

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WAY TO FREEDOM

A consecrated believer can fall into passivity in a foolish and deceived way for several years and still be ignorant of the danger of his own position. He can become more and more passive as time passes, until the sphere of passivity becomes so great that it inflicts unspeakable pain to his mind, emotion, body, and environment. Hence, it is essential to preach the true meaning of consecration to him. In the previous chapters we emphasized the importance of knowledge because the knowledge of the truth is absolutely indispensable in rescuing one from passivity. Without the knowledge of the truth, it is impossible to experience deliverance. A passive believer falls into his condition because of deception, and the reasons for deception are foolishness and ignorance. Without foolishness and ignorance it would be impossible to be deceived.

KNOWING THE TRUTH

We have to know the truth concerning all things. We have to know the truth concerning co-working with God; we have to know the truth concerning the work of evil spirits; we have to know the truth concerning consecrating ourselves; and we have to know the truth concerning supernatural things. This is the first step toward deliverance. A believer must know the truth concerning the source and nature of all of his experiences before he has the hope of deliverance. The believer is (1) deceived, (2) then he becomes passive, (3) then he becomes possessed, (4) then he is deceived into further passivity. Therefore, if a believer wants to be free, to avoid being possessed, and to avoid all the deception and passivity that come as a result of possession, he must remove the deception. If the first point—deception—is eliminated, then other points—passivity, possession, and further deception and passivity—will be disintegrated one after another. When a person is deceived, he opens a door for evil spirits to come in. When a person is passive, he gives ground for evil spirits to stand and remain. The result of this action is possession by demons. In order to be delivered from possession, one must remove the passivity. In order to remove the passivity, one must remove the deception. In order to remove the deception, one has to know the truth. Therefore, the knowledge of the truth is the first step toward deliverance. Indeed, only the truth can set men free!

Since the beginning of this book, we have repeatedly warned the believers about the danger of all supernatural experiences (such as signs, voices, miracles, wonders, flames, speaking in tongues, sensations, etc.). We do not mean that all supernatural experiences should be refused, rejected, and opposed. This would be unscriptural to say, because the Bible tells us that God has done many supernatural things. Our purpose is to show the believers that there is not only one source of supernatural experiences. Evil spirits can imitate what God can do. It is very important to distinguish what is and is not from God. If a believer has not died to his emotional life and earnestly seeks after experiences in his feeling, he will be deceived. We are not saying that believers should refuse all supernatural things. We are simply advising the believers to refuse all of the supernatural things from Satan. In this chapter we want to point out the fundamental differences between the work of the Holy Spirit and that of evil spirits so that believers will know how to distinguish between the two.

Today believers are particularly susceptible to deceptions in supernatural things. Because of these deceptions, they are possessed by evil spirits. We earnestly hope that a believer would spend the time to discern supernatural things to avoid being deceived. A believer should never forget that if the Holy Spirit gives him a supernatural experience,

he can still use his own mind. There is no need for him to be totally or partially passive to obtain such an experience. Even after receiving such an experience, he can still use his own conscience to discern what is good and evil, and he can decide to accept or reject it. There should be no compulsion. If evil spirits give a person a supernatural experience, they must first put him into a state of passivity; his mind must become blank, and all of his actions must be driven by an outside power. This is the basic difference. In 1 Corinthians 14, the apostle speaks of the spiritual, supernatural gifts of the saints. Among them, there are revelations, prophecies, speaking in tongues, and other supernatural expressions. The apostle admits that they all come from the Holy Spirit. But in verse 32 he tells us the characteristic of these divine gifts. "The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets." The apostle said that if a prophet (believer) obtains something that is really from the Holy Spirit, the spirit that he has obtained will be subject to him. If the Holy Spirit gives man numerous types of supernatural experiences, the spirit is still subject to him; the Holy Spirit will not go against man's will to use any part of his body. A man should still have control over himself. Only the spirit that is subject to the prophet is from God. Any spirit that demands the prophet's subjection is not from God. Therefore, we should not refuse all supernatural things. However, we have to check whether or not the supernatural spirit requires us to submit to him passively. If a person who has received the gift of tongues or some other similar gift cannot control himself, if he cannot speak when he wants to speak and be quiet when he wants to be quiet, if he cannot sit still and is forced to throw himself on the ground, or if a power from outside controls him, this indicates that the spirit he has received is an evil spirit. This is the basic difference between the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of evil spirits. The former wants man to have full freedom, while the latter want man to be passive. Therefore, if a believer wants to know where his own experience comes from, he should do some checking and find out if he is passive or not. This will solve all the problems. A believer is deceived because he does not know this basic truth.

Therefore, if a believer wants freedom, he must eliminate his foolishness. In other words, he must know the truth. Knowing the truth simply means knowing the real condition concerning a matter. The lies of Satan bind the believer, and the truth of God sets the believer free. But there is a problem: in order to know the truth, one needs to pay the price, because this truth will shatter the vainglory which the believer gained from his past experiences. He may think that he is making twice as much progress as others, that he is already spiritual, and that he will not make mistakes. It is very difficult to make him admit that he may be possessed by the demons or prove to him that he is in fact possessed by the demons! If a believer is not willing to be faithful to all the truth of God, it will be very hard for him to accept the truth that will cause him to suffer and be humbled. Accepting what one likes is not hard; but accepting the truth that takes away one's vainglory is not so easy. However, whoever vehemently resists this truth should be careful lest he be possessed by demons. It is easier for him to realize that he can be deceived. It is much more difficult for him to realize that he is already possessed and admit that he is possessed! God must grant us the grace. Otherwise, even if we know the truth, we will still resist it. To accept the truth is the first step to salvation. We have to be willing to know all the truth concerning ourselves. Nevertheless, it takes humility and honesty to be willing to know the truth concerning our own spiritual and supernatural experiences.

There are different ways for possessed believers to obtain the truth. Some have been bound so tightly that they have lost their freedom in everything. As a result, this causes them to wake up and realize the truth about themselves. Some believers obtain the truth because they realize that even though ninety-nine percent of their experience seems to

come from God, there is still a tiny portion of wrong elements mixed in. This raises their suspicion and causes them to doubt if their experience is really from God. Through this they understand the truth. Some obtain the truth when other believers preach the truth to them and enlighten them concerning the real fact. In whatever way a believer obtains the truth, he should never refuse the first ray of light.

Doubting is the first step to acquiring the truth. This is not to doubt the Holy Spirit or to doubt God and His word. This is to doubt our own past experiences. This doubt is necessary and even scriptural because God wants us to prove the spirits (1 John 4:1). If we believe in something, there is no need to test it; if we have to test it, this means that we cannot decide for certain where it comes from. We often have the wrong idea that this kind of testing may offend the Holy Spirit. We do not realize that the Holy Spirit wants us to make such tests. If something is of the Holy Spirit, it will still be of the Holy Spirit even though it is tested. If it is of evil spirits, it will be exposed as a counterfeit. Has God caused you to fall into your present position? Can there be contradictions in the work of the Holy Spirit? Is it possible that you never make any mistakes in all that you do?

When a believer receives a little light from the truth, he will admit that it is very possible that he can be deceived. This gives the truth a chance to work. The biggest mistake that a believer can make is to think that he can never be wrong. Someone else can be wrong, but he can never be wrong. This will cause him to be deceived to the end. But after he humbles himself, he will see that he has been deceived. If he compares the principle of God's work with the condition of the evil spirits' work, he will see that his past experiences were all received in passivity. He fulfilled the condition of the work of evil spirits, and the result was many strange experiences; in the beginning they made him happy, but later they brought him sufferings. When he makes a comparison between his past attitude, the principle of God's work, and the condition of the evil spirits' work, he will find that he was not actively co-working with God. Rather, he was just trying to passively follow God's will. Therefore, all of his wonderful or frustrating experiences must have come from evil spirits. Then he will admit that he was deceived. A believer must not only receive the truth, he must also acknowledge it. Only by acknowledging the truth are Satan's lies eliminated. A believer's experience should be according to the following steps: (1) he should believe that it is possible for a believer to be deceived; (2) he should particularly believe that it is possible for him to be deceived; (3) he should acknowledge that he is indeed deceived; and (4) then he should go on to ask why he is deceived.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE GROUND

While we can say with certainty that a believer can give ground to evil spirits, we need to ask what the ground is. Before a believer asks what ground he has inside, he should first study what is a ground. Otherwise, he will consider demon-possession to be something that it is not, or something that is not demon-possession to be demon-possession. Perhaps he will confuse his daily spiritual warfare with the dark authority with warfare for the freedom from demon-possession. By doing this, he will afford convenience for evil spirits to do their work.

In addition to the matter of sins, a believer should realize that he allows his will to become passive whenever he accepts the counterfeit of evil spirits, and he gives ground to evil spirits whenever he believes in their injected thoughts. (This point has been discussed in the previous chapter.) Presently our attention is on passivity. Being passive

is allowing one's own mind or body to fall into a state of complete inactivity—stopping the use of all one's faculties. It is stopping all conscious effort to control the mind and use the will, conscience, and memory. Through passivity crucial ground is surrendered. Among the believers, the degree of passivity varies. The depth of passivity dictates the depth of one's possession. Nevertheless, no matter to what degree of passivity the believer has fallen, he should remove this ground as long as there is passivity. A believer should resolutely, definitely, and steadfastly oppose evil spirits from gaining any ground in him. He should particularly oppose them in the areas where he was deceived. It is very important for a deceived believer to know the ground he has given up and claim back the ground.

A common thought concerning the matter of demon- possession is that one only needs to cast the demons out by the name of the Lord. But this method is not adequate when it comes to demon-possession in the believers, because there is a difference between possession in believers and possession in heathens. Heathens are possessed through their sins, while believers are possessed through deception. Hence, the way for deliverance is to be deceived no longer. If the cause of possession is deception, and we only order the demons to depart, we are only dealing with the effect and not the cause. This may work for a while, but one will not gain lasting freedom. Unless one deals with the cause of demon-possession, which has to do with the ground, the demons may obey and leave for a while, but they will come back through the ground they still occupy. This is not a theory. This is what the Lord meant in Matthew 12:43-45. If a "house" in which demons previously lived is not torn down, they may leave for a while, but they will soon come back, and the condition of the man will be worse than before. This "house" is the ground which man gives to evil spirits.

Hence, while it is important to cast out the demons, it is indispensable that one deals with the matter of the ground. Casting out demons is useless if the ground is not dealt with, because the demons will still come back. This is why many believers cannot secure a lasting freedom for themselves or others after casting out the demons in the name of the Lord. While demons can be cast away, the ground cannot be cast away; rather, the ground needs to be reclaimed. Unless one specifically and continuously reclaims the deceived and passive ground, there will not be lasting freedom.

If a believer does not deal with the ground he gives to evil spirits, it will cause evil spirits to come in and stay. Although one may cast out the demons in himself or others in the name of the Lord, and although the demons may appear to have left, the person is not really free. Only certain manifestations of the demons are gone. They may change to another kind of manifestation, or they may stop the present manifestation for a while to avoid further attack. When the believer becomes less watchful, they will renew their manifestations. In short, if the ground is not dealt with, demons will still have something to hold onto. The mind must receive the truth, and the will must vigorously, actively, and resolutely repudiate all the ground. This is the only way.

Therefore, when a believer realizes that he is possessed through deception, he should seek for light, find out what ground he has surrendered, and remove the ground. Evil spirits come in through the ground given to them. If we remove the ground, they will depart.

Therefore, when a believer finds out that he has given ground to evil spirits in a particular matter, he should immediately reclaim the ground. Since he became possessed by giving up his sovereignty and self-control and by falling into passivity, he

should exercise his will vigorously and oppose the power of darkness through the power of God in the midst of various temptations and sufferings, rendering void the promises he gave to the evil spirits in the beginning. Since passivity sets in gradually, it can only be removed gradually. The degree of passivity that the believer has discovered is the degree that he can reject. If the passivity has extended for a long period of time, the deliverance will also take a long time. It is easy to go downhill, but it is hard to go uphill. It is easy to become passive, but it is hard to be free. It requires the cooperation of the believer's whole being to reclaim the ground that he has surrendered. Only then can he be set free.

A believer must pray and ask God to show him where he is being deceived. He must sincerely desire God to show him the true condition of his whole being. Generally speaking, whatever a believer fears to hear and makes him uneasy when it is mentioned is an area where he has given ground to evil spirits. If the believer is afraid of dealing with something, he should deal with it, because nine times out of ten, evil spirits are occupying the ground behind it. A believer must receive light from God to examine his own sickness as well as other factors. After he is clear about his sickness, he should reclaim his ground from evil spirits in a definite way. Light is indispensable. Otherwise, the believer will regard supernatural things as natural things and things that belong to evil spirits as things that belong to the physical body. This enables evil spirits to attach themselves to the believer permanently without any hindrance. Having this attitude is the same as saying "amen" to the demons.

RECLAIMING THE GROUND

There is one common principle that underlies all the ground given to the evil spirits. This is passivity, which means that the will is not active. Hence, in order to reclaim the ground, the will must become active once again. The believer must (1) obey God's will, (2) oppose Satan's will, and (3) exercise his own will and join himself to the will of the saints. The responsibility of reclaiming the ground lies with the will. Since the will was passive, the will has to oppose the passivity.

The first step that the will has to take is to decide. To decide is to set the will in a certain direction. Once a believer, who has suffered from evil spirits, becomes enlightened by the truth and stirred up by the Holy Spirit, he will no longer be able to bear the continuous attachment of evil spirits. Spontaneously, he will be led to a position of hating the evil spirits. He will resolve to oppose all the works of evil spirits. He will decide to regain his freedom and his sovereignty. He will also decide to drive out evil spirits. God's Holy Spirit will work in him to create a hatred for evil spirits. The more he suffers, the more he hates. The more he is bound, the more he hates. The more he thinks about it, and the more time that goes by, the more he hates. In the end, he will be determined to be fully delivered from the power of darkness. This kind of decision is the first step towards reclaiming the ground. If this decision is genuine, a person will not turn back no matter how much he is opposed by evil spirits in the process of his reclamation. He has resolved and made up his mind to oppose evil spirits hereafter.

The believer must also exercise his will to choose. This means that he must choose his own future. In the days of warfare, the choice of a believer occupies an important place. The believer should constantly declare that he chooses freedom, wants freedom, and will not be passive. He will exercise his own faculties and identify all the wiles of evil spirits. He wants the evil spirits to fail, and he wants to cut off all ties with the power of darkness. He will reject all the lies and excuses from evil spirits. This kind of choosing

with the will and this kind of repeated declaration is very useful in warfare. We should realize that this kind of declaration simply shows that the believer has made such a choice; it does not mean that the believer has decided to do such a thing. The power of darkness is not affected by what the believer has "decided" to do. However, if the believer chooses to oppose evil spirits in a specific way with his will, they will flee away. All these things are related to the principle of man having a free will. Although the believer may have once allowed them to come in, he now can choose something different from what he once allowed and leave no ground to evil spirits.

In this warfare, the believer should carry out all the work of the will vigorously. In addition to making decisions and making choices, he must also resist. This means that he exercises the power of the will to withstand evil spirits. Moreover, he should reject. To reject is to close oneself and give nothing to the evil spirits. On the one hand, the believer should oppose the work of evil spirits in him, and on the other hand, he should reject evil spirits. To oppose means to stop evil spirits from further works; to reject means to remove all previous promises given to evil spirits, that is, to remove all the promises that brought in their work. Hence, when rejection is added to opposition, the evil spirits will be unable to work. First we must oppose, then we must have a rejecting attitude. For example, we should reject the evil spirits by saying, "I am resolved." This means that we exercise our will to lay hold of freedom. But we also need to oppose, which means that we have to exert strength in a real way to combat the enemy and maintain the freedom that our will has secured through rejection. This kind of rejection and opposition must continue until we are completely free.

Resisting is a real warfare. Resistance requires the combined strength of the spirit, soul, and body. But the main part that must be exercised is the will. Deciding, choosing, and rejecting are all matters of attitude. But resisting is a matter of practice. Resisting is the act that expresses the attitude. It involves a wrestling in the spirit and with the power of the spirit in which the will pushes out the ground that the evil spirits stand on. It is an assault on the battleground of the power of darkness. Resisting is a driving away, a chasing out, and a pushing aside with the power of the will. Evil spirits occupy the ground that the believer has given to them. When they see the believer's attitude of opposition, they still occupy their original ground and will not retreat. To resist is for the believer to drive out evil spirits with "real power." To resist is for the believer to "compel" the evil spirits and force them to be "evicted." Hence, when a believer is engaged in such a resisting work, he must exert his strength and exercise his will to drive out the evil spirits. Otherwise, a declaration in the attitude is useless. Practice must go side by side with attitude. Moreover, it is of little use to resist without also rejecting, because promises given to evil spirits at the beginning must be reclaimed.

In the process of reclaiming the ground, the believer must decide with his will and choose and reject. He must resist with his will. He must decide to fight the warfare. He must choose freedom. He must reject all ground and withstand the enemy from occupying further ground and taking away his freedom. In the midst of such decision, rejection, choosing, and withstanding, the believer is fighting for his sovereignty. We should never forget the matter of the free will. God has given us a free will. Hence, we ought to be our own master. Yet now, evil spirits have taken over our members and their functions and have become the masters of our "being." We have lost our sovereignty. When a believer begins to reclaim his ground, he is opposing the evil spirits in their work of "replacing" him. Therefore, he has to fight. The believer must continually declare that he will not allow evil spirits to infringe on his right. He will not allow evil spirits to infringe on his personality. He will not allow evil spirits to attach themselves to

him. He will not allow evil spirits to take over his being. He will not follow evil spirits blindly. He will not! He will not! He will be his own master. He wants to know what he is doing. He will take control of his being. He wants his whole being to be subject to him. He rejects all the works of evil spirits on him. He rejects all their rights to work on him. When he exercises his own will to utter his own decision, choice, and rejection, evil spirits will not be able to go on with their works. Since the will has decided, rejected, and chosen, he should follow up with the resistance of his will.

When the believer reclaims the ground with his will, his life will experience a new beginning. What was done wrongly is done. Now he has a fresh start. He can reclaim all the things that he offered to evil spirits. His spirit, soul, and body must be taken back from the enemy. He should consecrate them once again to God. All the ground given to evil spirits through ignorance should be repudiated. All the rights given to them should be taken back. The way is as follows:

Rejecting everything that he once received.

Departing from everything that he clung to.

Canceling everything that he scheduled.

Repealing everything that he promised.

Not believing in anything that he believed in.

Destroying everything that he did before.

Retracting everything that he said.

Dissolving everything that he joined himself to.

Speaking out on everything that he held silence on.

Opposing everything that he cooperated with.

Refusing to give what he previously gave.

Overturning all previous considerations, discussions, and promises.

Rejecting all previous prayers, answers, and healings.

All these measures are aimed at evil spirits. Previously the believer regarded the evil spirits as the Holy Spirit. Therefore, there was an intimate relationship. Now he is clear about this relationship, and he is going to reclaim what he gave to them in his ignorance. One yields the ground to evil spirits in isolated incidents. Hence, in order to reclaim the ground, one has to remove the barriers one by one. The greatest barrier to freedom for the believer is an attitude of reclaiming with his will the ground in a general, inclusive, and unclear way, while refusing to claim back the ground specifically, point by point, in a detailed way. A general objection to the ground gained by evil spirits will only give the believer a right attitude. In order to gain freedom, he has to reclaim all the ground in detail. This may seem difficult. But if the will is indeed for freedom, and if the believer

asks for the enlightening of God's light, when the Holy Spirit points out everything in the past, he only needs to resist item by item, and everything will go away. If the believer is willing to press on patiently, he will see that this is a practical way to deliverance. Item by item he will be liberated into freedom. A general resistance shows that we are opposed to the evil spirits' work, but a detail resistance forces evil spirits to let go and give up the ground that they held.

For a believer to become passive in his will is like going downhill; everything progresses downward until he falls to the lowest point. In order to reclaim his ground, he has to turn back and ascend step by step. He has to climb up the same number of steps that he descended at the beginning; he cannot skip one step. He gradually fell into deception and passivity, so he must gradually understand and come alive. All the passive places must be overturned one by one and reclaimed one by one. As his feet take another step up, he is reclaiming another step. Formerly, he had another downturn with each step he took. Now, he is making another upturn with each step he takes. We should note that what we have most recently surrendered to evil spirits is what we have to reclaim first. The last step of our descent is the first step of our ascent.

The overturning of the ground in the believer must not stop until he reaches his original place of freedom. A believer must know from where he descended. He must return to his original condition. He should know his normal condition; he should know how active his will was, how clear his mind was, and how strong his body was. He should know his present condition and compare the two. Then he will realize how far he descended through passivity. He has to set his normal condition before him all the time, yet still consider this normal condition as the least of his goals. He should not be satisfied until his will is actively controlling every part of his whole being; until this is reached, he has not reached his normal condition. In the process of regaining his freedom, a believer should clearly identify his normal condition. Only then will he not be deceived to think that he is free when he is in fact not recovered to his normal condition.

We should fully regain the things that we can no longer control, things that seem to lie beyond our sovereign power, whether they be our thoughts, memory, imagination, discernment, judgment, love, power to choose and withstand, or any part of our body that has fallen into passivity and lost its normal condition, which makes us unable to become our own master. We should use our will to oppose this kind of passivity and exercise our will to use our faculties. The moment we fall into passivity, evil spirits will take hold of our passive faculties and use them in our stead or with our help. When we see our own real condition and want to reclaim the ground and use our own faculties again, we will feel that this is very difficult to do. This is because: (1) our own will is still weak and cannot control everything, and (2) the evil spirits will exhaust all their strength to fight us. For instance, a believer may have fallen into passivity in the matter of determination. Even though he repudiates this ground and does not allow evil spirits to work anymore, and even though he has decided to exercise his own determination and not be under the control of evil spirits anymore, he will find that: (1) he cannot determine anything by himself, and (2) evil spirits will not allow him to determine anything or act in any way. When a possessed believer tries to overturn the authority of evil spirits, evil spirits will try to stop their prisoner from acting freely.

Now the believer has to choose whether he will remain passive, allowing evil spirits to continually move him. If he is unwilling to let evil spirits use him in this way, even though he is temporarily unable to "determine" anything, he will not allow evil spirits to use his power of determination. So the battle for freedom begins. This fight is altogether

a contest of the will. Because the will has fallen into passivity, it allows every faculty of the whole being to fall into passivity. The will (the person) has lost its sovereignty and no longer can freely control and direct every faculty of the entire being. As a result, evil spirits come in to substitute for the will (the person) and to control and direct every faculty of the entire being. Hence, if the believer wants to be free, the will needs to rise up to: (1) oppose the rule of evil spirits, (2) recover the lost ground, and (3) work actively together with God and exercise his own entire being. Everything is dependent on the will. When the will opposes the evil spirits and does not allow them to occupy its faculties, they will withdraw. As we have mentioned before, evil spirits are able to come in because the believer gave them permission. Therefore, his present rejection is needed to cancel out his previous consent so that the evil spirits will lose their ground of attack. When he very carefully withstands them, evil spirits cannot possibly work anymore.

Every inch of ground must be recovered. Every point of deception must be exposed. The believer should have the patience to fight with the enemy in everything and fight to the end. He should know that rejecting all the ground does not mean that he has already recovered all the ground, because not all the ground is recovered immediately after he has rejected them. Evil spirits will still make their final struggle. The will of the believer still needs to pass through very fierce warfare before it can become strong, powerful, and free. Hence, the believer must continually carry on to overthrow the ground. Furthermore, he needs to overthrow with endurance, until every point of ground is exposed, rejected, and abolished, until all the faculties of his whole being can turn according to the human will. All the passive faculties should be recovered to their normal working condition. The mind needs to think clearly; it needs to be able to think about the subjects that the will wants to think about. Moreover, no thought should be outside the will's control. The memory needs to be able to memorize the things that a person wants to remember and not be filled with thoughts that he does not want. Other actions of the body—singing, speaking, reading, and praying—also need to be controlled by the will. The will needs to be active so that it can be the master of the whole being. All the various abilities of man's whole being need to function normally.

A believer should not only refuse the ground taken by evil spirits, he also should refuse all the work done by evil spirits. A believer needs to exercise his will to take the stand of opposing all the work of evil spirits. This will inflict suffering upon evil spirits. Then the believer needs to ask God to give him light so that he will know the works of the evil spirits and refuse them one by one. The works of evil spirits on the believer include: (1) replacing the believer's activities and (2) influencing the believer's activities. Therefore, the believer ought to reject their work by not allowing (1) his activities to be replaced or (2) his activities to be influenced. The believer should refuse not only the ground that gives rise to evil spirits but also the ground that preserves them in their present position. When a believer withstands in this way, he will see them use all of their means to oppose him. Unless he engages them in combat with all his might, he cannot return to his normal condition and regain his freedom. When a believer battles this way, he will discover that initially he cannot use his own faculties. But when he marshalls all his strength to attack their full power, his will can fully bounce back from passivity to activity, and he can once again rule over his whole being. Both passivity and demon-possession are destroyed in the warfare.

When the believer battles to regain his ground, he will pass through very painful times. In resolutely trying to regain his freedom, he will feel great pain and an intense struggle because of the resistance of the power of darkness. When he tries to use his will to (1) oppose the authority of evil spirits and (2) to carry out his duty, he will experience the

intensity of the resistance of the evil spirits who have been occupying him. When he begins to fight he does not realize how deeply he has fallen. Only after he has fought with evil spirits little by little and regained the ground bit by bit, feeling the opposition and bondage from the evil spirits, does he realize the depth of his fall. Because evil spirits are so intense in their opposition, and because they are so reluctant to let go of their bondage, his symptoms become worse when he initiates the warfare to regain the ground. It seems that the more he fights, the less power he has, and the areas that are possessed by the enemy are more confused and disorderly. This condition is a sign of victory. Although the believer feels worse than before, his condition is actually improving because these symptoms indicate that the believer's resistance has produced effects, and the evil spirits are feeling the believer's attack. Consequently, they have risen up to resist. However, this is only their final struggle. If the believer persists, evil spirits will definitely flee.

During this warfare, it is very important for the believer to always stand on Romans 6:11, recognizing that he is one with the Lord and that since the Lord has died, he has died also. This faith will free him from the authority of evil spirits because they have no authority over a dead man. This must be the believer's firm standing. During this time he also has to learn to use the Word of God to deal with all the lies of the enemy, because they will tell him that he has fallen so deep that he cannot be restored. In the midst of the suffering of the conflict, particularly when the evil spirits are making their last struggle and the believer experiences the uttermost pain, they will cause him to become discouraged and feel that he is hopeless and unable to be free. If the believer listens to the devil, he will fall into the greatest danger. The believer must realize that Golgotha has destroyed Satan and his evil spirits (Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:14-15; John 12:31-32). Salvation has been accomplished. Every believer can be delivered out of the authority of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love in his experience (Col. 1:13). Moreover, based on the fact that the reclaiming of ground has brought about greater suffering, we know that the evil spirits are trembling at this reclaiming work. Therefore, what has been done is right, and more ground should be recaptured. No matter what new manifestations evil spirits come up with, and no matter how much they have caused one to suffer or act, as long as he recognizes that the source is evil spirits, he should reject the manifestations and ignore them. Do not feel sorry about them or discuss them. After one has refused them, he should not pay any more attention to them.

If a believer is very faithful to ignore any temporary sadness and boldly reclaim his ground with his will, he will see his freedom gradually coming back. If the ground is rejected and reclaimed in a detailed way, the degree of demon-possession will also be reduced bit by bit. If a believer does not give new ground to evil spirits, the power of demon-possession will decrease in proportion to the shrinking of their ground. Although it may take some time before a believer can be completely free, nevertheless, he is on the way to freedom. Perhaps in the past he had no feeling for himself, for his own senses, his appearance, or his daily life. Now gradually these feelings will come back. The believer should not be misled to think that his spiritual life is going backward because he feels these things once again. He should realize that he lost consciousness of these things when he was possessed by the demons. Since he is beginning to be freed, the feelings for them are coming back. These feelings show that evil spirits were attached to his senses but they are departing from him now. When a believer reaches this step, he should advance faithfully, because he will soon experience a full release. However, before he has returned to his normal condition, he should not be satisfied with a little success. If the demons are to be fully expelled, the ground must be fully recovered.

THE TRUE LEADING

We should understand God's way of leading as well as the relationship between man's will and God's will.

We must realize that a believer's submission to God should be unconditional. Moreover when a believer's spiritual life has reached a climax, his will should be one with God's will. This does not mean that the believer no longer has his own will. The faculty of the will still exists, but the natural temperament is gone. God still needs the faculty of man's will to work with Him for the accomplishment of His will. When we look at the pattern of the Lord Jesus, we can see that a person who is one with God still has the capability of his will. "I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30). "Not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me" (6:38). "Yet, not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Here we can see that the Lord Jesus who is one with the Father has His own will besides the Father's will. The verses do not say that He does not have His will; rather, they say that He did not seek, perform, or accomplish His own will. Therefore, whoever is really one with God should not eliminate the function of the will; rather, he should put his will on the side of God's will.

Genuine leading does not mean that the believer should obey God like a machine. Rather, it means that the believer should actively carry out God's will. God does not want the believer to follow Him blindly; He wants the believer to use his whole being sensibly to do His will. Lazy ones like to see God acting for them while they passively follow. But God does not want believers to be lazy. God wants believers to vigorously prepare their members and actively obey after they have spent the time to examine and understand God's will. We have spoken previously on how to know God's will through the intuition. Therefore, we will not repeat it here. If a believer desires to obey God, he must go through the following steps: (1) he must resolve to obey God's will (John 7:17); (2) he must receive the revelation concerning God's will through his intuition (Eph. 5:17); (3) he must be strengthened by God to resolve to carry it out (Phil 2:13); and (4) he must be strengthened by God to execute it (Phil. 2:13). God will not replace the believer in carrying out His will. After a believer understands God's will, he should set his will to carry it out. After his will is set, he should claim the power of the Holy Spirit to carry it out practically.

A believer must claim the power of the Holy Spirit because his will is too weak to act alone. It is always the case that "to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not" (Rom. 7:18). Therefore, the Holy Spirit is needed to strengthen our inner man so that we can practically obey God. First God operates within us to make us willing. Next God operates within us for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

God reveals His will through our intuition. If a believer's will is united to Him, God will multiply strength to the believer and enable the believer to set his will according to God's will and carry it out. God wants the believers to be one with His will. Yet He does not want to replace His children in the application of their will. God's purpose in creating and redeeming man is that man would become completely free in his will. Through the salvation accomplished by the Lord Jesus on the cross, believers today can freely choose and follow God's will. This is why many commandments in the New Testament (all of them pertaining to life and godliness) require the exercise of the will on the part of the believer to choose or reject. If God wanted to eliminate the faculty of the will, would these commandments have any meaning?

A spiritual believer is one who has the full power to exercise his own will. He should constantly choose God's will and reject Satan's will. Although many times he cannot tell what is from God and what is from Satan, he can still choose and reject. He can say, "Although I do not know what belongs to God and what belongs to the devil, I will choose God and refuse the devil." Though he does not know what belongs to God, he can choose God in his "motive" and choose everything that is of God. He can adopt the attitude that he does not want anything that is from the devil, whatever it may be. Whatever comes upon him, he should choose and reject. It does not matter if he does not know; he still must always choose God's will. He can say, "Whenever I know God's will, I want it. I will always choose God's will and reject Satan's will." By doing this, God's Holy Spirit will work within him, and He will strengthen the will that stands against Satan day by day to the point that Satan will lose his power day by day. Then God will gain one more faithful servant in a rebellious world. When one continuously rejects Satan's will in his motive and asks God to prove what is according to Him, he will realize in his spirit the great role that the attitude of the will plays in the spiritual life.

SELF-RULE

When the believer's spiritual life reaches its climax, he can rule over himself. When we say that the Holy Spirit within us lords over us, we do not mean that the Holy Spirit Himself directly rules over any part of our person. If the believer has this misunderstanding, he will either be possessed by the demons or become discouraged when he does not see the Holy Spirit ruling over his life in this way. If a believer realizes that the Holy Spirit is leading him into self-rule, he will not fall into passivity; on the contrary, he will advance greatly in his spiritual life.

"The fruit of the Spirit is...temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23, KJV). The original meaning of temperance is self-control. The work of the Holy Spirit is to lead the believer's outer man into full submission to his self-rule. The Holy Spirit depends on the believer's renewed will to reign over himself. Whenever a believer acts according to the flesh, the outward man rebels against the spirit. This rebellion does not come as one integrated rebellion, but as uncoordinated rebellious acts. When a believer is really spiritual and when he bears the fruit of the Spirit, not only can kindness, joy, meekness, etc., be found in him (in his soul), but also the power of self-control can be found in him. Although the outward man was confused at one time, it is now totally subdued and fully under the reign of his own rule in accordance with the will of the Holy Spirit.

First a believer must control his spirit so that his spirit is always in a proper condition. It should not be too hot or too depressed, but in a proper position. Our spirit, like our other parts, needs to be under the control of our will. A believer can only control his own spirit and keep it in the proper place when his mind is renewed and when he is full of the power of the Holy Spirit. The experienced believer knows that when his spirit becomes agitated, he has to exercise his will to control it. When the spirit becomes too depressed, he has to exercise his will to uplift it. Only in this way can the believer walk in the spirit every day. This word does not contradict what we said before about the spirit ruling over the whole being. When we say that the spirit controls our whole being, we mean that the intuition of the spirit expresses God's will. Consequently, the spirit controls our whole being (including our will) through God's will. When we say that our will controls our whole being, we mean that our will is directly controlling our whole being (including our spirit) according to God's will. Experientially these two things are fully compatible with each other. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Prov. 25:28).

Second, the believer should control his mind and the other faculties of his soul. Every thought should be subjected to the control of the will. All wandering thoughts must come under the control of the will. "Take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). "Set your mind on the things which are above" (Col. 3:2).

Third, the body should be under control. Man's body should be a tool to him and not become his master through wild cravings and lusts. The believer must use his will to control, train, and subdue his body so that it can be completely obedient and wait on God's will without any resistance. "But I buffet my body and make it my slave" (1 Cor. 9:27). When the believer's will reaches the state of total self-control, he will not be frustrated by any part of his being. Once he knows God's will, he can instantly respond. Both the Holy Spirit and man's spirit need an autonomous will to carry out God's revelation. Hence, on the one hand, we should be one with God; on the other hand, we should buffet our whole being so that it will obey us fully. This is very important to our spiritual life.