

Release from Mental Torment



Walking Through the Land of God's Promises (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we together go one stage further in our conducted tour through the land of God's promises.

Yesterday I gave the Bible's answer to the question "How to become a child of God." Today I am going to deal with one of the commonest problems of our age, the problem of mental torment. I'm going to share with you how to obtain release from this kind of torment.

We need to understand that in our contemporary culture and civilization we are exposed to many different kinds of pressures and they seem always to be increasing, never diminishing. They would be far too numerous to attempt to name them all but let me just give you some simple examples.

One common form of pressure is peer pressure from our own particular group, our own age level, our own social level, the pressure to conform, to be like the rest of the group. This is manifested in a very obvious way when children are in school together. There's a pressure to do what all the other kids are doing. For instance, a child may be pressured into smoking marijuana because all the other kids are doing it. Or to using swear words or unclean words simply because everybody else is doing it and not to do it makes you stand out like a sore thumb. Or the pressure goes on as we grow up in life, in upper brackets it's known as "keeping up with the Joneses." The other family across the street has got a new car, we have to have a new car; they built a swimming pool, we've got to build a swimming pool. There's an almost ceaseless pressure to be like others and to keep up with others, often in a way that's contrary to our own inner nature and real personality.

Again, another obvious pressure is economic pressure, the pressure to earn enough to satisfy your material desires and to provide some security for your old age and to do the things that people do and most things in that order, the key to being able to do them is money. So there's a continual pressure to get money. And usually, no matter how much money people get, it never seems to be enough.

Then there are some more basic pressures. The mere pressure to survive, as for instance in the fight against

disease. Many, many people have had a condition diagnosed which in a shorter or a longer term is likely to prove fatal. So you may be one of those fighting against a disease in which the prognosis is that it's going to take your life, maybe in a few months, maybe in a few years. And so you have this kind of sentence of death hanging over you, a form of pressure.

Now often associated with such pressures there is a voice that speaks to your mind. Sometimes it's even an audible voice but many times it's just an inner voice and yet the things it says can be formulated in clear and specific sentences. Now we need to understand that where there's a voice, there's a person behind the voice. There's no such thing in the universe as a voice without a person. The presence of a voice indicates the presence of a person.

Many times the voice we hear in such situations accuses us or torments us in some way. If the voice that comes to our mind accuses or torments, then we know for sure one thing: behind that voice there is a person and that person is Satan. Bear in mind, he, Satan, the devil, is the accuser and the tormentor. When you have an accusing, tormenting voice in your mind, in your life, pressuring you, driving you, goading you, you know without further evidence that the devil is at work in your life.

Let me give you examples of common forms of accusation and torment that the devil brings against people's minds and each one of the examples I've given you I have met, more than once, in counseling with people who are under mental pressure and experiencing mental torment.

One common accusation is: God doesn't love you. You feel rejected and lonely. Other people seem to be able to relate to God, God seems to have a plan for other people's lives but you're the exception.

Or, "You'll always be a failure." Maybe that voice not only comes to you just directly to your mind but it comes to you through another person. Maybe through your parents or through your life's partner. "You'll always be a failure." "You've failed so many times that there just doesn't seem to be any alternative for you in life but failure." And there's this voice telling you you'll always be a failure.

Or, "You're going out of your mind." In counseling sessions I've been astonished how many people have a voice that says to them, "You're going out of your mind." It usually says something like this, "You know your aunt died in a mental home and there's something strange with your grandmother and you're going to be the next one." And I don't think that it's possible to put in words how agonizing that kind of torment is.

And then there's the torment that's associated with physical pain, symptoms of disease. Like, "That pain is caused by cancer." You have a pain somewhere in your abdomen, maybe you have other symptoms, some kind of bleeding and you're too frightened to go to the doctor and get an X-ray or an examination but ceaselessly, day and night, there's this thought that's formed in your mind, "That's cancer. It's cancer that's causing that pain." Quite possibly there's probably very little wrong with you but you're just tormented and too frightened to face up to the challenge of your tormentor.

Now there's a description in the Bible of a man who underwent that kind of torment and he summed it up very vividly in a few words that I'd like to share with you. The man was Job and these words are found in Job 3:25-26. Listen to what Job says:

> "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil." (NIV)

That's true of countless thousands in our contemporary civilization. "What I feared has come upon me." You see, your fear can open the door to the very thing that you're afraid of. Probably one of the things that causes some people to get cancer is simply a morbid fear of cancer. Certainly one of the factors in people losing their mind is the fear of losing their mind. So the devil uses the fear as a lever to bring something else upon you that follows the fear. "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil." Is that your condition? Does that describe you? I want you to know there is a remedy.

First of all, we need to recognize the door that Satan uses to get into our lives. There are various doors, but I am just going to suggest to you two of the commonest that I've seen many times in counseling sessions. The first door that Satan uses is resentment and unforgiveness in ourselves. We are resentful and unforgiving toward some other person, usually a person that's pretty close to us. It might be a parent, it might be a husband or a wife or a child or a neighbor or a minister in a church, but it's usually somebody we're pretty close to. Then the other door that Satan frequently uses is rebellion, an attitude of rebellion toward God. Sometimes, also toward society, toward human authority. But in its essence it's rebellion toward God, a refusal to submit to the righteous government of God.

Now the remedy first of all, is to close the door. If the door is resentment and unforgiveness, then we have to forgive the

person we resent. We have to lay down that resentment, that bitterness, that hatred. Listen to what Jesus says in the Lord's Prayer: (Matthew 6)

> "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

We have no right to ask God to forgive us beyond the measure in which we forgive others. That's the measure in which God will forgive us. Jesus comments on that:

> "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (NIV)

So if we want forgiveness from God, we have to forgive others. God has laid down that requirement and He will not alter it. Remember, forgiveness is not an emotion, it's a decision. In a sense, it's tearing up the I.O.U. somebody owes you. You've got the I.O.U. in your hand but God has got in His hand a great many I.O.U.'s from you. God says, "You tear up your I.O.U., I'll tear up Mine." That's the first was to close the door, to forgive other people.

But if your problem is rebellion, and especially rebellion against God, then the way to close the door is to submit to God. Again, it's a decision of your will. Listen to what James says in chapter 4, verse 7:

> "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (NIV)

You see, you cannot resist the devil as long as you're resisting God because God is the only one who can give you the faith and the strength and the grace that you need to resist the devil. So, if the devil's tormenting you, the first thing you have to do is to submit to God. Lay down your rebellion toward God. Say, "God, I submit to you. You're my creator, you're in command of the universe and I submit to your righteous government, to your dealings in my life, and I'll do whatever you require of me." Then you have the right to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and to drive the devil out of your life, just as Jesus did when the devil came to Him. He answered him each time, "It is written... it is written... it is written..." Jesus was submitted to God, therefore He could resist the devil. If you will submit to God as Jesus submitted to God, then you have the right to resist the devil. You have the right to say to those voices, "I will listen to you no more. Satan, get out of my life! I'm yielded to God, I belong to God, you have no claims over me! All the claims against me were settled by the death of Jesus on the cross. I now resist you and command you to go from me."

All right. Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be dealing with a theme that follows on very naturally from our theme for today. The theme will be how to enjoy true peace of mind.

Radio Program

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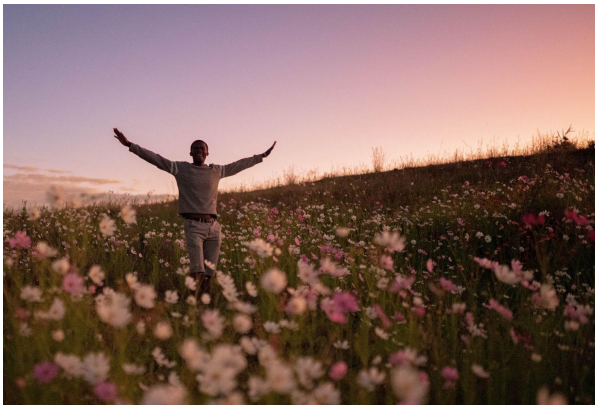

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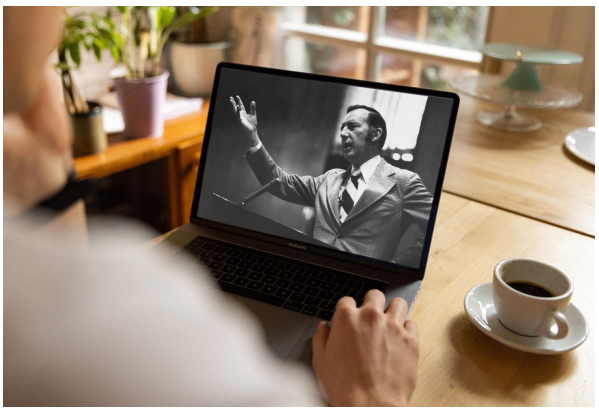

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