



The Acts of the Spirit  
DISTURBING THE PEACE

# ACTS 19:11-20

“THE SONS”

OCTOBER 13, 2024

## SUMMARY

This week in our Acts series, we encounter the full spectrum of spiritual thought in the ancient world. Pastor Joey reminded us that ancient people were keenly aware that the spiritual realm interacts with our physical realm, something we, as modern people, would do well to remember.

However, the ancients needed clarification about the nature of the interaction between the two realms. Apart from Jesus, they were left to their own devices to navigate the physical and spiritual union. Joey described this as a spectrum between **Magic and Miracles**.

- **Miracles:** The belief that events happen at the will of the divine with no human control over them.
- **Magic:** The spiritual realm can be negotiated based on spells, sacrifices, and spiritual/moral behavior.

This was on full display when the seven sons of a Jewish priest attempted to gain access to the miraculous power of Jesus that Paul had without the relationship Paul had with Jesus. This didn't end well for these charlatans. However, due to their folly, the whole area clearly saw the power of Jesus, which only comes through knowing him. They brought out all their magical paraphernalia and gladly burned them at a small earthly cost (\$15 Million) for the great spiritual wealth of Jesus.

Jesus doesn't exist to serve us; we exist to know and serve him.

Joey challenged us to evaluate where the magical mindset is creeping into our day, either through technology or through our well-intentioned spiritual practices. Neither are wrong by themselves, but they can often cause us to confuse a relationship with Jesus with manipulating Jesus for our agenda. The latter produces no fruit; the former produces all we could ever want or need.

Let's digest this truth together as we discuss Acts 19:11-20.



# ACTS 19:11-20

## DISCUSSION

Every relationship has benefits; we all help each other, meet each other's needs, and leverage our resources for each other's good. But there is a difference between the benefits resulting from a genuine relationship and using the relationship to gain the benefits.



This document can be used for either personal or group reflection.

Group facilitator: Please feel empowered to use only the questions that are helpful for the context of your group.

- What is the difference between the two types of motives?
- How does each motive impact the relationships?

### Extract the Truth

### Read the text: Acts 19:11-20

- What jumps out to you from the text?

Pastor Joey said that we often ignore the fact that there is a spiritual realm that interacts with our physical world. But in the ancient world, they knew it intimately. They sought either to submit to it or manipulate it to get what they wanted. Pastor Joey explained that there was a spectrum of thought described as follows:

- Miracles: The belief that events happen at the will of the divine with no human control over them.
- Magic: The spiritual realm can be negotiated based on spells, sacrifices, and spiritual/moral behavior.

This spectrum perfectly summarizes the ancient world before Jesus. On one side, you have stoicism; on the other, you have paganism.

- What life experiences would lead a non-believer to fall on one side or the other of this spectrum?
- What did a relationship with Jesus provide that was different than these two philosophies?

Awareness of the spiritual realm is on the rise in our Western context, and with it, the re-emergence of stoicism or magical spiritualism.

- Where do you see evidence of this, and how can awareness of this spectrum help us live as effective witnesses for Jesus today?



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## Experience Transformation

As believers, Pastor Joey said, this thinking affects everything we do, even if we have no apparent ties to “magic” in our lives. This thinking affects us in a few ways:

- Magic: Worship of Technology/Self-Help to solve all our problems.
- Legalism: Contract agreement with God that is based on our Good Behavior/Spiritual Practices
- Stoicism: Avoidance of God about our needs and circumstances
  - Based on these examples, how do you see magical thinking creeping into your relationship with God?
  - What is God inviting you to take action on today, and how can this group help you do that?

**PREPARE FOR  
NEXT WEEK:**

Read Acts 19:21-41

