

“Spiritual Warfare & Victorious Christian”

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Introduction

What is “spiritual warfare” and how to define ‘demonization’ ?

How people are demonized ?

Can a Christian be demonized?

How to be victorious in spiritual warfare personally?

How to be helpful to others to become victorious?

Explanation:

‘Spiritual warfare’

‘demonization’

Description & diagnosis

Can a Christian be demonized? ‘Yes’ and ‘no’

Way to victory in spiritual warfare

Ways to be helpful to others

Christian leaders may not be in total agreement on the how's and why's of demonization of Christians, yet they all recognize the fact that Christians could be demonized. Therefore overcoming demonization is an essential aspect of Christians' warfare against sin, self, Satan (& evil spirits). The controversial debate on the possibility¹ and extensiveness² of demonization of Christians is beyond the scope of the present simple study which is just an attempt to provide brief instructions for Christians on overcoming demonization.

The Reality and Reasons of Demonization of Christians

Testimonies of suffering Christians and reports of pastors/counselors all point to the fact that *Christians could* and are being demonized. In the Philippine context, Christians can be demonized for the following reasons:

1. Spiritism, superstition and animism

Most Filipinos, including many Christians, are believers and practitioners of spiritism, superstition and animism. They believe that there is a "diwata," or "anito" or "patron" for every place, phenomenon of nature, and profession. They wear amulets on their bodies, place crucifix or charms in their vehicles, keep shrines (e.g. "sto nino") at home, visit astrologist, patronize palm-readers or fortune-tellers, resort to *espiritista* for healing, etc. They observe superstitious taboo and practice. People may use different names such as "folk Christianity," or "split-level Christianity," etc. to label this syncretistic characteristic of the Filipino culture. The sad fact is that Filipino Christians are readily susceptible and vulnerable to demonization.

2. Popular Christian superstition and possible personal involvement

Non-Christians may be superstitious out of fear of the unknown, unseen and invisible entity or reality. Christian superstition is mostly due to theological ignorance, spiritual immaturity and doctrinal inconsistency. For example, Filipino Christians often think that God may be punishing them for missing morning devotions or a prayer meeting when tragedy occurs to them. For many have a ritualistic view of Christian duty.

Other Filipino Christians may have an idolatrous attitude towards the printed Bible and find it easier to fall into sleep by placing it on their chest when frightened by the evil-spirits. Yet others when facing a crisis may cry out "susmariosep" or "in Jesus' name" as a sacred formula, or an incantation to ward off evil spirits.

The more Christians are afraid of Satan and his companion evil spirits, the easier and more likely they could be demonized.

Christians who repeatedly quench the Holy Spirit, persist in sin, or willfully rebel against God, could leave room/ground/hold for evil spirits to inhabit/squatter in their life.

3. Past influence

Just like many physiological diseases that can be passed down from one generation to another, so also can demonic influence (Ex 20:3-5). Demonization of Christians may be caused by pre-conversion connection with evil spirits, e.g. ancestral transference, parental consecration (or spiritist healing during childhood), or personal involvement in occultic practices (e.g. moving glasses, fortune-telling, séance, etc.).

The Real Victory Won by Christ for Christians

Overcoming demonization is not the monopoly of a few specialists or exorcists. All Christians could and should be victorious. They should be reminded of the following truth:

1. The position of Christians in Christ

Christians can win the spiritual warfare against the principalities and power of evil. The basis of Christian salvation, sanctification and spiritual victory is Christ's atoning death and his abolishing the power of the enemies: sin, sickness, Satan and evil spirits, self and death. Salvation is for the total person (body, soul &/or spirit) and is complete (past, present and future).

2. The provision for Christians in Christ

Christians should know the provision in Christ and should be reminded of the victory over the spirits are won by the power of prayer (Mk 9:29), the Word of God (Eph 6:17, 18), the blood of Christ (Rev 12:11), and the power of Jesus' name (Mk 9:39; Lk 9:49).

3. The promise for Christians' victory

Not only Jesus' disciples were given the authority to cast out demons (Mt 10:1; Mk 6:7,12; etc.), Christians are also promised spiritual victory over demons and evil-spirits (Mk 16:15-18; 1 Jn 4:4; Jam 4:9, etc.).

The Real Victory of Christians Over Demonization

The position of Christians in Christ, the promise and the provision for Christians are the basis of Christians' overcoming demonization. Yet these promises and provisions for victory are to be appropriated and realized by Christians now and here.

1. Preparing for Christian victory

Christians are to fight the spiritual battle with spiritual preparation by being born of God (I Jn 5:1-5, 18), abiding in Christ (Jn 15); walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16ff); confessing of sin (1 Jn 1:9), etc.

2. **Personal victory of Christians**

Since there are many possible reasons for demonization, Christians are to carefully examine and explore the many aspects of their lives, i.e. past and present, ancestral ties or personal involvement, etc. Spiritual victory can only come when one is sincere in his desire to be freed, confident in the total salvation and liberation in Christ, honest in his confession, earnest in his prayer for deliverance. The following is a sample prayer (not a sacred formula but a systematic coverage) of confession, renunciation and affirmation:

“As a child of God who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors...As one who has been crucified and raised with Christ and now sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounce any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. All this I do in the Name and Authority of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior, Amen.” (Gal 3:13, Eph 1:7,20; Rom 6:4, etc.)

Christians after being delivered from demonic bondage should get rid of sinful practices and demonic items, e.g. adultery and idolatry, "anting-anting," amulet and charms, etc. which were the immediate causes of trouble and defeat before their deliverance. They should henceforth walk closely with God, grow spiritually and be ministered to by the Body of Christ.

3. **Participatory victory with fellow Christians**

The Body of Christ has been given the authority (Mt 18:18-20), endowed with spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:9-10), for mutual edification and defense in the spiritual warfare. Gifted and strong Christians should help the suffering and demonized ones to experience victory together in the various stages of deliverance: preparing, proceeding, and post-deliverance follow-up. Here is a sample prayer of deliverance:

“In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the power of His precious blood, I bind every spirit of (name of people or place) and command you to leave ...and go to the place prepared for you, harming nobody, now and never return. In Jesus' Name and for His glory, Amen.”³

Conclusion

Overcoming demonization is promised and provided by Christ for Christians and the Church. Christians have a choice of either becoming victorious or victimized in the spiritual warfare against demons. We are to regularly prepare for victory, readily proceed to victory with positive attitude of being calm (1 Cor 15:33), confident (1 Jn 4:4) and cautious (Eph 6:10ff, 1 Pet 5:8-9). Of course, the best way is being preventive by the leaders' modeling, teaching, and discipling and by the followers' watching carefully against the enemies, and walking daily in the Spirit.

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End Notes

1. Most authors agree that Christians can be oppressed and obsessed but they differ in terms of the possibility and extensiveness of inhabitation and possession.
2. In passing, it should be noted that theologian Merrill Unger who denied the possibility of Christians being demonized (i.e. inhabited and/or possessed) in 1952 had reversed his position in later publications (1971:116ff; 1977:46, 128, 136).
3. For further theological discussion, biblical study and practical guideline, please consult the books listed below and the forthcoming publication by the present writer entitled *Deliverance Ministry Manual*.

Appendix 1 – A Prayer of Renunciation & Affirmation

As a child of God purchased by the blood of the lord Jesus Christ, I here and now renounce and repudiate all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me by my ancestors. As one who has been crucified with Jesus Christ and raised to walk in newness of life, I cancel every curse that may have been put upon me. I announce to Satan and all his forces that Christ became a curse for me when he hung upon the cross. As one who has been crucified and raised with Christ and now sits with him in Heavenly places, I renounce any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. All this I do in the

Name and authority of the Lord Jess Christ (Gal. 3:13, 2:20; Eph. 1:7, 20; 2:5-6; Rom. 6:4)

Signed _____

(Full Name)

Address _____

Phone No. _____

(None of us knows what works of Satan may have been passed on to the counselee from ancestry. Therefore, it is well for every child of God to make the above “Renunciation & Affirmation”. It is advisable to speak it aloud with the witness of other Christians.)

Spiritual Warfare: Understanding Demonization

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Introduction

The Puzzling Question: Can a Christian be demonized?

Figure 1. Possible Stages and Intensity of the Activities of the Enemy

The Personal Question: Can I be one of the Christians being demonized?

The Practical Question: Can I be free from demonization?

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

The life-goal of each Christian is to glorify God. The objectives of the Christian Life and ministry are to lead a godly life daily, to love and serve God and others diligently. The enemies of Christians are sin, self (the “flesh” or the fallen nature), and Satan and his cohorts – evil spirits. Unfortunately, many Christians are blinded to the fact of spiritual warfare and are deceived by Satan’s strategy of slighting the reality of his presence and power (or evil spirits).

Though there are several dimensions in spiritual warfare, in this two-part series the scope of discussion will be on demonization: *a basic understanding of demonization* (part 1) and *a brief instruction on overcoming demonization* (part 2). The question and answer format is employed to make the presentation simple.

THE PUZZLING QUESTION: CAN A CHRISTIAN BE DEMONIZED?

Yes, a Christian can be demonized if we understand “demonization” to be “the process and state of being influenced, controlled, and eventually being inhabited/possessed by an evil spirit and demonic force.”

Demonization of a Christian may vary in degree and duration. Even Jesus was influenced by the devil and his followers (evil spirits and demonized persons included)

in his temptation, persecution and crucifixion.

There are different types and stages of demonization as shown in the following table:

Figure 1. Possible Stages And Intensity Of The Activities Of The Enemy

Oppression	Obsession	Inhabitation	Possession
In Christians or non-Christians			In non-Christians
External		Internal	

Oppression is the state/process of being tempted spiritually with a sense of being weighed down physically and psychologically,” as in the case of a Christian being disturbed or harassed by the devil. Possible symptoms are: heaviness or obstruction in body and/or mind; depression; discouragement; dullness; etc.

Obsession is “a persistent disturbing preoccupation with an often unreasonable and unnatural idea or feeling,” as a result of the devil’s (or evil spirits’) intrusion into the life of a Christian, impelling him to (or preoccupying him with) certain ideas, emotions or actions from without. After his repeated oppression by an evil spirit, King Saul was obsessed by the thought of killing David because he was filled with jealousy and consumed by his hatred of David; though he had previously been anointed by the Spirit and prophesied (1 Sam. 10:1, 9-13).

Inhabitation is the process of being temporarily occupied, leading to being inhabited or indwelled by the devil or evil spirits (Luke 13:11-16; 1 Cor. 5:5).

Possession is “the act or state of being dominated or possessed by an extra-ordinary force (e.g. passion. impulse, idea) or extraneous personality (the devil or evil spirits).” Demonic possession by evil spirits occurs among non-Christians who have not been born again and are subject to the complete control of Satan in the kingdom of darkness.

Demonic inhabitation of a Christian is like the illegal occupation of new settlers in urban centers. Satan has no rightful occupation in the heart of a Christian whose life belongs to God after regeneration. However, a Christian's willful disobedience against God and personal persistent sins in his life can give ground for the devil or evil spirits to act as "squatters" in his life for a period of time.

For example, Judas who repeatedly stole money (John 12:6) had first allowed Satan to enter his heart. This eventually led to his betrayal of Jesus and suicide (John 13:2, 27). Another example is found In Acts 5:2 of Ananias and Saphira. Similar cases were seen recently in ministers and evangelists who, being first obsessed with sexual immorality and sinful practices for a long period, were later driven to moral corruption and spiritual defeat.

THE PERSONAL QUESTION: CAN I BE ONE OF THE CHRISTIANS BEING DEMONIZED?

Since man is a holistic unity with three-dimensional functionality (i.e. one person with a composite personality of physio-psycho-spiritual aspects), the following list of possible symptoms (inductively derived from biblical cases of demonization and personal experience in deliverance ministry) are of three inter-related categories:

1. Physical Changes

a. Negative changes:

Physiological disorder or physical infirmities. e.g. paralysis and crippling. Blindness, dumbness, convulsions, foaming at the mouth, falling or fainting, altered voice and personality, etc.

b. Positive changes:

Superhuman strength and power

2. Psychological changes

a. Negative changes:

Fear, restlessness, depression and defiance, rebellion and volitional weakness, anti-social and destructive (even suicidal) thinking and attitudes, etc.

b. Positive changes:

Mediumistic abilities or extraordinary power and knowledge, e.g. moving objects, fortune telling, psychic healing, etc.

3. Spiritual changes

a. Personal:

Blasphemous thoughts, inability to concentrate on Bible reading or Christian exercise, transference, hatred, and fear of Christ, resistant to spiritual things, unusual reaction to Christ or His name, ineptness for true knowledge of sin, religious doubt, lack of peace or joy that is persistent, loss of faith, lack of spiritual growth or exhibit spiritual decline, inability to pray, spiritually impotent, etc.

b. Collective changes:

Cause division among Christians, disrupting of worship services, causing church splits, etc.

THE PRACTICAL QUESTION: CAN I BE FREE FROM DEMONIZATION?

Yes. Christians can be freed from three types of demonization, i.e. obsession, inhabitation and possession.

No. Christians can never be free from oppression as long as we live in this world.

The *how* of being freed from demonization will be discussed in the next issue: Part II – Overcoming Demonization.

CONCLUSION

In the spiritual warfare against sin, Satan and self, no Christian is exempt from the constant and persistent assault of his enemies and none can drop his guard at any time.

Christians, beware, be warned, and be watchful!

Spiritual Warfare

What Chinese Christians Should Know and Do

Enoch Wan

“Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war. . . .” are the words of an old hymn and an apt description of the reality of the Christian life. No one has been able to escape this reality since the fall of Satan. “Spiritual warfare” is the reality of the ongoing fight between God (and the godly) and His enemy (and the ungodly).

Different Kinds Of Spiritual Warfare

If the universe is divided into the spiritual, human, and natural systems, then there are eight types of spiritual warfare.

1) God ↔ Satan

Satan, the fallen angels, and the evil spirits wage war against God and the godly in this age. God in Christ at

Calvary defeated Satan, sin, and death, saving repentant and believing sinners and bringing them out of the kingdom of darkness into light (Gen. 3:15; 1 Jn. 2:1; 3:8- 10; Heb. 2:15).

2) God ↔ Non-Christians

Rebelling against God, fallen humanity and unrepentant sinners will be judged and punished (Rom. 5:1-11; Col. 1:21; Rev. 20).

3) God ↔ The World

The corrupted order is under the control of the principality of darkness. It forms opposing forces against God and His children (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

4) Satan ↔ Christians

Satan rules over the powerful kingdom of darkness against Christians - externally, through worldly forces; internally, through carnal flesh, temptation, accusation, and persecution. Therefore, Christians should understand Satan’s devices, be vigilant, resist him, die to the self and the world, be cleansed by the blood of Christ, walk in the Holy Spirit, put on the armor, and fight the good fight (Rom. 6; 2 Cor. 2:11; 12:7; Gal. 5-6; Eph. 6:11-16; 1 Thess. 2:18; 1 Tim. 3:6-7).

5) Christians ↔ The World

Satan uses the corrupted worldly system to oppress and persecute Christians, who should not love the world, but be crucified with Christ and be sanctified by the Holy Spirit (James 4:4; 1 Jn. 2:15; Eph. 2:2).

6) Obedient Angels ↔ Fallen Angels

The ongoing warfare between dark angels and good angels (Jude 9; Dan. 10:13).

7) Christians ↔ Non-Christians

Christians suffer at the hands of non-Christians for Christ’s sake. Nevertheless, Christians are to follow Christ’s

example in loving them, yet not be conformed to their ways (1 Pet. 4:12-14; 1 Jn. 2:15-16).

8) New ↔Self Old-Self

Christians' new inner-self at war with the flesh, the corrupted and sinful nature (Rom. 6:8; 7:14-25; 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:15-18; Gal. 5).

Among the various kinds of spiritual warfare, that which is between Satan and Christians demands our utmost understanding, because such an understanding is critical in securing spiritual victory. The powerful influence of Satan on living beings is called "demonization." It may take different forms and be in different stages, progressing intensively from the external to the internal.

(See diagram 1)

Diagram !: Stages and Symptoms of Demonization

DIMENSION	PERSON	STAGE	SYMPTOM
External	Christian or Non-Christian	Oppression	Feeling weighed down, depressed, unable to focus, etc.
		Obsession	Long-term or cyclical symptoms: Being distracted/disturbed in thought (cognition); being filled with hatred, anger, rage, and self-pity (emotion); weakness in will (determination); backsliding (spiritual), etc.
Internal		Inhabitation/ Visitation	Cycles of unusual and involuntary ungodly manifestations in mind, heart, will, etc.
	Non-Christian	Possession	Extraordinary, supernatural, uncontrollable manifestations, etc.

While Christians cannot be possessed by Satan and evil spirits, they can be visited and inhabited by them. As believers fail to submit to the lordship of Christ, indulge in sin, are enslaved to sinful habits or a wicked past, or suppress the work of the Holy Spirit, they will become susceptible to prolonged visitation or temporary inhabitation by evil spirits.

Diagram 2 shows both the positive and negative manifestations of demonization in the physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the demonized Christian.

Diagram 2: Manifestations of Demonization

DIMENSION	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Body	Supernatural strength & ability	Physiological imbalance & physical inability, such as blindness, deafness, dumbness, epilepsy, faintness, foaming at the mouth, change of voice & character, etc.
Psyche	Supernatural power & knowledge: e.g. fortune telling, clairvoyance, psychic healing, telekinesis, etc.	Depression, phobia of various types, rebelliousness, low will power, self-isolation, anti-social attitude, suicidal tendency, destructiveness, etc.
Spirit	Hypocrisy, counterfeit spiritual gifts, false prophecy, etc.	Personal: Blasphemy in thought & word, lack of concentration in devotion or worship, fear of or hatred against Christ, unusual response to Jesus' name, insensitivity to sin, loss of joy & peace, repeated spiritual defeat, inability or unwillingness to pray or repent, etc. Social: Disruption of worship service & mission outreach, divisiveness among Christians & congregations, causing others to stumble, shaming Jesus' name, etc.

Christians may become demonized due to the following factors:

- **Helpless influence** – being ignorant or innocent, such as a childhood experience of being offered to spirits for healing, parental connection as in the case of an unplanned pregnancy, satanic attack, being addicted to alcohol or drugs, etc.
- **Hopeful desire** – for supernatural power, whether by Satan's deception or self-initiated invitation, such as palm reading, fortune telling, pact for success with evil spirits, etc.
- **Hurtful situation/experience** – traumatic childhood experience; rape; addiction to alcohol, drugs, pornography, or gambling; abortion; abusive relationship, etc.
- **Willful determination** – rebellion against God, the Word, the Church; blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, etc.

Spiritual Victory by God's Authority and Christian Responsibility

While it is true that winning the spiritual battle is "[n]ot by might, nor by power; but by [God's] Spirit" (Zech. 4:6), God sees fit to entrust Christians with a certain degree of human responsibility. The Triune God has already won the victory over sin, Satan, death, and darkness. His power is first and foremost in securing spiritual victory for Christians. Christians, however, are not to be passive, but to engage in spiritual disciplines that lead to spiritual

growth and maturity.

Christians are not only born of the Holy Spirit, they are to walk in the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5). The spiritual disciplines are not to be practiced by worldly wisdom (1 Cor. 2: 4, 5, 10) nor by human precepts and doctrines but by the power of God (Col. 2:20-23). They are to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and by Christians' active exercise of faith, abidance in truth, and commitment to prayer, etc. Diligence in the spiritual disciplines is not a matter of either by the Spirit or by human effort. It is both by the power of the Holy Spirit, first and foremost, and by Christian action as well.

Christians involved in the pursuit of holiness and the cause of Christ in evangelism and mission are engaged in spiritual warfare. Winning souls from the kingdom of darkness and bringing them into the light is setting free the slaves of sin, Satan, self, and spiritual bondage. To gain spiritual victory, the following actions are essential: knowing the enemy, practicing spiritual disciplines, putting on the armor, teaming up with other Christians, engaging in prayer and fasting, exercising spiritual gifts, calling on the name of Jesus Christ, claiming the cleansing power of Christ's blood, and depending on the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

The enemy uses different strategies to war against different kinds of Christians in different situations, e.g. negligence and indulgence, presumption and deception, curiosity and fear, rebelliousness and ungodliness. If Christians do not take seriously the call to spiritual disciplines and the reality of spiritual warfare, it is to their own peril and defeat. If we are vigilant and diligent, we will grow into spiritual maturity and will win the spiritual battle to the honor and glory of God.

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