

The Potency of Intimacy

Paul's Connection to the Lord vs. Disconnected Power Seekers

The Empowered Church Series - Part 34

Acts 19:11-20

11/4-11/5

Introduction

- **Religious Systems vs. Faith Systems** – it's commonly said in Christian circles that Christianity is not a religion it's a personal faith. I believe that's true. But does everyone know what that means? First of all a system simply means how a bunch of different parts work together. It's the organization or interconnection of ideas. There's nothing wrong with a system, per se. So there are religious systems and there are faith systems. Although religion only really means belief in a superpower, in modern vernacular and historical usage it has come to mean a system of man's attempts to connect with God. Faith on the other hand denotes a system of belief that relies more on God doing everything. In other words, in the religion Islam there are things that man must do in order to achieve righteousness. In the Jewish religion (Judaism), there are things that man must do for righteousness. Many of the Eastern Religions (Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism) there are similar **steps to achieve connection with the divine**. Christianity is unique in that it believes that mankind is unable to connect to God, God must do all the connecting. Christianity describes being 'dead in our sins' and unable to respond to stimuli without the act of the God. This loving initial reach is based on the unique concept of Christianity called **GRACE**. Grace means that we don't deserve it, but God does it anyway out of His love. In the end Christianity teaches that the only thing that mankind must do to connect with the divine is to **BELIEVE/TRUST** that God is who He says He is and can do what He says He can do and lean into that relationship. Since that cannot be manipulated or forced by either party, it must be a faith-based connection (invisible God).
- **Relationship vs. Manipulation** – Once we are in the Christian stream of things (system of faith) and realize **the power of relational connection**, this is where the **heart motivation** comes in. **There are healthy relationships and unhealthy relationships**. Since God is a personal God and interacts with us on every human level (emotionally, mentally, physically, socially, spiritually), the interaction on our side can go wrong. **We tend to want to control our environments** and those who are in our environments. This leads to manipulation. In Christian relationship this will look like **trying to force God's** hand through prayer, or by trying to emotionally bully God. Of course, those things don't work, but even in the attempt we are distorted. **It is only when we realize WHO we are dealing with, rightly, that we begin to interact with God properly**. Therefore, a good deal of our study must be in the nature of God (WHAT He is like). Intimacy with God is what we are seeking, because life flows from that type of connection to Him (Mt 7:23). **God will not be manipulated nor controlled and resents any attempts to do so. When we interact with Him, on His turf (honest, transparent, heart-felt, genuine love), life can flow.**
- **When it comes to POWER** – This dynamic is of utmost importance when it comes to working with the Power of God. **There is a great temptation to take THINGS of God and try to use them for OUR purposes. God gives us enough leeway** that it can become both

dangerous and insulting to the Lord. Therefore, we need to be setting personal boundaries and check-and-balances to make sure that we don't go that way. **We must NEVER try to USE God. We must always partner WITH God.** Anything else will leave us as monsters.

Power FLows Through RELATIONSHIP with God

- **It's less WHAT we know and more WHO we know.**
- **Context Set Up**
 - **Paul's in Ephesus¹** - explain the supernatural elements of the city. The city of Ephesus in the modern-day region of Turkey, was a massive and incredibly influential city of the ancient world. It housed one of the **7 wonders of the world, the temple of Diana/Artemis**. This stunning temple was a perfect beacon of how supernatural and superstitious and pagan this city was. **Temples of false gods and goddesses lined the streets**. Temple prostitutes gathered from corner to corner. This was a very, very **tempting city to try to engage in a manipulating religious experience**. It is here that Paul sets up a hub of Christian missionary work.
 - **Bizarre Stories** - we are about to study one of the most incredible, wildest, most bizarre passages of Scripture in the New Testament. I guarantee you that you will see the world differently after we are done today.
 - **Trigger Warning** – we are dealing with the subject of demons today and demons tend to thrive off of fear. It's critical that we set a tone ahead of time about a Christian's identity in Christ BEFORE we do this. Although I want us to have a healthy respect for the demonic, I do not want us living in fear or letting them bully us. So, let me set down some ground rules. I will be telling you more than you probably want to know later in the message but there are **2 things that we must keep in mind from the get-go:**
 1. **God is Greater** – We are not dealing with two equal and opposite super powers in the world (good vs. evil; God vs. Satan). We are dealing with ONE Almighty God and rebellious creation. God and Satan are not on the same platform nor is it even close. There was a time when Satan didn't exist and God has full control over what he does and doesn't do. Demons are the same way. God is a warrior God and doesn't play around when things get serious. **Demons are afraid of King Jesus, period.**
 2. **God is in Us** – **Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world**. Memorize that verse. The very principle of Christianity and becoming a Child of God is that when we surrender to Jesus Christ, He purifies our spirits completely by His blood that He shed on the cross and that purified spirit is then **indwelt by the Holy Spirit** and sealed. We BECOME a **new creation**, children of God, locked down as family. That gives us **a different reality, identity, and experience in this world**. One of the **benefits** is that we are no longer forced to be puppets of the enemies of God nor controlled by them.

¹ "The whole atmosphere of this passage, in fact, tallies admirably with the reputation which Ephesus had in antiquity as a center of magical practice." NICNT

Lesson

• Holy Laundry!

• God anoints Paul's handkerchiefs & aprons

- **Ac 19:11–12** – *“And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons² that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.”*

- **God was doing EXTRAORDINARY miracles** – Although all miracles are in a sense extraordinary, when you work in a ministry that is flowing with anointing of signs, wonders, and miracles, you get used to them. For Dr. Luke to highlight that what **God was doing** in Ephesus at this time, was **above and beyond**, is notable. God was doing stuff that no one had heard of. It was stuff that was scarcely believable. It's not something that anyone else would have expected their ministry or their partnership to God, to do. Whether or not John 14:12 indicates that new levels of anointing will be present in the Church Age increasingly, I don't know. It seems so, but I don't know where that ceiling is, or what to expect. All we know is that God brought **a new level of anointing** into this arena of Paul's ministry.

- **God doing the miracles VIA Paul** – This is a VERY important clarification and should be a constant reminder to us that **GOD does the miracles, we are the conduits of that power. We don't generate our own power independent of God. God's power flows THROUGH us. That is why the vine and branches analogy is so critical. Connected we can bear fruit, disconnected we can do NOTHING.**

- ***Jn 15:4–5** – “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”*

- **Through Paul's hands** – It's clear that God was working through Paul's hands, but what I find so intriguing is that it indicates that **Paul needed to do something for the power to flow. He had to TOUCH someone.** That refers to the beautiful partnership between God and His people. **He COULD do it alone, but He doesn't want to. He wants to move THROUGH His people to get heavenly things done because it involves us. We bond with him through the PARTNERSHIP.**

- **The Power of Anointing** – Anointing is a key word that you will hear me use over and over, so it bears repeating what it actually means. It means that **God gives a special empowerment to a person to do extraordinary, heavenly things.** Sometimes that anointing is to bless a partnership with His people, sometimes it's bestowed upon people with little to no relationship to God because He wants to get something done regardless. **Anointing doesn't always mean connection happened that was healthy. It means God moved, but doesn't always indicate that God moved through a healthy individual.**

² “Both the Greek words used here are of Latin origin: σουδάρια from *sudaria*, “sweat-rags” (cf. Luke 19:20; John 11:44; 20:7), and σμικίνθια from *semicinctia*, “aprons.” NICNT

Thankfully Paul was an example of a great partnership with relational connection.

- **Anointed handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched his skin** – This seems so crazy to us and it kind of is. But it happened. The Bible isn't playing around. This stuff happened. And to be honest, many people have tried since to varying degrees of success. Just for a moment let me explain how this played out. Paul would work doing leather making and tent making during the early morning hours. He would sweat a lot and since he was dealing with animal products he would use an apron. Those items would be discarded if there was no ability to launder them. People would either request them from him, or take them after he used them. We know the power still hit after Paul was gone so we are left with two options of what happened: 1.) The anointing power that God gave to him, resided on those items of clothing as they were taken to others. 2.) God simply brought fresh new power to the people as the clothing was used upon them. Either way it doesn't matter, but because I'm analytical, I want to know. Does God anoint material, or does God work through material. Either way it's cool. And this is not the first or last time this happened in the Bible.
- **Jesus' Clothing** – there are multiple accounts in the Gospel of Mark that talk about Jesus' clothing being anointed to heal. They didn't even have to touch His skin (which we normally think of a person being contained in their skin). His power was flowing through His stuff.
 - **The woman with blood discharge touched Jesus' robe - Mark 5:25-30** – *“And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years,²⁶ and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.²⁷ She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.²⁸ For she said, “If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.”²⁹ And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.³⁰ And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my garments?”*
 - **The sick in the marketplace touched the fringe of Jesus' garment and were healed - Mark 6:53-56** – *“When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore.⁵⁴ And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him⁵⁵ and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was.⁵⁶ And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.”*
- **Peter's Shadow** – Oddly enough, the anointing and impartation concept goes even further in the ministry of Peter (but most of us forget this teaching way back at the beginning of this series in chapter 5 of Acts). Peter's shadow healed. That means, again, that either God moved through the crossing of

the shadow with power or gave fresh power upon the person as the shadow touched them. **Either way it was not even 'STUFF' that was anointed, it was a shadow.** That's a whole other level.

- **Deliverance and Healing Done via Peter's Shadow - Acts 5:12-16** – *“Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. ¹³ None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴ And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ¹⁵ so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.”*
- **The concept of Impartation** – All of these incidents operate on the concept of impartation. Impartation means **TRANSFERENCE**. Something that one person has is transferred to someone or something else. This is the basis for laying on of hands (touching to transfer), or prayer intercession (transfer of one person's relational connection to God for another via proxy). It made a lot of sense to the ancient world that believed in magical items, but in the modern-Western world it seems odd and impossible. But we believe in the supernatural reality.
- **Anointed clothes healing the sick (diseases LEFT)** – Let's revisit this: Paul's clothing healed the sick. They would take his sweaty items (unknown of the sweat had anything to do with it – i.e. a part of him) and touch the person they were praying healing for and the anointing of Paul would flow through that.
- **Anointed clothes casting out demons (CAME OUT)** – In the same way the clothing items would be utilized in demonic deliverance situations. Someone praying over and casting demons out would touch the person with Paul's items to transfer the anointing power of Paul to enhance what was going on already. And demons would be removed!
- **Demon Hunters**
 - **The 7 Sons of Sceva Story**
 - **Ac 19:13–16** – *“Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ‘I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.’ ¹⁴ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. ³ ¹⁵ But the evil spirit answered them, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, ⁴ but who are you?’ ¹⁶ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them,*

³ “V. 14 is expanded as follows in the Western text: ‘among whom also the sons of Sceva a priest wished to do the same (they were accustomed to exorcize such people), and entering into the demon-possessed man they began to invoke the Name, saying, ‘We charge you by Jesus, whom Paul proclaims, to come out.’” While most Western witnesses omit the number of the sons, the Latin codex *gigas* says “two sons” (cf. 25 below).” NICNT

⁴ “It is doubtful if we should attach great importance to the change of verb: ‘Jesus I know (γινώσκω) and Paul I know (ἐπίσταμαι).’ There was a distinction in fact, in that he knew Jesus by name and Paul by sight, but that is not the normal distinction in meaning between the two Greek verbs.” NICNT

mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

- **Itinerant Jewish Exorcists⁵** – Jews believed in God, Satan, angels and demons, although in the Old Testament those concepts were very rough and shadowy. It's not until we get to the New Testament that our doctrines on those pieces clarifies. But in Jesus' day there were Jews who believed in setting people free from the power of the demonic. They were called 'exorcists'. Exorcism tends to focus more on the **removal of demons** from within a person, namely in cases of possession, but practically speaking it can also mean dealing with demonization or areas/pockets of demonic stronghold (a lighter form of that type of ministry). Itinerant means **TRAVELING**. They would go around to where the needs were instead of setting up a shop and letting people come to them. It was a relatively common practice in that day for groups to travel around and do ministry based on the financial support of either their homebase or the giving of those they ministered to. We see that it was going on, even in the Christian community, early on during Jesus' ministry on earth (In mark 9:38 we see that the disciples were troubled when other groups (Christian or not) would go around and do deliverance ministry apart from their group. Jesus told them that if it was relatively legit, let them do it.)
 - Mk 9:38–41 – *“John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.”³⁹ But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.⁴⁰ For the one who is not against us is for us.⁴¹ For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.”*
 - **Some. Who? 7 priests, who were sons of the high priest Sceva⁶** – If their dad was a priest they were priests. The priesthood is passed down in lineage not like a career. But here's the thing, there is **no indicator that Sceva WAS the Jewish high priest**, so it seems that this is a manipulation tactic by this group and this family specifically. He was probably influential and wanted to over hype his ability of power and authority since he was in the exorcism world.
 - **Started using/invoking the name of Jesus Christ (Lord) OVER evil spirits** – When we are talking about **power social structures**, we are talking about **AUTHORITY**. A person with higher authority is able to command something in less authority

⁵ “Among practitioners of magic in ancient times Jews enjoyed high respect, for they were believed to have exceptionally effective spells at their command. In particular, the fact that the name of the God of Israel was not to be pronounced by vulgar lips was generally known among the pagans, and misinterpreted by them according to regular magical principles. Several magical papyri which have survived from those days to ours contain attempts to reproduce the true pronunciation of the ineffable name—*laō, labe, laoue*, and so forth—as well as other Jewish expressions and names such as Sabaoth and Abraham, used as elements in magic spells. The closest parallel to the Ephesian exorcists' misuse of the name of Jesus appears in a magical papyrus belonging to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, which contains the adjuration: “I adjure you by Jesus, the God of the Hebrews.” NICNT

⁶ “Among those Jewish exorcists were the sons of one Sceva, a Jew, described here as a chief priest. It is possible that this Sceva actually belonged to a Jewish chief-priestly family, but more probably “Jewish chief priest” (or even “Jewish high priest”) was his self-designation, set out on a placard: Luke might have placed the words between quotation marks had these been invented in his day...Mastin suggests that his designation ἀρχιερεύς was intended to “authenticate the activity of his sons as *bona fide* exorcists” (“Scaeva the chief priest,” p. 405). The Western text calls him ἱερεὺς, not ἀρχιερεύς.” NICNT

because **they have the power to do something about it and ENFORCE their will**. Therefore **instead of fighting physically** about everything, a system of authority (I'll take their word for it) comes into play. This is absolutely the case when you have **opposing sides with animosity or with rebellion**, as is the case with demons toward God (although there is little indicator that God is actively mad toward Satan, even though He is livid against what Satan and demons do to His kids). It becomes a system whereby **teams are set up and those on the more powerful team are able to tell the less powerful team what to do**. This is the foundation for this whole story we are studying. It is the foundation for how a Christian operates in areas of the demonic. But what we will notice is that **you actually need to be part of the team's name you are invoking**. This group was trying to utilize the **authority without the connection**. They were invoking the name of Jesus in order to force a demon to do something, but they didn't have anything to back it up.

- **Those who HAD evil spirits** – There is no practical difference between the phrase, 'evil spirits and 'demons'. They are the same thing. This is talking about the clients that the traveling Jewish exorcists were working on. It was people who were either harassed or possessed by demons.
- **Possession vs. oppression?** – There is a great debate in Christian circles about **how demons operate especially in connection to Christians (everyone agrees that non-Christians are fair game)**. What does God allow them to do? The main debate is whether or not a Christian can be possessed. Some say no, because the Holy Spirit dwells fully in the spirits of a believer and won't share space there. Others say 'yes' because Christians can give over authority to the demonic to control them. The debate created a **sub-category of how demons operate** in order to explain details. It led to the concept of **oppression** or demonization. That means that there is a difference between total control vs. significant influence or harassment. The demons may not be indwelling in the core of a human, but they can **attach themselves to believers** in key ways (that they have been allowed to have through neglect, trauma, occultic activity, invitation, sin, etc.) and make their lives miserable. The debate then becomes to what degree. **I argue against total possession** because the Holy Spirit would then be rendered useless in the life of a believer and that would be an insult to His name, regardless of how stupid or sinful we look. I don't believe that is allowed. **However, I am firmly convinced that Christians that do not utilize their power, authority or know their identity can be SIGNIFICANTLY impacted** by the harassment of demons. At Bridgeway we have a deliverance ministry for this very reason.
- **Evil spirits vs. demons** – **are they the same thing?** Yes, they are.
- **"I command you by the name of Jesus whom Paul proclaims."** – what's wrong with this statement? Although they wanted to operate on the authority concept knowing that both Paul and Jesus had authority over

demons (to varying degrees), they were using it without any personal connection to those two. They weren't on Paul's team and they weren't on Jesus' team. Therefore they were relying on the magic in the words themselves, which isn't a thing (it is a thing when two parties agree to it in faith, but not when one party doesn't).

- **Formula vs. Faith** – This is where we get into **magical thinking**. **Magic operates on the idea that there is a neutral power to be manipulated and gained in the universe**. It means that when you learn the secrets, arts or skills to tap into power centers (whether that is in the earth, or in the universe, or in the human potential) you can wield that power upon others and upon situations. The **Christian worldview** is that there is no other source of power outside of God (angels) and Satan (demons). There may be earthly aspects that we haven't discovered yet (i.e. magnetism, aura-type emanations, etc.) but those are purely earthly like gravity, but there is no true power source spiritually or supernaturally outside of God's design. Therefore you are **either working from one power source or the other**. To utilize God's power is most connected through relationship. That is faith in what God says to be true and doing what He says in obedience. To try to use God in a manipulative way is **trying to force Him by control mechanisms of words or systems**. That is when we start to look through the lens of praying the 'right' way, or invoking special words (Jabez prayer), or using incantations (right words, in the right ways).
- **Using names for spells vs. using THE NAME of Jesus** – pagan arts use names for authority and incantations.⁷ So **what's the difference between that and a Christian utilizing the name of Jesus Christ for authority and power? One is an unhealthy system of force and other is a healthy system of respect and relationship**. But make no mistake there are a lot of similarities between how Christians connect with the supernatural and how witchcraft connects with the supernatural. We pretend its' very different but it's not. The key difference is in how the structure is viewed, not so much in how the structure works.
 - **The Jewish respect for Yahweh**⁸ – it's called the 'ineffable name' meaning that it should never be spoken. It was allowed to be spoken by the Jewish high priest one time a year on the day of Atonement in the temple. The Jews believed that it was a dishonor to God to use it. This means that even to this day they won't even write the name and many times won't write the word GOD, they will use a hyphen, G-D. The whole concept is on respect. Although Christians have

⁷ "In those days, everyone believed that illness and disease, and especially mental illness, were the result of the activity of evil spirits which settled in an individual. Exorcism was a regular trade. If the exorcist knew the name of a more powerful spirit than the one which had taken up residence in the afflicted person, by speaking that name it was possible to overpower the evil spirit and make it depart." William Barclay Commentary (Daily Bible Series).

⁸ "The Jewish high priest was the one man who was authorized to pronounce the otherwise ineffable name; this he did once a year, in the course of the service prescribed for the day of atonement. Such a person would therefore enjoy high prestige among magicians." NICNT

tremendous respect for God they believe that we have been invited into a Father/child relationship and our dad allows us to use His name in proper ways.

- **BUT, THE evil spirit/demon replied** – which demon? This one. Who’s this one? It simply means the demon that they were dealing with at the time. This is not a special demon per se.
- **Wait, demons can talk?** – over and over in the Bible it shows demons talking just as much as angels talk. Remember, **demons are simply fallen angels and each group can do similar things**. They are not a different race of being. Demons are personal beings too. That means they have personalities, differences, nuances, experiences, etc.
 - **The problem with talking to demons** – One of my biggest concerns with many deliverance ministries (exorcism ministries) is that a lot of them want to talk to demons. They play the game of needing to know the name so they can control the demon by power. To me that is not only not-Biblical (not in there) I would consider it anti-Biblical (against the teachings of the Bible). The Bible tells us that we are operating off the authority of Jesus Christ alone. He is more than sufficient and we don’t need to play power structure games like the occult (the occult believes that you can force things by knowing secret information and by threats of more powerful beings). Additionally, the Bible is very clear that Satan is the ‘Father of Lies’ (Jn 8:44) and therefore all demons easily lie. Their whole system of power is based on lies. They need to convince us that they are more powerful than they are so they can continue to control us. We don’t want to operate off of the information they provide.
- **Jesus I know** – Demons have a better theology than we do. They know God personally and have been around God in ways that we won’t be on this side of heaven. **They know a TON** (James 2:19). But, the key is that their relationship stays at knowledge and doesn’t move to surrender or intimacy. **They know ABOUT, we should now DEEPLY by personal connection**. Also, it’s important when dealing with demons to **never separate the existence of demons from their history with God**. It not only identifies what they are but it informs that they do and what they are about. It gives the proper parameters of discussion and processing. Demons know the Son of God, Jesus Christ of Nazareth well and are scared of Him (He’s the boss).
- **Paul I recognize** – Paul had done so much for the Kingdom of God, and so much in deliverance that word had spread to the demon population of that part of the world, that they knew his name. They know he wasn’t someone to mess with.
 - **Known in Hell** – I remember reading a book where someone quoted this passage and asked the question, ‘are you known in hell?’ The point was to say, are you doing anything impactful for the Kingdom of God or against the kingdom of darkness to get on their radar or are you living a self-absorbed life that doesn’t matter to them?

- **But who are you?** – this was where things went bad for them. The demon said that he was clear of the other two names, but there was no connection between these guys and those two figures, so that means there was **no power source connection**.
- **The man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered them, overpowered them** – The demon supercharged the individual that it was possessing (possession means full control) and used it's limbs and body to fight back and beat up the exorcists. This is one of the most intense examples of what happens when we overstep and get in trouble doing this type of ministry.
- **They fled out of that house naked and wounded** – It takes a bit to overpower, master some people and beat them up, tear their clothes off of them. This wasn't a simple quick reactionary movement. This was a sound beating. The exorcist team left really messed up. How did this happen? God let it happen. They were not connected to the Lord so they were already vulnerable, but if God wanted to step in, He would have. This was to teach them a lesson and provide a sign and wonder to grab other people's attention.
 - **Wait a second...Demons can fight back? Physically?** – Yep, they sure can. There are many stories of this happening. Demons are stronger, faster and smarter than we are. We don't mess around with them. We do our job, we utilize the Lord's authority that He's given us. We get in and get out. There needs to be a healthy respect of all things demonic but not a controlling fear. But yes, if God lets them fight back they can do that.
- **A Good Old Fashioned Book Burning**
 - **Supernatural Revival Hits Ephesus**
 - **Ac 19:17–20** – *“And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.¹⁸ Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices.⁹ ¹⁹ And a number of those who had practiced magic arts¹⁰ brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.”*
 - **This situation became known to all the residents of Ephesus (Jews/Greeks)** – word got around and it freaked people out. That was such an extreme situation that there's no way it's not going to hit the rumor mill, especially in the supernatural/spiritual community.
 - **Fear fell upon them all** – What are the healthy aspects of fear? Fear is a response to a situation or threat. It can be useful or harmful. When fear of something actually dangerous happens it's telling your body that you are in

⁹ “Gk. πράξεις, here a technical term for magic practices (the verb πράσσω also has the technical sense of “practise magic” in appropriate contexts).” NICNT

¹⁰ “Gk. περιεργα, lit. “superfluous works,” another technical term for magic practices (like Lat. *curiosa*). Cf. G. A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, E.T. (Edinburgh, ²1909), p. 323, n. 5.¹⁰

danger and to prepare to do something about it. When fear of the presence and power of God fell upon the people of Ephesus, it led to repentance, which was God's point.

- **The name of the Lord was extolled** – what does that mean? How do we do that today? The word 'extol' means to 'praise enthusiastically'. In other words there can be forced praise, which means something deserves a response and there can be something willingly praised (you like it and its effects) and then there is exuberant praise when you are **fired up about it**. That is this word. It's when people are in awe of God and it's a positive thing and **God's name is held in high regard again**.
- **Revival hits** – it went beyond being impressed. It led to the **transformation of hearts, and it went from ideas to action**.
- **Christian Renewal: Many who were believers now** – this is a bunch of Christians who realized that they still had a lot of stuff in their lives that needed to be dealt with. God was calling them to repentance in their own lives to reconnect and align with Him. Many revivals across the world have been filled with moderate, mediocre, carnal Christians coming to terms with a newfound real faith.
 - **Confessing** – confession is a **combination of realization and ownership**. It's **saying out loud what is true. It's agreeing with God** in His determination. It's verbalizing what we have done. This is a special part of **owning what we've done behind closed doors**.
 - **Divulging their practices**¹¹ – divulging is exposing and repenting. They were not just admitting that it was done but that they had been doing it and how they did it. It was a full vulnerable transparency. There is a high value of secrecy in the occult for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons is the secrecy helps in the internalization, private ownership, faith-filling in the specialness. When this is all spilled out for everyone to see, it loses that special aspect and becomes less potent.
 - **A Word about spells (occultic faith)** – Many of us think about witchcraft and spells with feelings of looking down on the gibberish and silliness of it all. But here's the thing, **spells are ultimately faith-based incantations trying to barter on the power of the demonic (they would argue it's utilizing neutral power of the universe, I disagree)**. In other words, they are the **unhealthy version of prayer**. Whilst we should be praying in alignment with the Lord and seeking His will, the occult is more about **alignment for manipulation and control of power and spirits**. But nevertheless, we must realize that faith, whether it's used for good or bad, is a feature of perspective and focus. In a world where there are power personal forces at work (supernatural beings), HOW something thinks is critical. Getting them to buy into your system is crucial. Therefore WHAT something thinks

¹¹ "According to magical theory, the potency of a spell is bound up with its secrecy; if it be divulged, it becomes ineffective." NICNT

about something makes it useful or not. This can shape outcomes because the powers that be, operate off different belief systems, differently. In a sense a perception can create reality.

- **Secular Revival:** Man who were in the occult – this is a bunch of non-believers who were involved in occultic practices.
 - **Practiced magic arts** – what does this mean? It's not so much practicing in the sense of trying over and over until you are better at something but practicing as in 'doing it.' Like a practicing doctor is in business and doing what he knows. These people were active believers in witchcraft/occult and they were acting upon that knowledge. They were open for personal or societal business.
 - **Burned their books publicly** – what books?¹² To learn the art of spell-casting, which are based on many words, it's helpful to have reference books. There is a possible spell for any situation so it's impossible to know them all at one time, even with years of study. The more learned would know the main and basic ones that fit into everyday life, but still to get into an unknown area would be in a reference book. Those books of spells are special, secret, and therefore very expensive. They would have been on parchment or papyri since we don't have modern books until after the printing press. **Modern paper products weren't being made until AD 105 by the Chinese.** It was not until **1436** that the **Gutenberg printing press** was developed to mass produce books and printing by typeset. Therefore these 'books' would be bound parchments. **Why burn it?** So, no one else can use it, or be tempted to use it.
 - **A lot of books: 50,000 pieces of silver worth**¹³ – what is that in today's money? It seems, according to my calculation¹⁴ (which is highly suspect) that it was about **\$700,000 worth.**
 - **What about book burnings today?**- there are many people still doing public burnings of things they deem non-Godly. In the 1980's there was a

¹² "Many of them also gathered their magical papyri together and made a bonfire of them. A number of such magical scrolls have survived to our day; there are specially famous examples in the London, Paris, and Leiden collections. The special connection of Ephesus with magic is reflected in the term "Ephesian letters" for magical scrolls.³⁹ The spells with which they abound are for the most part the merest gibberish, a rigmorole of words and names considered to be unusually potent, arranged sometimes in patterns which were essential to the efficacy of the spell. They fetched high prices...The best collection of such documents is Preisendanz's (I, 1928; II, 1931); see 32 above. Cf. G. A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, E.T. (London, ²1927), pp. 254–64, 302–8, 453–60. A papyrus amulet in the library of Princeton University has been edited with translation and notes by B. M. Metzger, in *Papyri in the Princeton University Collections*, III (1942), pp. 78–79; he has given a popular account of it in "St. Paul and the Magicians," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 38 (1944), pp. 27–30, where he describes it as "a firsthand specimen of the same sort of magical craft which Paul encountered at Ephesus." See now H. D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, I- (Chicago, 1986-)." NICNT

¹³ "The second step is the public burning of magic books worth a large sum of money, fifty thousand pieces of silver. This rejection of magic and the burning of these manuals of magic are a major public statement about a change of direction in life. If the silver refers to denarii, then fifty thousand of them would equal a single worker's wages for 137 years without a day off, since a denarius was an average worker's wage for a day (so BDAG 128 §2c; BAGD 105 §2c, but counting denarii, not drachmas, which the BDAG note mentions). Ehling (2003) argues that denarii were more common in Ephesus than drachmas, noting that we have forty-seven inscriptions of the former but only six of the latter. She places the sum at equal to eight hundred thousand small pieces of bread, or enough to allow one hundred families to live for five hundred days. It is a large sum of money and reflects the city's commercial commitment to such trade and practice, as this is only a portion of the community's holdings of such material." Darrell Bock, Baker Exegetical Commentary.

¹⁴ John Calvin said that it was 50,000 denarii. I looked up denarii to dollars and it said 1 denarii is equal to \$.0701. I divided the \$50,000 and got \$713,266.76, which I'm rounding up to \$700K. Not sure that is right.

big move to do that. A lot centered around rock and roll music (records, etc.). So, are these a good idea? I am not in favor of them because I believe that IF something is being burned that is neutral, it marks it out as demonic and the enemy receives more authority. Now, if it's a clear anti-Godly thing then yes, burn it so no one else can use it.

- **The Word of the Lord increased and prevailed mightily** – what a beautiful way to say that. What does that entail? What would that look like today? The way of the Lord was seen as powerful and present. That's what we want. Today it would look like a big momentum movement of Christianity in popularity. It would look like society seeing God as amazing.

Conclusion

- **What demonic strongholds are we allowing in our lives?** – Just because we are not carrying around actual spell books doesn't mean that we aren't allowing demonic strongholds in our lives. So what are we allowing?
 - **What needs to be removed for God to flow more freely?** – are there practical things that need to be removed in our lives for God to flow more freely in our lives? What objects are idols? What objects are taking too much of our heart that shouldn't be? What things are replacing God in our lives?
 - **Praying for release and surrender.**
- **Praying for deliverance and freedom**