
Witchcraft
in
Relationship
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Witchcraft in Relationships

Sermon Transcript for Sunday, 15-May-2011

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Smashwords Edition

Summary: *Witchcraft is imposing your will upon another, against their will. You've been given you a free will to make decisions with your life, but someone can bring pressure or push you to change and accommodate them and what they want. Its within that context that witchcraft operates. They try to pressure you from within. Don't isolate yourself or withdraw; instead Identify, Pray, Confront, set Boundaries.*



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I want you to open your Bible with me in Acts, Chapter 13. I want to just speak on Witchcraft in Relationships, the operation of witchcraft in relationships, and there's so much could be shared it's impossible to cover it in just one service, but I'm going to bring this out in a way that will help you recognise witchcraft operating in relationships. We'll help you understand what is behind it, and also help you understand how to deal with it. Unfortunately I can't just give you a method. I'll give you some keys, but sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is crucial. I think you'll enjoy this, so let's just open it up, and we'll have a read in Acts Chapter 13.

Paul is on a journey - Verses 6 to 8; Now when they've gone through the island of Paphos they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, which means son of Jesus. Hold that - notice he's a sorcerer, a prophet and he comes under the name the 'son of Jesus' or as though he's a descendant or something from Jesus. Then what happened was, he was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God; but Elymas the sorcerer withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fixed his eyes intently on him and said: "you full of deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord shall be upon you, shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." Immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around looking for someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed.

There are so many insights into this scripture, but I want to look just at two realms of witchcraft offering. I want to focus on the second one. In this particular situation we have a man, a proconsul, who's a major political leader of a region. Wherever you have political leaders, wherever you have leadership who has authority, you will always find the

operations of witchcraft coming around them, to try and sabotage them away from God's way of doing things.

Those who carry authority, responsibility, are like a magnet for this kind of thing to come around. The reason is, if a person has a major influence, carries great authority, and their decisions have a great effect; then occultic powers seek to come around, get influence on the person's life, control the way they think, and then work and influence through them, all that is under them. Putting it simply, if you can get a hold of the one in charge, you can influence everything that's underneath them. Now that applies in every arena of life. If a demonic power can come and access, and manipulate, and control a person's life, everything under them lacks the life, vitality, flow, freedom and fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit. It all begins to shut down, in spite of how hard they work, because a spiritual influence is at work.

So I have been around in different places, and seen how frequently that people who practice the occult get in near someone who is operating in a leadership function, in any kind of level of the community. If you operate in business, you'll find people who have the occult will seek to get in near you; they'll seek to influence you; they'll seek to come around you. Notice the occult realm operates through people. It was a connection with the sorcerer Elemis, who means literally the sorcerer. He presented himself as the son of Jesus. He presented himself as having some kind of wisdom and whatever, but behind him there was a demonic spirit, which influenced the proconsul away from God.

One of the things you'll find about witchcraft, it will always move you away from God. It will seek to bring you under the power of, and influence of, and authority of, an evil spirit; then subsequently shut down everything under you, and cause all kinds of problems in it. So we see in a number of places in the Bible, whenever the gospel went out, apostles ended up confronting sorcerers; operators in witchcraft who were attached to leading political figures. Even in the Old Testament, it was the same. If you look back in the days of Moses, when Moses was delivering Israel, and Moses confronted Egypt, his confrontation was with the demonic powers that govern the nation, and specifically through the sorcerers who were gathered around the Pharaoh. So there's many,

many things in the Bible on that, but let us just realise that that spiritual power or influences work through people - for good or for bad.

You and I are designed to be a gateway, and a channel, for the life, liberty, freedom, joy, fruit, nature of the spirit of God; and the kingdom of God to come, but people can equally as well open their lives to demonic influences, and then something else comes; there's death, destruction, strife, discord, disharmony, whatever. I was talking to a member of this church recently, and a new person had been appointed in the area they were working, and there was strife and discord; disharmony, problems. People were demoralised, productivity took a steep dive with this person being there. I asked: is there any chance that he's been involved in the occult? He said: actually he is. I said: well what are you doing about it? He looked a bit puzzled about it. I said to him: God put you there, to be a kingdom representative. It is your role to shut it down - not shut the person down, but shut down the operation of spirits, which are working through the person making everyone's life unhappy.

Many times Christians think that the kingdom, or the power or the presence of God, only comes in a church meeting. God wants us to bring and advance His kingdom into our workplace, into the arenas we are; and so I just showed him how to pray, got up and started praying. He came back the next day and said: man, it's got pretty tough at work. It's got really hard. I said: great, the fight has begun. The wimp has stood up [laughs] and starting to take his authority. Within 10 days the person had been replaced; the atmosphere changed, the whole productivity went up, and there was a totally different change in that environment. Subsequently this person was promoted.

Now this is our people in the community, shifting things at a spirit level, and having an influence inside an environment in the work. We can do it. You need to understand, this is our job. We're called to do this kind of stuff. So that's an occultic realm of spiritism operating, and the Bible describes in the Old Testament, a number of places it talks about the realm of the occult; and it talks about the whole area of occult practices and occult powers. In Deuteronomy Chapter 18 Verses 9 to 14, the Bible tells us not to be involved in any kind of occultic practice, that those who practice those things - fortune telling, divination, consulting spirits, calling

up the dead - that these are an abomination to God. They bring a defiling around people. We're not to be involved in such things. In fact we are to confront them, because of the harm and the damage that they cause.

Let's have a look at a man who came under a demonic power of witchcraft. It's found in 1 Kings 19, and this is a great man of God. There's no way you can understand this passage unless you consider the reality of spiritual powers; and so we know the story of Elijah. Elijah was a prophet of God, so Elijah was called to come into the nation, stand up in the nation, and to bring a drought on the nation, and to confront the witchcraft and occultism that had come into the nation of Israel, that had defiled it. So he was confrontational prophet. He was to call the nation to repentance, and to bring a spirit of reviving, a softening of the hearts of the fathers; and turn them to their sons, and the sons to their fathers; so he was to bring a national revival.

The Bible says that in the last days, in Malachi 4, that God will again bring the spirit of Elijah into the church, and it will be for the same thing. It'll be to confront controlling powers, to dismantle them, to bring people out of idolatry, to restore fathers into their right places and to restore marriages and families; because in the last days there'll be a major decline in family values, family life. We see that already happening. Now here's this man Elijah. Elijah stood up, had a great victory, wow! Fire from heaven! That's fantastic. That's no little miracle is it aye? Fire from heaven! Awesome - then having called fire from heaven, he then proved that the prophets of Baal had no power whatsoever, having confronted them and bringing the fire of God from heaven, he then put them to death. But that wasn't all. There were some other prophets there, prophets of Jezebel, and they all got together and began to curse Elijah, and send witchcraft curses against him. How do they do that? Well they invoke their spirits, spoke words against him, stood in agreement.

When people, men stand in agreement, they can invoke powers into the earth; because God has designated men to carry authority, men and women to carry authority. So Verse 1: Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, how he'd executed all the prophets with the sword. Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying: let the Gods do to me and more also, if I don't make your life like one of them tomorrow. In other words He

said: I'm going to kill you; and when he saw that, he ran for his life to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, left his servant there. He himself went a day's journey in the wilderness, came and sat down under a broom tree, and he prayed that he wanted to die. It's enough! Take my life, I'm no better than my fathers! He lay down and slept; and then an angel appeared to him.

Now you notice here that he had received a messenger of Jezebel, probably someone came to him, and told him exactly what was going to happen. But what had happened was, through the words of that man, the demonic power was released against him. Notice this - it was when he heard the message. When someone spoke to him, that's when this demonic power started to come against him; and you notice a number of things, and these things, each one of them, they reveal an aspect of what you feel and experience when under a witchcraft attack. Notice the first one was his perspective was distorted. He couldn't see clearly when he saw that, so he lost sight of God, and he got focussed on the problems. He lost his sight of God, how great God is, and the call of God, faithfulness of God, the power of God. He lost sight of yesterday's victory. He got totally focussed on the size of the problem facing him.

Second, so it distorted perspective. Second thing he did was, fear filled his heart. He became very afraid. There was a dread, a panicky feeling, a sick feeling filled him and overwhelmed him. Why was that? Because a spirit was against him, to confuse his mind and stop him seeing clearly. Then the next thing you notice is - he isolated. He began to shut down and withdraw. He isolated himself from his companion, and then he withdrew from his responsibility, and began to run away. All he could think of was, how he could get out of the pressure, the struggle, the problem and the difficulty.

Finally he comes to the point where he's depressed, heavy and he sits down under a tree. The last thing you find is, his last prayer is: I want to die, Lord kill me now. So you see a progression of experiences. When a person is attacked by witchcraft experiences, a witchcraft spirit, no matter what the source, the impact on your thinking and emotions will be the same. That's why you can always pick it up so easy. God put it in the Bible so we'd learn.

The first is you lose perspective, what God has called you to do, what God is able to do, what God wants you to do; and you become filled with the problem. Second thing is, fear begins to grip your heart. Fear's the opposite of faith. Fear, you can have a sick feeling in your stomach, a dread in your stomach, whatever. Now you can feel fear, you don't have to yield to it; but if the third thing happens, you're going to go down under that spirit.

The next thing he did was - he isolated, or disconnected. Disconnection is one of the major fruits of witchcraft operating. When people disconnect in relationships, you know something is wrong. Something is affecting the person and causing them to shut down, so witchcraft will cause you to disconnect, to want to withdraw from relationship, because of the turmoil you're facing on the inside. Instead the one thing that would help you in that time, is to lean into relationship; but what the pressure is, is to withdraw from relationship. You find when people come under spiritual attack, one of the most common things that they do is withdraw from fellowship and connection; when that is the one thing that would really help you, coming into fellowship, bringing it into the light, would get you out of the mess.

So the next thing you see is having withdrawn and disconnected, then he comes into depression. Depression is a sense of heaviness, despair, it brings a confusion, darkness, a blackness. You can't think properly. You are now under the influence of that spirit. The spirit is producing heaviness and torment around your life. Then finally you sit down, and feel like you lose the will to fight. All you want to do is find a way out. Now this is written in the Bible for us, to be warned by, and to learn from. These are clear symptoms. Anytime you start to experience a sequence of those things happening, then you know that a witchcraft spirit is coming against you; to draw you back from the assignment God gave you; disconnect you from the people God connected you to, to fulfil that assignment; and to cause you to end up wanting to abandon what God called you to do, and find an escape from life's realities.

So I would encourage you to get your Bible, mark them all down. Anytime you see, sense, feel those things happening, or they're happening around someone else, get it out in the light. Get it out in the open. The

moment you bring it to the open, you break its power. One of the keys to breaking this thing is the point here, where he isolated himself. It's okay to get caught up in the problems. That happens to all of us. It's okay to feel a bit afraid, and not quite know what to do; but if you isolate at that point, that is when the thing starts to have it's impact on you. Why? That witchcraft spirit, sometimes called a Jezebel spirit, I don't always use that name because people tend to associate it with a woman rather than actually deal with it as a spirit power - gender neutral - so we'll just call it witchcraft at this point. So it's gender neutral, it's just got everyone it's after.

He wants to separate you from the assignment of God, and the connections of God, so you disconnect and shut down; and then find yourself lost in life. It's a very, very interesting spirit. There is three things work with it. One is an Antichrist spirit. Antichrist spirit works with it, and it's function is to break the flow of liberty, of life, of freedom; and to cause you to start to shut down on the inside, so that spirit resists the flow of the Holy Spirit. When we live and flow in the Holy Spirit, the anointing of the spirit flows, and so the flesh drives us, but the spirit flows. So when you're walking in God, and walking in the spirit, you can be relaxed about life and there's a flow to your life, there's a flow to your decision making, there's a flow in your relationship. There's a flow that comes out of your innermost being. God says in John 7 verses 38-39: out of your innermost being will flow rivers of living water; and He was speaking about the spirit.

So any time the flow from inside you is being choked up, you've got to address what's going on. Something is going on, so witchcraft, one of the things it will do is, to seek to shut down the flow of the Holy Ghost. Now you see why the Spirit Life Course can be helpful for you, because it helps you to strengthen your inner man, your spirit man, so you've got some strength inside when spiritual pressure comes on you. If you're weak, you can't stand up to much, so it doesn't take much to knock you back.

A second spirit that works with it is what's called the Power of Death, or a Spirit of Death. Spirit of Death will cause you to isolate and disconnect, and start to become alone. Loneliness comes around you when that is operating, and the other one is the power of hell, which fills you with fear

and dreads and uncertainty. So these things all just work together. You can't separate them. All you have is a bad experience - something big has come up, you feel shut down on the inside, you start to feel a dread about what's going to happen; and then you have to make a decision. You can either stand up and fight, and bring it to the light; or you start to isolate and disconnect, and then you're on a downhill spiral. This is what happened to him.

It's wonderful to see how God got him out of it. God got him out of it very simply. He just connected with him, touched him, broke the disconnection. Once the disconnection was broken, and he was strengthened, he was able to go up and he was reassigned - go back where God called you to be, and do what he called you to do. Now I just want to leave it on that realm just at that point.

I want to move on somewhere else. I want you to go and have a look in Galatians, Chapter 2. Maybe some other time I'll come back and teach a series on that whole area, but I just want to stick to this one area, witchcraft in relationships. I want to show you something in Galatians, Chapter 2. Here it is, Verse 11: Now when Peter - this is Paul is engaged here - when Peter had come to Antioch, I - that's Paul - withstood him or confronted him to his face, because he was to be blamed. There was a fault. There was something that was wrong, because before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; when they came he withdrew or shrunk back, isolated or separated himself, because he was afraid. There it is. It's an operation of witchcraft - so notice Peter is mixing with the Gentiles. He's mixing with the Gentile people here, and in Galatia, and in Galatians church - he eats with them, fellowships with them, there's no problem; and then these guys from Jerusalem come, James and some of the other guys, and as soon as they came, he came under pressure. Under pressure - notice this - he became afraid. This is Apostle Peter - he become afraid, and notice what - he withdrew and isolated, he changed his behaviour to accommodate his fear of rejection, and the feeling of the pressure of these Jerusalem Jews, who were a little bit legalistic.

They were trying to impose the Jewish law on these Gentile believers. They were trying to bring them under the law; do this, don't do this, have

circumcision, have this, have this, have this, don't have that. They were trying to bring them all under the law. They actually were limited in their thinking. They were holding what God had said hundreds of years ago, and they hadn't got a hold of what God was saying now, so they were sticking to their former revelation, and they were trying to bring Peter under it. When Peter felt the pressure of it he caved in, and not just Peter caved in; also - notice here it says: Barnabas did as well. It said he withdrew, separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision, and the rest of the Jews played hypocrite with him. Look at that, hypocrite, acting out a part. They were not authentic or genuine, and even Barnabas was carried around with their hypocrisy.

When I saw they were not straight forward, straight up and down about the truth of the gospel, I confronted Peter in front of them all. Now this is an operation of witchcraft coming against Peter. Peter has become afraid. He's wanted to please them, he's wanted to be accepted by them. He's become afraid of them; and instead of holding to revelation what God had shown him, he caved in, or traded, to have peace with these people, security with these people, acceptance by these people. He caved in what he really believed, and when he caved in to what he really believed, he then was acting and living out something he didn't really believe. That's why he's called a hypocrite, and the others are called hypocrites. It's just someone acting a part, not authentic, not genuine. If you ask: what do you really believe Peter, he'd say: well I believe the Jews don't have to do this. Well Peter, how come you're now carrying on like the Gentiles do have to do this?

So Paul just confronts him, and he confronts him very seriously. Chapter 3 verse 1: You foolish Galatians! Who bewitched you? What spirit has come over you, that has caused you to move away from the revelation you received? Now you've got to understand this. The spirit of witchcraft will seek to move you away from the things God has revealed and showed you. It will come through people, and will push on you through people. It can come through culture, and the culture pressures you to conform, to agree; to be like what they want; to please people, so you'll be accepted.

The pressure can come through family, to agree with what they want, and how they want it. Why? So that you can be accepted, and they'll be happy with you. It can come through Christians, or believers who don't believe the same as you. You may be in another area of truth or whatever, and they can pressure you to make you, or cause you, to feel like you have to conform. It can come financially through situations. It can come in your business and workplace. This can come anywhere, but it always is a spirit operating, and it operates through people. Once you understand it's a spirit, and it operates through people, you'll realise you have to: one, engage it at a heart and spirit level; and two, at a relationship level.

You've got to learn to recognise this. Once we learn to recognise it, oh my how things change then! See? So notice - I want to share with you another scripture now. You notice here in Galatians 5 - since we're in Galatians lets go down into here in Galatians 5, Verse 19. Now the works of the flesh are evident. This is not demons. Demons can help it happen, and push on you to make it happen, but actually this is not demons. Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions - and so there's a whole list of things there. Right in the middle of it is witchcraft. Witchcraft is connected - they've got the word sorcery there, but it's the word witchcraft in the original language; idolatry, sorcery, hatred, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred - Verse 20. So witchcraft, notice they've got it in between idolatry - having an image of God, worshipping something that's not really God - and hatred, having bad attitudes in your heart, wrong attitudes of hate, not love, in your heart. There it is right in the middle is witchcraft.

Notice it says: it's a work of the flesh; so how does it operate? This is the bit when you understand how it operates, so we've seen the occultic dimension, and what it does to people. Now I want to look just at when a person is not in the occult; they may be a good Christian person, may be a nice person, someone that you know, someone you're connecting with; and yet they can operate - when they're not flowing with the Holy Spirit, they can operate out of witchcraft. So witchcraft literally means to use a spiritual power to pressure or manipulate someone, so your will is done, no matter what they're wanting to do. I'll say it again: witchcraft is

imposing your will upon another, against their will. Now I'm not talking about this in relationship to parents and children, where parents have to insist on their will over the will of the child. That's a different deal. I just wanted to stick with - although it applies in there, but I want to just stick with the more sinister side, where God has given you a free will to make decisions with your life, and someone brings pressure to make you, or push you, to change and accommodate them, and what they want. It's within that context that witchcraft operates.

When witchcraft is in relationships, it's either: very direct; or it's very subtle. If it's very direct, it comes like this - SHOUTING! Yelling! Anger! Banging doors! That's pretty obvious when it's like that. That is nothing more than the flesh manifesting anger, and it's designed to intimidate you, and to manipulate you, to co-operate and do what you may not necessarily want to do; or it can be more subtle. It can be emotional, but what happens is - you feel it. You feel the pressure. It can be a demand, the manipulation of emotions: oh, well you don't love me. If you loved me, you'd do this - and as you're listening to the person talk, even if they never say what they want, you know exactly what they want. Maybe they never said it - are you meaning this? No, no, no, I never said that - and they never did. But what they did is try to pressure you from within.

Now how does that work? Well the Bible tells us that we're designed spirit, soul and body. I won't go into all of it, but in a number of things it says - in Proverbs 4:23 it says: out of your heart flows the issues of life. So when it's talking about your heart, it's talking about your spirit, your inner man. So here is what you need to understand - there's a lot to be discovered in this. Whatever is in your heart, creates a river, a flow from your spirit, that goes outside your body, and influences people and environment. Your spirit flows, out of your heart flows. If you have bitterness in your heart, then bitterness will defile everyone around you. If you have love in your heart, people feel loved. If there's anger in your heart, people feel what's there.

Jesus said: out of your innermost being - John 7:38-39 - shall flow rivers of living water; but he was speaking of the spirit. So what he does identify, is that you are designed to flow from your spirit; so your soul carries the same shape as your body, but your spirit is like an energy

source. It's dynamic, there's a life flow; and what it does is, it flows out of you. People in the world call it 'sixth sense', or they might say you've got an 'aura' around you; or they say you give out certain 'vibes'. They're talking about the same thing. It is about the flow from your spirit.

Okay then, so we flow from inside. Now the first place the flow of your spirit is seen, is on your countenance; so for example in Genesis chapter 4, when Cain got angry, his countenance fell. So when you've got a turmoil inside your soul, when you've got anger or bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, the first place the flow from within you is seen, is on your countenance.

In one of the Psalms, Psalm 43, it says: they looked to him, and were radiant; so when we spend time with God, and we're in the presence of God, and our heart is free and flowing, something comes up on our face, on our countenance. Ever seen pictures of Africa or India of unsaved people? There's a darkness there. Then you see the same people and they're saved, and they're now radiant, or bright or alive. So your spirit, whatever's in your heart will flow out of you; seen on your countenance; flows through and expressed through your words, and your body language, and your actions. Of course what happens is, you exert a spiritual influence on others; so for example if I'm preaching like this, and preaching to a group like this, and I'm flowing from my spirit, my spirit flows out and touches everyone right to the very end of the room.

If you, inside yourself, begin to react; or several begin to react, and start to arise and resist, I will feel it in my spirit. I'll literally feel the impact of your thoughts arising to push against me. I was in a church in Fiji, and I went to preach there. Everything that I put out, there was a resistance, because a religious spirit sat on everyone. A religious spirit is concerned about the form, looking good on the outside, but it's not authentic; so religious spirits, and religious people, are full of hypocrisy. They're one thing on the outside, but underneath it is completely different - hatred and bitterness, all kinds of things.

Now the thing is, what they think is, you can't tell; but actually if you're a spirit person, you can always tell. Why? Because when you open your heart to talk, connect and flow, there is a resistance or a wall. In this

case, it pushes back on you; and the feeling you have after you've spoken, after you've engaged, is one of being deeply rejected. You've got no idea, because nothing bad was said. In fact in this particular case, in this particular meeting, no one said anything, but I felt this huge wall. It was actually like I was just talking into a brick wall, and there's all these people - notice they're in church. They come to hear God, come to listen to what God has to say, but the reality is such a religious spirit over them, it pushed back on me. I went home and had one of the worst nights I had ever, just total rejection come over me; and a desire to withdraw, isolate and just vanish, catch on a plane and go home.

I couldn't do that of course. I made a decision to step up and stand up. The Lord showed me how to address it; but the thing I want to draw to your attention is, whatever's in people flows out, and affects those around them. You can't hide it. It's just called spiritual realities, and so relationships, where there's love flowing out of the heart, through the words, through the body language and so on, will actually create an atmosphere of love around; and people feel your spirit, and feel what you carry.

So all of us flow out of our heart. How's it seen? It's seen in a number of ways. If someone is manifesting, or someone's got some kind of issue going around their life, usually you'll see it in a whole number of ways. You'll see it in the body language. The body will close up when the person inside has got a bad attitude, and you will literally feel the atmosphere around them change. If a person's sitting on anger, they may never say a word. You can feel anger fill the atmosphere. If a person is really excited, when you get with them, there's an energy begins to fill the atmosphere. You come away and you're really excited. If a person's got bitterness inside them, and you go near them, what will happen is, you'll begin to feel yourself becoming negative towards the church; leadership; people; this one and that one. Whatever they're bitter about, you will begin to feel a reaction. You'll start to find your thoughts becoming negative towards that person. This is a witchcraft spirit operating.

Another kind - there's a whole range of different ways. If a person's feeling sorry for themselves, they come in and they walk up, they talk to you. Soon the energy, the flow of their spirit, soon what you'll feel is, as

though you feel very sorry for this person, and you'll feel almost like you need to step in and help them. God hasn't told you to do it, but you're just being affected by the spiritual dimension around their life. So whatever's in our spirit flows. You get in a football match, everyone gets excited. The excitement fills the air, the atmosphere, so that's people's spirit, saved or unsaved there's a part of us actually affects the atmosphere round us. A person that carries peace in their heart, they're at peace inside, got the peace of God in them, you get around near them, you feel quite at peace with them. You feel the peace.

A person's anxious and uptight, some people can be so anxious and uptight; they walk into the room. The atmosphere begins to change in the room, and as they get there, you think: oh my God, what's about to happen! Hello - you are now resonating, and reflecting back the very thing that they're letting out. Once you begin to understand that, you realise how important it is to deal with your own stuff; then learn how to sense and recognise what others are carrying, and what others are bringing.

If a you go to a funeral, you find everyone's sad. They're all grieving, and even if you don't even know the person, suddenly you can feel tears, you start to feel sad. Why? Because you've been affected by the atmosphere there; so it helps us to understand, because we're designed as spirit beings, whatever's in our heart will flow out of our life. Whatever's in our spirit, will flow out of our life - fear, timidity, self-pity, uncleanness. You can't hide it. It flows. People feel it, and get affected by it.

You've got religious, got control, it'll all flow out some way. You're trying to manipulate someone, hey, they'll feel it. Now the problem is, on the other side is, we don't always recognise what we feel; and don't always know what we're going to do, what to do about it. When a person's got issues in their heart, say anger issues, what will happen is this. This is what they do. They begin to shift their focus off God, and begin to focus on the injustice. Once they focus on the injustice and the anger, this is what happens. The Bible says: now the light of the body is the eye, so whatever you focus on, you open your life to. So you start to focus on injustice, offence and anger, you know what will happen? Very soon you'll

open your whole inner being to spirits; and so what will flow out of you is the injustice, the anger, the offense flows out; and people feel it.

So what do they feel? Well they feel a whole number of things. Here's what they feel: they feel a pressure on them - don't know what it is - until you pray. You can feel a pressure on you, and you feel agitated, don't know what it is; or you can feel shut down, like you're closing up inside, and you've got no idea why you're closing up. You can feel suddenly anxious and full of dread, and you've got no idea why you're full of dread. There's sort of like, something is about to happen, I don't know what it is, or it feels like you're on eggshells. Now what the person who's got the anger issue, has got the other issue; what they don't realise is they are releasing into the atmosphere.

You could sit there on your anger, you could sit there on your bitterness, you could sit there on your hate, and you will still fill the atmosphere with it! People will still feel oh! Don't go near! Something's on there! Then they will have changed their behaviour to accommodate you, and they've come under the spirit that's controlling you.

God spoke to - through the prophet - spoke to Saul, and said: Saul, rebellion is as witchcraft. Now the real word for rebellion is this. It's bitterness, bitterness. Bitterness is like witchcraft. Why is that? Because when a person's bitter in their heart, they have their own agenda they want to impose on people, and it's like witchcraft. It opens the door to the same spirit to come and pressure people. That's why it says: bitterness defiles people; because a person who's bitter will do this. They will seek to influence everyone around, to come into agreement with their bitterness, and it defiles us; so when in human relationships, we start to feel the pressure, that's not said, unspoken, it's in the atmosphere, you will then be under pressure what to do with it.

You are responsible to choose what you do. You can either submit and yield to it. Now a lot of women that live with an abusive man, the whole atmosphere is so full of uncertainty, that forever they live in anxiety and terror and fear and dread, and trying to accommodate the spirit of witchcraft. Let me tell you this. You're wasting your time, and you're damaging yourself. The only way through it is to confront it. You can do

nothing else except confront it, because if it's not confronted, you end up in agreement with it. If you end up in agreement with it, you come under it; then you'll go through the cycle that Elijah did, exactly the same things. You'll start to feel pressure, your spontaneity goes, you'll start to shut down, no creativity. You start to feel yourself feeling anxious and on edge, then you start to withdraw and isolate, start to feel shut down.

In other words, witchcraft operating through the flesh, through a person with bad attitudes, has the same sensations as if a demonic occultic attack was coming on you. It may be a little less intense, but it's the same deal, because it's the same spirit. So how can you deal with it? Very, very simple; let me share with you simple keys. I wish I could just say it's a one, two, three thing but it isn't.

But we did see in Galatians that Peter confronted it, so let me give you some things you could do to deal with it. Number one, identify it. Number one, you've got to identify what it is that's affecting me; and some of it will be your own reactions, but try and identify what it is you're feeling. So these are the kind of things I look for: number one, a reserve or hesitancy, or starting to feel like I'm uncertain, and I'm holding back rather than abundant. I like abundance. We're made for abundance, so if no abundance, and abundance is shutting down, you're becoming reserved and withholding and mean, you know something is shutting you down. Ask the question, what is it?

A loss of spontaneity is another one, where you start to feel you can't be yourself, you can't be relaxed, you're having to somehow please everyone. That is a sign something is pushing on you. What is I'm feeling? How's it affecting me? You start to feel another thing, pressure around you to yield and please someone, then you know there's a witchcraft operating. You start to feel fear, anxiety or dread, you want to flee away from it, or you want to die, all of those are symptoms you've got a witchcraft spirit operating. So how is it operating? Where is it operating from? Who is the person that I need to face up to? What is it I need to face up to? Number one, identify it.

Number two, pray. You need to pray. Never try to deal with stuff without prayer. Why? Because you'll react. You've got to deal with your own

reactions, your internal reactions of anger, and all kinds of stuff. In Ephesians 6 it tells us: we're not wrestling against flesh and blood, we're wrestling against spiritual powers; so separate the person from the spirit. So pray strong, build up your spirit man, and begin to just take authority. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what the issue is. God, what is the thing? What is it I'm dealing with? What is it, that I'm feeling is coming against me? Ask Him to show you the thing, show you or help you identify it, the thing you can't see; and don't take action until you can see clearly.

So if you get offended, you won't see anything. You've got to get into God, pray strong in tongues until you start to free up, ask the Holy Ghost to help you see what it is, and just wait until you can see clearly - oh, that's what it is! You actually then have to confront the darkness, so to do that you need to prepare yourself. To prepare yourself in this relational issue - what am I responsible for? What are they responsible for? Then what they're responsible for is what they've got to face. You don't have to face that. What you're responsible for is your stuff. You're not responsible for their feelings, their choices, their decisions, their actions - that's their stuff. You're responsible for your feelings, your decisions, your choices, your actions; so you've got to be clear you're not going to make them change. You're not going to try and make them do anything. What you're going to do is, you're going to speak out, and let the light come into the darkness.

The Bible says to do that, it says: don't have fellowship with the evil works of darkness. In other words, don't yield, surrender and get drawn into that whole drama. Rather, expose it. Bring it out to the light. Say: hey, we need to talk. We need to talk - then that's the challenging part, is to bring things to the light. So the thing is, we just need to talk, let's have a talk; then say what you're sensing, what you're feeling; this is what I'm feeling, this is what I'm sensing. Listen, we've got a problem in this relationship. This is what I see is happening - we need to talk about it.

You've got to realise that the other person's responsible for their stuff. Hey, did you realise - come in a spirit of grace, come in a spirit of life. You've got to come in the opposite spirit. You've got to always operate in the opposite spirit. Someone's angry, you come in calmness. Someone's bitter, you come with a sweet grace in your heart. If someone's

dishonouring, come with honour. That's part of how you win. You win by playing the game God's way. You win by finding God's way, and so one of the ways He says to win is, you know: bless those who curse you. I don't want to bless them. I want to punch them, and then curse them - or maybe the other way round. But you've actually got to manage your own internals before you address the thing, and you desire to have a godly outcome. So you come to the person with love in your heart, and concern for the relationship, but you've got to talk the truth. You've got to speak the truth; say: this is what I'm feeling, this is what I'm sensing, what's going - and when they say no, no, no, there's nothing going - yeah, there's something's going on. I can feel it. Then they say no, no, no. Actually what you're doing is affecting all of us, it's affecting me. This is how it's affecting me. You've got to lay it all right out there, straight on the table. This is what I'm unhappy about. This is what I'd like to talk about.

Then explore the possible solutions, and if it all comes to an end, and it doesn't end so good, at least you set a boundary; then actually I don't have to put up with that. I'm not going to put up with that, and you establish a clear boundary: that this is how you'll behave in the future, if they behave that way.

So what you've got to realise is, behind these what we call human problems, is a spirit power that operates; so don't try and deal with these problems just on one level. Deal with them: one, in prayer; two, with love and grace and truth; and boundaries at a practical level. So if there's an issue comes up, identify it: what are you feeling? Try to get a handle on it, try to get a name on it, pray, ask the Lord, just strengthen yourself in the spirit. Ask the Lord to give you inside, what it is you're dealing with, bring it out so you can see it, what you've got to face, what they've got to face. Then go to the person when you're ready - prepare yourself. Go to the person when you're ready, and just go in grace, go in peace, go to reconcile, go to sort the thing out - but go to get a change.

Go to get the darkness - you know all it takes to get rid of darkness, just turn on the light. That's all it does, so demons actually, once you're in the right frame and space with God, once you're actually fired up in God, and got the right heart attitude, all you've got to do is just come with the truth and the light and bang! You're suddenly there, and the person may just

go crazy - whoa! So that's what we've been up against all this time. This is real bad stuff. Let them shout and whatever, just say: listen, I won't carry on with that, and you just put a wall and a boundary, and say: I won't be treated that way, and we won't continue while you're carrying on that way.

This is a real challenge for us in relationships, to be able to do this, be able to go and sort things out like that. I encourage you to have a think about this, and think about the relationships where you have, or are experiencing, witchcraft pressure on you; and instead of just saying: it's just me, there must be something wrong with me, maybe there's a spirit coming in to separate and fragment that relationship, undermine that marriage, undermine that family, undermine that partnership. Something's coming in - why don't you be the one that steps up by saying: this is what I'm feeling God. Now I'm going to pray until I get the insight. Then I'll prepare my heart, and go talk about it, put it on the table, and we've got it out, and we've cleaned it up. Amen!

Father, we just honour you right now. We thank you for your grace, your presence, your truth, your life with us. Just while our eyes are closed right now, I wonder is there any person here and today, as I've shared that message, you know you're facing that very thing - just raise your hand quite quickly right now. Eyes closed, heads bowed. Very many, lots of people, lots of people right now, you're facing that very kind of pressure round you right now. Could be with a child, could be with a partner, could be in ministry, could be any kind of area. Okay, whole heaps of people.

Thank you for being so honest. Let me just give you one real important thing. Do not isolate in it. That step of isolating and disconnecting, is a step of yielding to this thing, and you will end up in a very bad place. You have to come into the open with it, and connect with it. If you don't know what to do, find someone you can share with; who will pray with you, and help you see it clearly. But here's what you can do. Firstly, try and identify what you feel, and how this thing is pressuring against you. Go to God in prayer, and ask Him to help you. Stand up strong in the spirit, and ask Him to help you to see it clearly; and just wait, take a little while to see it clearly, a few days, maybe a little longer. Then you start to see it very clearly, and say: now God, I want to prepare myself. What's my part?

What do I need to do? Give me wisdom, what I need to handle it, and how I can handle this person. Then you arrange to meet, and get it straight out on the table, in the light. Now remember, it's not necessarily going to be very pleasant. If there's a spirit behind it, and you're coming against that thing, you may have quite a mess. But you know it's better to face that; than it is to live and just want to die. You're better than that. You've got more in you than that.

Father, right now in Jesus' name, we take dominion and authority over every spirit of witchcraft that is attacking members of this church. Those that put their hands up, I break the power of that spirit right now! I break the power of death! I break the power of hell! I break that anti-christ spirit off you! I release you from the heaviness and pressure, in the Mighty name of the Lord, Jesus Christ! I call you to stand in Jesus' name and come into the liberty, stand fast in the liberty that Christ has set you free! Do not be entangled again in that yoke of bondage. Father, we honour you today, for the grace you give us to win in life, and everyone said ... Amen! Let's finish with a victorious sound. Those of you put your hand up, if you'd like us to lay hands on you, just pray for you, come quickly to the end, we'll pray with you. Come on church, let's stand up together!

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Summary Notes

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1. Introduction
Acts 13:4-12 Paul's encounter with a sorcerer in Cyprus.
The Sorcerer operated with the assistance of demonic powers.
He sought to turn away the governor from faith in Christ (v8)
People operating with witchcraft spirits seek to influence those with authority.
The impact of this occultic power is to turn people from faith in Christ and control them.

2. Witchcraft and The Occult
Occult = hidden, covered, secret = the spiritual power behind it is concealed.
Dt. 18:9-14 God expressly forbids His people to be involved in the occult.
Witchcraft = to manipulate, intimidate or control someone or something with the assistance of spiritual powers.
The power behind witchcraft is demonic and always steals, kills and destroys.
1 Kings 19:1-5 After successful ministry Elijah came under witchcraft attack "Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying …" (vs2).
(i) Distorted perspective – he focussed on problem and not on God (v3)
(ii) He became afraid – He felt fear, dread, sick- He drew back from his responsibility (v3)
(iii) Isolation - He separated himself from relationship – a mistake! (v3)
- Disconnection from relationship is a fruit of witchcraft operating.
(iv) Discouragement and Depression – "He sat down" (v4).
(v) Death Wish – "He desired to die" (v4). A sense of hopelessness
overwhelmed him.
God's response was to touch him, refresh him, challenge him and reassign him.
When witchcraft operates in relationships – people can experience similar issues.

3. Witchcraft in Relationships
· When people are in relationship with one another they have influence on each other.
· Witchcraft = to manipulate another person to impose your will upon theirs. So they do what you want, rather than what they really want to.
· This manipulation of others to asset your will may be –
(i) Direct: shouts, threats, violence.
(ii) Indirect: subtle manipulation of emotions – guilt, blame, self pity, demand.
· The agenda may never be spoken but a "pressure" to agree and to please the person is "flet".
· You might experience – guilt, dread, anxiety, grief.
· You can never be at rest to be yourself when witchcraft operates.
· Example of Peter and Jerusalem leaders
Gal. 3:11-14 "Now when Peter had come to Antioch I withstood him to his face"
Peter had personal revelation from God (Acts 10:9-16) to connect relationship with Gentiles.
When the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem came he changed his behaviour.
He was afraid of judgement and rejection by them – he felt pressure to conform.
Paul confronted the behaviour which he called hypocrisy – not authentic.
The spiritual pressure was so strong Barnabus was influenced also.
4. Witchcraft and The Flesh

(i) Witchcraft is also a Work of the Flesh
· Gal. 5:17-21 Witchcraft is connected to idolatry and hatred.
· Selfish agendas war against the low of the Holy Spirit and are contrary to Him.

(ii) Rebellion is as Witchcraft
· 1 Sam. 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.
· Rebellion = 4805 = to be bitter, to resist, to rebel.
· Underneath witchcraft are bitter roots and rebellion against God's order.

(iii) Religion can be a form of Witchcraft
· Gal. 3:1 "Oh foolish Galatians – who has bewitched you?"
· Bewitched = 940 = to charm, put under a spiritual influence, bring evil on a person.
· The Galatians had come under the influence of religions legalism.
· Religion – activities to please God that have form but no power (1 Tim. 3:5).

(iv) How God has designed us
· Man is designed to be spirit, soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23)

· The spirit of a man energises his body and soul (Prov. 4:23)
· Spirit life flowing from within a person is first seen on the face. E.g. Ps 34:5. Gen. 4:5-7 – Cain.
· What is in a person's heart overflows as a "spiritual presence" or atmosphere.
· Demons can manipulate people and fill that atmosphere (Eph. 4:26-27).
· Whatever a person focuses on he will open his heart to release. (Mt. 6:21).
· Examples of Spiritual presence 'felt'? – body posture, voice tone, atmosphere.
*Anger *Peace *Uncleanness *Anxiety *Arrogance *Blame *Self Pity
· Unrestrained negative attitudes within a person overflow and influence people around them placing a "pressure" upon them.
· When witchcraft operates people "feel" – sick, dread, fear, anxiety, pressure, tense.

5 How to Deal with Witchcraft in Relationships
· It is a doorway to the demonic – you must confront it (Gal. 5:1).

(i) Identify the influence
· Reserve – something is 'not right'.
· Loss personality, spontaneity, freedom.
· 'Pressure' to please, appease, yield.
· Fear, anxiety, dread.
· Desire to flee – avoid.
· Disconnecting relationally.
(ii) Pray strongly (Eph. 6:10-12)
· Energise spirit man – tongues
· Ask Holy Spirit to reveal what can't see
· Hold back until see clearly (Acts 16:18)
(iii) Prepare self to respond
* What am I responsible for?
* What am I not responsible for?
* Do I need support?
(iv) Confront the Darkness (Eph. 5:11-13)
* Find suitable time/place
* Speak directly
* Say what feeling/sensing
* Bring issue out to open
* Explore possible solutions
* Establish clear boundaries what you will/will not accept.
* Stay Calm.

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