I AM NOT AFRAID: DEMON POSSESSION AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

STUDY GUIDE

BY ROBERT H. BENNETT

Copyright © 2013 Robert H. Bennett. All rights reserved.
3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
1-800-325-3040 • www.cph.org

This downloadable resource is provided free of charge as a supplement to the publication I Am Not Afraid: Demon Possession and Spiritual Warfare. Other than downloading this resource for personal, Bible study, classroom, or congregational use, other usage is prohibited. No part of this material may be transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of Concordia Publishing House.
CHAPTER ONE

DEPART YOU EVIL SPIRITS

Preparation: Read Pages 3–8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before reading this book, how did you understand the concept of demon possession and exorcism?

2. How did the story at the opening of the chapter compare with your prior perceptions of demon possession?

3. Many times people expect long rituals with specific steps to be followed for an exorcism. Based on the story at the beginning of the chapter, were there any extensive rituals that you noticed? If so, describe them.

4. From the readings, what do you find to be so special about the Lutheran Church of Madagascar?

5. What is a mpiandry?

6. What do you understand the term ‘spiritual warfare’ to mean?

7. Why is a study of spiritual warfare necessary for our time?
CHAPTER TWO

DRAMATIC CONVERSIONS

Preparation: Read Pages 9–14

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The chapter begins with a discussion of two terms, ‘power evangelism’ and ‘power encounters’. Are these terms helpful?

2. If one was to retain the term ‘power encounter,’ what are some precautions that should be considered?

3. Can a faithful Christian deny the existence of Satan and his demons and still properly understand the doctrine of justification? Explain your response.
CHAPTER THREE

THE ROAD TO SOATANANA

Preparation: Read Pages 15–32

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a worldview?

2. What is a toby?

3. What is the Fifohazana movement?

4. The interview of Pastor Randrianandrasana contained some provocative points especially in regard to the demon possession of a Christian. Do you agree with his statement that a Christian can become demon possessed? Explain your answer.

5. Describe the four markers of an African worldview as Okorocha describes them.

6. What is animism? Is there an influence of animism on our western culture, if so what animistic practices can you name?

7. What are two mistakes that western missionaries generally make when dealing with animistic societies?
CHAPTER FOUR

THE MALAGASY WORLD

Preparation: Read Pages 33–52

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been in a place where great evil has occurred? What was your experience?

2. While there are many different spirits referenced in this chapter, there was one that is similar to what we would generally call a mermaid. What is the difference between the mermaid in a Malagasy or African context and the Hollywood depiction of these creatures?

3. How do traditional Malagasy people view their ancestors?

4. There are two different forms of exorcism that the Lutheran Church in Madagascar uses, one is the general exorcism and the other is the specific exorcism. How do these two differ? How are they similar?
CHAPTER FIVE

RELYING ON THE ANCESTORS AND SPIRITS

Preparation: Read Pages 53–64

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As you read through the beginning of this chapter, consider how you have reacted to the content of the book up to this point. Discuss your reaction and how it compares to the students described at the beginning of the chapter.

2. As you consider the responses of the Malagasy Christians provided in this chapter, review the questions listed on page 54. Discuss how you would answer these questions.

3. What did you learn about the background of the Malagasy Christians described in the chapter? Review your answer with the tables in Appendix 1 of the book.
CHAPTER SIX

THE POSSESSED MIND

Preparation: Read Pages 65–83

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. People come to church at different times of life and for various reasons. Discuss when you became a member of the church. Did you become a Christian as an infant through Holy Baptism or as an adult? Did you come from a different religious background?

2. One consistent theme found in this chapter is the work of the Law upon the hearts of those who sought out the Church for release. Discuss the responses you found to be most interesting in this chapter.

3. Only the Gospel can bring peace to the tormented soul weighed down under the yoke of the Law. Give examples of this truth found in the chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN

STORIES OF LIFE IN THE CHURCH

Preparation: Read Pages 85–96

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The basic question of this chapter was, “How has your life been affected by the Church?” The answer given is summed up in the doctrine of justification. What is the doctrine of justification?

2. Give examples of how the doctrine of justification is represented in the stories found in this chapter.

3. Discuss the sacramental language used by the Malagasy Lutherans. How do they understand Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in their lives?

4. What role did the Lutheran catechism play in the conversion of these people?
CHAPTER EIGHT

CHRIST BOUND SATAN SO THAT WE MAY BE FREE

Preparation: Read Pages 99–128

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the exorcisms of Jesus differ from the exorcisms of the Jews?

2. What was your understanding about the existence of Satan and his demons before reading this book? Have you changed your mind through reading this book? If so, how?

3. Jesus teaches an important lesson about how exorcisms are to be viewed in Matthew 7:15–23. What is that lesson?

4. Read Matthew 8:28–34 and compare and contrast the text with the parallel texts. What rituals are used in the exorcism Jesus performed?

5. What is significant about Jesus’ power over the demon demonstrated by Matthew 15:21–28?

6. What did the disciples do wrong when they attempted to exorcize the demon from the man’s son in Matthew 17:14–20?

7. What was the first miracle of Jesus in both the Gospels of Mark and Luke? What did these miracles reveal about Jesus?

9. What is significant about John 12:31–37 in regards to our discussion on exorcism?
CHAPTER NINE

WE TREMBLE NOT

Preparation: Read Pages 129–67

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before discussing this chapter, sing the hymn “A Mighty Fortress is our God” (LSB 656). Did you notice any exorcistic language in this hymn? Discuss the hymn in view of what you have learned up to this point in the book.

2. Where in the Book of Concord would one look to better understand the Reformers’ view of Satan and his demons?

3. Discuss the Roman Catholic Mass and its connection to the traditional rites of the tribes of Madagascar. What similarities do you notice with the famadihana rite from Madagascar?

4. Do you agree with the statement that Luther was an exorcist? Discuss your answers.

5. What does Luther say about accepting every possible case of demon possession without critical discernment?

6. Where do medical professionals fit into the picture of spiritual warfare?

7. What does Luther teach us about suicide?
8. What does Luther teach us about depression?

9. What do you think of C. F. W. Walther’s warning to pastors? Do you agree with him or has he overstated his warning?

10. Can a Christian be possessed by a demon? What does Walther say about this? What does Francis Pieper teach us about the Christian and demon possession?

11. What are the problems Luther and Walther find with the Roman Catholic rite of Exorcism?

12. Helmut Thielicke makes the point that unbelief prevents belief in the devil and his demons. What do you think about this statement?

13. Why do modern-day theologians refuse to accept the reality of the devil?

14. How does John Warwick Montgomery answer his critics who would deny demonic possession?
CHAPTER TEN

VISIT THIS HOUSE, O LORD

Preparation: Read Pages 169–74

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What resources are available from the Lutheran Church in the area of spiritual warfare?

2. Has a pastor ever performed the blessing of your home? Why/Why not?

3. How have the Lutheran resources dealing with spiritual warfare changed over the years?

4. How is the doctrine of Holy Baptism connected to spiritual warfare?
CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL THOUGHTS

Preparation: Read Pages 175–78

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What can the western world learn from their Malagasy brothers and sisters?

2. What has surprised you about the information presented in this book?

3. How are spiritual warfare and Christian conversion related?

4. The Lutheran Church confesses that the doctrine of justification is the central theme of Scripture. How do the stories contained in this book connect to the doctrine of justification?

5. How might the rite of exorcism be reintroduced into the western church?