

CHAPTER 3

PREPARING THE PERSON SO THEY ARE READY FOR YOU TO CAST THE DEMONS OUT – FIRST MAKE SURE THEY ARE REALLY SAVED

¹¹ And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life. ¹³ I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John 5:11-13 (RSV)

²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

John 5:24 (RSV)

It is possible this chapter and those that follow will disappoint some people as they may be looking for something sensational like *The Exorcist* or some other horror film. Such films have created a false image of what deliverance is about and how it works in practice. It is widely assumed that deliverance will be spectacular and dramatic and that all the person's problems are ended overnight, like taking a miracle diet pill which makes you lose 3 stones instantly.

But anyone with common sense will know that to lose weight takes time, effort, determination and a willingness to change your way of life by introducing regular exercise and cutting out white sugar, sweets and so on. Anyone who tells you that you can lose weight overnight is a liar and the same is true with deliverance. Or at least it is true in the vast majority of cases.

You might reply by saying “*But surely in the Bible we see Jesus instantly casting demons out of people in a dramatic way and with no mention of repentance or any counselling or changed lifestyle*”. My response to that would be as follows:

- a) Jesus was the Son of God and I'm not. He could therefore operate with a level of power, authority and knowledge that I don't have and I'm not willing to pretend I have any of that or that my experience of deliverance ministry has been equal to His.
- b) Jesus was operating in the first century in Israel at a time when levels of repentance, faith, Bible knowledge and sincerity amongst the general population were vastly higher than they are today in the apostate 21st century, at least in the West. So we are not comparing like with like. I don't encounter any people like the Philippian jailor Paul met who was bursting with sincerity and willingness to listen and said “*Brothers, what must I do to be saved?*”. In the main we are living in the equivalent of Sodom and Gomorrah and the people we meet today, both in churches and amongst the wider population, are generally hard hearted, proud, insincere, unrepentant, full of unbelief, ignorant of Scripture, and unwilling to listen or change.
- c) It would have been very different if this was even the year 1870 when British and American churches were packed and almost everyone knew the Bible thoroughly. I often wish I could have pursued my ministry in the 19th century as it would have been so much easier. But the fact is we live in the spiritual desert of the 21st century, which I personally believe is the great apostasy the Bible speaks of. We must therefore be brutally realistic about the kind of people we are going to be dealing with and the likelihood of them even being willing to be helped. Imagine someone

wanted to go hitch hiking and camping in Germany and Austria. Can you agree that it would make a profound difference whether they were doing it in 1923 or 1933 or 1943? Things change, not only politically but spiritually so we must have regard to what the time is and what the conditions are in the country we live in.

Therefore, concerning deliverance ministry, I would advise you to do three things simultaneously:

- a) Believe it to be real, genuine, biblical and vitally important, such that you do not shy away from it and are willing to help people in this way, BUT
- b) Be realistic about yourself and recognise you are not Jesus, or even apostle Paul, and will not experience the same results they had or operate with the same ease, speed or fluency.
- c) Be realistic about the immaturity, lack of knowledge, insincerity and weakness of character of many of the people you deal with. Recognise they will need a lot of preparatory work in terms of repentance, forgiving other people and also renouncing the occult and false religion before they are ready to be delivered. Indeed, many of them will actually *still need to be saved*, because our churches are packed with people who were never genuinely converted in the first place. So, you will often need to be willing to take the person right back to square one and explain the Gospel to them so they can be properly converted and saved. If you don't, then your efforts to cast out the demons will be wasted and you will get nowhere. You can avoid that disappointment and discouragement if your expectations are realistic to begin with.

Please also read the *whole* of this book, not only the final chapters, in order to seek guidance on how deliverance ministry should be conducted. And also read all of Book 7, because I can't squeeze everything we need to know into one short chapter. This book and Book 7 are designed to be read together and to add up to a complete case in a series of stages which build on each other.

The aim is to give an overall combined approach based on achieving several goals in the person's life – and also in your own life. Hopefully, that will give you success in casting out demons and, above all, *in preventing them from returning*.

I cannot emphasise this point about preparation enough because, unless the person is genuinely saved to begin with, and unless you then go on to prepare them and get them to deal with and eliminate the things which gave the demon(s) *the right to enter in the first place*, you will not succeed in keeping the demons out. They will just return virtually immediately. That is because, although I believe we can order a demon to depart, *we have no authority to order it not to return*.

At any rate, we see no example anywhere in the New Testament of either Jesus or the apostles commanding a demon not to return *to an adult*. We do see Jesus on one occasion ordering a demon not to return, but that was in the case of *a child* who was not responsible for having become demonised in the first place and of whom less could be required in terms of taking its own steps to keep the demon out. So Jesus did it on the child's behalf. But I see no basis for thinking we can do that for an adult.

At least we see no biblical precedent for that. Therefore, the adults you deal with must take responsibility for themselves and do what is necessary to keep the demons out permanently. If they won't agree to do that then there is no point casting the demons out. It will achieve nothing and is actually likely to send the person backwards because, when the demons return, the person may then become disillusioned, unbelieving and resentful on top of all their existing problems.

Please remember that many of the books about deliverance ministry are written by men who travel around and might only be in that particular church or town for a short visit. Therefore, when you read of their “great successes” and of all the demons they cast out of people, which they may well have genuinely done, they make no mention of how the person was *the following day, or a week later*.

That is because they were not there to find out. So, their accounts of deliverance ministry make little or no mention of the problems of *demons returning to the person*. Therefore, from reading some of those books you will possibly pick up the very false impression that demons just need to be cast out and that is all there is to it. But I assure you, that is not the case.

By the way, I hasten to add that there is nothing wrong with deliverance being done by visiting ministries who are not local rather than by the person’s home church or a friend or relative. Indeed, in some ways there is wisdom in that because the ministry of deliverance involves getting to see and hear about people’s sins and their past and present problems.

Plus, they might manifest in ways which they later feel embarrassed about. In addition, preparing a person for deliverance may require you to ask some pointed questions and tell them some home truths and that can result in relationship breakdown if it is done by someone they know.

So, I am not against getting help from people you don’t know, and won’t see again, provided of course you make thorough enquiries to see whether they are competent and trustworthy and, ideally, they are recommended to you by someone you trust. My point was simply that most of the books on deliverance are written by those people with visiting ministries who never see the person again. Thus, their books don’t always give the full picture and you just need to bear that in mind.

The fact that a demon has been cast out is just one of the tasks that needs to be done, albeit a very important one. But one cannot over estimate the importance of getting the person you are helping to become properly and thoroughly *prepared* so they can *keep their deliverance* and remain free *permanently*.

If you truly care about the people you are trying to help you will see the importance of this point. Otherwise, you could be like a court bailiff who attends a house to evict squatters and drags them out onto the street and then drives off, feeling his job is done. But he has done nothing to advise the house owner about keeping all doors and windows locked in future, or about revoking any existing “tenancy agreements” and not issuing any new ones.

Therefore, as soon as the bailiff has driven away, the squatters just walk round to the back of the house where they know the door has been left open, and they move straight back in. Such a bailiff would not be providing a good service to the public. Therefore, don’t operate in that way.

Do bear in mind also that demons are utter liars and conmen. Therefore, they might well appear to cooperate and leave the person with manifestations of noise and disturbance, but only to trick the people doing the deliverance into thinking the job is done, while fully intending to move straight back in and knowing full well that they can. Can you see how such a trick could cause the person “helped” to see the whole thing as a waste of time and become so disillusioned and cynical they take no further steps thereafter to seek deliverance. If I was a demon, that is what I would do.

Another way to illustrate this point about thorough preparation is the way I plant trees and the many steps I take beforehand to give them the best chance of success. I have a large garden and I have

planted a lot of trees at the bottom of it. However, because the soil is poor, being just clay mixed with lots of stones, I was very thorough in digging out a large 3 foot by 3 foot by 3 foot cubic hole to plant each tree in.

Then I took out all the bad soil and put it in a skip and I replaced it with a mixture of high quality compost, good top soil and manure, and refilled the hole. I also put in plastic tubes to reach down to the roots so I could water deep down in dry weather. I also put in strong wooden stakes to protect each tree from the wind. Then I covered the area with bark chippings to retain water.

The point is that by doing all that, which took ages, I ended up with vastly better results and all the trees prospered and grew brilliantly. If I had just dug a shallow hole in poor quality soil and didn't bother with watering tubes or wooden stakes, or bark chippings I could have been far quicker in getting them all planted. But the problem is that many of the trees would have died or done badly.

So, it is a false economy to cut corners, whether in gardening or deliverance ministry, and thorough preparation done with patience brings vastly better results. I emphasise all these rather disappointing and deflating points at the outset because I want to be totally straight and honest with you. I refuse to exaggerate my own achievements or the ease with which things are done. On the whole deliverance ministry is hard work.

In particular, it is slow and painstaking and requires patience and an insistence on being thorough and not cutting corners or rushing ahead with things. At least it does when you live in an apostate age as we do today and are mostly dealing with very immature Christians (at best) who know little or nothing of the Bible.

It is much more important to get the right result than a quick one, especially if you want the benefits to last permanently. Therefore, always focus on the person's long term benefit, not on the immediate position. If you want to truly help people you will be patient, pragmatic and thorough and your emphasis at all times will be on their welfare, not on how you look to others or whether you might appear to have failed.

You can't allow your own pride or concern for your own image to influence you. If you do the demons will use those factors to trip you up and defeat you. So, in this regard, humility is your best defence and it will help to keep you from making rash decisions and from being deceived.

Your first task is to find out whether the person is genuinely saved because churches are packed with false converts who never truly repented or believed the true Gospel

Again, I fear I will frustrate my readers here, as they may be eager to press on and get down to the exciting business of casting out demons. And yet here I am quibbling about whether people are really saved or not. But I assure you this is a real issue which you are going to face regularly unless you prefer to deceive yourself and others by just assuming that everyone who attends a church must automatically be a Christian and truly saved and that every person is exactly what they claim to be.

I have long since given up believing any of that, partly because I have learned from experience and partly also from the fact that the spiritual climate in the West has declined drastically, as has the number (and proportion) of genuinely saved disciples within the churches. So, in 1981 when I was converted,

evangelical and charismatic churches were made up mostly of genuine disciples with some false ones in among them.

But now they appear to consist mostly of false converts who were never actually saved, with some genuine disciples in amongst them. But even they are mostly immature and don't know the Bible. In short, the relative proportions of the two groups have been reversed. Therefore, your default setting today when you meet a new person who claims to be a Christian, should be to begin by assuming they were probably not genuinely converted until evidence emerges to prove they were.

In 1981 the default setting for most of us, rightly or wrongly, was the opposite i.e. to assume the people we met in churches were genuine converts until the opposite was proved. But even if that was justified back then, those days are well and truly over. Therefore, if you want to succeed in helping people to get delivered you must recognise that fact and act accordingly, with realism, shrewdness, discernment, patience and caution.

Therefore, your very first task, before you do anything to prepare the person for deliverance, is to address the most basic question of all - *"Is this person truly saved? Have they been genuinely and fully converted to begin with?"* You need to establish the person's 'spiritual status' before you can meaningfully decide how to help them.

Answering that question enables you to answer the next question which is *"Do I move straight to the process of preparing them for deliverance? Or, must I begin by first telling them the real Gospel, explaining repentance, and getting them properly and genuinely saved?"* The snag with this, however, is that you are likely to offend people if you start questioning them as to whether they are actually a real Christian at all.

They might have been in a church for years, perhaps helping and serving, and even preaching sometimes. But the sad fact is, especially in these apostate days, that that means very little and it is entirely possible they were never saved to begin with.

Alternatively, it could be they were saved but, only through the inept ministry of a *negligent midwife* who gave them an incomplete or confused explanation of the Gospel or, more probably, *did not adequately emphasise repentance*.

Therefore, perhaps they were saved "by the skin of their teeth", but only like a baby born prematurely or which is dropped on its head at birth or deprived of oxygen etc. Such a baby would have been "born" but it has made a very poor start in life and is not likely to thrive or, perhaps, even to survive.

Incompetence, neglect and lack of thoroughness in preaching the Gospel and in helping people to be converted is now the norm and is often the root of the problem. That is why we have so many biblically illiterate and unrepentant people in churches today who see nothing wrong with their behaviour or attitudes and no reason to change.

Or it could be they were badly taught and didn't know the 'ingredients' of the Gospel message itself such that they, for example, never knew that Jesus is the Son of God. As is the case with most of the cults, they may have thought at the time, or even still, that He was just a "good man" or a "great teacher who is a model for how we should live" and so forth.

One often hears such misguided things being said by well meaning but hopelessly confused people. Your duty, therefore, is to ascertain what their real spiritual status is. Are they saved or not? The best way to begin finding that out is by asking the person two key questions and listening very carefully to their replies:

- a) Can you describe to me exactly *how and when* you were converted / born again / saved?
- b) Can you explain to me *what the 'Gospel' is*?

I fully accept that not all people are highly educated, articulate and good with words. I really do know that and make ample allowances for it. But, even if a person lacks all those intellectual and verbal skills, they should still be able to give you at least a basic account of their conversion, by which I mean the moment when they repented and believed the Gospel and so were born again.

And that account needs to make coherent sense and clearly feature repentance and believing the Gospel. Also, when they tell you what they understood the Gospel to be, it needs to be at least a reasonably clear and full definition. It is not unreasonable to expect that of people because the Gospel is a very simple, and very specific, message and its 'ingredients' are all identifiable and vital.

It is not a "*spiritual experience*" or a "*journey*" or a "*feeling*". Neither is it "*mystical*" and it is not "*different for every person*" either. The Gospel is a distinct message which is capable of being expressed in clear simple words even by a child.

I do recognise that some very fortunate people were brought up in a Christian home by devout Christian parents and were taught the Bible and told the Gospel from the cradle. So, some people may not be able to point to an exact moment, or even a day, when they were born again. It may have occurred when they were very young or it may have occurred gradually and very early in their childhood such that they can't remember *not being a Christian*.

I do recognise that and accept it, although it is quite rare these days. However, even with such people, they will still be able to tell you *what the Gospel is* and there will also be clear evidence of sanctification, discipleship and maturity in their lives which you can see easily. Those things should be looked for as corroborating evidence of the genuineness of their salvation.

Therefore, even with such people, you will quickly and easily be able to discern whether they were genuinely converted *at some point*, even if they can't specify the date. What you are looking for is evidence of *genuineness* and *of a changed life* and such things can be identified if you look closely, are not naïve, and ask the right questions.

There is also *only one true Gospel* and the person either knows it or they don't. They can't have their own personal version of it. So, the person needs to at least be able to tell you that the Gospel includes the following basic points:

- a) that we are all sinners and are not acceptable to God so we face His wrath when we die
- b) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became a human being, so He was both fully God and fully man
- c) that He lived a perfectly sinless life, unlike us

- d) that He was then executed unjustly to be punished in our place for our sin so that God does not need to punish us for it because our sin was placed upon, or transferred to, Him
- e) that He died and rose again and ascended to Heaven
- f) that if we truly believe in who He is and what He did for us on the cross and if we genuinely repent of our sins and put our complete trust in Him alone, not in our own merit or being a ‘good person’, then God will forgive all our sins and also transfer all Jesus’ righteousness to us. Then we can wear His ‘*robe of righteousness*’ instead of our own “*filthy rags*”.
- g) then God can view us as being not only sinless, but also righteous enough to go to Heaven because we have all of Jesus’ righteousness *transferred to us* and can rely on that, not on our own.

I hasten to add that the person need not use all those exact words or be fluent in explaining it. A stumbling, stuttering, inarticulate account will suffice. But they do need to show you that they did grasp *at least the basics* of that message so they could meaningfully “*believe the Gospel*” because, if they didn’t even know what it is, how could they have believed it?

They must also speak of themselves as having *repented*, as opposed to making no mention of repentance, which is what most people do if asked to describe their conversion. Otherwise, what conceivable basis could there be for concluding that they:

- a) repented and
- b) believed the Gospel?

But if they didn’t do both these things, and do them genuinely, how can they be saved? Therefore, if you are not 100% satisfied that they are truly saved, then focus on resolving that problem now and preach the Gospel to them. And if you, or they, are in any doubt on this then *just do it all over again* anyway, even if it isn’t necessary.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with a genuinely saved person making completely sure of their position by repenting all over again and believing the Gospel all over again. What possible harm could that do? Therefore, urge them to do it.

One thing is for sure, if I was on an aircraft crashing towards the ground, and I had only seconds to live, I would not hesitate to repent again and put my trust in Jesus and believe the Gospel all over again. It would be the obviously sensible thing to do. Why would any reasonable person resist that?

Therefore, if the person becomes offended, agitated, angry or feels threatened, or if they don’t want to re-examine the question of their conversion or if they see it as a waste of time, or beneath their dignity, then beware. A genuinely saved person will never be offended by being asked to “*give his testimony*” and describe his conversion or explain the Gospel.

On the contrary, truly saved people love to speak of this. It is like a woman discussing her wedding day or a man talking about how he started his first business. Neither will they be unable to describe or explain it, at least at a basic, inarticulate level. I am not asking people to sound like Shakespeare.

Being asked to explain these things is only likely to cause offence in the mind of a person who is not saved, because his inability to do it will make him feel exposed and threatened. But, more to the point,

the demons inside him will feel very threatened themselves by this line of questioning and will do all they can to obstruct it. Remember, they don't want to be cast out so they will resist it in every way possible. Therefore, they will get the person to feel offended and to be angry with you for even asking such questions so that the conversation quickly ends.

Therefore, treat the person's *reaction to being questioned* about their conversion as an important part of that test, and be guided by it. Then have the courage and confidence to trust your own judgement and do not be cowed into silence by their anger or by the fear of offending them. The fear of giving offence is one of the greatest obstacles to the preaching of the Gospel in this apostate age.

This policy of challenging people if you feel they may not be a genuine Christian, or have not been adequately instructed about the Gospel is not unique to me. In Acts we see Apollos, who later became a leading figure in the Church, being stopped and questioned by a humble married couple called Priscilla and Aquilla. They were concerned that Apollos didn't correctly understand the Gospel, because he appeared only to know the baptism of John, not Christian baptism:

²⁴ Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was proficient in the Scriptures. ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was accurately speaking and teaching things about Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; ²⁶ and he began speaking boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God more accurately to him.

Acts 18:24-26 (NASB)

But Apollos didn't get offended at being challenged. He allowed them to correct him and to instruct him "more accurately" and he went on from strength to strength and became a famous evangelist. Both we, and the people to whom we minister, need to imitate the humble, teachable spirit that Apollos had. It brought him to a place of great maturity and usefulness to God in his subsequent ministry:

²⁷ And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, ²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Acts 18:27-28 (NASB)