

Acts 19:19

Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.

No, we are not going to talk about magic today and how bad it is. Instead, I want to talk about something I noticed when I read this, and that is that no one told these people to burn these books. It was something they did on their own, and by doing so, it showed true repentance.

I know when I got saved, one of the very first things the Lord took from me was my vulgar mouth that poured out profanities with every other word that came out of it. It was like the Lord took those words and had me throw them into the fire, because that's what I wanted to do with them, I didn't want them to be a part of who I was any more. No one told me to, which was evidence of a repentant heart.

Now not everything that was bad in my life got thrown in the fire right away. I know one thing that took years for me to stop, and that was smoking, which I struggled with and hated. Until about 16 years ago when the Lord took it from me, as I finally threw it into the fire, never to have it return.

Yet don't we make so many rules for new believers to follow once they are saved? We do because we forget that the Lord called us to catch 'em, and He will clean them.

† **Matthew 4:19** *Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

Notice once again Jesus says *fishers of men*, not "*Cleaner uppers of men*". Our encouragement for new believers should not be to make them clean, but to help them learn how to be cleaned, and that's by getting into the Word of God.

Paul gives us an example of this.

† **Romans 7:7** *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."*

Notice that Paul does not say that, "*I would had not known covetousness unless my Christian brothers and sisters badgered me about it*". No, he said, *For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."*

It was God's word (the law) that changed Paul's heart and way of thinking. And the Lord didn't do this just for Paul, but all of us as believers. The more we grow in the Lord by being in His word, the more we throw those bad things that are in our life into the fire to be burned and gone from our lives, because the Lord is changing us day by day.

† **2 Corinthians 4:16** *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*