

FREEDOM MINISTRY

Introduction

Jesus ministered to the broken and needy and had an ability to deeply address the real needs of people He dealt with. He provided all that people needed to move out from under the dominion of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God. As Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, His ministry was characterized by teaching about the kingdom and instruction regarding life as a kingdom resident. Along with this teaching, Jesus provided demonstrations of power evidencing the kingdom at work among the people. It was His stated task to reclaim what was lost (Luke 19:10) and to undo the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

The works of the devil in our day and age are varied and complex. These works cripple humans and impair their ability to know and worship God. Satan's reach has gained inroads into our minds, emotions, bodies, relationships and culture. To help people be free today, we must follow Jesus' model and instruct people regarding kingdom life. We must also help them encounter our living and present God who acts in power and authority to overcome the impact of living in a fallen world system. Such an encounter is designed to help people break free from strongholds and demonic oppression in their lives allowing God's people to live fully as the redeemed sons and daughters He has intended.

Issues to be Addressed

Three issues need to be addressed for people to find freedom from bondage in their life:

- The issue of bondage and strongholds in the lives of believers
- The issue of learning to walk and grow in freedom
- The issue of maintaining healthy balance where there has historically been a tendency toward imbalance

Helping People Become Free

People living in a fallen world system live under the effects of Satan's rule. Our response to these conditions must be varied, Spirit-led and appropriate to the needs of people. Since people are tripartite (1 Thessalonians 5:23), it is important to address spirit, soul and body for them to find true freedom. Focusing too much on one particular aspect often becomes detrimental to the other two aspects.

Freedom ministry includes elements of Spirit-empowered ministry, biblical counsel, expulsion of demonic spirits and healing prayer for physical, spiritual and emotional wounds.

Helping People Walk and Grow in Freedom

At Evident Life, we want to instruct and model the kind of life and activities, which allow people not only to obtain freedom but also to maintain and increase it in their lives. The kinds of activities that we consider important to help in these areas include educating people regarding their identity in Christ and the fullness of life available to them, engaging their will in the process, helping them engage in spiritual warfare for themselves and their loved ones and gaining an ability to recognize and eliminate the things that got them into bondage in the first place. We desire to help people step into a community of friends that can be a support in their journey.

A Healthy Balance

Because this ministry deals with demonstrations of God's power and engages demonic forces, it is important to minister within biblical parameters. At one end of the spectrum is a completely rational approach, which disavows any concept of the supernatural. At the other end of the spectrum is the belief that we are all pawns in some cosmic battle and we have no role in becoming and staying free.

At Evident Life, we will maintain a healthy balance between these two extremes; discerning and responding with authority to strongholds and demonic spirits while helping individuals recognize and accept their own responsibility for life choices.

Focus of Freedom Ministry to Individuals

Our focus is based on core values anchored in Scripture that help maintain balance as we minister freedom to individuals.

1. **Biblical Foundations (2 Timothy 3:16):** To maintain the health of our Freedom Ministry, we will consider Scripture as our foundation for all we do. All experience will be screened through our understanding of Scripture.
2. **Solution-Focused (Philippians 4:8):** We will make Jesus, His work and the work of the Holy Spirit more prominent than the work of unclean spirits.
3. **Spirit-Guided (John 5:19):** We will develop our ears for the guiding voice of God so that we may do what we see the Father doing.
4. **Compassion (2 Timothy 2:24):** We will treat people with the love and compassion which have been shown to us. We will treat God's children the way we would want our children to be treated.
5. **The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23):** We will conduct ourselves and our ministry in a way that reflects the fruits of the Spirit.
6. **Discipleship (Ephesians 4:16):** We are growing disciples with long-term fruit and the ability to reproduce.
7. **Personal Growth (Matthew 10:8):** We are not teaching techniques; we are passing on what we have freely received.
8. **Unity (Psalm 133:1):** We are stronger together than we are as individuals. We will accept and grow from one another's differences.

Christians and Demonization

A common debate among believers revolves around the relationship between Christians and demonic spirits. Often at the core of this debate is the question, "Can a Christian be possessed by a demon?" At the heart of this question is a need to understand the interaction between the spiritual realm and the daily life we live as Christians. The Bible has some clear descriptions about this issue.

We must first realize that any time we read the term "demon possessed" in English, this is not the phrase used in the original language of Scripture. Two common terms in the Greek, the language of the New Testament, are "*daimonion echei*," translated "has a devil" (Luke 8:27), or "*daimonizomenou*" (John 10:21), best understood as "demonized." In neither case is the term "demon possessed" found in the original language. In fact in the case of the first phrase, the implication is just the opposite. The spirit does not have the person; the person has the spirit.

Although realizing this does not address the issue of a born-again believer and demonization, it is important to understand that the issue is influence and not necessarily possession. Satan did not have to claim ownership of Adam and Eve to exert influence over them.

The terms Jesus used when doing away with demonic forces clearly imply that the spirits were issued forth from the person (*ap autou*—off or out of the self, Matthew 17:18; *ekbleethentos*—plucked out and expelled from within, Matthew 9:33; *exelthontos*—to issue forth from, Luke 11:14). These phrases would indicate an internal position of influence much like bacteria or infection is internal.

All of these verses indicate the position of influence that Jesus dealt with regarding demons and people. Regarding that same influence with born-again believers, our clearest scriptural example is found in 2 Corinthians 12:7 (NASB). Paul states: “because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself!”

The apostle Paul testifies concerning himself that God sent a “messenger of Satan” (*angelos*) to be a thorn in his flesh (*sarki*). These phrases clearly indicate that an angel of Satan was in the physical person of Paul. The same position of influence described in the encounters with Jesus is indicated even more clearly in Paul’s own description of his condition.

It is our position that demonic forces can influence a person in varying degrees from an external position as well as an internal position. The body and the soul (mind, will and emotions) can provide a haven for influencing spirits. The spirit of a born-again believer is the Holy Spirit of God, but as Paul makes clear, we can either live by the flesh or live by the Spirit. When we live by the flesh, we give the devil an opportunity (*topos*—a place or geographical location, Ephesians 4:27).

Scriptural References

- Matthew 28:18–20
- Matthew 10:5–8
- Matthew 4:17, 23
- Luke 4:16–21
- Romans 6:16–18
- Romans 6:6
- 2 Corinthians 5:17–18
- John 8:31

Conclusion

As our response to Jesus’ command to declare the gospel of the kingdom and demonstrate it as we go, we seek to encompass the ministry of Jesus to undo the works of the devil in the lives of individuals. We desire to help people grow in their soul (mind, will, emotions) through elements of teaching and discipleship so that they can grow in the freedom they obtain as they seek to know and serve Jesus Christ.

We also work to make compassionate settings of ministry available for groups and individuals so that people can encounter God in the areas of their need.

Resources

- *Demons and Deliverance* (Frank Hammond)
- *Victory over the Darkness* (Neil Anderson)
- *The Bondage Breaker* (Neil Anderson)