



“Binding”¹ the Enemy: Prayers and Commands to Alleviate Demonic Harassment and/or Oppression

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The primary purpose of these prayers and commands is to provide temporary relief from demonic oppression and/or harassment between emotional healing sessions. These prayers and commands are not intended to provide permanent deliverance from demonic oppression and/or harassment. My perception is that harassing/oppressing demonic spirits are usually anchored in psychological and/or spiritual issues, such as the toxic content carried in unresolved trauma, sinful defenses, and unconfessed willful sin. If deliverance prayer is attempted before these underlying issues are resolved, the demonic spirits leave temporarily but then easily come back.² With respect to trauma, a “window” for re-entry seems to open whenever something triggers the unresolved toxic content, and this is especially true if the person receiving ministry responds to the activated traumatic memories with sinful choices. I therefore agree with many others that it is best to bind demonic spirits until the underlying psychological and spiritual issues have been resolved. Once the underlying anchoring issues are resolved it is easy to *permanently* remove the harassing/oppressing demonic spirits.³

I give this sample prayer to my clients as a handout. I discuss with them that all problems aren't demonic, and encourage them to experiment humbly with the prayer between sessions. With this humble attitude, little harm is done by trying the prayer for fear, suicidal thoughts, or other thoughts and emotions that oppress them. If the problem is mostly demonic, this simple binding prayer usually helps dramatically. If the problem is *not* demonic, then we keep working to address other possible sources. As many of you know, problems often include a demonic component mixed in with other contributing factors. In these cases, eliminating the demonic component makes it easier to work with the other factors. I have had a number of clients who were amazed to discover that certain longstanding symptoms resolved immediately with this simple binding prayer.⁴ Clients can also share these prayers with any family or friends who wish to support them in prayer.

¹ There is much scholarly debate about the meaning of “binding” and “loosing” found particularly in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18. While some believe it refers to the Christian’s authority over evil spiritual forces, many do not. My usage of the word is not intended to invoke the authority referred to in these verses. Rather I am using the term as a simple way to express the idea of temporarily rendering harmless any evil which may be attached to some wound, deception or sin in a person’s mind. That we as Christians do have authority over evil spirits is attested elsewhere in Scripture (Mtw 10:1, Luke 9:1, Luke 10:17-20).

² Most ministers experienced in prayer for emotional healing seem to agree on this point. See, for example, Francis MacNutt *Deliverance From Evil Spirits*, p.182-195, and Charles Kraft *Deep Wounds, Deep Healing* p.255-273, *Defeating Dark Angels* p.119-156, 177-198.

³ See “Closing Prayer” on the Ministry Aids page for additional comments regarding this point and for a sample prayer to permanently remove demonic spirits.

⁴ As just explained above, the binding prayer alone would only provide temporary relief. With just the binding prayer, but not resolving the underlying anchoring issues, the symptoms would eventually return.

Preparatory/faith foundation prayers: These prayers were especially helpful to me as I was just beginning to minister in my authority in Christ over demonic opposition. I experienced a lot of uncertainty and insecurity, and found that the affirmations of truth and scriptural references bolstered my faith and authority.

Considerations regarding focusing the target (October 9, 2003 update): In the previous version of this essay, we stated:

“Our perception is that focusing the target increases the impact of our commands. For example, addressing ‘demonic spirits contributing to this sleepiness’ is more focused and would have more impact than addressing ‘all demonic spirits present.’ The caveat is that this only applies when you have the right target. The risk is that you can miss something. Demonic spirits are happy to take any loopholes (for example, if internal parts are causing sleepiness and a demonic spirit is contributing confusion, they are happy to dodge if you address “all demonic spirits causing this sleepiness”). The “shotgun” approach is less likely to miss, but has less impact on what it hits.”

Since then (as our understanding, faith, and authority have increased), we have discovered that the “shotgun” the Lord has given us is almost always powerful enough to get the job done. Now we simply use “all demonic spirits present,” or “all demonic spirits the Lord has just designated” in almost all of our interactions with demonic spirits. Our perception is that the usual simplicity and lack of loopholes far outweigh the very rare need to try again with a more focused target.

Enforcement/demonic behavior modification: I have been including the enforcement piece at the end of the sample prayer for a number of years now. My perception is that we have experienced the same kind of benefits that parents experience when they take the time and energy to consistently enforce any rules they make (a lot more obedience and a lot less nonsense). See “Dealing With Demonic Interference/Opposition During the Session, Prayers and Commands to Neutralize Demonic Interference” for additional discussion of this point.

Pray with authority, but be aware of the conditions under which demonic spirits can disobey: The reality that there are a number of situations in which demonic spirits can disobey caused me considerable confusion as I was learning to deal with demonic interference. “How can I be confident in my authority in Christ when the demonic spirits successfully defy me on a regular basis? I look like a fool, claiming to have all this authority, when they just laugh in response to some of my commands.” This confusion was based on the incorrect understanding that having confidence in my authority required that I *know, with complete certainty*, that the demonic spirits in question would always obey my commands. The correct understanding is that having confidence in my authority requires that I *know, with complete certainty*, that the Lord is present, good, and victorious over all demonic spirits, that the Lord will be faithful to the principles and rules he has established to govern creation (including demonic spirits), that the Lord has given me authority to enforce these principles and rules, and that demonic spirits *will* comply with my commands unless there is some other more important consideration involved. It is important for both the facilitator and recipient to understand this perspective so that demonic disobedience doesn’t cause confusion and/or undermine their confidence. When demonic spirits are able to disobey, instead of being confused or concluding “I guess we don’t really have authority over demonic spirits after all,” they will non-anxiously work together to discern and resolve whatever is making it possible for the demonic spirits to disobey. See “Dealing With Demonic Interference/Opposition During the Session, Prayers and Commands to Neutralize Demonic

Interference” for additional discussion regarding this point.

Angelic assistance: See “General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids” for comments regarding asking for angelic assistance. Include this only if you feel comfortable doing so.

Don’t pray against dissociated internal parts: Sometimes people who have dissociated parts in their internal psychological system will feel frightened, threatened, or confused by binding and/or deliverance prayer. It can feel like the dissociated parts are being attacked and/or prayed against. My experience is that dissociation (especially mild dissociation) is much more common than most people realize. In light of this, I try to discuss this possibility with every client and clarify that these prayers are addressing only demonic spirits, and NOT any part of the person. See “Dealing With Demonic Interference/Opposition During the Session, Prayers and Commands to Neutralize Demonic Interference” and “Distinguishing Between Demonic Spirits and Internal Parts” for additional discussion regarding this point.

“Binding” the Enemy: Sample Prayers and Commands

Preparatory/faith foundation prayers (optional):

“Lord Jesus, we recognize You as the supreme authority over all of creation. We claim the truth that you have invested us with your authority as your ambassadors. We position ourselves in you, and acknowledge that all we accomplish comes through you and through the power and authority you have invested in us. We ask you to guide us and grant us discernment and wisdom. Help us to understand the spiritual principles and rules that You have established to govern Your creation, and to issue commands that are consistent with Your principles and rules. We ask that You would help us discern the reason whenever demonic spirits fail to obey our commands, so that we can find and resolve whatever is allowing the demonic spirits to disobey.”

“All evil spirits present here, we confront you with the truth. Jesus Christ has been Lord over you since your creation. He triumphed over you in defeating Satan in the wilderness and every day during His ministry on earth. He triumphed over you on the cross and in the grave. His resurrection has sealed your fate, and is ultimate proof of His victory over you, and proof of your inability to oppose Him. Jesus has continued to triumph over you throughout the earth during the last two thousand years of Christian history.

“We stand humbly in our position in Christ. We are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6). We abide in Christ as branches in the vine (John 15:4-8). We are living temples (1 Cor 6:19, 2 Cor 6:16), with Jesus and the Heavenly Father living in our hearts (John 14:23), as promised in Scripture. We are surrounded by and filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

“We come boldly in the authority of Jesus Christ, speaking the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Eph 6:17), into this situation. We come obeying Jesus’ explicit commands to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons (Mtw 10:8). We come in the authority Jesus has explicitly given us over evil. We come with spiritual weapons in the name of Jesus for exposing and tearing down your strongholds (2 Cor 10:4-5).”

Commands to Bind the Enemy:

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command all demonic spirits harassing or oppressing me/ _____ (name) in any way to be bound in and under the name and authority of Jesus Christ.”

“You may not touch my/ _____’s mind, body, or spirit in any way except as the true Lord Jesus allows in order to provide information He wants us to have. You may not harass or oppress me/ _____. You may not hinder the work of Jesus Christ in my/ _____’s life in any way.”

Enforcement/Demonic Behavior Modification (optional):

“We command you now to submit yourselves to the true Lord Jesus Christ and deal with Him personally regarding whether you have adequately complied with our commands.”

“Lord Jesus, we acknowledge you as the righteous judge and we submit these demonic spirits into your hands with respect to whether they have adequately complied with our commands. We ask you to deal with them as You see fit. (Optional) We ask that you release and empower the angelic warriors you have prepared to enforce compliance in this situation.”