COUNSELING 8 — DEMONS

Describe in biblical categories the operations of the devil. Is there a difference between Believers and unbelievers regarding the activity of the devil? What is a biblical methodology for responding to the demonic in the context of counseling?

AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEVIL AND HIS WORK

• Existence of Satan
  ✓ Seven books of the OT mention him (Gen. 3; Job 1-2; 1 Chron. 21; Ps. 109:6; Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:1-19; Zech. 3)
  ✓ Nineteen books of the NT mention him, and in the remaining books, his existence is strongly implied or referred to in other ways.
  ✓ Christ mentions him 25 times.

• Personality of Satan — he is not a force or idea but a created being with personality.
  ✓ Personal pronouns are used of him (Job 1:6)
  ✓ Personal characteristics are ascribed to him —
    ➢ He has intellect—he deceives the world (Rev. 12:9)
    ➢ He has emotions—he hates Israel & Christ (Rev. 12:17)
    ➢ He has a will (2 Tim. 2:26; Eph. 6:11)

• Origin and nature of Satan
  ✓ Satan’s character is seen in his names
    ➢ Satan — adversary or resister (52x in Scripture)
    ➢ Evil One — He is responsible for evil (1 Jn. 5:19)
    ➢ Devil — slanderer (35x in NT; 1 Pt. 5:8 — same root as “gossiper”)
    ➢ Serpent — referring to his subtlety and craftiness (Gal. 3:1; Rev. 12:9)
    ➢ Tempter (Matt. 4:3)
    ➢ Prince of this world (Jn. 12:31)
    ➢ God of this age (2 Cor. 4:4)
    ➢ Deceiver of the whole world (Rev. 12:9)
    ➢ Angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14)
    ➢ Accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10)
    ➢ Head of the house of evil (Hab. 3:13)
Satan's history —

➢ Satan enjoyed a privileged status with God (Ezk. 28:12-15).
➢ Satan was a wise and intelligent being, perfect in beauty (Ezk. 28:12). He was blameless, serving God as an anointed cherub (Ezk. 28:14-15).
➢ Satan sinned and fell from his exalted position (Ezk. 28:15-17).

... Pride was the cause of his downfall (see also 1 Tim. 3:6 — the sin of Satan and the demons was "arrogant revolt" [Leahy, 23]). Isaiah 14:12-14 might allude to the same circumstance, indicating that Satan desired to be like God, cf. "I will" — 5 times — v. 13-14.
... The five "I wills" of Satan are matched and superseded by the six "I wills" of God (Ezk. 28:16-18)
... “The ultimate moral question of the universe is this: can the creature in fact become equal to the Creator?”

✓ Satan is a morally responsible person, accountable to God (Job 1:7).
✓ Satan is deceptive, scheming to defeat Christians.
   ➢ He is the Christian's adversary (1 Pt. 5:8).
   ➢ He slanders Christians (Rev. 12:10; Eph. 6:11 — schemer).
✓ Satan is the prince of this world (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2).

“Satan has no authority to rule men, for man was never his own master. And therefore there could be no sceptre of rule belonging to man which was transferable to Satan after the Fall. God has given Satan no dominion over man. Man is within 'the dominion of Satan' (Acts 26:18) only because of his sin. In revolt against God, he aligned himself with Satan. In this sense Satan is his 'god' and 'prince'; man is captive in the jurisdiction of darkness (Col. 1:13):” [Leahy, 24.]

“[Satan] is not sovereign in a rival kingdom [to God], but a rebel to whom God gives as much rope as will glorify His name.” [Leahy, 36.]

✓ Satan is also not the "King" of Hell, where he torments others; God is determined to judge him and consign him to Hell where he will receive God's wrath for all eternity, along with all other sinners (Rev. 20:7-10). He is not sovereign in Hell; he is judged in Hell.
✓ Satan is powerful, but his power is limited (Js. 4:7-10; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Pt. 5:8-10). Do not minimize his power or speak lightly of him, but know that
   ➢ he is restricted by God (1 Jn. 4:4)
   ➢ Christ is always interceding on our behalf (Jn. 17:5; 1 Jn. 2:2).
   ➢ he is used by God to accomplish God's purposes (2 Cor. 12:7)
   ➢ believers have the ability and power to resist him (we need not give in to him. Js. 4:7)
AN OVERVIEW OF DEMONS AND THEIR WORK

Demons, like Satan, are fallen angels (Mt. 12:24, 26; 25:41; Lk. 10:17-20; Rev. 16:13-14; 18:2). Satan is a fallen angel and in Matt. 12:24 he is called the prince of demons, linking demons with fallen angels. Matthew 25:41 refers to the “devil and his angels,” indicating not only their unity but their similar origin.

• Origin of demons —
  ✓ Demons were created sinless in “unconfirmed holiness,” apparently given a period of time to confirm their goodness or wickedness. Some, with Satan, chose Evil (Ezk. 28:15; 1 Tim. 3:6; Jude 6; Rev. 12:4). Their sin was “arrogant revolt.” [Leahy, 23.]
  ✓ God has no redemptive plan for angels — once they are confirmed in their wickedness, there is no offer of grace or salvation made for them, as God made for man (Heb. 2:16).

• Types of demons —
  ✓ Those who still occupy positions in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12; Dan. 10:13, 20; Is. 24:21; Rev. 12:7).
  ✓ Those who roam the earth (Mt. 8:28-32; 12:45; Mk. 5:1ff; Acts 8:7; 19:12-16; Js. 2:19).
  ✓ Those who are currently shut up in the abyss, but will be released during the tribulation (Lk. 8:31; Rev. 9:1, 2, 11).
  ✓ Those who were bound at the Fall, kept in chains until the final judgment (Jude 6; 2 Pt. 2:4).

• Characteristics of demons
  ✓ They are spirit beings like angels (Matt. 8:16).
  ✓ They are localized, not omnipresent; they are “fast,” but can only be in one place at one time.
  ✓ They are intelligent — they knew Jesus (Mk. 1:24); they are “theologians” who have doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1).
  ✓ They understand God and His wrath (Js. 2:19).

• Activity of demons
  ✓ They oppose God, His angels, and His people (Eph. 6:12; Dan. 10:13)
  ✓ They support the work of Satan (Mt. 12:26-28, 43-45; Rev. 12:7)
  ✓ They indwell bodies (both human and animal; Mk. 5:1-13).
  ✓ They influence the mind. (2 Cor. 2:11; 4:4; 1 Tim. 4:1; Js. 3:15). (This does not mean that they can read minds.)
  ✓ They deceive nations (Rev. 16:14). Through miraculous signs they will deceive the nations at the end of the age to gather them for war against Christ. Cf. 2 Thess. 2:7ff.
They deceive people. Satan can tempt people and lead them astray (1 Thess. 3:5); demons work in unbelievers (Eph. 2:2).

They are a source of apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 1 Jn. 4:1-6; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 2:18-29).

- Demon Possession
  - Definition: "Demon possession means a demon residing in a person, exerting direct control and influence over that person, with certain derangement of mind and/or body. Demon possession is to be distinguished from demon influence or demon activity in relation to a person. The work of the demon in the latter is from the outside; in demon possession it is from within. By this definition a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a believer can be the target of demonic activity to such an extent that he may give the appearance of demon possession" (Ryrie).
  - Occurrence of demon possession —
    - Demon possession is not linked to sin or immorality. In fact, the only times demon possession is linked to moral evil it is by false accusations of demon possession and immorality (all accusations against either John the Baptist or Christ, e.g., Mt. 11:18; Mk. 3:21ff; Lk. 7:33; Jn. 7:20; 8:48-49; 10:20).
    - Scripture speaks of the fact of demon possession, but does not identify the origin of demon possession. So beware of speculating about the origins of demon possession.
    - Demon-possessed people are almost always linked with those who are suffering physically; it is a manifestation of suffering, not a statement about the moral condition of the one possessed (e.g., Mt. 4:24; 7:22; 8:16; 9:32-34; 10:1, 8; 12:22ff; Mk. 6:13; Lk. 6:18; 11:14; Acts 5:16; 8:7). The casting out of demons is typically spoken of as "cured" or "healed," like a physical disease or suffering (e.g., Mt. 17:18; Acts 5:16).

“EMM advocates claim to follow the model of Jesus for spiritual warfare, but their model is actually more rooted in the occult worldview than the Bible’s. They incorrectly take Jesus’ model for fighting situational evil and adapt it to fighting moral evil. By demonizing sin, EMM theology actually embraces a worldview that the Bible opposes.” [Powlison, 75.]

- Demon possession is generally involuntary. The only possible exception in the NT might be Acts 16:16-18 where “spirit of divination" is literally, "spirit of Python, suggesting she was a worshipper of Apollo, who was worshipped at the shrine of Delphi (central Greece) as the Pythian god. [Leahy, 89.]
- Demon possession is limited to unbelievers as one cannot be indwelt by both the Spirit and the devil (1 Jn. 4:4).
➢ Satan is never said to inhabit any individual, with the possible exception of Judas (Jn. 13:2). Judas was “completely under the sway of the Evil One and was thus incited to commit such black treachery.” [Leahy, quoting Geldenhuys, 93.]

• Judgment of demons — with Satan, into the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:1-3).

THE OPERATIONS OF THE DEVIL AND DEMONS — WHAT DO THEY DO?

• The devil is a liar who provokes moral evil (Gen. 3:1-5; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 1 Pt. 5:8)
• The devil speaks through and uses false prophets (1 Kings 22; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Cor. 11:14-15; 1 Jn. 4:1-6)
• The devil is a philosopher and “theologian” who creates a world system to influence the thinking of individuals (2 Cor. 10:5).
• The devil tempts through external devices (Mt. 4:1-11; Heb. 2:18)
• The devil blinds people to the truth through his false philosophies and ideologies (2 Cor. 4:3-4)
• Demons torment people physically (cf. Mt. 4:24; 8:16; 9:32-34; 10:1; 12:22ff; Mk. 3:10; Lk. 6:18; 8:2; 11:14; 13:32; Acts 5:16).

“Sins such as unbelief, fear, anger, lust, and other addictions, point to Satan’s moral lordship, but never to demonization calling for [casting out demons]. People are victims of demonic sufferings, just as they are victims of lameness, blindness, or purely physiological seizures.

“...Demonization is not spooky or morally charged any more than fever, disability, and other afflictions are morally charged. [Casting out] work was done to alleviate suffering...Jesus heals the demonized, just as he does the other sick. The result of [a casting out] deliverance is relief, peace, and the restoration of mental and physical capabilities. It does not lead directly to moral improvement except as the miracle prompts grateful faith in Jesus....

“...the demonized are never portrayed as culpable for their afflictions. This does not mean the sick — and presumably the demonized — are not sinners in addition to their affliction. See how Jesus treats the lame men in Mark 2:5 and John 5:14. Without repentance, faith, and obedience the temporarily healed will face far worse sufferings — a threat of hell. Without repentance, faith, and obedience the exorcised will face seven worse demons — also a threat of hell.

“Clearly in the gospels a person 'has' an unclean spirit the same way he or she 'has' a fever, convulsions, or a paralyzed limb. Contrary to [casting out] teaching, unclean spirits are never implicated as holding people in bondage to unbelief and sin. They are never portrayed as inhabiting and enslaving sinful parts of the human personality. Instead they are part of the curse that the loving Savior has come to reverse.
“In today’s climate of opinion the New Testament emphasis is so novel that it is worth reiterating: the New Testament never links demonization to moral evil in the person who has a demon. New Testament teaching does not connect inhabiting demons either to patterns of sin in the demonized individual or to the impact of other’s sins….

“Sin is not identified as the cause of demonization; neither is demonization linked to perpetuating sin. How demonic suffering or inspiration might interact with the victim’s sinful nature is never in view in the biblical accounts.” [Powlison, 66-68.]

• Satan does promote and entice people to moral evil in the inner man (e.g., Lk. 8:12, 15; 22:3; Jn. 13:2, 27; Acts 5:3; 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 2:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:25-26), yet Scripture’s primary emphasis is on the power of the flesh and the personal responsibility of the sinner for his sin (Rom. 3:9-20; Gal. 5:7-21).

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It is always our moral evil, our unbelief, pride, lusts, fears, and wickedness that need to be repented of. Moral bondage to the devil is simultaneously a slavery to the enthralling power of sin. The Bible often talks about our responsibility without even mentioning the devil, but the Bible never talks about the devil without mentioning our responsibility. The Bible does not portray moral evil — however heinous or devilish — as demonization to be cast out. We minister to blind slaves with all the energies of prayer, love, and truth, fighting spiritual warfare in the classic mode.” [Powlison, 104.]

**KEY PRINCIPLES AND PASSAGES:**

• Satan is a defeated foe:
  - Satan has been judged and will be judged finally; his doom is certain:
    - He was cast out of His original position in Heaven (Ezk. 28:16, 17).
    - His judgment was pronounced in Eden (Gen. 3:14-15).
    - He was judged at the cross (Jn. 12:31, 16:11).
    - He will be cast out in the middle of the tribulation (Rev. 12:13).
    - He will be bound in the pit for the duration of the millennium (Rev. 20:2).
    - He will be cast into the lake of fire at the end of the millennium (Rev. 10:10).
  - Christ defeated Satan at the cross —
    - Christ defeated death and thereby stripped Satan of his power and gave hope (confidence!) beyond the grave (Heb. 2:14). [This is the reason for the necessity of Christ’s bodily resurrection.]
    - God is now both just and the One who justifies; His righteousness is fully validated. This is the heart of redemption and the defeat of Satan (Rom. 3:25-26).
    - Christ’s death and resurrection made it possible for a people to live a new and righteous life (1 Jn. 3:8).
• Genesis 3:1-15 (cf. Powlison, 52-53)
  ✓ Satan comes to Eve as a serpent, a created being; he is compared to the wild animals, made by God.
  When God curses Satan (vv. 14-15), it again emphasizes that he is a created being; he is not God.
  But he is subordinate to God.
  ✓ The interaction also indicates the nature of our warfare against Satan — he is opposed to us, a liar and deceiver, and a murderer. He is morally evil and seeks to rule Adam and Eve and conform them to his evil.
  ✓ Suffering and death are a consequence of the moral dilemma and are not unjust. “The problem of sin is the ultimate cause of all our varied miseries.” [Powlison, 53.] This means that all suffering and all troubles are related to sin and the fall of man even if they are not directly connected to sin. Thus, “Genesis 3 lends no support to EMM distinctives. It opposes dualistic tendencies and does not demonize sin.” [Powlison, 53.]
• Job 1-2 — “in spiritual warfare, the human drama is a moral drama, not a demonological drama.” [Powlison, 57]
• 1 Sam 16:13-23 — God used the evil spirit to accomplish two purposes [Powlison, 54-5]:
  ✓ He judged Saul’s sinful rebellion with the demonic tormentor — so the demon is connected to God’s punishment of sin, not to the power of sin. “The demon does not make Saul sin, as if it had gained a ‘ground’ through Saul’s rebellion.”
  ✓ He exalted David by enabling David to bless Saul with peace in the midst of Saul’s suffering. Thus, this passage does not validate casting out demons. To the contrary, David ministers to Saul through his music (worship psalms?), so that the demon left Saul.
• James 4:7-8 — Satan can be resisted; he has no authority over the believer.
• 1 Corinthians 16:13
• Jude 9
  ✓ Michael is identified as the archangel. This is the only passage that identifies him in this way. In fact, no other angel is described as an archangel (though the archangel will blow a trumpet, 1 Th. 4:16).
    ➢ Daniel 10:13 describes him as “one of the chief princes.”
    ➢ Revelation 12:7-8 indicate that he has authority over other angels — they are his, making him a “general-in-chief.” He is one of the most powerful of the angels.
    ➢ He is one of only two angels who are named in Scripture (Gabriel is the other).
  ✓ The dispute about the body of Moses is not described in Scripture. It probably was part of oral tradition — likely the account of Dt. 34:6 is in view. Some suggest Satan wanted the body to entice the nation of Israel into idolatrous worship of it.
  ✓ Michael, though a (the?) pre-eminent angel did not pronounce against him a railing judgment.
  The word judgment denotes a verdict to defame Satan. He refused to act on his own authority.
✓ Rather (but said..., “but” is emphatic), he left the judgment to God's authority — the Lord rebuke you. This was a way of entrusting the Lord with the judgment of Satan — “God take care of you!”

✓ By application, if Michael with all of his angelic power and authority is hesitant to rebuke Satan, but simply entrusts Satan to the condemnation of God, then no man should dare to rebuke Satan.

- Romans 8:38-39 — God is authoritative over every realm of Satan's means to hurt man.
- 2 Corinthians 11:14
- 1 Peter 5:8-9
- James 2:19
- Ephesians 6:10-20

✓ Be strong in the Lord is a passive inv — it's a command to allow God to do His work. And in the Lord suggests that the strength comes from our union and fellowship in our position in Him.

✓ Put on is another means of being strong in the Lord — the believer wears God’s provision and defenses against the attacks of Satan. That armor is put on as a unit (need all of it).

✓ The armor is God's defensive protection against the schemes of the devil. I.e. the devil uses a variety of methodologies and philosophies to attack the believer (implication is that this is a spiritual, not physical battle, and an ideological conflict, not a "possession" conflict).

✓ The armor of God is —

  ➢ Truth (v. 14) — to be girded with truth shows a readiness and commitment to use and live the truth at all times and in all circumstances. It is “truthing” in love (4:15).

  ➢ Righteousness (v. 14b) — not just justification, but also sanctification, a life that is committed to living in accordance with our justification. That righteousness protects our hearts (with the breastplate).

  ➢ Gospel (v. 15) — to “wear” the gospel on our feet pictures walking (living) in the triumph of Christ and the peace that comes from our salvation (Rom. 5:1).

  ➢ Trust (v. 16) — This faith is the daily trust in God’s ability to do what God has said He will do.

  ➢ Assurance (v. 17a) — a confidence that God will protect the believer's salvation and bring it to the final promised end (e.g. 1 Pt. 1:3ff).

  ➢ Scripture (v. 17b) — the only offensive piece of armor possessed by the believer is the Word of God which is used to refute error and attacks of Satan’s deceitful ideologies.

- Romans 8:9-16
- 2 Corinthians 10:5
- 2 Timothy 2:26
- 1 John 5:19
**A Biblical Methodology for Responding to the Demonic:**

- Is there a biblical mandate or permission to cast out demons?
  - Only four NT books refer to casting out demons (Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts). Only four other NT books even mention demons (John, 1 Timothy, James, Revelation).
  - No biblical passages ever commend or command believers to cast out demons — even for relieving suffering. [Powlison, 95ff.] Most casting out of demons *today* is done as a means of battling and overcoming sin; Scripture never provides that as a means of our warfare against the flesh.

> "Scripture loudly rejects applying ekballistic methods to include our warfare with sin. The gospels are entirely consistent with both the Old Testament and the epistles. What should properly be called spiritual warfare is always conducted in the classic mode [i.e., living a life of faith and obedience]....The Bible neither gives us a direct command to do ekballistic healing nor reaches us how to do it such that we should presume it is an abiding activity. The consistent and cumulative silence of Scripture about ekballistic healing ought to give advocates serious pause." [Powlison, 98.]

- Note the distinction between moral and situational evil.
  - Moral evil refers to sin in any of its forms — things people believe and do. And man is always responsible for his immorality and God will judge every form of immorality because He hates it.
  - Situational evil includes any of the consequences that come from moral evil — it includes direct consequences like broken relationships and indirect consequences like car accidents and cancer. It is "suffering, hardship, unpleasant and harmful events, death." [Powlison, 65.]
  - Moral evil causes situational evil — either directly or indirectly. "Comprehensive evil — sin and suffering — defines the human condition and the human dilemma." [Powlison, 66.]

> Scripture consistently portrays demons as situational evil (not moral evil). They are “evils that hurt and abuse people....Demonization is a fact recognized and identified by its expression through miserable conditions, such as blindness, deafness, paralysis, dementia, and seizures. Sins, such as unbelief, fear, anger, lust, and other addictions, point to Satan's moral lordship, but never to demonization calling for EMM. People are victims of demonic sufferings, just as they are victims of lameness, blindness, or purely psychological seizures.

> "This explains why the demonized are included in the lists of the sick whom Jesus heals and why the New Testament is so matter-of-fact about demonization. Demonization is not spooky or morally charged any more than fever, disability, and other afflictions are morally charged. Ekballistic ministry was done to alleviate suffering....Jesus *heals* the demonized, just as he does the other sick. The result of an ekballistic deliverance is relief, peace, and the restoration of mental and physical capabilities. It does not lead directly to moral improvement, except as the miracle prompts grateful faith in Jesus." [Powlison, 66-7.]
✓ Many aspects of Jesus’ ministry are not to be copied by believers (e.g., Mt. 17:24-27; Lk. 21:3-6; Jn. 6:1-14; Mk. 2:5ff; Lk. 7:14; Jn. 11:43; 9:1ff).
✓ Remember Jesus’ reason for casting out demons (Heb. 2:3-4). Jesus cast out demons to manifest His deity and Messianic authority so that people might repent of their sins (e.g., Mk. 1:27-28).

"Jesus says nothing about how to do power works. Nothing about demons of sin. Nothing about casting out demons from oneself as the way to solve personal problems and grow as a believer. Nothing about delivering new converts by something more deep hitting than repentance and faith....With virtually every miracle, we are told or shown the purpose; we are not told to do likewise." [Powlison, 94.]

✓ Christians should avoid relying on their own power and authority in dealing with demons, since even the only named Archangel (Michael) refused to rely on his own strength in dealing with Satan (Jude 9).

• What is the biblical pattern of handling suspected demon possession?
  ✓ Repent of sin
  ✓ Practice the basic pattern of sanctification (put off sin, put on righteousness, renew your mind)
  ✓ Take in and be absorbed with the Word of God (Col. 3:1-2, 16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pt. 1:2-3).
  ✓ Resist sin (Eph. 6:10-20; 1 Pt. 5:5-11; Js. 3:13 – 4:12) by obeying the Scriptures. Disobedience was first practiced by Satan and he loves to draw people away from Christ by tempting them to disobedient rebellion.
  ✓ Christians should recognize the power of Satan, but not be afraid of him or his followers.
  ✓ Stated most simply, the means to dealing with any form of temptation from Satan or “demonization” is to, "Live the Christian life of receptive faith and active obedience in the midst of life’s hardships.” [Powlison, 91.]

“The greatest weapon which the Church possesses is the Word of God proclaimed in the fulness of His Spirit. Here are the facts, and no fact is truly understood when divorced from the Divine revelation of Holy Scripture. The Gospel unfolded in Scripture is said to be the ‘power of God unto salvation’ (Rom 1:16)...

When we face Satan with the sword of the Spirit, we do so with the weapon he dreads most. Our Lord in His temptation used no other weapon. Let the Lord’s people unite to rely in faith and obedience upon the sole mighty Word of God, and God will give peace to them, blessing their efforts in accordance with His sovereign purpose of grace, and using the prayerful proclamation of that Word to bring about the ultimate doom of the adversary.” [Leahy, 168.]
“We experience deliverance from the power of Satan when we turn consciously from darkness to the light. The one who blinds us that we might wallow in lies, lusts, and misery is sentenced to everlasting darkness, while we who once lived in fear of death now rise to life in hope of the resurrection.” [Powlison, 22.]

**RESOURCES:**