

Section Three - The Ensnared Heart

Snares

Despite times of true repentance and dedication a believer may still find that they have certain ungodly attitudes and behaviour patterns that they are unable to leave behind; things such as anxieties, anger, aggression, lust, addictions, irrational behaviour etc. If you have been involved with drugs or the occult you may still be being troubled by the unwelcome influence of evil spirits. If you have truly repented of your selfishness and sin and these things still happen then the Devil has you trapped in a snare. The reality of the Devil and evil spirits is dealt with in Appendix Three - The Demonic.

And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. [2 Tim 2:26]

He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling (snare) in him. [1 John 2:10]

In the natural world a snare is used to catch an animal in the spiritual world it is used by Satan to trap us so that we are bound to a carnal (selfish) lifestyle. Everyone will have had snares at work in them before they became a believer whether they knew it or not. Few people have all their snares removed in the process of becoming a believer and receiving the Holy Spirit.

There are many who claim it is not possible for a disciple of Jesus Christ to still have snares as discussed here. The tragedy is that this gives no answer to those who are earnestly struggling without success to get free of ungodly attitudes and behaviour. Such a person is in need of loving care and help to be set free and not condemned for their failures. They will leave the church thinking Christianity does not work. Those in real need of all that Jesus died to give them then go unaided and the church lands up full of smug middle class people who are able in their own strength to hide their problems or so they think.

The *wounds* of the heart and our *selfishness* as discussed in previous sections can function like *snares* too but we need wisdom because each of these three areas need to be dealt with in a different way for us to be fully set free. How different snares become established within us will be discussed in detail in Section Five - The Restored Heart but over simplifying it a bit just for now we can become vulnerable to being snared through our own sin or by someone else's by being abused by them in some way.

The sin that gave rights for a snare to be placed is usually not the same as the sin that the snare causes. This can cause confusion when we try to work out what the cause of a problem is. This means that however deep the repentance over your habitual sin may have been it may not be sufficient to break free of it. To remove the snare not only do we have to repent of the sin that it causes but we also have to remove the grounds or right that the Devil used to establish it.

To help us appreciate how a spiritual snare works let us compare it to a small but strong fishing hook that through a foolish act became well and truly hooked into say the flesh of your arm. In the natural world you would get someone to carefully remove it but snares in our inner man can only be removed through Jesus Christ. So without Jesus we just do our best to live with and minimise the inner pain caused by our inner snares. But what happens when someone (Satan or one of his minions) gives a tug to the line

attached to the hook? In an attempt to minimise the pain caused you will simply follow the pull of the line and go where you were drawn.

A picture of this can be seen in the resurrection of Lazarus. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (a picture of what we are in Christ) He gave instructions for the grave cloths (wide strips of cloth wrapped around the body) to be removed from him. Even after Lazarus had been raised back to life he still needed the help of others to get completely free.

And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. [John 11:44]

Removing snares can also be compared to removing ivy that is growing around a tree, which if not removed will over time grip the tree so tight it can even kill it. Removing snares can also be compared to removing a parasitic plant like mistletoe that gets nourishment by forcing its roots into the branches of a tree.

It will be a shock for some to know that what has been called snares above are actually evil spirits that have attached themselves to us or ensnared us. The act of being set free from them is called 'deliverance' by many.

If despite serious repentance and surrendering of our selfish nature to God we have habitual sin that we cannot stop falling into then it is most likely that we need to be released from the influence of evil spirits. Working out what has ensnared us can sometimes need the help of a wise counsellor. Details of various snares are given as they are dealt with in Section Five 'The Restored Heart'.

Strongmen

Strongholds that can affect our attitudes and behaviour were introduced in Section One. They are incorrect ways of thinking and feeling that are ingrained into our nature. A stronghold in our lives can be under the influence of a group of evil spirits working together while being ruled over by a strongman. The title of strongman is a general term for the head demon influencing you through a stronghold. Typical strongmen are called rejection, rebellion, control (or Jezebel), pride, lust, fear, unbelief etc.

But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

[Luke 11:20-22]

Recovery

You bind and cast out strongmen and their minion demons. Then the stronghold is broken off your life by faith over a period of time as your heart is healed and restored to full health. Prayers to promote this are suggested in Section Five 'The Restored Heart'. While it is possible to cast out many demons yourself you may find it much easier to do so with someone supporting you who is experienced in these things.