Deliverance? Ministries, Not The Movie.

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I was asked, “do you believe in deliverance/healing ministry?”

My reply was…

“I think 90% of deliverance ministries are fear based, and devil-centered. Let me explain. Once we become Christians our focus thereafter is always on Christ. We are not given a spirit of fear of the devil, demons, curses, etc. We are to keep our eyes on Christ and keep our life moving toward Him. If we take our eyes off Jesus and start looking for demons and curses we become like Peter when he walked on the water. He took his eyes off Christ and sank.

Christ is our Protector. If we have any sin problem (curse, demonic oppression, etc.) He will address it in our heart through His Spirit and His Word.

Deliverance ministries lead to fear because they are not focused on Jesus. They are focused on the enemy and his ways. That is why Romans 16:19 tells us regarding evil “be simple." We should not be overly interested in the devil or his activities because we are not equipped to fight him. Only Jesus can fight that battle for us and that is why we must stay focused on Him.

I hope I answered your question.”

The emailer wrote back and said...

This makes all the sense in the world. I have never heard this before. After I was saved 10 years ago, I felt freedom, peace, and joy I had never known. When I got involved in ministry at (church name withheld), my relationship with the Lord subtly changed into one of fear because of this very thing. We were constantly having prayer meetings... binding, rebuking, "casting out", yelling at the devil. I never had a pure feeling about this but was taught it was our "responsibility" and if you were being oppressed it was because you weren't "warfaring" as you should. This brought in a lot of fear and strife. You are right, now I see how much the devil was being glorified over the Lord. My eyes turned to the power of Satan and away from the power of the Christ.

Thanks again for your answer. The Lord has been so good to use your ministry to get me back on track and like Peter, when the Lord restores me, I will turn back and help restore my brother (and sister).

In my reading on the subject I found an article by Bob DeWaay describing the problems with

deliverance ministries. Bob was one of them in the past, a deliverance counselor. He had “cast out” many demons from Christians but came to realize that he was addressing the wrong problem. He describes the problem as being one of worldviews. Is your view of spiritual realities one of warfare with evil spirits, or is it that God is sovereign and evil can’t touch you unless it is in God’s sovereign purpose? It makes a world of difference.

DeWaay described his work in deliverance counseling as being knowledgeable and proficient in the "rules" of spiritual warfare. As I read the article I had images in my mind of deliverance counselors being analogous to shamans and witchdoctors. In animist religions the shaman and witchdoctor knows the special rules, incantations, and potions that will fight off the evil spirits. Just as the Liberian children whose parents put the Juju strings around them to protect them, so the deliverance counselor prescribes practices, rules, and prayers that will protect the Christian from evil spirits.

Deliverance ministries teach that we open the door to demonic possession/oppression by our willing contact with evil things. Well, if that is the case what can I say about my library? I have hundreds of books from cultic, occult, and New Age sources. Also, our family brought back lots of souvenirs from Liberia. Among them are African masks which were probably used in animist religion. I saw those masks in my Dad’s back yard years ago and asked him about them. He said he put them out there because he was going to burn them. He said they represented an open door for Satan to attack. I told my Dad what Paul said about idols in 1 Corinthians 8:4, that “As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.” My Dad said, “Well you take them then.” I’ve been fine ever since.

Here is the link to Bob DeWaay’s article. It is a bit long but worth every minute.

http://www.cicministry.org/commentary/issue78.htm