

Are Demonic Powers Stopping Your Spiritual Discernment?

How you see Jesus affects every area of your life. Jesus is a spiritual warrior. After the anointing of the Holy Ghost came on Jesus; He rebuked demons, faced Satan, healed the sick, and spoiled principalities and powers. He defeated death, hell and the grave. *“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.” Acts 10:38* Through the body and the blood and in His name; we have been given authority to trample scorpions and snakes, cast out devils and set people free from all oppressions. *“Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.” Psalms 91:13* *“Behold, I give unto you 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* *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16:15-18*

Spiritual warfare is part of being a disciple of Jesus Christ and the spiritual warfare is not over. The rise and fall of spiritual power within the Church has been related to the response and opposition toward demonic principalities and powers. As leaders recognized the spiritual warfare caused by demons they equipped believers to use their authority in Christ to fight back. When this is not done that world and the Church suffered.

WE are in a spiritual war whether we want to be or not. Jesus did not ignore demonic power and he didn't teach his apostles to ignore them either. *“AND when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.” Matthew 10:1* The Apostle Paul taught the church in Ephesus how to fight, *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;” Ephesians 6:10-18*

Paul compares spiritual opposition to warfare. Warriors wear armor and armor is for fighting. He teaches six important truths.

1. Christ's followers should be strong in the Lord.
2. Be full of spiritual power.
3. Recognize devils have wiles or tactics.
4. The battle is a spiritual battle not a natural one.
5. Spiritual warriors wear God's armor.
6. The battle ready fight back.

Paul knew about the spiritual opposition against him. *“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.” 1 Corinthians 16:9.*

- *“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” 1 Timothy 6:12*
- *“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” 2 Timothy 2:3*
- *“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” 2 Timothy 2:4*
- *“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare.” 1 Timothy 1:18*
- *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.” 2 Corinthians 10:3*
- *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” 2 Corinthians 10:4*

Paul use of terms like soldier, fight, weapons and armor to help bring home the concept that we are in combat, real warfare. Warfare means “armed conflict against an enemy.” As Christians we understand there are many spiritual enemies of Christ including demons, principalities and powers.

The enemies seldom discussed are the systems, structures, kingdoms, and organizations that demon inspired people build. Christians should not partner themselves with organizations the demon influence built (e.g. financial scheme, pornography, abortion clinics, abortion drugs, drugs, trafficking of drugs of any kind, thief by political deception, etc. ...). These are the results of demonic influence and we know that Satan’s allies and associates come only to steal, kill and destroy.

Spiritual warfare is a spiritual fight against a spiritual enemy; Paul identifies those enemies as:

- Spirits
- Principalities
- Powers
- Rulers of the darkness of this world
- Spiritual wickedness in high places

Remember our battle is not against flesh and blood; but this spiritual battle does manifest itself in the natural. Win spiritually and things get better in the natural; lose spiritually and things get worse in the natural. This is why engaging in the battle is so important we must fight with our two weapons of offense the Word of God and prayer both of these are vital to the disciple of Christ. There are many different types of prayer, but not all prayer stops demon powers. Mature in the Word and learn how to be like Jesus who fought the good fight of faith and won.

Many don’t engage in the battle because of fear. Are you afraid to discern the presence of demon activities? Demon influenced people and their activities must be discerned. You can’t stop them by ignoring them. Evil spirits, spirits of infirmity, seducing spirits, spirits of error, unclean spirits, anti-Christ spirits, Jezebel spirits and divination spirits have infiltrated the Church. These spirits target the high places of authority and power. Sometimes these spirits work alone and at other times they network together.

Many have been victimized by evil spirits because they are afraid to judge demonic operations. Apostle John teaches us to try the spirits. *“BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1.* To “try the spirits” means to put them to the test and when you do this devils respond.

Four things spirits use to stop your spiritual discernment:

1. Don't judge lest you be judged.
2. Let the one without sin throw the first stone.
3. The measure you use to judge someone else will be measured back to you.
4. Take the beam out of your own eye first.

The list goes on and on of scripture used wrongly. Satan's tricks haven't changed he tried to use scripture with Jesus in the desert and he will try to do the same with you but don't be fooled. Everyone should examine their own hearts "first" but spiritual discernment requires sound judgment. We must judge which simply means to make a judgment. Making a judgment "is not" being judgmental. A judgmental person is a person that is seeking out to find fault in someone else. This is not what we are addressing here. Christians should never be fault finders or fault accusers. Spiritual discernment affects lives and can set someone free from the oppression of demonic influence. Our fight is not against flesh and blood, that's people, but against demonic spirits.

We make judgments every day. We believe what we hear or we don't. We are not judging any ones salvation, that's between them and God, but we are judging what spirit they are flowing in and the fruit of their lives and ministries. Good trees bear good fruit and bad trees bear bad fruit. *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."* Matthew 7:15-20

Listening to and being around people lets you know what they value. You make judgments during conversation and by watching people's actions. What do they embrace? What do they value? What do they pursue? What do they talk about? Value based judgment happens every day. Scripture says, *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"* Amos 3:3.

These core values govern our lives.

- What we value, we will pursue.
- What we value, we will defend and fight for.
- What we value, we will enjoy.
- What we value, we will hang on tightly to.
- Decisions are based on what we value.

Scripture says we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."* 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

How would anyone know if they were unequally yoked if they didn't make a judgment? In this scripture Paul was not being judgmental against unbelievers. He was instructing and educating the children of God for their protection. Christ authorized us to make judgments about people. Jesus Christ said, "You shall know them." He expected us to look at and observe accurately what kind of person we were observing. *"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil*

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(Matthew 7:16-18)

It is unscriptural for someone to tell you not to judge because the spiritual man judges all things. Scripture makes this clear, “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things yet he himself is judged of no man” (1 Corinthians 2:15). For some of us this scripture can fly right over our hair and ever get into our minds and then into our hearts. The spiritual man judges all things. Are you a spiritual man? Do you walk in the Spirit on a regular basis or are you still walking in the flesh and don’t even get what is meant by walking in the Spirit. Or maybe you get it on purely a mental level but do not know how to get it on a spiritual lever. (God’s Word, Maturity and Time will grow you.) To judge, Greek *anakrinō*, means:

- To investigate, examine, enquire into, scrutinize, sift and question.
- As a judge would hold an investigation.
- To interrogate and examine the accused or witnesses.
- To judge, estimate, determine (the excellence or defects of any person or thing).

Jesus Christ never taught His followers to ignore demonic spirits. Don’t let demon spirits use their weapons of fear and mass deflection to stop your spiritual discernment. And remember to check yourself to see if you are in the Spirit because we would never want to use this authority for a reason to sin and unfairly judge people, be judgmental, mean spirited and hurtful, condemn people or judge their salvation. Christian spiritual discernment is very important as we must make judgments as we seek to weigh what we hear and what we see against the written Word of God. It takes spiritual maturity to see things as they really are.

In closing, once you’ve identified that there is a demon spirit at work you must pray to the Lord and he will direct our next step. The end result is to build up the kingdom of God and not to tear it down. Don’t ignore it and hope it will go away, it won’t and it will start influencing others. You have the cure, use it.