

On Deliverance, Healing, Freedom, and Discipleship
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Discipleship is the essence of what it means to believe in and follow Yeshua. Becoming a disciple of Yeshua means becoming like Yeshua. Because we have sinned and are subject to the consequences of sin, even those of others, we must undergo a transformation. Accepting the lordship and salvific work of Yeshua is the beginning. The process of sanctification and transformation into His image is the lifelong work we must actively be involved in for us to truly call ourselves a disciple.

Discipleship produces freedom. In order to achieve freedom one must be set free. This happens through great prayer as well as godly counsel from a leader within one's own community, someone who is a veteran follower of Yeshua who walks in freedom him/herself. Such counsel often includes how to take off the old (one's former way of living) and putting on the new (the new life in Yeshua characterized by Yeshua's own lifestyle) (see Ephesians 4). This is a process of relationship, accountability, covenant, and honesty.

During this process there may will most likely be calls for intense times of prayer. Per 2 Corinthians 10, we are called to tear down strongholds, false arguments, and high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, including taking *every* thought captive to Yeshua. This is a general warfare tactic as well as a personal one.

A deep level of this process can be deliverance. Deeper than deeply rooted issues and traumas can be the very presence of demons that affect us. Though believers are not demon-possessed given the presence of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, there can be demonic entities that can afflict us within our soul and/or body. These can enter through the iniquities of our fathers and mothers or through sins we've committed. Sin opens the door to darkness. Just like we can still be sick as believers, even though Yeshua came to heal the sick (see also Psalm 103), we can still be affected by demons, even though He came to undo the works of the devil (1 John 4).

We do not go looking for demons or assume that all ungodly behavior or thought patterns are because of demons. However, if we do not find resolution through godly counsel and discipleship, if deep, intensive, and personal prayer is not solving the deepest of issues, if repentance, contrition, and commitment to walking in all righteousness is not showing the desired relief, then it may be that one is vexed by a demon and needs to undergo deliverance.

Such deliverance should be done with those who are trained. While all believers have authority over demons, given to us by Yeshua Himself, some of us have more training in this regard, particularly when it comes to those in covenant within a congregation. Such people are trained to try to find the roots and reasons as to why one might be afflicted by demons and, like a doctor, figuring out what demons may be afflicting them, so to be able to cast them out specifically.

Once such deliverance happens, through godly counsel and direction, the once-afflicted ought to walk in a way that would not lead to affliction again. Commitment to being in the congregation, chavurot, close discipleship and follow up are wise prescriptions for one to walk out their victory and freedom. Freedom is achieved and then prolonged through godly behavior and practice within a community.