

Pastor Greg has said "You will have in life what you are willing to live with."

Need for every disciple is to recognize life's spiritual dimension—because when we see only the natural, we misdiagnose the problem and respond the wrong way.

Acts 16:16–18 *One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She earned a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes.*

17 *She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved."*

18 *This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And instantly it left her.*

I. MISSING SPIRITUAL REALITIES

A. Problem with many men - lack of spiritual discernment

Acts 16:16 *One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She earned a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes.*

1. Discernment - means to divide / tell the difference between / see and make decisions appropriately
 - a) Ultimately it comes down to the ability to see beyond what simply on the surface
2. Things gain access to our lives that have the potential to do great harm
 - a) Our text shows us - there was something at work inside this slave girl that was completely opposed to what Paul and the apostles were doing

B. What are the spiritual realities we can miss

1. Hells strategy involves **timing**
 - a) Context of this scripture - they just experienced a radical conversion

Acts 16:15 *She and her household were baptized, and she asked us to be her guests. "If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my home." And she urged us until we agreed.*

- b) Supernatural outreach - Lydia is powerfully converted / and her whole house
 - (1) What can happen in ministry - after a season or time of breakthrough there can be a assault from hell

2. Hells strategy involves **spirituality** - things that look good on the surface but are actually dangerous

Acts 16:17 *She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved."*

- a) **Not everything that is spiritual is good or beneficial:** When Hell says all the right things that can lead men to believe something that's not true
 - (1) **pastoring and pioneering:** When you are pastoring someday you will have well meaning religious people that will come into your church and flatter you: *"That was the most powerful sermon I've ever heard, I've been looking for a full gospel church like this, I would love to help you any way I can."*
 - (a) The problem is foolish pastors let them follow them around for years in ministry - meanwhile under the surface they are hurting you... **YOU CANNOT BUILD A CHURCH ON RELIGIOUS PEOPLE**
3. Hells strategy involves **distractions**
 - a) What can happen is we don't see spiritual strategies against our lives is we become distracted from our calling and our purpose
 - (1) Focus on other people - Paul's attention and focus is now diverted from souls and is apparently fixed on this slave girl
 - (2) Focus on **hobbies** or **entertainment** - often when men are under assault and things are not going well in ministry - they look for a cheap escape from reality / that could be a lot of different things

2 Timothy 4:10 *For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*

II. BECOMING A SPIRITUAL MAN

A. Identify what's following you

Acts 16:17 *She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved."*

1. To be a man of God you have to be a thinker - Disciple is a learner
 - a) Critical in becoming a spiritual man is learning the ability to analyze your own life and ministry
 - b) There can be things that follow men around long after salvation and calling that hurt and hinder them without them even seeing it.
 - (1) The danger isn't that natural observations are always wrong. It's that they are incomplete.
2. Have to see in life what is **unacceptable**
 - a) Common saying that has become part of discipleship culture - this is unacceptable

- b) That comes when men see what's following them
- c) Paul went a few days and identified the spirit that's been following them was doing damage to the work of God

B. Pay attention to the tension

Acts 16:18 *This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And instantly it left her.*

1. After some days - Time had gone by and Paul had enough
 - a) Problem with some men - hell is still following them doing damage to what God has called them to do
2. Paul identified something men can miss
 - a) If ministry is becoming a vexation / where is that coming from? When did this start? How long has that been happening - in deceptive work that's called a clue
3. What bothers you?
 - a) Our text says Paul was exasperated, greatly annoyed, bothered, grieved, very much annoyed, worn out
 - b) Are their things in your life and ministry that personally bother you?
 - (1) Does barrenness bother you? Lack of converts / lack of visitors / lack of breakthrough in finances, lack of healing or deliverance
 - (2) How long have these areas gone unchanged - days, months years?

C. Have to see with spiritual eyes

1. Much of what you experience in life is Spiritual - not physical

Ephesians 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

- a) Critically important skill for everyman - issues you are facing are **spiritual in nature**
2. God wants you as a man of God to see the spiritual realm that is effecting you

2 Kings 6:15-17 *When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16 He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

- a) The servant was only seeing the natural - what was right in front of him - Elisha helped him see the spiritual
3. Seeing with spiritual eyes will help you in the natural
 - a) Doing anything for God requires a miracle - supernatural breakthrough

III. AGENTS OF DELIVERANCE

A. Spiritual Men Exercise authority over the demonic

Acts 16:18 *This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And instantly it left her.*

1. Taking Dominion
 - a) Right to rule - hell ruled here before but not anymore

Joshua 10:24 *"Come near; put your feet on the necks of these kings."*

2. Confronting the powers of Hell against your life and ministry
 - a) Paul turned to the source of what was hindering his ministry and vexing their forward progress
 - b) Have to identify what must change in your life - its supernatural / not people, job, credit rating .. its supernatural

B. Acting as an agent of deliverance

1. Personally - I will not longer allow hell to effect and hinder my calling and purpose God has for me
 - a) this what Paul does - he commands the SPIRIT to leave they girl and she was set free
 - b) As a spiritual man you have the right and responsibility to bring deliverance to people around you
2. Corporately
 - a) Pastor Greg would often challenge us disciples to see with spiritual eyes / where are we lacking and what are we going to do about it
 - b) As a pastor your job is to identify what is spiritually hindering or blocking progress and growth - start now

C. God blesses the work and worker when we have spiritual eyes

1. Blessed by Breakthrough
 - a) Pauls ministry was marked by radical conversions and miracle healing

Acts 16:31-34-31 *And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. 34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.*

- b) Becoming a Spiritual Man will help your future - breakthrough in, fruitfulness and deliverance