by acute darkness, confusion, chaos, horror in the mind; anguished knifelike pain in the heart, or other innermost vital parts of the being; or (3) *physical*, in any part of the body . . ." ¹³

Frost warns, "One subtle form of soulish behavior is a pseudo-spiritual emphasis that can lead to unwholesome mysticism. There is usually a great emphasis upon *new* revelations and spiritual mysteries often accomplished by visions, dreams, and 'prophetic' discourses . . . All such manifestations must be tested by God's Word and discerning Spirit. A further and very practical proof of validity is the fruit produced" ¹⁴ (**Galatians 5:22**).

"So-called spiritual leaders have been seduced into spiritism by approaching the occult from an intellectual (but soulish) point of view. To investigate out of curiosity even borderline areas of

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁴ Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

parapsychology apart from the spiritual defenses is to invite deception and delusion into one's life. It has happened . . ."¹⁵

Dr. Unger states that: "Facts are not lacking to indicate that modern spiritism is nothing more or less than ancient sorcery revived, with particular emphasis on communication with the supposed spirits of the dead, which are really deceiving, impersonating demons, so that the phenomenon is basically demonism."¹⁶ Jacobs adds: "When people who are theologically ignorant begin to dabble in matters of the spirit, anything can happen. When starved men finally eat, they may not be able to go about it with cool heads or ready stomachs . . ."¹⁷

As for the Spiritualist Church which is popping up everywhere nowadays, on page 70 of their Manual they state boldly, "It is the mission of spiritualists to revolutionize the world, to sweep away the accumulated rubbish of centuries of ignorance and superstition." What is this rubbish accumulated over the centuries? Listen to Mrs. M.E. Cadwallader, editor of the "Progressive Thinker," one of the journals of spiritualism: "I denounce the following: the vicarious atonement, the doctrine of eternal punishment, the literal resurrection of the body, the virgin birth of Jesus, the infallibility of the Bible, the doctrine of salvation by faith only. No, the religion of the spiritualists is as different from the so-called Christian religion as a sunny day is from a starless night."¹⁸

Willful sin is another open door to the entrance of demonic control, and one willful sin always invites others along with it. Because sin is progressive, one act of disobedience leads to another. "A demon may . . . be secretly welcomed by a prospective host for some selfish reason, therefore, move in; or it may move into the host as an unwelcome intruder. The host, in either case, must deal with the demon's presence . . . Once they have a position in a host, they may invite fellow demons in or may become overly demanding and can cause great trouble. This can lead to the domination of the host's personality either all, or part of the time."¹⁹

Any habit or desire which has gotten to the point of driving, compelling and tormenting the person is suspect. For this is the way the demon operates. Robert Peterson, missionary to Indonesia, lists a number of the grosser symptoms and manifestations where demons have gained a degree of control:

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁶ From *Biblical Demonology* by Merrill F. Unger, copyright 1952 by Scripture Press, Wheaton, IL. P. 158.

¹⁷ From *Demons at Work in the World Today* by Donald R. Jacobs, copyright 1972 by Herald Press, Scottsdale, PA. 15683. Reprinted by permission. pp. 37, 38.

¹⁸ Zollar, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

¹⁹ Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

- Enlarged eyes and a glassy stare.
- Fear and intense hatred in the eyes and expression.
- Flatulence and heavy, labored breathing.
- A voice apparently not originating from the vocal chords, frequently using a language unknown to the possessed.
- Abnormal passions seen in such things as the use of vile epithets, drunkenness, drugs, and sexual vices [**Luke 8:27**].
- Frequent suicidal impulses [**Matthew 17:15**].
- The possessed advances toward one with a wild countenance and often threatening gestures calculated to inspire fear, and when rebuffed, there is a violent display of temper.
- The demons are able to impart supernatural strength which promotes acts of violence [**Matthew 8:28; Mark 5:3; Luke 8:29; Acts 19:16**].²⁰

As mentioned above, drugs and alcohol depress and weaken God's protective devices for man. Most of the time alcohol works more slowly, but just as surely toward the same end as drugs. Delirium tremens in an alcoholic is nothing more than seeing into the spirit world. What he sees there with a naked, unprotected mind and soul, is enough nearly to drive him out of his mind with terror.

What alcohol does gradually, over a period of time, drugs can accomplish in a matter of minutes, depending on the kind used. The psychedelic-hallucinogenic drugs will lower the screen of protection, allowing demonic forces access to a person and causing him to "see" whatever the demons wish him to experience. They frequently bait the poor deluded victim with "good trips" that reveal whole worlds of blinding colors, sounds, and strange scenes of breathtaking beauty. Since these are fascinating to the depraved nature of man, the individual submits again and again. The victim may even have visions of "God," angels, and Heaven -- deceiving and misleading.

It will not be long, however, before the demons tire of this sport and begin to show their cruel and destructive nature. As they drop their masks of beauty and euphoria, the dupe is subjected to ugliness, laced with horror or unbridled terror. This is intended to drive him toward insanity and/or suicide. The Bible says about alcohol: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and

²⁰ Peterson, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (**Proverbs 20:1**). The same is true of drugs. The difference is that, with drugs, it is almost instant insanity; with alcohol, the process usually takes longer, a kind of creeping, sure deterioration. The end is the same. "Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known" (**Romans 3:16, 17**).

I recall a young Navy lad in his twenties who came to my home one night to get help for himself and his wife. He was taking drugs, mostly "grass" (marijuana) and "acid" (LSD). A few months earlier, while tripping on acid, he had experienced a fantastically beautiful experience. It had begun in horror, with an angelic guide escorting him to see the pits of hell. Next he was taken to a realm where he saw "heaven" and met "God." The god he met was an exceedingly dazzling creature, who informed him in dulcet tones that all the young man had to do was to put his trust in him and all would be well. He would not go to hell, but rather come to this beautiful place, aglow with beauty and light. He was to go forth to enlist others to come here too (**II Corinthians 11:14**). This was his "conversion" experience and his "call" to preach, as he told it to me.

The reason he had come for help was that, in spite of these lovely experiences (which were repeated each time he tripped on drugs) he was deeply troubled. Restless and unhappy unless on drugs, he could neither pray nor have any sort of communication with "God" when he was "straight." A growing sense of uneasiness, a gnawing emptiness, a total absence of peace, and a burning desire to return to drugs were all that he had to show for his experiences. Somehow he knew this was wrong, and it caused him to seek help.

My first task was to lead him to see that he had never been born again at all and had no evidence of Bible salvation. He was the victim of a real, but counterfeit, religious experience of "conversion," totally foreign to Scriptures.

I read **Revelation 3:20** to him: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in . . ." I explained that he must personally and definitely invite Jesus Christ to come into his heart and save him from his sin (**Romans 3:23; 6:23**). After a bit of patient reviewing of the verses, the Holy Spirit enlightened his understanding. The blindness fell from his mind (**II Corinthians 4:4**), and he grasped the simple truth of the Gospel. It began to dawn on him that he had been defrauded by cunning, deceiving, religious spirits into accepting a pseudo-conversion experience.

After being convinced of the truth of the Scripture, he attempted to ask Jesus Christ to come into his heart. This caused unbelievable distress and difficulty. He could hardly talk but gasped out words haltingly and with long, drawn-out syllables, as the demons that had captured him through drugs fought to prevent his acceptance of the Saviour. I had to rebuke and bind the hindering spirits in Jesus' name before he finally got the words out, "Lord Jesus, please come into my heart and save me from my sins . . . right now."

When he did this, great peace filled his soul; his burden lifted and his awful fears of the future vanished. After making sure that he had the assurance that Jesus had come into his heart, I turned to his wife, who was trembling uncontrollably. She, too, was eager to be saved and quickly asked Jesus to come into her heart. They began to embrace, laughing and crying with relief and great joy, praising the Lord Jesus from whom the deep settled peace had come upon their troubled souls. I had the joy of casting out demons from each of them that night. Some hours later they left, rejoicing in all that Jesus Christ had done for them.

"Some individuals are so bound they may have almost lost their will to the power of the enemy. God can set them free by the prayer of faith and the authority of Jesus' name. Such a release, however, can be maintained only if they choose to remain free . . ." ²¹ If we are willing to be dominated, we can be dominated, but if we want to enjoy the reality of that which is ours, we can. James wrote, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." **James 4:7** has the order right -- first we submit to God, then we resist the devil. This fierce enemy cannot stand before us then.

Frost writes that "the demons hate and fear believers." They know that they are defeated, but this does not stop them from continuing their work -- *until* their defeat is enforced upon them by faithful believers. ²²

Although ministers and workers are often able to help others, God wants His children to grow up in Him and in a knowledge of His Word and to be able to exercise authority over Satan. This is the authority of the believer, not just of the preachers and special workers.

"We are assured that there can be some weakening of demon powers by refusing to give them the cooperation they thrive upon: "*They feed on our fears and self-directed thoughts.* (See **I John 4:18** – "fear hath torment.") Our power to resist and overcome increases as we feed upon God's truth and give attention to His Son by much praise and worship. Our faith becomes strong by praying in the Spirit . . ."

"The thief comes not but for to *steal*, and to *kill*, and to *destroy*. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly" (**John 10:10**).

²¹ Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 49.