

What the Python Spirit Really Wants

I didn't realize how strong is the spirit of python's chokehold on my region until I started to personally experience the effects of its presence. One of the only named spirits in the Bible, the python spirit is a coiling spirit that works to squeeze out the breathe of life (the Holy Spirit) and cut off your lifeline to God (prayer).

To accomplish its deadly agenda, this spirit will remind you of wounds from your past, surround you with ungodly influences that tempt you to compromise the Word of God—or just barrage you with circumstances that knock the wind out of you.

Symptoms of a python attack may include weariness, a loss of passion to worship and pray, feeling pressured, overwhelmed, helpless and even hopeless. The severity of those symptoms depends on how long this enemy has been coiling itself around you and how much pressure it has applied.

Let me show you this spirit in the Bible. You'll find it in Acts 16:16 when Paul encounters a girl possessed with a spirit of divination. The word divination in this verse comes from the Greek word for puthon, which translates in English as "python." *Vine's Dictionary* explains how Greek mythology believed the Pythian serpent guarded the oracle of Delphi until Apollo slew it (and then took on the name Pythian). The word was later applied to diviners or soothsayers, inspired by Apollo.

Attacking Your Prayer Life

Python can attack anyone. You don't have to be in sin to find python trying to slide under your door. Paul was a man of prayer. The Bible says he spoke in tongues more than anybody else in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 14:18)—and probably more

than anybody else in the early church.

Despite Paul's relationship with Christ and a strong prayer life, he still had to wrestle against principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (see Eph. 6:12). Paul had to wrestle against python—and so may we. Let's look at Paul's encounter with the python spirit.

"Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, 'These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.' And this she did for many days" (Acts 16:16-17).

The python spirit had a stronghold in Philippi. When the man of prayer started heading for the house of prayer, this spirit launched its first attack against him—a distraction followed by a full-blown trial that aimed to take him out of his purpose. Python knows it has no authority in a city that prays in the presence of God, so it works to distract people from praying so they can't fulfill their purpose.

Python would rather watch you lick your wounds than pray to a healing God. Python would rather hear you complain or gossip than take your problems to a miracle-working God. Python would rather distract you with attacks, trials and persecutions than see you press into a gracious God for deliverance. Again, python's ultimate goal is to put you in bondage and thwart your purpose. You may be going through the motions but you feel dead on the inside because python has squeezed the life out of you.

Loosed From Python's Grip

When you rise up in your Christ-given authority against python, the battle ensues. Paul cast the demon out of the girl, which meant her masters could no longer profit from her

false prophecies. “They seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities” (Acts 16:19). From there, they were falsely accused, had their clothes torn off, were beaten with rods and thrown into prison with stocks on their feet.

Paul and Silas were in physical pain. They had been publicly humiliated. They were slandered and maligned. And they were in the grip of the python spirit. At this point, they had several options: They could lie there and lick their wounds. They could complain to one another about their situation. They could meditate on the persecution and decide to abandon their purpose in exchange for being set free. But they didn’t do any of that. Thank God, they left us a model for how to break free from the python spirit.

“But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed” (Acts 16:25-26). Prayer and praise are what python is trying to stop, but prayer and praise will set you free.

In next week’s article, we’ll take a closer look at the python spirit and what it takes to combat it in a region. Florida has 43 houses of prayer across the state—more per capita than any other state—but the python spirit is so active that the Everglades are overflowing with these dangerous snakes. In a state known for prayer, why is python so dominant? More on that next week.

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