

Deliverance from Evil Spirits

by Paul Cook

This study is more of an overview of deliverance, rather than a step by step guide. Deliverance from evil spirits is an important part of the continuing mission of Jesus Christ. The Bible contains many examples of deliverance both during and after Jesus' earthly ministry. Believers in Jesus today have the authority and opportunity to continue his deliverance ministry to the oppressed.

Evil spirits, also known as demons, can gain access to people in a number of different ways. Sexual sin offers evil spirits footholds to oppress those involved. Since today's world culture is largely pornographic, we can expect a growing number of people struggling with demonic oppression.

I am posting this study for a variety of reasons, including:

- To help people understand the basics about deliverance ministry
- To help people get free from demonic bondage, since porn addiction is a major avenue to demonic oppression/demonization
- To help people who do not have access to an effective deliverance ministry
- Dispel common myths about deliverance and exorcism

Course outline:

- [What are demons?](#)
- [Do I have a demon and if so, what should I do?](#)
- [Preparing for and going through deliverance prayer sessions](#)
- [What to do after deliverance prayer sessions](#)
- [Bible Examples of deliverance](#)
- [Wrap-up](#)

Assumptions: Deliverance can be very challenging both for the person seeking freedom and those who help him/her. We write this studied based on the following assumptions for the person seeking freedom:

- You have placed faith in [Jesus Christ](#)
- You are striving to make Jesus Lord of every area of your life
- You have completed our online [Freedom Journey I](#) course
- You desire to be completely free of Satan's grip

We do not encourage people to pursue deliverance until they are fully committed to live for God. Those that go through deliverance half-heartedly run the risk of a worse situation afterwards ([Matthew 12:43-45](#)).

Who can minister deliverance? Bible references on deliverance show that anyone walking closely with the Lord Jesus can minister deliverance. You do not have to be a priest or a seminary graduate. Deliverance is not to be taken lightly. Those who minister in this area should be prepared and fully equipped in their relationship with Jesus. They should be striving for purity in all areas, so that the devil has no foothold in them as they minister to the oppressed.

Do I have a demon and if so, what should I do?

Determining whether a person has a demon or not can be challenging. We must remember to rely on God for help in this "verification" process. Deliverance ministers typically look for a combination of symptoms that point to demonization. These may include:

- Confirmation from the Holy Spirit that a demon is present (word of knowledge)
- Spiritual "recognition" of a demon: God gives certain people the ability to discern the presence of evil spirits. Scripture refers to this as the gift of "discerning spirits" ([1 Corinthians 12:8-11](#)). Knowing the name and/or nature of a demon can be beneficial in routing it (Luke 8:30).
- Physical manifestations (see below)
- Agreement from other deliverance team members and the afflicted person
- Behavior lines up with Biblical examples of demonization

Physical manifestations: We listed below many of the possible physical manifestations that could indicate demonization. A combination of these symptoms increases the probability that a demon(s) is present.

- Sickness or disease (Luke 4:39; Luke 4:41; Luke13:10-13)
- Unexplained bodily pains
- Distorted voice
- Distorted posture (Luke13:10-13)
- Extremely fierce/hostile behavior (Matthew 8:28-32; Acts 19:13-16)
- Unexplained foul odors in vicinity of the person (typically like sulfur or rotten eggs)
- Obsessive/Compulsive/Driven behavior (Luke 8:29)

- Seizure (being seized by the demon and driven to do something) (Luke 8:29; Luke 9:39-42)
- Self-destructive behavior (throwing oneself into fire; suicide attempts, cutting the flesh; etc.) (Mark 5:1-6; Luke 9:39-42)
- Nakedness in public (Luke 8:27)
- Abnormal living patterns and behavior (Luke 8:27,35; Mark 5:5)
- Difficulty reading Bible and worshipping God
- Difficulty confessing and renouncing specific sin (especially occult sin)
- Bodily contortions or convulsions (Luke 4:33-36; Mark 1:25-26); bulging eyes; contorted face; slithering like a snake; crouching like a cat; etc.
- "Demonic" reactions (aversion to the word of God, aversion to worship of God, obeys authoritative commands in the name of Jesus, mockery, distraction, aversion to looking the deliverance minister in the eyes, etc.)
- Foaming at the mouth (Luke 9:39-42)
- Deafness and/or muteness (Luke 9:39-42)
- Mocking (Luke 4:33-35; Acts 16:16-18)
- Crazy or abnormal behavior (Luke 8:35; Mark 5:5)
- Superhuman strength (Luke 8:29; Mark 5:3-4)
- Hostility toward true followers of Jesus Christ (example: crying out with a loud voice) (Acts 8:6-7; Luke 4:33)
- Severe phobias/fears
- Addictions
- Night visitations from evil presence
- Recurring nightmares
- Tormenting thoughts & voices in the mind
- Cursing
- Lack of peace

Note of Caution: There are emotional and medical disorders that can produce many of the above symptoms. If you think you may have such a disorder, it is wise to seek medical and spiritual counsel from qualified sources before moving forward in deliverance. Example conditions known to produce symptoms mimicking demonization include Tourette's Syndrome, Schizophrenia, Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), Disassociative Identity Disorder (DID) and several others. Demons can be involved in these conditions, but may not be. Attempting to cast demons out of a person that is not demonized could lead to further emotional and spiritual damage.

What to do if you have a demon: Start by asking God to arm you with supernatural wisdom and discernment in finding the right people to help you get delivered. Seek help from people with experience in deliverance (if possible). Be sure to look for people who minister in the love of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, deliverance ministries are especially prone to Satanic attack. If the ministry is not following Jesus closely, it can easily fall into error (pride, greed, control, etc.). Suggested sources for help:

- **Your church:** We all need to be connected with the "body of Christ." This term refers to all people who have placed faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. The scriptures make it clear that body of Christ is made up of many parts that are interdependent (1 Corinthians 12). We need to be connected with other believers for spiritual protection, edification and growth. A church's spiritual covering can be an important shelter during times of recovery from demonization and other spiritual strongholds. Seek prayer and counsel from the pastor and/or prayer ministry at your church. Take caution that demonization can be a controversial topic in some churches. Some churches hold that Christians can not be demonized. Ask the Lord to guide you and reveal any doctrinal problems your church may have on this topic. If you are looking for a church, please visit our [church page](#).
- **A local healing prayer and deliverance ministry:** Healing prayer and deliverance ministries can be very helpful for people whose churches are not effective in deliverance ministry. These ministries have experience and training to help people break free from demonic bondage.
- **A strong Christian friend (walking in purity):** If you can't gain the help of your church or a local prayer ministry, this might be an option for you. It will be very beneficial if your friend has some experience in prayer ministry and deliverance.

Elements to look for in your prospective help source:

- Belief in the Bible as the word of God
- Reliance on the power of God through prayer, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and faith in the word of God
- God's love, not legalism
- Experience in deliverance ministry
- God's peace in your heart about the ministry
- Fruits of Godly wisdom (pure, peaceful, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy ([James 3:13-18](#)))

Going it alone: We don't recommend pursuing "self-deliverance" for several reasons. First, the Bible gives us many examples of people being delivered by at least one other person. Self-deliverance is possible, but we have found no examples of it in the Bible. Secondly, it makes good sense to approach deliverance with a team of strong believers helping you, since deliverance can be physically and spiritually taxing. Here are some additional ways a team can help you in deliverance:

- Provide additional spiritual covering, faith, encouragement and fellowship
- Provide loving affirmation for confession and healing (James 5:15-16 and 1 John 1:9)
- Provide physical and spiritual strength in case heavy demonic resistance is encountered during the deliverance session (sometimes demonized persons may be temporarily incapacitated by the demons during the deliverance)
- Provide a mix of spiritual gifts to assist in the deliverance ([Gifts of the Spirit](#))
- Provide follow-up care and support: You will need all the encouragement and support during and after deliverance that you can get. You want to have people around you who will encourage you to walk in purity so that the spirits will never be able to gain access to you again (Matthew 12:45).

Deliverance Prayer Sessions

Preparing for Deliverance

Preparing for deliverance is basically a process of drawing near to God and purifying ourselves from as many sin footholds as possible. Evil spirits use footholds to attempt to keep us in bondage. When the footholds have been removed by confession and repentance, the spirits are less able to resist being expelled. Here are some suggestions for actions to take leading up to the deliverance date:

- Inventory current and past sin (see our [Deal with Sin](#) page)
- Confess & repent from the sin as you are able. Note that demonized persons sometimes experience a "blocking" effect when trying to renounce past sin (especially occult sin). Manifestations may include difficulty in speaking, severe distraction and/or severe exhaustion. If these occur, take note of the sin area you are attempting to deal with and inform your deliverance team of what you are encountering.

- Ask sincere Christians to pray for you as often as possible. Prayer cover is something that will help you maintain some semblance of peace as you approach the deliverance session date. Email is a great tool by which you can create a "prayer support team" who you can email your prayer request updates to quickly.
- Saturate your mind with the word of God daily as you draw near to the deliverance session. Load the word into your mind through daily devotion Bible studies, scripture memory/meditation and scripture tapes/CD's
- Surround yourself and your home with atmosphere of praise & worship
- Daily prayers for peace, protection and victory: Examples: [Binding evil spirits](#) influencing you & loosing God's peace and deliverance; [Pleading the blood](#) of Jesus over you and your mind
- Fast: Fasting strengthens your spirit and brings your body into submission to your spirit

You can expect resistance (from the evil spirits) to increase as the deliverance date approaches. Like apartment tenants who resist eviction, demons resist deliverance. Some of the demon's ploys we know of include:

- Try to increase your addictive behaviors
- Try to increase your emotional conflict
- Scare tactics to increase your fear of going through with deliverance
- Doubt attacks (thoughts like "You'll never get free," or "You won't be able to have any fun once your delivered")
- Try to point you into self-destructive behaviors
- Lack of peace, fitful sleep, nightmares, etc.

If you reach this point and are under attack, take courage and don't allow the devil to weaken your resolve to be free of the demonic bondage. The devil is a defeated foe and knows at this point that he is on the way out. Your debt was paid and your freedom purchased 2000 years ago by Jesus Christ. Be encouraged in your faith to persevere and proceed with the deliverance as God directs you.

Deliverance sessions

Format: Every deliverance session will likely be unique depending on you, your deliverance team and the Holy Spirit's guidance. Some events typically included in deliverance sessions:

- Beginning prayers, praise and worship

- [Binding & Loosing prayers](#): Binding the demons from violent manifestations; binding demons from all power sources / Loosing God's plans for freedom and deliverance
- [Protection prayers](#): Pleading the blood of Jesus Christ over persons present, the room and the atmosphere all around
- Prayer for direction: Asking the Lord for guidance on how to proceed with the deliverance
- Invitation prayers: Inviting the Lord and his angels to come into the room; Inviting the Lord to heal and deliver
- Confessing and Renouncing: Confessing and renouncing specific sin areas, especially those associated with the bondage
- Commanding in the name of Jesus: Taking authority in Christ over the demons and commanding them to leave the demonized person. This is often accompanied by reading of key passages from the scriptures that support the believer's authority over evil.
- Prayer for healing: Asking the Lord to heal any emotional, spiritual or physical wounds from the past that may be serving as footholds for the current oppression
- Prayer for [cutting soul ties](#): This severs any sinful connections of our soul with other people, spirits or objects.
- "Soaking" Prayer: This is when the deliverance team prays quietly in the Spirit for the person seeking freedom. Soaking prayer is often used in praying for healing, as documented studies have shown that prayer applied over a time period yields healings. Praying in tongues is a useful tool for this type of prayer, especially when the deliverance team is unsure of how to proceed.

What to expect: There are a wide variety of deliverance examples in the Bible. Some went quickly, and others were more drawn out. Certain "classes" of demons do seem to offer more resistance than others. For example, spirits associated with [occult sin](#) (all sex sin is in this category) tend to be the most tenacious. Deliverance from occult spirits may include manifestations. **There is no reason to fear demons** if we are trusting in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. God has given us the authority and the spiritual surgical tools to remove the evil spirits and restore wholeness to the freedom-seeker.

Your responsibilities

Believe: Faith is the key ingredient that will release God's power in your life and help you break free. There are several beliefs that our faith must be anchored in:

- You have authority over all evil spirits through your faith in Jesus Christ (Luke 10:19-20)
- The word of God is living and powerful; it substantiates your claim as an heir to the kingdom of God and the authority of Christ (Galatians 4:7)
- You have overcome the power of the devil through Jesus Christ (1 John 4:4; 1 John 5:4-5)
- God will deliver you from evil and preserve you for his heavenly kingdom (2 Timothy 4:18)
- You have the Holy Spirit's live-in help to stop your sinful habits and to live a new life practicing righteousness (Romans 8:11,13)

Don't give up: Deliverance can be challenging, but with God's help, you will be successful. Your resolve to continue through the session will be a great help to you and your deliverance team. Stand united with them in resolve to rid yourself of the evil spirits. Don't listen to the lies the devil will use to try to weaken your determination. Sample lies include:

- "You'll never get free"
- "Life without sin will be boring"
- "You don't really want us to leave"
- "You can't live without your pet sin" (or "You'll die without it")
- "You know we'll be back, so why even bother resisting now?"
- "God can't use you because you're a rotten sinner"
- "God has already given up on you; you've got no hope"

Be honest with your team: Complete honesty with your team about how you are feeling and what is going through your mind is very important. This will help the team navigate through the session. If you don't feel free at the end of the session, don't feel obligated to say you're free. Also, if you are feeling uncomfortable about how the team is proceeding at any time, share this with them. If something doesn't seem right, don't be afraid to ask for a break to share your concern and/or to pray about what to do.

Have courage and don't fear: The devil does not want you free from demonic bondage. He will use fear and lies to try to keep you in bondage. Your faith in God will directly neutralize any fear tactics ([Deuteronomy 31:6](#)). Your reliance on the word of God (the truth) will destroy any lies the devil tries to tell you (John 8:31-32).

Follow-up sessions

Deliverance from major demonization may need to take place over several sessions. There may be many spirits involved, and it's possible that the Lord may direct a gradual deliverance so that the freedom-seeker can adjust to each change along the way. A one shot deliverance would obviously seem best, but don't get discouraged if more sessions are required.

Deliverance Follow-up

Follow-up Actions

The actions you take following a deliverance session will be just as important, if not more important than the deliverance. This is because the evil spirits will seek re-entry at some point. If they succeed in re-entry, your condition will be worse off than before the deliverance., as Jesus explained in [Luke 11:24-26](#). It is best to walk very close to Jesus following the deliverance. Here are some suggested actions to take:

- Meet with God daily in devotional times (to include Bible study, prayer, praise and scripture memory work)
- Maintain daily vigilance against temptations
- Give God thanks and praise each day for the deliverance and healing he has given and is giving you.
- Honor God each day with how you use your body, remembering that your body is a temple of God's Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20).
- Get connected with a good church. A church will give you a spiritual "covering" of prayer and edification that you need. If you're not connected to a church, we encourage you to get connected ! (see our [Church Page](#))
- Set up a support network: Your church may be the best place to establish a support network. Your support network should consist of people who are willing to pray for you and disciple you in your walk with Jesus. Take care not to abuse your support network by depending on them more than you depend on God.

As you move forward in your new life, have an expectant heart, looking for God's hand guiding you. Consider how God may want to use you to reach others with his love and healing.

If the deliverance session (s) were not successful:

Seek God for the answer: Before considering all the possible reasons for the session being unsuccessful, seek God for the answer in prayer. James 1:5 says that we can call on God for wisdom and that it will be given to us. God has the light that will dispel all the darkness and reveal the hidden secrets.

Look for hidden roots not previously addressed. Some examples of roots include:

- Unconfessed sin
- Generational sin
- Curses that have not been addressed specifically
- Inner vows/bitter root judgments: Inner vows and bitter root judgments are self-imposed bondages we place on ourselves in reaction to trauma and/or abuse that we've experienced. Examples: "I've never let myself love another person again," "I'll never trust a woman again," "I'll make her pay for how she hurt me" or "I'd rather die than live with him again."
- Soul ties (see our [soul ties](#) page)
- Satanic seals that have not been broken: Like many satanic elements, seals are a parody of our being sealed by the Holy Spirit in holy baptism. A person can be sealed for Satan, signifying that he is dedicated and belongs to Satan, and that he is protected and cannot be freed until the seal is broken. (ref: pgs. 220-222 [Deliverance from Evil Spirits](#) by Dr. Francis MacNutt)
- The stronghold may be more formidable than the deliverance team can handle: Some strongholds may require more specialized deliverance teams with experience in the particular area of bondage. An example of this is often found with people who suffered Satanic Ritual Abuse. Satanic rituals often cause deep emotional, spiritual and physical trauma that is coupled with powerful evil spirits who are "assigned" to the victim. These cases can be tricky and challenging for an inexperienced deliverance team to tackle.

Other reasons for incomplete deliverance:

- God may be directing a more gradual deliverance process over several sessions
- Lack of commitment in the freedom-seeker to walking in purity
- The deliverance team or the individual seeking freedom did not prepare spiritually for the deliverance

If you have serious misgivings about your deliverance team or simply a lack of peace about them being the right help source for you, then perhaps you should seek a different team. There are no perfect deliverance ministries. Some are run better than others. Let God guide you on this.

Bible references on deliverance and exorcism

The Bible features many examples of deliverance ministry. We can glean many helpful points about deliverance from studying these examples.

[Luke 4:33-36; Mark 1:25-26](#) In Capernaum, a man with a demon cried out at Jesus. Jesus rebuked it, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" The demon then convulsed the man and cried out with a loud voice. It threw the man down and came out of him.

[Mark 1:34](#) Jesus cast out many demons; He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew him.

[Mark 3:10-12](#) Jesus sternly warned the unclean spirits that they should not make his identity known

[Luke 4:38-39](#) Jesus rebuked the fever in Peter's mother-in-law and it left immediately

[Luke 4:40-41](#) Jesus laid hands on many people and the demons cried out and came out of them. Jesus rebuked them and did not let them speak.

[Luke 9:37-42; Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29](#) The demon-possessed boy is delivered: This story has many interesting features. The evil spirit was able to seize the boy, cry out in a loud voice, convulse him, bruise him and cause him to foam at the mouth. The disciples were unable to cast the demon out, but Jesus was able to do so. Jesus said, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" (Mark 9:25). Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the child (Luke 9:39-42). Jesus later explained to the disciples that their unbelief kept them from being able to cast the demon out. Jesus also said that type of demon would not go out except by prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:20-21; Mark 9:29).

[Luke 9:49-50](#) Man casting out demons in Jesus' name

[Luke 11:14-15; Matthew 12:22-23](#) Jesus casts out a mute demon

[Luke 13:10-16](#) Jesus looses woman from a spirit of infirmity: She had been afflicted for 18 years and was bent over permanently. Jesus called her to him and said, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." He laid his hands on her and immediately she was made straight. Jesus mentioned that Satan had bound the woman (Luke 13:16).

[Matthew 8:28-32; Luke 8:26-33; Mark 5:1-20](#) Gaderenes (or *Gerasenes*) demoniacs: These men were exceedingly fierce. They cried out at Jesus, and begged him to permit them to go into the swine. Jesus said, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" (Mark 5:1-20). He also said "Go" (Matthew 8:32). Apparently the spirits didn't leave immediately, because Jesus then asked "What is your name?" (Mark 5:1-20). They told him their name was "Legion" and begged him to send them into the swine. Finally the spirits left the demoniac(s) and went into the swine.

[Acts 19:11-12](#) Exorcism via handkerchiefs that touched Paul's body

[Acts 19: 13-16](#) Jewish exorcists attempt deliverance without faith in Jesus: These exorcists were likely spiritists/conjurers who used spells & oaths to bind spirits (see *Strong's* #1845). They invoked Jesus' name without believing in Jesus nor having a relationship with him. The demons recognized the exorcist's lack of authority, jumped on them and beat them up!

[Acts 8:6-7](#) Philip preached in Samaria to the multitudes. They heeded his teaching. Unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed.

[Acts 16:16-18](#) Paul casts out spirit of divination from slave girl: The girl met Paul's team as they went to prayer. The spirit harassed Paul for days. Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." The spirit came out that hour.

References for the Christian's Authority over evil spirits

- [Matthew 10:1,7-8; Mark 3:15](#) Jesus gave the twelve disciples power to cast out evil spirits and to heal all kinds of disease, weakness and infirmity. Jesus sent the disciples out to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out demons.
- [Luke 10:17](#) The 70 disciples returned with joy, confirming that the demons were subject to them in Jesus' name
- [Luke 10:19-20](#) Jesus gave his disciples authority over all evil: ¹⁹"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰However, do not

- rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." NIV
- [Mark 16:15-18](#) Jesus gives Christians authority over evil spirits: "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (*NKJV excerpt*).

Power principles for deliverance: There are many interesting "power principles" regarding deliverance ministry. The main principle is that God's Kingdom is superior to Satan's kingdom. Here are a few other examples:

- Every kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Luke 11:17-18)
- Jesus cast demons out by the finger of God (Luke 11:20). As adopted children of God, with the Holy Spirit residing in us (Romans 8:15-17), we too may cast demons out by the finger of God.
- A fully armed "strong man" guards his palace. When a stronger man comes and overpowers him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoils ([Luke 11:21-22](#)). In Christ, we are the stronger man that overpowers demons and takes their spoils from them (men's souls).
- You must first bind the strong man before you can plunder his house. In Christ, we have authority to bind things in heaven and on earth ([Matthew 12:29; 16:19; 18:18-19; Mark 3:27](#)). (see [Binding Prayers](#))
- He who is not with Jesus is against Jesus. He who does not gather with Jesus scatters (Luke 11:23).
- Following deliverance, an unclean (evil) spirit will go through dry places seeking rest and will find none. It will try to return to the person it left and take with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself. If they enter and dwell in the man, the last state of the man will be worse than the first (Luke 11:24-26; Matthew 12:43-45). This underscores the need for the freed person to walk closely with Jesus after deliverance sessions.
- For more power principles and kingdom characteristics, see [God's Kingdom](#) and [Satan's Kingdom](#)

Final Remarks

I hope that this study has helped you. We encourage you to take our other courses as the Lord leads you (see [online courses](#)).