

WORD

¹⁶As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. ¹⁷She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. **ACTS 16:16-18**

The book of Acts recounts the story of a slave girl who practiced witchcraft. While part of what she said about Paul is true, we must understand that she was speaking while being possessed by an evil spirit. The spiritual realm is as real as the natural realm, and in this lesson, we will understand three realities regarding this.

1 There is a natural world and a spiritual world.

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. **EPHESIANS 6:12**

Each one of us is made up of three parts: a spirit, soul, and body. In the same way, we live not only in a natural, physical world, but in a spiritual, supernatural one as well. We need to be mindful of the reality of both worlds. Sometimes, there are spiritual forces at work that we may not be aware of. There are times when we think we are just dealing with an angry co-worker or a persecuting friend, but there may be something beyond what we see in the natural. As believers, who are we really wrestling against?

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2 There are evil spirits and there is God's Spirit.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." **JOHN 10:10**

In the spiritual world, Satan leads the spiritual forces of evil, and His ultimate goal is to keep us from fulfilling the will of God in our lives. Jesus came on earth to give us a full life—one that is fruitful, abundant, and joyful, even in the midst of challenges. Recount a time in your life when what was meant for evil turned out for good (Genesis 50:20).

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3 Jesus' name is all-powerful.

⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11**

Through the name of Jesus, we have authority over demons and evil spirits. Jesus has rule and dominion over everything, both in the natural and spiritual worlds. Paul proclaimed freedom from the demonic spirit for the slave girl in the name of Jesus (Acts 16:18). Share how you have learned to trust and rely on the powerful name of Jesus.

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