

Why It Might Be Time for You to Do a Thorough Book-Burning

After a meeting at the small group I attend at my home church, we were talking about an experience in churches that used to happen. Sometimes it would happen in a church parking lot. It may have come after a message on the danger of a certain kind of music. A bonfire would be created and people would come and throw their records or tapes on the fire. Someone mentioned the potential toxic fumes of such a fire.

This strange practice comes from a story in the book of Acts, chapter 19, where people came and burned their scrolls that were connected with sorcery that they were practicing. The value of the scrolls that were burned could be compared to the value of the wages of about 135 people working for an entire year. That would have been some bonfire.

It got me thinking, "What would that look like today?" Before we can figure it out, we should think about what it meant to the first people who threw the scrolls in the fire. Imagine seeing your neighbor Larry, who used to be known as a person to go to for magic, walking out of his house with an armful of scrolls that you knew were used as basically instruction manuals. It would have been the talk of the town.

These people were saying two things. First, they were publicly stating to everyone that they were done with their previous sin. Everyone would know about their new commitment to Jesus. Second, by burning the books, they were indicating there was no going back to the former life. It is kind of like the military strategy of burning the boats so there is no retreat.

The first application of what they did is pretty obvious. **There is something powerful about the public confession of leaving a sin behind.** This could also be a

public commitment to something good as well. Confession can be freeing and empowering for the journey ahead. I know there have been times when I have made public commitments to things that freed me from that moment forward. James was right when he said confession can bring healing.

Burning the boats so there is no going back in today's world is where it gets a little more personal. Telling everyone to burn their Christian rock records often turned into more legalism than creating freedom. That being said, **there is still something powerful and freeing about creating no turning-back moments.** Rather than telling you what to do, let me encourage you: Dare to ask yourself what that should look like in your life. If you ask the Holy Spirit, He will bring His creativity to encourage a life-changing moment for you.

I love what the Bible says is the end result of this kind of story. "So the word of the Lord powerfully grew and spread" (Acts 19:20) Wouldn't it be great to see that through your life? {eoa}

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