

# **SURVIVING CHRISTIAN TESTING AND AFFLICTION**

**by**  
**John H. Painter**  
**October, 2006**

## **FOREWORD.**

If you are the one going through a time of testing and affliction, you would undoubtedly like someone to give you a simple way to get out of it. But, you have undoubtedly noticed that not all Christian prayers are answered with the desired outcome. Saint Paul noticed that, when God declined to remove Paul's "thorn in the side."

So, how can a Christian deal with the fact of personal affliction, when a desired answer does not come easy or quick? Do you say that at least you'd like some compassion and support in your suffering? You got it! Jesus has that for you, and so do I. But, beyond compassion, what else can I do for you? What else can I do for you, acting as Jesus' earthly agent?

How about understanding what's going on with you? Would you like to know what the Bible has to say in general about bad things happening to good people? Would you like some biblical tools with which to look at your own specific problems, with a view toward understanding and perhaps getting them reversed? Such tools are in the Bible.

I am a teacher by gifting. And, teachers deal in understanding and how to achieve it. Teachers are charismatically drawn to promoting understanding. So, I am motivated, both by compassion and by the gut-level desire to lead you to understanding. Moreover, I am motivated to lead you to applying that understanding toward your own personal restoration.

Remembering your school time, you probably remember that achieving understanding of some things is harder than for others. Christian affliction is one of those hard things. So, learning how to understand it is going to require some study and Bible reading. There is no substitute for that. But, the payoff is worth it.

In reading this paper, you should remember that all things ultimately work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purposes. You should also remember that to accomplish His will on earth, God is working through a fallen race. We need to keep this in mind at all times, as we attempt to perform that with which the Lord Jesus has tasked us.

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## **PART-1: CHARACTERIZING CHRISTIAN AFFLICTION**

### **INTRODUCTION.**

This paper deals with the observed fact that God's people suffer affliction. And, such affliction is apparently within God's will. This is something that American Christians have a hard time accepting, even though both Peter and Paul talked about it in the Bible.

It is very difficult for Christians to understand why bad things happen to good people. In Jesus' day, believers thought that it must be due to sin in the life of those afflicted. Sometimes it was. But, when the blind man was healed by Jesus, He explained that the blindness was not because of sin of the man or his parents, but so that the works of God might be demonstrated in the man [John 9:3].

What this means is that God has His own purposes for permitting affliction in the life of a believer. One of God's purposes is to make a point with the heavenly host [Eph. 3:9-13]. That is, like Paul, Christians may suffer tribulation to make the wisdom of God evident to rulers and authorities in the heavenlies.

The heavenly "*rulers and authorities*" of [Eph. 3:10] are translated from the Greek as "*principalities and powers*" in [Eph. 6:12]. That is, these are the demonic officers against whom is the Church's earthly battle. God uses a Christian's response in faith to affliction to make God's wisdom absolutely clear to the heavenly demonic forces. And, He equips Christians with six pieces of armor through use of which they may stand under demonic assault. This is God's will, as expressed in the Bible.

Here in Part-1, we first look at biblical affliction of God's people, whether or not sin is present. Then, in Part-2 we will show how to deal with affliction, using a seven-fold model of Christianity. The approach will be analytical, leading to diagnosis and prescription for Christian affliction.

When affliction is present in a Christian or his family, he or she is looking for compassion and loving support. An organized, analytical approach to his or her problems may not be just the thing desired. But, like medical practice, treatment is most successful when compassion, love, and analysis are combined. That's why just the right combination of graces is required from [Rom. 12:6-8], to minister in the area of Christian affliction.

### **AFFLICTION – BIBLICAL CAUSES.**

#### **'Thorns' in the Flesh.**

Both Old and New Testaments shed a lot of light on why bad things happen to good people. The story of Job was the first detailed example. God gave Job over to be tested by Satan. After his testing, Job confessed that he had been proclaiming about God things he didn't understand [Job 42:3].

Saint Paul was a later example, with his "thorn in the flesh" [2 Cor. 12:7]. Whatever his physical affliction, it was put upon him by a demon, and the Lord would not remove it. There was a reason for it. It was so that Paul would not become haughty because of the abundance and excellence of the revelations being given him by the

Lord. It was also to demonstrate that Paul would do Jesus' work in the Lord's strength and not in his own.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that God disciplines His sons (and by implication His daughters, too) with a training purpose [Heb. 12:5-11]. There is also the related idea from Paul, of God's excellent work being done by Jesus' afflicted minister. There is a third idea of a minister demonstrating in his life God's message for the future. This happened in the lives of the prophets, Ezekiel [Ezk. 4,5,12,24] and Isaiah [Isa. 20]. It is known as 'walking out' the message given. So, there appear to be many scripturally valid reasons for Christian affliction.

### **Sins and Sinning – Biblical Examples.**

One recognizable sin that might even result in the death of the Christian is irreverent behavior at communion [1 Cor. 11:29]. Another was a sexually sinning Christian who should be turned over to Satan, so that his flesh might be destroyed, but his spirit saved [1 Cor. 5:5]. These sins were observable ones that could lead to death. But, they did not mean that the Christian was not eternally saved.

An extreme example was that described by Jesus in [Mat. 7:21-23]. It concerned people doing such Christian works as prophesying, casting out demons, and other "wonderful works." Jesus described what they were doing as iniquity. And, He said that He had never known them. They clearly thought that they were Christians, but Jesus denied them entrance to heaven.

These three biblical examples seem harsh and judgmental to modern Christians. But, they were well understood by Protestant Christians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as can be seen by reading Matthew Henry's Commentary.<sup>1</sup> He advised that such earthly judgments were really signs of God's love, that the Christian might not suffer the eternal judgment that the sins deserved. Henry also called attention to the fact that such earthly judgment may be interpreted as God chastening His children for training purposes.

### **Chastening as Children of God.**

Jesus says that He rebukes and chastens those He loves, with a view toward bringing them to repentance [Rev. 3:19]. Paul says that when we are judged on earth, it is the Lord chastening us, so that we won't be eternally condemned. As in the case of Paul, not every chastening is unto death.

Personal chastening is a part of being children of God [Heb. 12:5-10]. And, in fact, the Book of Hebrews says that anyone observed to not be under chastisement is not a child of God. It appears that all children of God suffer chastisement, and it is likened to flogging. Flogging hurts. So, Christians may be physically hurt, as a part of God's chastening. Job was certainly hurt, and it is likely that Paul was, also. How, then, is the modern Christian to understand this?

The very definition of the Greek Bible word that is translated as "chastening" means discipline, as a part of training. It is used thirteen times in the New Testament. That was the way Jesus used it in [Rev. 3:19]. Paul said that if we would judge among ourselves we would not be so chastened [1 Cor. 11:31]. In other words, avoiding

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, 1706, Uncopyrighted, MacDonald Publishing Co., McLean, Va., ISBN 0-917006-21-6.

chastisement requires good judgment and an understanding of scriptural Christian living. Paul says that we need to figure out how to live, so as to survive chastening and not be killed [2 Cor. 6:9].

### **Keeping a Balanced View of Christian Affliction - Compassion.**

Focusing on the bad things that happen to Christians does not mean that the good things of Christianity should be ignored. There is a balance in life, which includes both good and bad. And, life is that way because mankind fell from grace with Adam and Eve. But, the Bible says that God works all things together, for the good of those who love Him and are those called according to His purposes [Rom. 8:28]. And, the “all things” include the good and the bad.

Jesus listed the good and the bad to be found in the churches of the very end-times in [Rev. 2,3]. He encourages Christians to hang onto the good and to repair the bad. Paul told the believers at Philippi to keep the good things in mind [Php. 4:8]. But, he also told Corinth to stop the bad things that were going on within Christianity [1 Cor. 11:31].

I’m coming to realize that mankind is indeed a fallen species. And, it was so, when God sent His only begotten Son to offer man a path to eternal salvation. In the flesh, mankind is fallen and so am I. And so are you. The only exception is when we’re in the Spirit. Then, it is Jesus, acting through us, individually. I need to keep this in mind at every turn in my living and in my writing for the Lord. There will be both good and bad in Christianity until Jesus makes His physical return [Rev. 22:11]. And, I need to remember that, especially now.

## **PART-2: DIAGNOSING CHRISTIAN AFFLICTION.**

### **GETTING SPIRITUAL – CONTEXTS FOR DEMONIC OPPRESSION.**

Now, let’s get analytical about all this. Although affliction may be either physical or mental, or both, the cause is spiritual. So, Let’s examine the underlying spiritual aspects.

#### **The Role of the Demonic.**

Peter says that God’s earthly judgment begins with Christianity [1 Pet. 4:17]. In both the Old- and New-Testament, God’s judgments of individual believers were seen to be at the hands of demons. Some church doctrines hold that a Christian cannot be subject to demonic affliction. But, in his own words, Saint Paul’s situation is a clear counter-example [2 Cor. 12:7].

We are now seeing increasing testing and judgment within Christian families. These attacks may be attributed to demons. According to Paul’s teaching on sin [Rom. 7:7-25], it is present in our lives when we are not “*in the Spirit.*” And, I will be the first to confess that I am not continually in the Spirit. So, like Paul, in the flesh I expect to sin, perhaps thoughtlessly, and to be subject to demonic affliction, if God permits.

It is important to understand God’s role in all this. As can be seen from Job, God does not specify the details of demonic affliction. But, His permission is needed for it. And, God sets limits upon it. For every test at the hands of a demon, God

provides a way out [1 Cor. 10:13], so that the Christian can bear it. To understand this, the Book of Job should be carefully and completely read.

God is very just about this. My observation is that disciplining afflictions are in the seven identifiable contexts of Christianity. Satan's purpose in these attacks is to disable the Christian from playing his proper role in the Church. These disabilities may be mental (deception) or physical. God's purpose in permitting such chastening may involve sin, but definitely has a training aspect. A demonic attack may come in one part of a Christian family (house), in order to disable another part.

### **The Seven Contexts of Christianity.**

Whether sin is the cause of Christian affliction, or whether God is making a point in heaven, there is a lot of information obtainable from analysis of the affliction, in light of biblical doctrine. It is biblically verifiable that there are seven contexts to Christianity and that God operates in those contexts. Jesus' discourse in Revelation-2 and -3, addressed to the seven churches in Asia, demonstrates those contexts and His actions in those contexts. Much supporting information is available elsewhere in the Bible, to fully characterize those contexts. For details, see the companion paper on the Alpha Aquila website<sup>2</sup>, entitled The Sevenfold Structure of Christianity, which may be read for fuller understanding of what follows, below.

The seven Christian contexts are simply labeled as Faith, Truth, Spirit, Power, Ministry, Doctrine, and Maturity. Given knowledge of the detailed characterization of the seven contexts, a Christian's afflictions may then be observed to fall within one or more of these contexts. Identifying a context then points at what may be God's will in allowing the affliction. If God's will can be discerned in the matter, then a course of action may be indicated for the afflicted Christian. In a case where the cause can be determined to be sin, a prescription for repentance may be formulated.

What has just been outlined in the above paragraph is a procedure for diagnosis and prescription that is spiritual, rather than physical. To apply it in detail may require the services of an appropriately gifted and trained 'deliverance' minister.

The existence of such a procedure follows from two biblical promises. One is that in every testing, God provides for a way out [1 Cor. 10:13]. The other is that we have not because we ask not, or we ask for the wrong reasons [Jas. 4:2]. That is, if we understand what, why, and how to ask, then we have a much better possibility for our prayers to be answered affirmatively. Certainly, God wants us to understand what His will is [Eph. 5:17]. And, the biblical Greek for that "understanding" is to "put it together."

### **Contexts for Demonic Oppression.**

Demons oppress Christians in areas of life such as health, finances, family, work, ministry, and home. The attacks are mounted by seven classes of demon, each one acting within one of the seven particular contexts of Christian life.

The first two contexts are those within which work individual basic disciplers and witnesses, sharing their faith and communicating the truths of Christianity. The next five contexts are those within which work prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and apostles, in that order. But one does not need to be one of the

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<sup>2</sup> Alpha Aquila Ministries, [http://alphaquila.org/Library/sevenfold\\_christianity.pdf](http://alphaquila.org/Library/sevenfold_christianity.pdf)

denominationally ordained ‘five-fold’ ministers, to be involved in the corresponding context [Eph. 4:11-13]. The demonic attacks are to disable any Christian for work in the particular context. My observation is that if there is enabling sin present, it will also be in the same context.

Table 1., below, shows seven scripturally identified demon classes and their contexts. Also shown are the corresponding defects of the Christian heart, which may produce an enabling sin that opens a Christian up to spiritual oppression. The context and corresponding demon type may be identified by the effects observed in the Christian. These listed soulish heart defects are those that manifest through the Christian’s speech [Mat. 15:18]. So, analyzing how a Christian talks may point at the context of the oppression.

Note that poor health is identified with the maturity context. An attack on health is intended to prevent a Christian from working in the mature things in the Church. The Christian may not be tasked as an apostle, but the context will be the apostolic, which is all about bringing Christians to maturity. The context includes such things as viewing Jesus as Conqueror (Apostles’ doctrine) [Acts 2:34-35], and Church unity [Eph. 4:1-6], and patience [2 Pet. 1:5-7] and mercy [Rom 12:6-8], and going on to maturity, if God permits [Heb. 6:1-3].

<b>SPIRIT OF ...</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>OPPOSES CONTEXT OF ...</b>	<b>HEART DEFECTS [Mat. 15:18-19]</b>
<b>Antichrist</b>	[1 John 4:3]	Faith	Selfishness
<b>Error</b>	[1 John 4:6]	Truth	False Witness
<b>Divination</b>	[Acts 16:16]	Spirit	Counterfeit Love
<b>Fear, Bondage</b>	[Rom. 8:15]	Power	Undercutting Authority
<b>Uncleanness</b>	[Luke 4:33]	Ministry	Putting Down
<b>Slumber</b>	[Rom. 11:8]	Doctrine	Worthless Dialoging
<b>Infirmity</b>	[Luke 13:11]	Maturity	Selling Self

**Table 1. Seven Demon Classes and Corresponding Christian Heart Defects.**

### **Gathering Intelligence for Spiritual Warfare.**

Using tables to characterize spiritual things may seem artificial to some. But, in dealing with demonic activities it is absolutely necessary to get a top-down view of the situation. Spiritual warfare is the same as physical warfare, in that good real-time military intelligence is required about the enemy, in order to formulate and mount a successful counter-attack. What we are doing here is laying out military-like tabular models that will allow us to analyze enemy organization and operations. We will continue this below, analyzing the detailed effects of enemy attacks upon our troops.

It turns out that Satan has organized his forces to match God’s organization of Christianity. That is, Satan has what I will call a “Five-fold Anti-Ministry,” which functionally targets God’s apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Members of the chain of command below Satan are biblically labeled as “*principalities*,

*powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places* [Eph. 6:12]. There are equivalent labels for the last two in [Eph. 1:21] and [Col. 1:16], being “*dominions*” for the last, and “*might*” or “*throne*” for the third. There are then seven different specialized classes of demonic troops to do the bidding of the command structure. A complete teaching on spiritual warfare is not possible in the present short paper, but can be obtained from this writer, separately.

Our counter-attack upon the demons responsible for Christian affliction may not be mounted on our own volition. As in all warfare, the command for a counter-attack must come down from our Commander, who is the Lord of Hosts, Jesus. We will deal with this necessity to have authorization, below.

## **CONTEXTUAL DIAGNOSIS OF CHRISTIAN AFFLICTION.**

### **Spiritual Observables.**

Analyzing visible effects of demonic oppression identifies both the Christian context and the demon oppressor’s type. The analysis is based on observing the effects displayed by the Christian. Table 2., below, shows a number of characteristics observable in oppressed persons, categorized by demon type. Only one context results in an attack upon the Christian’s physical health. The other six contexts result in attacks on the Christian’s mentality and thought processes.

There can be combined attacks by more than one demon, in which case the observables must be separated and properly assigned to multiple contexts in the diagnosis. Both Jesus [Mat. 12:45] and Luke [Luke 8:2] referred to the presence of multiple demons.

<b>SPIRIT OF ...</b>	<b>OBSERVABLE CHARACTERISTICS May be observed as passive effects or dynamic actions</b>	<b>CONTEXT</b>
<b>Antichrist</b>	Unbelief, distrust, unmoved, unsharing, negative, cold, dry, empty.	Faith
<b>Error</b>	Illegal, deceptive, hard-heart, hard-head, unrepentant, legalistic, hypocritical, deaf.	Truth
<b>Divination</b>	Blasphemy, sacrilege, meddling, rebellion, divisive, vain, phony, paranoid.	Spirit
<b>Fear</b>	Manipulate, confuse, terrorize, attack, violate, capture, enslave, control.	Power
<b>Uncleanness</b>	Loud, accuse, proud, lewd, immoral, unholy, addict, waste.	Ministry
<b>Slumber</b>	Self-sufficient, self-absorbed, worldly, lull, dull, denial, fuzzy-thinking, blind.	Doctrine
<b>Infirmity</b>	Torment, afflict, entrap, weaken, disable, humiliate, vanquish, silence.	Maturity

**Figure 2. Observable Characteristics of a Demonically Oppressed Christian.**

### **Do Observables Flow From Demons or Christian Heart Defects?**

In looking at the above list of observables, it may be asked whether they are being generated by an oppressing demon, or whether they are just manifestations of the Christian's heart. Here, we're talking about the soulish heart, not the fleshly one. I will be the first to admit that I do not know where the dividing line is between demon oppression and human heart. Those seven symptoms of a bad heart, in Table 1., are quite credible as emanating from a non-believer. But, it's a question whether the heart symptoms and the observables of Table 2. can be displayed by a Christian who is not demon-oppressed.

The heart is the subject of much teaching in both Old- and New-Testament. It's mentioned 159 times in the New Testament and 718 times in the Old Testament. So, there is a lot to be known about it. What I remember most is [Jer. 17:9], saying, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" I believe that only God can accurately read the human heart [Acts 8:21-22]. Therefore, if I need to decide whether or not the displayed symptoms proceed from demon or heart, I will ask the Lord.

#### **Diagnosis.**

Diagnosis is a good Greek Bible word, that means to ascertain exactly. It was used twice in Acts, concerning Paul's trial at the hands of Felix, the Governor at Caesarea. There, Felix, acting in his capacity as judge, said that he would investigate Paul's situation, thoroughly [Acts 24:22]. The word means a hearing, in the magisterial sense [Acts 25:21]. And, a biblical magistrate is a "master," that is, a teacher [Luke 2:46]. This is because such diagnosis depends heavily upon knowledge of the Bible.

A biblical diagnosis is a hearing, to which the hearer applies judgment to determine the facts of the case. There are four different kinds of judgment in the Bible, which apply to this kind of diagnosis. Christians are biblically instructed to use all four kinds. In making a diagnosis, a believer must be "in the Spirit" and "in Christ," at all times. This is because every step in the diagnostic process requires interaction and communication between the believer and Jesus. This is the most important aspect of the whole diagnostic process.

First is what I will call, "*Sizing it up.*" This is a gross estimation, with the Greek being, "*anakrino*" [1 Cor. 2:15]. It is getting a rough estimate of the situation. The second is "*diakrino,*" which I will call, "*Cutting it up*" [1 Cor. 6:5]. It is a careful sorting and examination of the evidence. (This is what Paul told the Corinthians to do.) The third is "*sugkrino,*" which is making comparisons [2 Cor. 10:12], in order to "*Put it all together.*" The final step is "*krino,*" which I call "*Summing it up*" [1 Cor. 5:12]. It is formulating a considered opinion.

The diagnostic procedure starts with making a list of symptoms. Use Table 2., above, as a guide to articulate the symptoms in as few words as possible. Ask for Holy Spirit guidance to both make the list and to make the following rough estimate of the situation. This is the "sizing up" step.

Next, use a table, like Table 3. in the example, below, to match the symptoms to Christian contexts. The Context column headings represent, from left to right, **F**aith,

**Truth, Spirit, Power, Ministry, Doctrine, and Maturity.** Again, Table 2, above, may be used as a guide. This is the “cutting it up” step.

Next, determine which of the Christian contexts have the most symptoms. And, there may be more than one major problem area. Contexts that have just a comparative few entries may be treated as secondary.

Next, look at the major problem areas, to see how they may be linked for a demonic purpose.

The last step is to write a detailed description of what the problem is, and how to approach the necessary repentance. This is the “Summing it up” step.

### **A Real-life Example.**

This real-life example describes a pastor whose church failed. The symptoms were assembled from a short interview of one of his church elders, whom this writer knew well. Many of the symptoms came from observations of how the pastor interacted with those around him in the church. A longer interview would have probably provided more symptoms. However, these were enough to render a good diagnosis.

#	SYMPTOMS	CONTEXT						
		F	T	S	P	M	D	M
1	No meaningful relationships with congregants.			◆				
2	Praise/worship all enthusiasm.			◆				
3	Gone from church much of the time (traveling).					◆		
4	Rejects elders confronting him on church issues.				◆			
5	Doesn't promote evangelism.				◆			
6	Overemphasizes hierarchical administrative structure.		◆					
7	Distrusts lay ministries.	◆						
8	Insists on strict “training” of lay leaders.				◆			
9	Discourages church giving to the poor.	◆						
10	Allows no church support of missionaries.	◆						
11	Allows no member access to office.				◆			
12	Sermons poor, unprepared.						◆	
13	Does not encourage making visitors feel welcome.	◆						
14	Allows no bible-study initiatives.		◆					
15	Makes no provision for children during services.	◆						
16	Has no plan for church “vision.”				◆			
17	Manifests a heartfelt desire to serve the Lord.			◆				
	<b>TOTALS</b>	5	2	3	5	1	1	0

**Table 3. Example of Symptom Context List.**

From the column totals, the two major indicated problem areas are Faith and Power. Faith is the area wherein disciples share their faith with new believers, showing them by example what Christian faith is. Power is the area wherein the evangelist works, bringing unbelievers to the point of belief in Jesus Christ.

### **Assigning Symptoms to Contexts.**

A very good question at this point is how did I make the assignments of symptoms to the contexts, in Table 3? Let me just illustrate, for the Faith context. The others follow the same way.

Symptom #7 is distrust, which is just the opposite of belief. And, it is distrust of the lay ministries, which is where the bulk of the “first works” of the church is done, in bringing new Christians to a saving faith.

Symptom #9 is against giving. And, sharing or giving is the [Rom. 12:6-8] gift that correlates with the faith context. Symptom #10 is similar.

Symptom #13 is inhospitality with those who may be looking for a community of faith. Again, it is related with sharing.

Symptom #15 is about provisioning for children. The children of the church is our greatest source of future believers. They need to be cared for until they can understand the message that will bring them to faith.

In order to prepare this part of the diagnosis, the evaluator must be familiar with the characterization of the seven contexts of Christianity. This familiarity may be gained from a little training and some reading. This writer’s book-length manuscript, The Joshua Walk, is recommended.<sup>3</sup>

### **Formulating a Considered Opinion – The Example Diagnosis.**

The example pastor lacks the basic grounding in faith that will enable him to understand the giving and sharing context of Christianity. Either he has never been so grounded or he has been diverted from it through demonic influence. In the latter case, he is not using that piece of mental armor that is the shield of faith, with which to quench the fiery darts of the evil one [Eph. 6:14-17]. And, in the faith context, the evil one is the spirit of antichrist [1 John 4:3]. What we have here is a pastor whose faith foundation is flawed.

The other problem area with this pastor is in the context of power. His problem is specifically that of over-control of everyone and every thing in his church. It may be said about him that he has a controlling spirit. Some might describe his own spirit that way, when in reality it may be a spirit of control that is oppressing him, mentally. That spirit of control is known scripturally as a spirit of fear (bondage) [Rom. 8:15]. This pastor is passing on to his lay leaders the bondage to which he, himself, is subject. He has no spiritual shoes of preparation of the gospel of peace (rest) [Eph. 6:18]. And, it affects his walk. He is likely to stumble a lot. Because of his fear, he cannot be at rest and trust his lay leaders.

There was a lesser problem in the Spirit context (score of 3). We see a conflict between the pastor’s apparent desire to serve the Lord and his lack of meaningful relationships with members of his congregation. His heart flaw comes into play here, being counterfeit love [Mat. 15:19]. He cannot extend Jesus’ love to members of his congregation on a one-to-one basis (which is the way Jesus did it). When he leads congregational worship, it is all enthusiasm without anointing. It may also be the manifestation of a spirit of divination (Gr.-python).

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<sup>3</sup> The Joshua Walk, Seventy Steps to Christian Maturity, by John H. Painter, Copyright 1992, 2006, No ISBN. [http://alphaaquila.org/Library/book\\_tjw\\_download.pdf](http://alphaaquila.org/Library/book_tjw_download.pdf)

It is my judgment that this pastor was mentally misguided by demonic influence. His ministry was disabled according to the various symptoms listed. He needed deliverance. In the event, he did not receive deliverance and the discerning Christians in his congregation went elsewhere. Within six months of my interview with the elder, the church had failed.

An interesting sidenote is that a protégé of the example pastor started a church in my community. I and my family attended that church for a year or so, until some of the same symptoms showed up. We did not know of the connection between the local pastor and the example pastor at that time. We only found out about that connection after we had left the new church and it, too, had failed.

### **PART-3: GETTING HELP FOR CHRISTIAN AFFLICTION.**

#### **RELIEF OF CHRISTIAN AFFLICTION.**

##### **Getting Help.**

A Christian can't just decide to do better. It's not a matter of doing (works). It's a matter of going boldly to the Throne for timely help [Heb. 4:16]. This is very specific help, not just something general. And, the emphasis is on the word, "timely." It's specific help, in time. That is, before it's too late. Remember, these chastenings may lead to death, if not abated. And, ministries may hang in the balance, which cannot be effective until the demonic oppression is either removed or limited.

<b>SPIRIT OF GOD</b>	<b>DEMONIC SPIRIT OPPOSED</b>	<b>CONTEXT</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>
Spirit of Faith	Antichrist	FAITH	[2 Cor. 4:13]
Spirit of Truth	Error	TRUTH	[1 John 4:6]
Spirit of Prophecy	Divination	SPIRIT	[Rev. 19:10]
Spirit of Power, Love, and a Sound Mind	Fear	POWER	[2 Tim. 1:7]
Spirit of Meekness	Uncleanness	MINISTRY	[1 Cor. 4:21]
Spirit of Revelation	Slumber	DOCTRINE	[Eph. 1:17]
Spirit of the Mouth of the Lord	Infirmity	MATURITY	[2 Ths. 2:8]

**Table 4. Seven Manifestations of the Holy Spirit.**

Going to the Throne means going to Jesus. That's where He is [Heb. 12:2]. The needed help will come through the Holy Spirit, in one of His seven manifestations. Yes, that's right. There are seven Holy Spirit manifestations that match the seven contexts [Rev. 3:1]. Table 4., above, shows these, lined up with the demon classes that are opposed.

##### **Spiritual Warfare and The Will of God.**

A focus on spiritual warfare is found in today's Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Spiritual warfare includes the means to drive away demons that are causing trouble with believers or nonbelievers, alike. Such trouble may include health

problems. However, if God has allowed the problem as chastening, then the chastened cannot expect to be successful in warring against the demon spirit, until God's will allows it. And, that presumably will be after the chastened Christian has figured out what is needed. So, a Christian under chastening must needs figure out what God's will is, in the particular instance.

One Christian may engage in spiritual warfare for another who is under demonic attack. But, the principle is the same as above. Before attempting to drive out a spirit of infirmity [Luke 13:11] from another, a Christian needs to discern what the will of God is, in the matter. This is because such exorcism may be what I call a gratuitous good work, which Jesus has not commissioned to be performed. Jesus says that He will view such as iniquity [Mat. 7:22-23]. Remember, Jesus always checked with the Father, before doing anything [John 5:19]. Likewise, we can do nothing without Jesus [John 15:5].

### **Authorization.**

The oppressed Christian may deal personally with the demonic oppressors, or the services of a Deliverance Minister may be obtained. The Christian will know which is the proper route to take. This writer knows of two very successful ones. Both have books available. If the Christian is to effectively combat his/her personal demons, these books are recommended.<sup>4, 5</sup>

Obtaining authorization from Jesus for removing the demons requires communication and a personal relationship with Jesus. If the Christian has it, then the Christian is in a position to proceed to determine the positive authorization and subsequent driving away of the oppressing demons. In making this determination, it is likely that the will of God in the matter will also be revealed to the Christian.

Given a positive authorization, then the final steps may be taken.

### **Closing the Door.**

Once repentance and authorization are obtained, sin is no longer an open door to oppression. As stated in [Heb. 12:1], sin is no longer of the besetting kind. Disposing of the troubling demon then becomes a matter of the methods of spiritual warfare. These include binding the demon and loosing the Christian [Mat. 12:22-29, 16:19, 18:18]. Included are dismantling the demon's stronghold, which is the space he occupies, and casting down all mental activities that rise up against the Christian's knowledge of God and obedience to Christ [2 Cor. 10:4-6]. Repentance paves the way for this step.

All of this is done in the Name of Jesus [Mark 16:17] and in the Spirit [Mat. 12:28]. For, the Holy Spirit is the "finger of God" in this activity [Luke 11:20]. The demons are overcome by the Blood of Jesus and the word of the believer's testimony [Rev. 12:11]. All this requires prayer and perhaps fasting [Mark 9:29].

The person removing the demons must understand his authority to do these things. That authority comes from our seating in Christ in the heavenlies [Eph. 2:6].

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<sup>4</sup> The Bondage Breaker, Revised, by Neil T. Anderson, Harvest House Publishers, 2000, ISBN: 0736902414.

<sup>5</sup> Liberating the Bruised, by Dr. Joe Allbright, Joe E. Allbright Evangelistic Assoc., Inc., 17014 Summer Dew Lane, Houston, TX 77095-1234. (Available through Amazon.com)

The “in Christ” means that individually we are in Him and He in us, in the sense of the “branch in the Vine” analogy [John 15:4]. And, that place of seating is superior to that of any demon [Eph. 1:20-21]. So, our authority is that delegated to us by Jesus, when we are “in Christ.” That’s why we do these things in His Name.

The books by Anderson and Allbright are a great help to the Christian, in dealing with demons. And, in the coming times, dealing with demons is going to be a major part of Christianity’s task. For there is coming a time when Satan and all his demons shall be cast out of heaven and confined to the Earth. They shall then be a major concern to Christianity.

### **Hindrance to Prayer – A House Divided.**

Jesus illustrated dealing with a demon as entering a strong man’s house and spoiling his goods [Mark 3:27]. Here, “spoiling” meant seizing or plundering. And, He explained that the strong man must first be bound, as with ropes. Jesus gave Christians the authority to bind or loose anything on earth, as having been bound or loosed in heaven. He gave this authority to Christians operating in agreement, in pairs [Mat. 18:18-20]. After arming His disciples with authority, He sent them out in pairs [Mark 6:7]. He also clarified that whatever is asked in His Name, he will perform it [John 14:13-14].

There is a little known fact in [Deut. 32:30] that if one can put one thousand to flight, two can put ten thousand to flight. I interpret this to mean that there is a leverage factor of five in prayer by two, agreeing. That is, a prayer by two in agreement is five times as powerful as two in individual prayer. I believe that this is the reason Jesus sent his disciples out by twos.

A Christian family, or house in Biblical usage, usually is headed by two elders, being the Christian father and mother (or grandfather and grandmother). When this pair of elders pray in agreement, the five-fold leverage factor is in play. But, should the elders be in disagreement, the five-fold advantage is lost. This is known as a house, being divided. In fact, Jesus said that a house divided cannot stand, as in being stable [Mark 3:25]. Peter instructs husbands how to live with wives so that their (plural) joint prayers are not hindered [1 Pet. 3:7].

When a Christian family conducts spiritual warfare, it is very important that the husband/wife teams be in agreement, and not be divided.

### **CONCLUSION.**

This writing has focused on the individual Christian who, like Paul, is suffering God’s chastisement through demonic affliction. As the Bible says, no chastisement is fun [Heb. 12:11]. Paul’s was not to death, although he mentioned some that were. Job, however, was restored. Our hope is that we, too, may be restored, at least to the point of being useful to God in the ministries He would have us do.

What has been given here is a set of steps, with enough scriptural tools, so that it may be useful to the believer. The purpose is to help him/her restore themselves or others to the extent that God will allow. And, the first step is to understand what is going on, and that it is scriptural.

It is the writer’s desire that the reader be led to understanding of the matter of Christian chastisement by God. Understanding is first a matter of being taught

knowledge and good judgment [Psa. 119:66]. Then, converting the knowledge to understanding is a gift of God (five verses in [Psa. 119]). I pray that the reader will receive this gift.