

The Holy Spirit

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Turn to Acts 19. If you are new to Bethel, in person or on-line you get it on your phone. Also, the text will be on the screen.

When Christ is preached the response is either revival or riot.

¹ While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ² and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³ So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. ⁴ Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all. (Acts 19-NIV)

In 2026 what new habits are you starting? And what old tired, and destructive habits are you discarding? Or what practices are you repeating? Refining? Or removing? You know that I recommend often to you, spend 15 minutes in a chair every day. Every day in my 15 minutes in a chair I select something to **repeat**. Something to **refine**. Something to **remove**.

Look at this diagram and perhaps you can add some new life to your 15 minutes in a chair. We have new 2026 bible reading guides in the lobby on the ledges. If you are watching on-line and want a reading guide, indicate your interest in the comment box on your screen and we can mail it to you.

Daily 15 Minute in A Chair-1 Timothy 1

Romans 7:24-What a wretched man I am!

Repeat, "Christ has made me adequate!"

Refine - declare, "I make it only because of his mercy!"

Remove - do not relax my grip of faith!

Romans 8:37-I am more than a conqueror

I hope you are doing something different in your Christian life in 2026. Otherwise, you are likely to recycle the same vanilla, bland and routine year, again and again. There is a movie name for this type of Christianity - Ground Hogs Day!

Some habits and practices carry more weight than others. By learning a new habit, we can experience a ripple effect. If you select the right ones, they can become catalytic. When they are practiced daily you can start a chain reaction.

Like a boat, once the habit in the harbor rises with the tide, all the other boats rise with the tide.

The difference between greatness and mediocrity is that **mediocre people will do from time to time, what great people will do every day.**

Now, you know I am proponent of taking care of your health. Making sure that you get some regular physical exercise. The Bible tells us that these bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians, chapters 3 and 6.

Exercise is the silver bullet to emotional health.

I want to show you my formula for taking care of my health. This is new to me in 2026. Each element really matters to your life span and health span.

Calories + Emotions + Sleep + Aerobic and Strength Exercise = Increased Life Span and Increased Health Span

- ✓ Make sure you put racing fuel for calories in your body.
- ✓ House clean your emotions and attitudes.
- ✓ If you fail to sleep, you fail to heal. The average American is sleep deprived.
- ✓ Then strengthen your heart and your muscles. You can add 10 years to your life span with regular exercise 5 times a week.

Practice those habits and watch your spiritual and physical health improve in 2026. Ok, you have come for a Bible study, not a personal training lecture. Although, I am qualified to do both. As your pastor and spiritual coach, you are too valuable to lose.

Let's begin in Acts 19. Why not use the habit and practice that is identified in the opening pages of Acts 19 as your new practice. It will be catalytic. It will lead to a chain reaction. Enjoy a domino effect.

Daily ask God to fill you a fresh with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle Paul has been asking God to send him to Ephesus for several years. After a fruitful ministry in Corinth Paul finally gets to fulfill his evangelistic dream. Preach and disciple believers in the occult and demonized city of Ephesus. For some time, Paul has been praying and ready to take on the spiritual warfare inside the Ephesian city.

Like the men of Luminor ready to take on Sauren in the southlands, Paul is ready to take on Sauron/Satan in Ephesus.

Paul's first encounter in this ancient demonic city was with the Holy Spirit. It is the power and presence of the Holy Spirit that offered Paul the key to the city.

Again, I am suggesting that you ask God to fill you a fresh with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. **Who is the Holy Spirit?** That is exactly what the Ephesian Christians asked, who is the Holy Spirit.

There he found some disciples ² and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." (Acts 19-NIV)

Here is where it gets fuzzy for some Christians. Is he a person? Is he a force? So many scratch their head. **Who is the Holy Spirit?** That is a real head scratcher. I am glad you asked that question.

We have been on a journey together since Acts 1 to discover and be a disciple that is dependent daily on the Holy Spirit

Whether you have an active and intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit or are a beginner like so many, why not join me again, as we learn more about who the 3rd member of the trinity is.

As a newly minted or mature follower of Jesus Christ, you may know about the Holy Spirit, or you may come from a stuffy or struggling faith community that hid the Holy Spirit from you. Ok, they didn't hide the Holy Spirit, they just didn't give Holy Spirit much opportunity for involvement.

I am not here to throw your spiritual upbringing under the bus, but like me your spiritual journey may have neglected to teach you about the Holy Spirit. All you know is, he might be a holy hunch. A holy something. A Holy Ghost.

Are you interested in meeting the **Holy Spirit** who can give you power? John tells us the Holy Spirit will be our advocate to help you. He will be your Helper. A Counselor.

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. (John 14-NIV)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; (Acts 1:8-NIV)

The Holy Spirit is my advocate. He is my personal friend. He will lead me into all truth.

- He comforts me when I am discouraged.
- He corrects me when I drift.
- He will transfuse me with his power when I am lagging.
- He gives me power when I cannot take another step.

The best part of the relationship, he will one day introduce me to my Savior Jesus Christ, as he delivers me to my heavenly home. The Holy Spirit is the member of the trinity that is at work in our world today, executing God's will on the earth.

And as Acts 1:8 announces, he will give you his *dunamis* power. The Greek word *dunamis* is where we get our English word for dynamite.

(Anybody want a fresh spiritual explosion in your life?)

Look at your notes and I want to show you that like the Ephesians disciples, you too can have the Holy Spirit. Look at the fourth point in your notes.

Like the Christ followers in Ephesus, many believers today do not know that God offers them daily empowerment and deliverance through the Holy Spirit.

Notice, verse 7, tells us, *There were about twelve men in all. (Acts 19-NIV)*. Paul has 12 newly minted Holy Spirit filled disciples ready to take on the challenges of the occult and demonic city of Ephesus. Paul will need all the help he can get from above.

The number 12 is significant in the Bible for many reasons. Perhaps you can shout out some 12's in the Bible.

- *12 disciples.
- *12 tribes of Israel.
- *At the age of 12 Jesus amazed the teachers in the temple.
- *12 spies went into the Promised Land.
- *Jesus fed 5000 with a little boy's lunch and there were 12 baskets left over.

The number 12 is everywhere. 12 x 2 = 24 hours in a day. 12 months in a year. 12 jurors in a court room. The number 12 is mentioned 187 times in the bible. 12 eggs in a dozen. 12 inches in a traditional foot. The number 12 is a big deal in the Bible.

12 symbolizes God's authority and power.

If this were the old west you might say, Paul rides into Ephesus and announces, there is a new sheriff in town. The Holy Spirit.

My favorite '12' is the tree of life in Revelation 22, with 12 different fruits ready to be eaten, one for each month of the year.

On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. (Rev 22:2-NIV)

Paul is going to confront the powers of darkness in the city of Ephesus. A people in bondage and slavery to demonic powers and the occult. Are you ready get a glimpse of where the power comes from to do the damage to the kingdom of darkness-the Holy Spirit.

Are you ready to do some damage to the powers of darkness in your life, family and every place Jesus wants you to serve his purposes in the earth.

Paul's first assignment is to teach the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah and offer opportunity to have their sins forgiven and the receiving of eternal life.

Then Paul offers the same message to the Greeks, Gentiles and citizens of Ephesus. We read about this Acts 19:8-9.

8-10 Paul then went straight to the meeting place. He had the run of the place for three months, doing his best to make the things of the kingdom of God real and convincing to them. But then resistance began to form as some of them began spreading evil rumors through the congregation about the Christian way of life. So Paul left, taking the disciples with him, and set up shop in the school of Tyrannus, holding class there daily. He did this for two years, giving everyone in the province of Asia, Jews as well as Greeks, ample opportunity to hear the Message of the Master. (Acts 19-MSG)

Perhaps I can give you a glimpse of what is going on in the human heart in the Jewish synagogue and school of Tyrannus.

The Jews got the message of Jesus delivering power for 3 months. The synagogue pulpit was open for 3 months. The Gentiles got the message of Jesus delivering power for two years. The classroom of Tyrannus was open daily for 2 years.

Notice the reach and scope of Jesus work in the Ephesus region- *He did this for two years, giving everyone in the province of Asia, Jews as well as Greeks, ample opportunity to hear the Message of the Master. (Acts 19-MSG)*

When the Jewish door slammed shut, Paul took his disciples and his football and went to where Paul shared daily the message of Jesus atoning death, resurrection and eternal life to all who believed.

When the light of Jesus Christ is turned on, it always confronts the powers of darkness.

Throughout Asia small pockets of believers and Paul's associates started churches everywhere. Listen to the names of the church planters sent out from Ephesus-Aquila and Priscilla, Timothy, Silas, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus, Luke. The Ephesian 12 filled with the Holy Spirit. The Jewish disciples from the synagogue and the Gentile disciples from the hall of Tyrannus.

If the human heart responds with repentance, there is **revival**.

If the human heart responds with rebellion, then there is **riot**.

This is the beginning of a region wide revival. Now, whenever Jesus is at work, the devil hits the fan. Paul stayed in Ephesus a total of 3 years according to *Acts 20:7*, ³¹*So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.*

The most noted feature of Paul's stay in Ephesus is the planting of the famous 7 churches in Revelation. During Paul's three-year stay in Ephesus, many experienced salvation in Christ and deliverance from the death grip of evil. (Acts 19:8-10)

In the witchy atmosphere of Ephesus, God in the power of the Holy Spirit worked in supernatural ways. God met the devil head on with his best supernatural delivering power. The Bible tells us where sin abounds, grace abounds more. *Romans 5:20-AMP, But where sin increased, [God's remarkable, gracious gift of] grace [His unmerited favor] has surpassed it and increased all the more, ...*

Paul's healing ministry and yours can go next level. God put the Holy Spirit's power into handkerchiefs; the word is sweat rags and aprons. Paul wore these while he made tents. These rags and aprons were then taken by superstitious Ephesians who thought perhaps this God of Paul's can do a supernatural healing.

The sick, the mentally ill, the demonized began to become whole. Stories of healings and deliverances filled the marketplace. The classroom of Tyrannus was now filled daily with wall-to-wall seekers, investigators. Jews. Gentiles.

Paul would work in the morning making tents, then teach in the afternoon. Before he taught, he often took off his apron and sat down his tent making rags. People who needed a miracle, often would grab these items and took them to the sick and demonized people.

¹¹*God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, ¹²so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. (Acts 19-NIV)*

God did the miracle not Paul. The healing power was in the Holy Spirit not in the rags and aprons.

Paul's dirty laundry was a reminder the resurrection power of Jesus Christ can do anything, anywhere to anyone.

Stop! Who knows someone that needs a miracle. A healing. A deliverance. God used Paul to do the supernatural, and the same Holy Spirit wants to reveal God's power through YOU! (Acts 19:11-12)

Acts 19, is a Who's Who of miracles and deliverances in the days of revival in Ephesus. 7 spiritual con artists, known as the "Seven sons of Sceva" claimed they had power to exorcise demons out of people.

¹³ Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." ¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

One day as the sons of Sceva are listening to Paul's lectures, they hear about the power in the name of Jesus. So, they add Jesus' name to their incantations. The Jewish exorcists add the name of Jesus to their bag of tricks.

One day they get a call to cast out an evil spirit. The text tells us about a power-encounter. What happened to the exorcists is one of the funniest stories in the Bible.

When they announced the evil spirit should leave the troubled soul, the spirit yelled back at them.

In a hideous voice they heard, *¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them,*

"Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?"

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a bad day when a demon sasses you. Mocks you. Speaks to you! And puts you in your place.

These exorcists did not have a personal relationship with Jesus. They are going around invoking the name of Jesus and trying to cast demons out of troubled people. And the demons speak up. Talk right to them. Jesus, we know.

Paul, we know.

But who are you.

That is a shocking thing when you are face-to-face with a demon.

¹⁶Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. (Acts 19-NIV)

You want to know what is worse than having a demon sass you, talk back to you. It is to have a demon possessed guy beat you up.

In Ephesus 19 we meet seven spiritual con artists who realized playing spiritual games with the name of Jesus was deadly. (Acts 19:13-16)

And so, these guys run away naked and bleeding. Can you imagine if this is your profession and you go home to your wife for dinner.

She asks, as you come in, “why are you naked and bleeding?” “You say, “I got beat up today.” “Who beat you up, she asks?” “I didn’t get the guy’s name. I am not sure what the license plate was of the truck that hit me.” Damian. Chucky.

The reason these guys got beat up, was because they had no faith in Jesus.

- Friends, you cannot mix Jesus and the occult.
- You cannot mix Jesus and horoscopes.
- You cannot mix Jesus and dungeons and dragons.
- You cannot mix Jesus and Harry Potter.

You run a risk when you have one foot in Christ and one foot in the occult. One day it will be a disaster. I have engaged in deliverance for over 40 years. It still shocks me to discover how many Christians play with evil. Occult.

What happens next in Ephesus? Word spreads about the Sons of Sceva fiasco. As the word spread with a lot of laughter, not everyone thought it was funny.

The miraculous supernatural Holy Spirit activity and the sons of Sceva spiritual fiasco lit a fuse that started a revival and a riot. (Acts 19:17-41)

This incident became the epicenter of such a move of repentance that a spiritual earthquake took place. Jesus’ name was becoming known. Feared. Surrendered to. Worshipped.

The Ephesus who had lived in bondage to Greek and Roman gods, tossed their idols out the door and started going to church.

Christians began to realize that faith in Jesus and magic spells, witchcraft, occult practices were not only sinful. They were life threatening.

Many Christians who secretly hung on to old superstitions, practices of tarot cards, Ouija boards, seances made immediate decisions to cut ties, cast out and burn up the evil connections.

One night a bon fire bigger than what Texas AM, could produce started lighting up the sky. Ephesians started throwing in magic scrolls, occult paraphernalia, their once prize expensive idols.

The fire went on for days. When the fire finally died down, and Ephesians started talking about what had just happened, someone calculated the once priced occult items at over several million dollars to 1.5 billion dollars whether it is a day's wage or years wage. That is in ancient economic amounts. Let me end by reading the text.

¹⁷ The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored. ¹⁸ Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. ¹⁹ A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. *The value of the books was several million dollars.* ²⁰ *So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect. (Acts 19-NLT)*

The power of God's word that Paul preached daily, was demonstrated dramatically.

Ephesians were turning to Christ in such large numbers; the economy was on the edge of collapsing. (Acts 19:24-27)

Ephesians (and Bethel Christians) must repent of their sins. They confessed evil practices; they turned away by destroying all evidence of its existence.

Today it is time for some of you to burn some bridges to wrongful practices. Then to give yourself fully to the Lord Jesus Christ. What does God want you to discard? To burn? To remove from your life.

If you want to be truly committed to Christ, be honest with him in your walk. If you want to close the doors of occult and carnal practices, I am going to ask you to come and stand at an altar and altar your behavior.

To start a new journey of freedom with Christ. Lived out in the power of the Holy Spirit. What would it cost you, to let go?

I know what you would gain. True Christ-surrendered faith and surrender to Jesus who sets the captives free and gives you real Holy Spirit power to live.

Watching the bon fire was the proof that Jesus Christ was changing the lives of people. Jesus Christ was bringing revival to a city filled with witchcraft and the occult. If you read on, this so fired up Paul. Paul chose not to go into the fire of the riot, but he declared,

Rome I am coming for you next!

²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. ²¹ After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia.

"After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." (Acts 19-NIV)

Father,

I declare my love and surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I renounce and repent of all evil practices and carnal behaviors that You disapprove of. I ask Jesus Christ's atoning death to cover my pile of sins.

As a Christian I realize that faith in Jesus and participation in any type of occult practice is sinful and even life threatening. Today it is time for me to burn some bridges to wrongful practices.

I give myself fully to the Lord Jesus Christ. Today I start a new journey of freedom in Christ. Lived out in the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Cor 5:17-NIV)

In Jesus Name, Amen!