

DEFEND YOUR BUSINESS AS A BELIEVER



Act 16:16-19 KJV 16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. 19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

The Lord delights in the prosperity of His servant Ps 35:27. He has also promised that whatever we laid our hands on to do shall prosper. He promised in Deut 28 to bless our store houses and pronounced the blessing of fruitfulness on us.

He actually gives power to make wealth.

Deu 8:18 KJV But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.



The power there could be physical power for those that do manual labour, and it could be ideas, anointing, wisdom, grace, opportunity, open doors, ability, creativity, and so on and so forth. but he doesn't give money. He has none. He gives you power to make wealth.

In the New covenant, Paul reinvigorates this when he wrote to the Corinthians and told them what the grace of Jesus has made available for them.

2Cor 8:9 KJV For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

2Cor 9:8 KJV And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

The Lord Jesus by his death and resurrection broke the power of debt, poverty, insufficiency, lack and wretchedness. The question is this with all these wonderful promises and statements of fact about how God wants us to prosper, how come we still find ourselves struggling most of the time?

I believe that when you pray over your business and declare the promise of God over the work of your hands, God answers your prayer but God is not coming

down to buy your provisions, rent your house, pay you for the work. What He does is to give His angels command concerning you directly or inspire someone to favour you, buy things from you or come as your customers. Relatively, people are involved when it concerns finance. God flows through people.

The devil cannot stop God and you but he can cause a lot of issues where angels and man are involved.

Angels

You will remember the story of Daniel that in Chapter nine he prayed and in less than 3 minutes an angel came and told him that as soon as the prayer was answered a command was given to that effect.

Dan 9:23 KJV At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.



The same Daniel prayed in Daniel 10 but this time around, it took 21day before he could get an answer. What caused the delay this time around? Many Christian will deduce that it must be sin and so will start confessing known and unknown sin. Some will think it is a deliverance issue and will start looking for someone that will help them cast out the devils. This is what the angel himself said.

Dan 10:12-13 KJV 12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

The prince of Persia who was the principality or power in charge of that area was the one that hindered the angel that was to bring the answer to Daniel and kept the status for 21 days until when another angel Michael came to help the angel. Angel came to rescue angel. But at the beginning of the supplication was when the angel had been dispatched yet he could not make it to Daniel. So angels bringing good things to you can be hindered from getting across to you.



Men

1Th 2:18 KJV Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

One of the ways I believe Satan hindered apostle Paul was not through sickness or diseases but through the messenger of Satan that motivated and inspired judaizers against him everywhere he went. The account which we read in act 13 - 14. From Antioch to Iconium, to Derbe and to Lystria where he was stoned to death but was miraculously raised. He gave vivid account of all his troubles in 2 Corinthian

2Cor 11:23-28 KJV 23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in

deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Sometimes Satan flows through men directly too. Here is what Paul said about a man that hindered his ministry.

2Ti 4:14-15 KJV 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

So when it concerns finance and prosperity, a lot is involved. So how do you overcome such attacks and hindrances to your success and prosperity?

In the text we read in Act 16, Paul and his companion were in Philippi and on one of the days they were going to the oratory for prayers and a particular girl that had the spirit of python or divination followed them. She has been doing this for many days. She gives "good" testimony concerning Paul and his mission. This particular day as usual, she kept following them, shouting and crying. The Bible says Paul was grieved in his spirit and commanded the spirit in the girl to come out. Immediately the spirit left the girl.



However, a problem started, the Bible says the owner of the girl rose up and grabbed Paul and Silas to the magistrates and made a case against them. There was an uproar and the magistrate, without hearing Paul out, asked them to be flogged and thrown into the prison.

I believe you know the story very well and how they miraculously came out from the prison. But let's us analyse and look at the attitude of the owners of the slave girl. The girl was their source of income. They had made so much gain or profit from the ability of the girl as a soothsayer, prophecy and predict future events. They had made a lot of money from her. So when Paul cast out the devil inside the girl, the bible says the hope of their gains or occupation was gone. The writer uses the same Greek language

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No one needs approbation from the devil. Even though what the spirit in the girl was saying was true, no one needed such testimony from the devil. Devil was colouring the incident to make it look as if the apostles and the girl were collaborating and got their powers from the same source. The people of the land will not give any heed to Paul's message if they believe that the girl is working with the apostles. Jesus did not allow the devils to talk even though they recognized Him as the Messiah. So Paul would not tolerate the approbation of the devil in his ministry.

The word "he came out" is "exerchomai". It means: to go or come forth of; to come forth, emitted as from the heart or the mouth, to flow forth from the body. It was an irreversible deliverance. The devil isn't coming back and the hope of making money has finally gone for ever and ever. The girl had been delivered.

Ironically, the writer uses the same Greek word in verse 19 for "was gone" In order word, the hope of making money was gone with the devil. They saw it and also saw themselves in poverty, lack, insufficiency and wretchedness. How will they take care of their families, pay their children school fees and enjoy life again? They were not happy that the girl was delivered of the spirit that had held her bound for years. Someone says the most important thing to a civilized person is his pocket. They were only thinking about their own selfish pocket. They became very angry and dragged Paul and Silas out accusing them of bringing alien religion to their town.



This is my point, the story is a good demonstration of God's power over the demonic realm. but if you reverse the roles and use the attitude of the owners very well, you will gain some lessons. Those people saw Paul as the enemy who wanted to stop them from continuing benefiting from their "legitimate" source of income and they fought for their business with everything they had till they got Paul and his companion arrested.

Many Christian don't have this kind of attitude concerning their works and business. When things are not going well or when they even observe the root cause of their problem in their finances they do nothing about it. They blame the economy and align with their friends facing the same challenge. But you see so many times the devil is responsible for some of those things that affects our business and the earlier we take him out the same way those people "took Paul out" Will you fight for your business? Will you identify that "Paul" that is coming against your source of income?

The girl followed them for many days. Once you give the devil an inch, he will take a mile. The shouting continued for many days. Why did Paul tolerate her for so long? You see, as long as you can tolerate poverty, sickness, lack and evil, you will always have them. But when you are tired and sick of being sick, you will act like the apostle Paul did. Paul was grieved. This is holy anger directed towards the

devil. Stir up yourself and deal with that devil causing evil around you. You already have the authority and God is waiting on you to take advantage of the power in the name of Jesus.

Another case study in the New Testament took place in Ephesus. let's read what happened there.

Act 19:23-28 KJV 23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

It is generally known that the temple of Diana at Ephesus was deemed one of the seven wonders of the world, and was a most superb building. It appears that the silver shrines mentioned here were small portable representations of this temple, which were bought by strangers as matters of curiosity, and probably of devotion. If we can suppose them to have been exact models of this famous temple, representing the whole exterior of its magnificent workmanship, which is possible, they would be held in high estimation, and probably become a sort of substitute for the temple itself, to worshipers of this goddess who lived in distant parts of Greece.(Clarke)

Demetrius was a silversmith. The word used here denotes “one who works in silver” in any way, either in making money, in stamping silver, or in forming utensils from it. It is probable that the employment of this man was confined to the business here specified, that of making shrines, as his complaint Acts . Act

19:26-27 implied that destroying this would be sufficient to throw them out of all employment.

The word “shrine” properly means “a case, small chest, or box”; particularly applied to a box in which sacred things are deposited. Hence, we hear of the shrines for relics (Webster). The word “shrines” here denotes “small portable temples, or edifices,” made of



silver, so as to represent the temple of Diana, and probably containing a silver image of the goddess. Such shrines would be purchased by devotees and by worshipers of the goddess, and by strangers, who would be desirous of possessing a representation of one of the seven wonders of the world. See the notes on Act 19:27. The great number of persons that came to Ephesus for her worship would constitute an ample sale for productions of this kind, and make the manufacture a profitable employment. It is well known that pagans everywhere are accustomed to carry with them small images, or representations of their gods, as an amulet or charm

He called an assembly of fellow workers and told them the problem at hand. He accused Paul of troubling their business that had brought much gain for them and through which they got their wealth. It was from this business they had gotten their houses, chariots and flourishing life. He told them that what Paul was saying

about Diana would eventually affect the trade and nobody will make statues of Diana again and so they will not have money again. When those people heard that they were full of wrath and started rioting. the whole town was involved.



What lessons do we learn from their attitude? They needed to protect their trade from "Paul" whom they see as an agent of evil that wants to destroy their trade. If we apply this to Christianity and business, there are agents of the devil that are creating issues to our business and we fold our hands to them. Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen will not tolerate Paul.

The design of this clamor was doubtless to produce a persecution against Paul, and thus to secure a continuance of their employment. Often, when people have no arguments, they raise a clamor; when their employment is in danger of being ruined, they are filled with rage. We may learn, also, that when people's pecuniary interests are affected, they often show great zeal for religion, and expect by clamor in behalf of some doctrine to maintain their own interest, and to secure their own gains.(Barnes)

What will you do to protect your own trade and source of income? I hope you also understand the analogy I used. I am not in support of Demetrius and his men but

rather using it so we can learn great attitudes. Though theirs was negative. Rachael asked Jacob for a child but Jacob rebuked her, But we learned a great attitude there. It is the same thing here.

