

Clancy Nixon's Notes on Deliverance
September, 2016 Clergy Day

I believe that the Scriptures demonstrate that Christians can be demonized. A true Christian cannot be possessed by a demon, which means their will and personality has been overcome and is submerged by a foul spirit, because Satan cannot possess that which already belongs to Christ. However, a Christian can be oppressed by a bad spirit. The only Greek word in NT is *daimonizomai*, transliterated "demonized." There are plenty of biblical injunctions for Christians to withstand the devil, to not let him get a foothold. A demon can get a foothold over a Christian, and attach itself to him or her as a result of a variety of doors that have been opened in our lives. For a thorough review of all the pertinent scriptures on this, see <http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/demon1.html>

Demons can infest people's lives in a variety of ways. Here are the 5 most common ways:

1. By **invitation** of the person or someone in authority over the person. Here spiritual authority can open the door not only for protection, but also for infestation.
2. By **inheritance**. You can inherit the family demons! They can be passed down to you through spiritual authority. These are sometimes called familiar spirits.
3. Through **physical or emotional trauma: deep emotional hurts, or wrong reaction to them**. Evil Spirits can come in through trauma to harass people.
4. Through **sin**, particularly a sin pattern in your life.
5. Through **involvement in the occult**. This is a whole hour teaching in itself. If you use a ministry Questionnaire, which is really an excellent practice, you can easily identify these.

If there is a manifestation such as seemingly impossible body contortions, or self-mutilation, or unusual voice changes, or dramatic facial changes, or outrageous insults or sexual suggestions, then there is a strong indication that a demon is manifesting. The demonic is typically involved when you are praying for healing and **the pain moves, or intensifies** while you are praying. Another way you can tell if deliverance is indicated, says Leanne Payne, is if the person has dreams or recurring thoughts in which the profane is inserted into the holy.

So if someone in our congregation might be demonized, I believe that it is the responsibility of the priest, as a normal part of pastoral care and discipleship, to discern what the problem is, and to see that the person gets the help they need. Either we do it, or we train others to do that. It's important that we **do not automatically attribute** things like sickness or depression or fear to the presence of evil spirits. This has the effect of a) absolving the individual of personal responsibility in cases of emotional difficulties, and b) bringing the person into greater desperation through applying a spiritual remedy that in many of these cases, doesn't work.

Another way to tell if a person is demonized is through the gift of discerning of spirits. This is a really useful gift to pray for regularly.