

MOVING BEYOND THE PAST

Lesson 9: Closing the Doors In Our Lives

Closing the Doors In Our Lives

"The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor ",
(Luke 4: 17 -19).

Introduction: In the Scripture above, Jesus quoted from the book of Isaiah in describing His ministry here on the earth. Good news for the poor, sight for the blind, freedom for the captives, and liberty to the oppressed are integral parts of His ministry to us. As we receive His healing touch in our lives, we are transformed from hurting, wounded individuals into "oaks of righteousness", the planting of the Lord (Isaiah 61:3), strong and vibrant believers who display the splendor of the Almighty in all aspects of our lives. Oak is one of the strongest wood there is on earth. Oak like any tree stays where it is planted. It has solid roots. It is one of the most beautiful woods there is when sanded and stained. Are you becoming a solid oak of righteousness? It occurs by closing every door in your life that would allow Satan to influence you for evil.

If we are going to move beyond the past, then we must not repeat the sins of the past, they should not be part of our life today. We must close all doors of entry-not allow Satan entry into our life.

God's will for us is that we experience the abundant life that He desires to give us. The Scripture is clear, however, that Satan will try to short-circuit God's plan for us. His mission is to kill, steal, and destroy. But God's will is that we have life and have it MORE ABUNDANTLY! Let's look at how Satan gains entry into our lives and how to close those doors that may have allowed him entrance.

I. There are two main ways that Satan gains entrance into believers' lives.

A. Illegal intrusion

1. Satan has no legal rights in the life of a believer. He is an illegal intruder, and he knows it! He trespasses deliberately, hoping that we will permit it or tolerate it.
2. Ephesians 6:12-18 tells us how the devil continually fires his darts and accusations against us, always trying to pierce our armor. But if we keep our armor on, he will not be able to gain entrance.
3. James 4:7-8 gives us further instructions on how to thwart the devil's plans against us. As we draw near to God and resist the devil, he will flee! Give him no place in your life! Keep your "house" clean and filled with the Holy

Spirit, and there will be no point of illegal entry for him.

4. If the devil is only an intruder and has no right in our lives, then we need only to bind him and cast him out to solve the problem. However, sometimes we may be offering him legal rights to stay.

B. Legal intrusion

1. Ephesians 4:27 warns us not to give the devil a foothold in our lives. When we do, we give him legal right into our lives.
2. Romans 6:16 makes it clear that we become slaves to whatever we offer ourselves to obey. We choose to become a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness. 2 Peter 2: 19 further develops the thought by stating that "*a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.*" To submit to Satan and sin makes us slaves to him and gives him legal access into our lives.
3. Many people fail to understand that sin in itself brings a curse. Sins of the past definitely affect the future, and the only way to clear the past of sin is to remove any arguments that can be found against us. If Satan has found legal grounds of entry, then all the doors must be closed before we can effectively bind him and cast him out of our lives.

II. Doors of entry

A. Willful sin - "*Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?*" (Luke 6:46)

1. Willfully disobeying the written and prophetic Word of God produces spiritual death (separation from God) and cuts us off from the blessing of God.
2. Satan lies to us and tells us that what we want to do is right and that God's way is foolish. It is the very same, age-old tactic that he used to lead Adam and Eve astray.
3. Willful sin may involve words, thoughts, actions or feelings. When we willfully disobey God in any of these areas, we open a door of entry to the devil.

B. Unforgiveness - "*Forgive your brother from your heart*" (Matthew 18:35).

1. Jesus spoke often concerning the importance of forgiving those who hurt us. In the above-mentioned Scripture, He stressed the displeasure of the Father towards those who refuse to forgive others, even after receiving forgiveness from the Father for their many sins.

2. We are required to forgive others in the same way that the Father has forgiven us. We cannot expect to receive forgiveness for our sins if we stubbornly refuse to extend forgiveness to others (Matthew 6:14-15).
3. There is no limit on how many times we have to forgive or under what conditions (Matthew 18:21-22). Forgiveness is without number, condition or boundaries. It is to be as broad and limitless as the Father's forgiveness is towards us.
4. Refusal to forgive imprisons us. We are the ones who ultimately suffer for our decision to withhold forgiveness. We put ourselves behind spiritual "prison bars" that hold us just as securely as physical bars contain prisoners in jail (Matthew 18:34). But when we forgive others, we not only set them free, but we also are set free from the "tormentors."

C. Inner vows - *"Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one"* (Matthew 5:37).

1. Careless, flippant speech, especially where we swear or vow, can bring destructive results. Taking an oath is a serious thing and should not be regarded lightly (Matthew 5:33-36).
2. Moses warned the people in Numbers 30:2 against making vows and oaths and then failing to keep their word. It is a serious thing to say we are going to do or not do something then violate our words through our actions.
3. Inner vows are mental or vocal declarations that say such things as, "I'll never do," or "I'll never be like." We can recognize an inner vow at work when the very thing we say we hate in those we've judged becomes evidenced in our own lives.

D. Judgments - *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged"* (Matthew 7:1-5).

1. When we step into the role of judge, we place ourselves in a precarious condition because we will be judged "with the same measure [we] use". God alone is the Judge of all.
2. When we judge others, we determine their motives, their guilt or innocence, and their punishment. We might judge through the words we speak or simply through the thoughts we think.
3. Romans 2:1 says that we are without excuse in judging others. Leave all judgment in the hands of God, lest you bring judgment upon yourself.

E. Bitter Root Judgment and Expectancy

1. Although the seed is small, left unchecked, it can grow a deep root. We wind up reaping again and again later (Gal 6:7). (We never sow one seed and get back one seed.) The law of sowing and reaping guarantees that no one ever gets away with anything at any time in any place.
2. The impersonal law of God causes reward or punishment to come upon us (Prov. 13:21)
3. Only the cross applied by repentance and confession, and the Lord's forgiveness will release you from the root of bitterness.
4. A bitter root judgment has an expectancy with it: in whatever area you judged a parent comes the expectation that trait will return to you, either in your character, in a future mate, or in relationship with others.