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Project WorldReach (T&M™ ministry operation)
Dr. George Patterson (Originating Author)
SEAN International



Contact: **Project WorldReach PWR™**

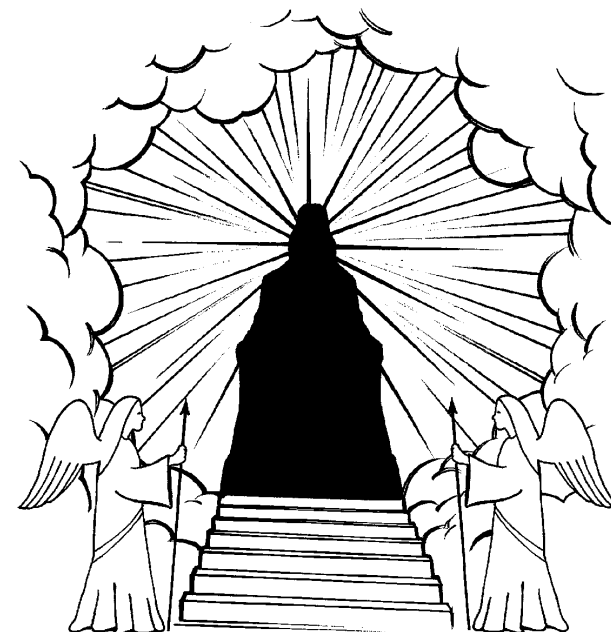
474 - 800 - 15355 - 24th Ave
Surrey BC, Canada
V4A 2H9

E-mail: pwr@trainandmultiply.com

Website: <http://www.trainandmultiply.com>

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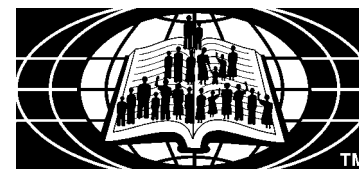
The Power of the Lord Jesus Christ in Us



Pastoral Leader Training Booklet

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The story below about Amina, based on events and observations in Africa, shows how a wise Christian overcame the power of demons. As you read it, look for those things that are commonly associated with demonic activity where people consider God to be distant and therefore deal with spirit powers.

Look for the following in the story:

DEMONS RESPOND TO PEOPLE'S MISPLACED FAITH

They come to people who look to idols, amulets or objects of any kind that they believe to have occult spiritual power. Scripture associates idolatry with demon worship. (Leviticus 18:21, Numbers 25:3, 1 Corinthians 10:20, Revelation 9:20)



PRACTICAL WORK

- God provides us with armor for spiritual warfare against demonic powers. (Ephesians 6:10-20) Read carefully what the armor is, then use it.
- Do you know people who are obviously oppressed by demons? If they want freedom, pray for them in Christ's name. It may require extensive prayer, perhaps fasting, and several sessions.
 - Rebuke any spirit that makes itself known in an evident way, in the name of Jesus, but give the demons no more attention than what Jesus did.
 - Help victims to confess their sins and renounce all occult practices, past and present.
 - Assure them of God's forgiveness in Christ, that Jesus has greater power than all demons, and that He defeated them totally by His crucifixion and resurrection from the dead.

Mamadou suggested to Ibra that he pray for them and he did so. He later tried to explain about Isaa to Fatima but found it hard. She cried, “Oh, my husband, you grow old and senile!” After several days, however, she found him calmer, less angry and even joyful.

Mamadou visited Ibra and read from a holy book. Fatima laughed at the witty answers Isaa gave to bad priests. Amina wept when she heard how Isaa healed the sick, fed the poor and showed kindness to women. Ibra told her, “Your protective spirit will soon let you die. I will ask Isaa to remove it from you and from our house. Mamadou has shown us truth.” Ibra spoke briefly to Isaa. Amina, weeping, also prayed, “Isaa, help me. I am so afraid.” She confessed her sins as Mamadou had begged them to do, and renounced all her occult practices and communication with the spirits. Then she cried herself to sleep.

In the morning, Ibra found Amina sitting at the family eating bowl eating goat meat. “Papa,” she said, “the darkness is gone!” He fell to his knees and praised Allah. In three months Amina was strong and returned to her husband Abdu. A year later Ibra and Fatima attended the ceremony to name her baby son.

DEMONS USE LIMITED POWER TO PERFORM VAIN SIGNS

God allows Satan and his demons to use a certain amount of power, but only up to a point. The lying signs they perform draw attention away from God and His Word, bring fear and help no one.

(Exodus 7; Job chapters 1 and 2; Revelation 16:14) God limits what demons can do. For example, they can never separate men from Christ. (Romans 8:38-39) People who fear spirits have deep concern for spiritual power. Their intense fears and rituals govern their lives. Many of them misuse drugs. Where Christ has never been proclaimed, people often come to Him by the hundreds or thousands when they see that His power is greater than the spirits that enslaved them.

DEMONS CRAVE MEN’S ATTENTION

Satan fell from heaven because of his willful pride; He wanted the attention that is given to the Most High God. (Isaiah 14) Demons don’t care whether men’s attention is praise, condemnation, fear or ritual. Jesus warned His disciples against a subtle form of demonic oppression — showing too much interest in evil spirits. (Luke 10:17-20) Jesus and His apostles never went looking for them; they rebuked them when they showed themselves through their human victims. (Example: Mark 1:21-27)

DEMONS TELL DESTRUCTIVE LIES

Satan is the father of lies. (John 8:44) Usually these lies, which Scripture calls ‘doctrines of demons’, lead people into destructive behavior such as abstaining from wholesome foods. (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

When demons reveal themselves in an evident way, believers in Christ can command them in Jesus’ name to leave. (Acts 16:17-18) Victims of demonic oppression, when rational, must confess their sins, renounce all occult practices and trust in Jesus. (Acts 19:13-20) We assure them that Christ by His death and resurrection defeated Satan and his legions totally, forever. (Colossians 2:15)

Please bear in mind, as you read the story, what to look for:

- Demons respond to **misplaced faith** (idolatry or occult practices).
- Demons have **limited power** to perform vain signs.
- Demons **crave men’s attention** of any kind.
- Demons tell **destructive lies**.

your messiah to make you known, to die as the final sacrifice to you, and you raised him back to life, to sit with you on your throne. In His Name I bind these demons. Amen.” Then he turned to the chief imam and said simply, “Do it again.”

The imam again called on the spirits and recited the mystical texts. The men washed and put the axe on the drum. They shouted as loud as they could. The people watched and waited but the axe stayed on the drum. Growing weary, they returned to their homes.

Ibra later went to Mamadou’s village to tell him, “Isaa has greater power than the imams. Why did he die and return to life? Is he more powerful than the spirit that destroys my daughter Amina?”

After several visits Ibra cupped his hands upwards towards the sky and begged, “Allah, I am a wicked man. I deserve all the misery I have. I believe that you sent your Messiah to forgive men like me. He died as my sacrifice to you, and you raised him to life. You give eternal life. You are good. I turn from my wicked deeds. I forsake the spirits, and I forsake every effort to manipulate you.” With tears in his eyes, Ibra asked Mamadou, “What about my family?”

not stand before the power of Allah. We will prove it.” When Mamadou came the next time, the entire population confronted him in the public square.

Amina’s father Ibra told her afterward what had happened. He thought Mamadou would run like a coward, but he prayed to Allah in the name of Isaa, and greeted them kindly, “Peace be to you.” Their oldest imam called upon Allah and the spirits to show their power. Two men washed themselves with holy water mixed with chalk dust from writing tablets upon which they had written powerful verses from the Koran. They carried a drum to the center of the crowd and laid an axe across it. The imam recited his magic texts and prayers to the spirits. Everyone gasped as the axe slowly rose about a meter above the ground, moved across the open area, hovered a moment, then fell to the ground. They all praised Allah. The old imam looked exhausted but relieved. He challenged Mamadou, “Now what can your Isaa do?”

Ibra thought that Mamadou would ask Allah to do something great, perhaps send fire down to burn the axe. But he said, “Messiah Isaa warned that such signs are for a wicked and adulterous generation. I will pray to Allah in His name.” He prayed calmly, “Allah, you sent

Demons are defeated when confronted with Jesus’ superior power. (We deliver people from demonic oppression in Jesus’ name, help them to confess their sins and renounce all occult practices.)

THE STORY OF AMINA

“I will protect my baby daughter Amina from evil spirits,” Fatima told her husband Ibra. She had lost three children at birth, two others before age five. One unwed pregnant daughter had leaped down a well rather than disgrace her family. Amina was her only child now, and Ibra and Fatima hoped that one day she would bear them a grandchild. Fatima purchased costly Islamic amulets to tie around Amina’s stomach.

“But what if a stronger spiritual force breaks through that protective barrier?” Ibra asked.

“I will bury ‘xamb’ poles in our yard to turn away bad spirits.”

The women had implanted the Xamb poles (worn out pestles for husking grain) around trees to add their spiritual power to that of the trees.

The baby grew and Ibra gave Amina to her cousin Abdu as his first wife. Half of the bride price went to a Muslim ‘imam’ (holy man) who spent a night in a trance at the mosque to identify her protective spirit. He told her, “Pour out a little milk for it twice daily in a sacred corner of your house wherever you live.”

Time passed with no child. Alarmed, Amina prayed to her protective spirit daily. It seemed not to hear. Then an aunt came to visit, who prayed to Allah and the prophet for Amina to bear sons. The aunt announced one morning, “Allah gave me a dream. Amina held a handsome baby son. But the spirit demanded that she must sacrifice a chicken, and not eat goat meat until the child arrives.”

“Goat meat is all we have,” Amina told her “but I’ll do anything for a son.” For three months she ate only grains but did not become pregnant. She lost weight. She cried to Abdu, “Your family will force you to send me away and get another wife who can bear sons.”

She and Abdu took a goat as a gift to another imam. After a sleepless night at the mosque the holy man told them, “Amina’s spirit will give you a son, but it has increased its demands. You must sacrifice a sheep to it, and Amina must stop eating rice and all forms of meat.”

Already underweight, Amina obeyed. She became ill but feared to disobey the spirit. Fearing divorce and shame, she continued her diet and grew thinner until she was too sick to work. Abdu’s father demanded that he send her back to her parents; sadly he bought the bus ticket. Back home Amina ate little and lay on a mat in the shade of a nime tree, weeping. Sometimes she acted like another person, speaking wicked things and accusations in a strange voice. She trembled at the darkness that she saw coming from the corner of the house where she had for years poured out milk for the spirit. Now it was too angry to respond. A neighbor told her, “I’ve seen women wasted away and die when the spirits are offended.”

She answered, “What will I do after death? Can I cross the narrow bridge to Allah and the prophet? Or will I fall screaming into hell? My protective spirit hates me, my family is powerless and Abdu’s family despises me. How can I stand in the final judgement? It is better that I simply die quietly.”

A Christian named Mamadou was coming from another village once a month to talk about Allah and ‘Isaa’ (Arabic for the Messiah Jesus). The imams called together the men after the Friday prayers at the mosque to announce, “Mamadou’s message is dangerous. He will