

# Deliverance from the Occult

Dr. John Ankerberg and Dr. John Weldon

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The following material is intended as a brief, general guide to help pastors and concerned Christians assist those who are suffering from occult involvement. Because our research has primarily been from the literature, the authors have had comparatively little personal counseling experience with the occultly oppressed.

However Dr. Kurt Koch has had 40 years of counseling the occultly oppressed and his book *Occult Bondage and Deliverance* is highly recommended. Most of the following material is adapted from pages 85-131 of that book. For a complete treatment, the reader should consult the full text and other relevant literature. (Cf. Kurt Koch, *Christian Counseling and Occultism*, John W. Montgomery, ed., *Demon Possession*, C. Fred Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian*.)

**First** and foremost, a correct diagnosis is essential; for example, mental illness must not be mistaken for occult bondage (pp. 133-190). A person must truly be experiencing demonic oppression from real occult activities; otherwise, misdiagnosis can cause serious problems. How does one determine if a person is suffering from occult oppression? Obviously, the counselor must be aware of the causes (e.g., occult activity) and symptoms of this malady and also be involved in some type of counseling of the person in question. Accurate information is essential to accurate diagnosis.

**Second**, it must be recognized that a genuine battle is in progress. A very real enemy has been encountered, and this enemy is dangerous. But it must also be realized that Christ has obtained victory. Because a real battle has been engaged, Dr. Koch cautions that people are not to rush into the area of occult counseling. Rather, they should seriously look to God for a leading in this area. Spiritual maturity and spiritual insight are vital:

*Without a commission from God, a Christian should not venture too far into the area of the demonic and the occult. There are certain rules that have to be obeyed... People with a sensitive nervous system or maybe with an occult oppression of their own should never attempt to do any work in this field. Recent converts and young women should also refrain from this type of work (pp. 87,88).*

**Third**, we need to recognize God's sovereignty. Christ and Christ alone is the source of deliverance. The usual procedures—psychology, ritual, hypnosis, meditation, etc., are useless and may compound the problem. Further God does not require our "often complicated counseling procedures." However deliverance without any counseling at all is rare. Also, full deliverance may take weeks, months, or sometimes years; or by God's sovereignty it may require only a few hours.

**Fourth**, all paraphernalia of occultism must be destroyed (Acts 19:19). "Magical books and occult objects carry with them a hidden ban. Anyone not prepared to rid himself of this ban will be unable to free himself from the influence of the powers of darkness" (p. 90). "Yet even the little figures made out of precious stones which often originate from heathen temples have to be destroyed if the owner finds he cannot free himself from his occult oppression" (p. 92).

In addition, all occult contacts and friendship must be broken and not even gifts from occultists should be accepted. In the difficult case of a saved person living with parents who are occultists, it may even be necessary for them to secure other living arrangements. If such persons are attacked by demons and/or their spiritual life declines while they are praying for their parents, Dr. Koch advises "the children of spiritistic families not to pray for their parents at all if they are still engaged in occult practices" (p. 93).

"Inexperienced counselors, however will be unable to appreciate decisions of this nature, for they will have little knowledge of the terrible attacks which can be leveled by the powers of darkness" (p. 94).

Perhaps prayer could resume after their Christian life has been sufficiently strengthened or the conditions change. Apparently, because the powers of darkness may attempt to strike back without mercy, such advice needs to be heeded more than one would expect. Battles should be undertaken only when the participant is fully equipped.

**Fifth**, deliverance from the power of the occult requires complete surrender to Christ on the part of both counselor and counselee. Our first responsibility must be to Christ and our relationship to Him. We cannot help others in so difficult an area until we ourselves are securely grounded as Christians.

Every person who really wants to be delivered from the hold of the occult must be prepared to commit his life entirely to Christ. Further "When a person is delivered from a state of occult subjection, he must withhold nothing in his life from the Lord. These areas which are not surrendered to his Lord will soon be occupied again by the enemy" (p. 126). If Jesus Christ Himself is truly our Lord, then He will protect us from the lordship of others; but if our commitment is half-hearted, we may be asking for unnecessary problems.

**Sixth**, the occultly oppressed person must acknowledge and confess his participation in occult activity as sin, because such practices are sinful before God and require confession (Deuteronomy 18:9-12; 1 John 1:9). In addition, confession must be voluntary, or it is worthless. The purpose of confession is to bring into the light that which is occult (hidden, secret).

Dr. Koch advises that confession be made in the presence of a mature Christian counselor. "Occultly oppressed people should, in fact, make an open confession of every single hidden thing in their lives in order to remove the very last foothold of the enemy" (p.98).

Further "The confession of a subjected person should not only cover the occult, but also every other department of his life" (p. 99). In other words, nothing should be allowed to build up or develop which may give the devil an opportunity (Ephesians 4:27).

In addition, a prayer renouncing everything occult is important:

In the normal way the thing that follows confession is absolution—the promise of the forgiveness of sins. In my counseling work among the occultly oppressed, however, I have found that I have had to abandon this sequence since the subjected person usually finds it impossible to grasp the fact that his sins have been forgiven. He is simply unable to believe. A barrier seems to lie in his way. I, therefore, always encourage the victim of occultism to pray a prayer of renunciation first of all (p. 99).

Further:

In counseling the occultly oppressed, a prayer of renunciation is, however of great significance. The question is "why?" Every sin connected with sorcery is basically a contract with the powers of darkness. By means of sorcery, the archenemy of mankind gains the right of ownership over a person's life. The same is true even if it is only the sins of a person's parents or grandparents that are involved. The devil is well acquainted with the second commandment which ends, "for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me" (p.100).

The powers of darkness may continue to claim their "right" of ownership although often the descendants of occult practitioners remain unaware of the fact, perhaps since they have had no contact with sorcery themselves. Nevertheless, immediately after a person in this situation is converted, Satan makes his claim felt.

In praying a prayer of renunciation, a person cancels Satan's right both officially and judicially. The counselor and any other Christian brothers present act as witnesses to

this annulment of ownership. Although many modern theologians ridicule the whole idea, the devil is in earnest. Hundreds of examples could be quoted to show just how seriously he takes the matter. When the occult oppression is minimal, the person who has made his confession will have little difficulty in repeating a prayer of renunciation after the counselor. The prayer can take the form: "In the name of Jesus, I renounce all the works of the devil together with the occult practices of my forefathers, and I subscribe myself to the Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior both now and forever. In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

The prayer is not a formula. Every time it is prayed it can take a different form. In severe cases of oppression, on the other hand, a number of complications can arise when it comes to praying a prayer of renunciation (pp. 100-101).

For example, the person may be unable to bring his hands together to pray, or his lips or vocal chords may be unusable. He may fall into a trance when it comes to renouncing the devil. "What can we do in circumstances like this? One can either command the evil powers in the name of Jesus, or else call some other Christian brothers to join in praying for the subjected person" (p. 101).

Renunciation may be followed by a remarkable change for the better. Nevertheless, "not everyone experiences such elated feeling after deliverance but the change of ownership is still valid no matter how one feels.... Renunciation is particularly important in cases where natives are converted out of a heathen background" (p. 102).

**Seventh**, it is vital to assure the individual that in Christ his sins have been forgiven, and that he now possesses an eternal salvation that cannot be taken from him. No matter how bad a person's sins may have been, they have been forgiven. Appropriate Scripture passages may be read such as John 5:24; 6:47; 19:30; Romans 5:20; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7,13,14; Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:3-5,18,19; Hebrews 1:3; Isaiah 53:4-7; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 1:7-9; etc.

It is also to be recognized that counseling should involve teamwork. The support of other Christians, church elders, etc., is important. As Koch explains, "Counseling the occultly oppressed is really a matter of teamwork. The individual counselor is far too weak to take upon his own shoulders all the problems he meets" (p. 105).

For example, people with occult subjection will often suffer their first attacks after they seek to follow Christ and serve Him. In other words, the battle often does not begin until a person receives Christ. Further, "there is a possibility that if a person puts too much of his own effort into trying to help the demonically oppressed that a transference will take place" (p. 105).

Eighth, prayer is another critical aspect of counseling. People who are delivered from the occult are still vulnerable even after being delivered. It is thus vital that a small group of Christians take upon themselves to continue to pray for them and care for them after their conversion. Sometimes Christians do not recognize how important this is. Many converted occultists have struggled tremendously because they could find no one in the church to help them.

If necessary, the group need only consist of two Christians. They should meet together at least twice or three times a week for perhaps a quarter of an hour at a time in order to pray for the oppressed person. The best thing is for the subjected person to be present as well, yet this is not absolutely necessary. Neither is it essential for the oppressed person to have made an open confession before all the members of the group. This need only have been made before the counselor at the very start (p. 106).

When a person is delivered from occult oppression, it is also crucial that he grow as a Christian. He must really lay hold of the four basic spiritual elements comprising Christian

discipleship: study in the Word of God, Christian fellowship, continuous prayer, and communion. Further; the new Christian must be grounded in the study of basic Christian doctrine and Christian evidences.

Sometimes those counseling the occultly oppressed will discover that the demons have returned into a person's life, and at this point, it seems the battle is greater.

Very often one finds that the powers of darkness return when a person is liberated in a Christian atmosphere, and then has to return and live in an atmosphere of occultism and sorcery. This is frequently what happens in the case of young people from spiritistic families who are converted when away from home and later have to return and live in the demonically affected house of their parents (p. 119).

People who have been delivered from occult oppression and yet have to return again and live in an occult or spiritistic atmosphere never find real and lasting peace. I usually find that I have to advise young people stemming from such environments, "Stay away from your parents—or from your uncle, aunt, or relation—if they are not prepared to forsake their occult practices and interests." This advice is not always appreciated, however. In fact, on occasions I have been actually rebuked for having given a person advice of this nature. Finally, repeating what we have just been saying, anyone who fails to act on all that the Bible says for our protection will live in continuous danger of falling victim once more to the influence of the exorcised spirits (p. 120).

No matter how difficult or how wearying the counseling of occultly oppressed people may be, the truth remains that the victory is won because of what Christ has accomplished (p. 124). Counselors need to believe God's promises and act in faith even in what seem to be hopeless situations. No situation is finally hopeless, for with God all things are possible. Further, the mere fact that a battle continues to rage is not evidence that the battle will be lost. Many times in biblical history and throughout church history, spiritual battles have been undertaken which have required great endurance, perseverance, patience, and faith. In the area of counseling those with occult oppression, and in the area of biblical demonology in general, there is much that is not known and, therefore, our reliance on Christ is all the more important. Finally:

It is also very important to remember when counseling and caring for the occultly oppressed that this kind of counsel will only thrive in the right spiritual atmosphere. One must never look upon a person and his needs as just another "case," or as some new "sensation" or "object of investigation." True deliverance will never be forthcoming in an unscriptural atmosphere—even if the battle for the oppressed person appears to be very dramatic. We must be on our guard against every kind of excess, and above all against exhibitionism. Let us therefore be: Sound in our faith, Sober in our thoughts, Honest and scriptural in our attitude (p. 128).

Anyone who desires may receive Christ as his or her personal savior by saying the following prayer:

Dear God: I confess before You that I am a sinner and that I cannot earn my own way to heaven. I thank You that You sent Christ to die on the cross for my sins. I now turn from my sin and receive Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior. I ask Him to come into my life and to help me to live for You. Amen.

If you have prayed to receive Christ as your Savior, please write to us and request some information to help you begin your new Christian life.

**Source:** *The John Ankerberg Show*, P.O. Box 8977, Chattanooga, TN 37414