

“I Don’t Deny Your Experience ...”

“... I just deny your interpretation of what you experienced.” Let me explain. There have been many times when I am studying with someone and they reply, “Well, I don’t care what you say; I’ve experienced this.” I respond as kindly as I know how and say, “I do not deny your experience. I do question your interpretation of what you experienced because it is contrary to what the Bible says.”

For instance, I once knew a lady who claimed strenuously that she had a demon exorcised from her when she was young. She told me of thrashing about and vomiting after a “pastor” had “laid hands on her.” She obviously had something happen to her, but demon possession was a first century phenomenon; it was allowed for a very specific reason — to demonstrate the comprehensive and supreme authority of the Son of God in the spirit realm and show that Satan is not in full control (cp. Luke 10:17-18). This type of activity was suspended near the end of the apostolic era (Daniel 9:24; Micah 5:11-12; Zechariah 13:1-2; Ephesians 4:8-16; 1 Corinthians 13:18-10). A study of the details associated with the so-called modern examples of demon possession reveals that these cases bear no resemblance to the genuine examples of spirit possession described in the New Testament. The contrast is dramatic.

Our experiences alone cannot be our guide. Every experience is valid only as it is confirmed in the scriptures. A similar case can be made for feelings. Proverbs 28:26 says, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool ...” Throughout your life, you will have times when you want to respond based on your experiences or feelings, but seeking to know His will based on circumstances or feelings can and often will be misleading, just like it was with Paul (Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:13). Always going back to the Bible for truth should be the precept you live by. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

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