

# Models of Deliverance Part 3: Perseverance

## —God at War, Week 11—

### I. Our General Strategy of Spiritual Warfare is James 4:7

**Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

- It is useful to use James 4:7 as a guide for how we think about this kind of war against the enemy (*discussed two weeks ago*).

### II. One Specific Strategy is a "Truth Encounter" Model

- This model focusses on renouncing sin and deception, and then reestablishing our freedom in Christ (*discussed two weeks ago*).

### III. A Second Specific Strategy for Spiritual Warfare is a "Power Encounter" Model

- This is the traditional and most common Christian approach, which focusses on directly confronting demonic spirits and commanding them to leave (*discussed last week*).

### IV. A \_\_\_\_\_ Specific Strategy for Spiritual Warfare is a " \_\_\_\_\_ " Model

- This is my term for an approach that generally argues against the "power encounter" model's focus on direct confrontation and, and especially against extreme forms (where demons are interrogated, etc). It also argues against some aspects of the "truth encounter" model, such as generational sins, or an implication that every attack must have grounds in some guilt of ours. This "Perseverance in Discipleship" model is represented by Sharon Beekmann, herself a former medium and spiritualist who understands well the occult (*Silencing Satan: Handbook of Demonology*; and her life story, *Rescued and Redeemed: How to Discern Demons from the Divine*).
- This model instead suggests we should not fixate on the attack, but instead focus on Jesus and a life of Christian discipleship. If confronted with demonic assault or deception this model suggests reaching out to Jesus (Ps 27:1; Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 5:8-9), repeating his name over and over, praying (the Lord's prayer, for example), and reciting appropriate Scripture (examples: Ps 91; 1 John 3:1; see Eph 6:17). It discourages head-on resistance or confrontation. Our focus should just be more and more on Jesus.
- This model emphasizes *persevering* when under spiritual attack. The attacks may not go away immediately, but as a life of faith, prayer, and Scripture is pursued, attacks should weaken and eventually cease—but all in God's timing. Faith in Jesus is the key, not showy encounters.
- Other versions of approaches like this (not Beekmann's) will sometimes appeal to Jude 9 and say we should never confront demons directly (even to command them away), but we should only pray to God about them.
- **Pros and Cons of this model**
  - *Pro*: this model is right to point out problems and potential abuses with some "power encounter" models. Also, sometimes attacks are not based at all on our sinfulness, as versions of the "truth encounter" model might suggest.
  - *Pro*: this model rightly emphasizes normal Christian discipleship, which is a key component in any spiritual conflict.
  - *Pro*: this model rightly emphasizes that, sometimes, an over-focus on resisting Satan, temptations, or demonic attack can paradoxically *increase* its power over us, since so much of our thinking is fixated on it. It is wise advice to focus more on Jesus and less on the demonic attack or temptation (see, for example, Col 3:1-4). Attacks should make us focus more and more on Jesus, not the demons.

- *Pro*: this model rightly emphasizes the need to persevere for a long time under attack. It also rightly recognizes that demons do not always respond to commands to leave as fast as we would like. This realism is encouraging to those who suffer.
- *Con*: this model downplays (or in extreme versions ignores) much the element of direct confrontation we *do* see in the New Testament. (Jude 9 is warning against arrogance toward celestial beings, it is not telling us to never confront them.) Accordingly, this model seems to not pay enough attention to the heritage of direct exorcism throughout church history. At times direct confrontation is necessary, though always with wisdom.

V. The \_\_\_\_\_ Strategy for Spiritual Warfare is a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ Models

- In my view, all three of these models are ultimately complementary, not contradictory, and it is wise to learn from all three. Why not pay attention to the diversity of how God has directed His church on this topic?
- All three models are simply varying ways of understanding and implementing the spiritual authority we have because of our position in Christ, that is, what is true of us because of Jesus, *if we are believers in Jesus*. We have real spiritual authority, because we represent Jesus on earth (e.g, Luke 10:16; Matt 18:18-20; 28:18-20). We have been united with Christ to such a degree that we share his authority, which includes authority over fallen spiritual powers (e.g., Col 2:9-15; 3:1-4). Accordingly, we are given authority to oppose them with mighty power (Eph 6:10) and cast them out by faith and prayer (Luke 10:19-20; Mark 9:29; Matt 17:19-20). One day we will even participate in the judgment of Satan and demons (Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 6:3). *See the “warfare prayer” included in the bulletin this week as a way to pray based on our identity and authority in Christ.*
- So, putting all three models together, from the “*truth encounter*” model it is important to repent of all sin and choose to believe the truth instead of lies. From the “*power encounter*” model, as Scripture shows, sometimes it is appropriate to directly confront demons and command them to leave in Jesus’ name. From the “*Perseverance in Discipleship*” model, we see the need to focus on Jesus instead of Satan, the importance of Christian discipleship, and the need to persevere in faith and never give up.
- So in seasons of spiritual conflict we should:
  1. Go through some process of comprehensive examination and repentance like Anderson’s *Steps to Freedom in Christ*.
  2. Directly confront in Jesus’ name any demonic forces at work and command them to leave.
  3. All the while pursue a renewed life of Christian discipleship which focuses on Jesus above all, and incorporates much Scripture and prayer, both alone and with others believers.
  4. *Above all, never give up, even if results are slow in coming.* Trust in God’s timing. This is a spiritual war, and rare indeed is the war without hardship, setback, and occasional defeat. Consider this advice to those engaged in spiritual warfare: “Discouragement and defeat should be expected. Three steps forward and two steps backward would be great progress” (Wendy Amstutz, *Exposing and Confronting Satan*, 185).
- In instances of spiritual attack, we should:
  1. Immediately submit ourselves to God in repentance and prayer (out loud is best).
  2. Command the demon to leave in Jesus’ name (again, out loud is best). Keep at it in faith.
  3. *If it does not leave after repeated commands*, then just ignore it and instead focus on Jesus in prayer and worship. Ask Jesus to come and take care of the problem. Remain in prayer. Trust that God is sheltering you and will drive it away in His timing.
  4. Sometime after the attack, explore with other believers possible avenues for help. *And most importantly, do not get discouraged, and never give up resisting!*

The Bottom Line

\_\_\_\_\_ in your position \_\_\_\_\_ and, if needed, exercise your \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ \_\_\_\_\_,  
 but recognize that the \_\_\_\_\_ of deliverance is \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Draw near \_\_\_\_\_, persevere \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_!