

Works of the Flesh / Fruit of the Spirit

Part 7

Scripture: Galatians 5:16-26

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:1-3

INTRO:

In Matthew chapter 14 we have the well know account of Peter walking on the water towards Jesus, walking and then sinking. At first the disciples think it is a ghost, but then Jesus calls to them saying "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter being Peter says; "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." And Jesus says 'come' and when Peter almost makes it to Jesus he sees the waves and the wind, became afraid and begins to sink. And Jesus catches him and says to him; "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" we all know the account and 3 verse later when they reach the shore it says;

*When they had crossed over, they came to the land of
Gennesaret.*

35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick,

36 and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

And as many as touched it were made perfectly well, because if I ask you, what is one of the main things we as humans seek when we are unwell or sick; it is to get better, right? When we have some serious case of the flu or a bad cold or some other ailment such as when something is broken or in a lot of pain, what is the one primary focus of our thinking... to get better isn't it? It's all we can think about in such times. And we will try almost anything to heal our bodies or take away the pain when it becomes too severe or goes on too long.

And yet, as ironic as it is, when we are well and healthy it is one of the last things we think of, our health that is. When we feel good, we never think of how it felt to feel bad, but when we feel bad all we can think of is how good it will feel, to feel good again'. Why is it we all remember the account of Peter walking on the water, but we hardly ever think of those who were sick of all kinds of diseases and ailments, and were made perfectly well.

If we look at the scripture that was read for us in 2 Kings chapter 5, we read of Naaman the commander of the Syrian army who was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, a mighty man of valor but he was also... a leper. And I'm sure that his ailment, his disease was on his mind every single day of his life, probably hoping and wishing that somehow or some day he could be made well by some means or another. Because that is what is in all of us isn't it. To be made well when we are ailing.

You see for Naaman, when the words of hope and healing from a young captive girl who was in his home came to the ears of his wife and then to Naaman himself and then to his master, his master wrote a letter to the king of Israel and sent Naaman to him to the land of Israel to be healed. But when the king of Israel heard of this, he tore his clothes and became distressed thinking that this was some kind of ploy to draw him into a war that he did not want to fight. But when the prophet Elisha heard of this he says to the king, in verse 8 of chapter 5;

"Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

And if you still have your bibles open to that chapter, I'll read verses 9 to 11 where it says;

9 Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house.

10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."

11 But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.'

Why was Naaman furious? Was this not the promise he was waiting for? He was furious because it did not go according to his own thoughts, showing up with his horses and in his chariot, and probably in all his military splendor, showing the world his greatness, was probably expecting great recognition in return. In verse 11 he reveals his own thoughts by saying 'He will surely come out to me', out to a man of such honor and stature. But who met him at the door... a messenger, possible a youth or a servant.

Being a great man he was expecting that the prophet himself would come out, and call upon the name of the Lord, bringing down the power of God to heal him, to wave his hand over the diseased place and heal the leprosy, in some great divine magical way.

But none of this happened, and was rather told by a messenger, possible a servant, to go and wash in the Jordan seven times to be clean.

He was furious because he somehow believed that the Lord God could be manipulated into healing him, as in some form of divine magic or sorcery ‘and wave the hand over the place and heal the leprosy’. But in the case of Naaman as in the many other places in the bible, it is not through the greatness of man that God reveals Himself or His mighty works, but more often than not it is through humility and faith. Because in one sense we are all like Naaman, we want God to heal us in our way, in our own time, having a disregard for the humility and faith that God is seeking first. Like those who came to Jesus and begged him, that they would only touch the hem of His garment and be made perfectly whole.

Humility and faith are pretty much the opposite of the word we are looking at today, which is sorcery. Because sorcery usually involves someone in power, someone in prestige and pride, and the glorification of self with their powers and actions over others.

F. SORCERY

In the bible sorcery is usually portrayed as someone who has the power of God, but in reality are all workings of the devil for selfish gains.

And an example of this would be of Simon the sorcerer in the book of Acts chapter 8 and in verses 9-11 where it says;

But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great,

10 to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God."

11 And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.

And also in the case with Paul's encounter with Elymas in Acts 13:6-11 where it says;

Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus,

7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

10 and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?"

11 "And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

From the words of Paul, sorcery is deceit, fraud, of the devil and is an enemy of righteousness and a perversion of the straight way. And with a description like that it is no wonder that Paul mentions it in his list of ‘works of the flesh’ in Galatians chapter 5. The word that Paul uses in Galatians chapter 5 is the word *pharmakeia* *far-mak-i'-ah* Strong's 5331, and many of you have heard of this word before, as we get our English word pharmaceutical from this word, and in the Online Bible Greek Lexicon it is defined as;

1) the use or the administering of drugs

2) poisoning

3) sorcery, magical arts, often found in connection with idolatry and is fostered by it

4) metaphorically. the deceptions and seductions of idolatry

If you remember I noted in the previous message, there is a connection that sorcery has with idolatry, in that they often go hand in hand with each other in the bible and in the world.

This connection comes from the one healing or the healing ones who portray as having the ability to heal through the use of drugs or the illusion to heal through other magic arts, just as the definition says that sorcery and magical arts are often found in conjunction with the practice of idolatry and are fostered by it, that the influence of such magical arts or drugs, effects or influence the worship of other gods or the healer himself. Simon astonished the people, making them think he was someone great, Elymas wanted to turn the proconsul away from the faith, to keep the power he had over the people for himself.

And by this point you may already have checked off that box saying nope this one DEFINITELY does not apply to me and we can move on now.

And true, when viewed as the bigger picture of what this work of the flesh pertains to, it is nothing we want to participate in.

But even though these are the bigger things we avoid, there are a many smaller things we need to be cautious about. Because when we are ill or in pain, we may begin to seek the health and wellness of our bodies in various other places and forms and in doing so, open the door for all kinds of demons and evil things to enter in and in turn become participants of some kind of sorcery.

Again, as I said in the beginning of this series, it is more about revealing the smaller applicable aspects, or beginnings of these things than looking at the bigger picture of these sins. And the one root thing that we must ask ourselves in regards to this topic is, what am I trying to gain or achieve with any certain practice in my life? What is it that I'm trying to do or get to, that God is not doing for me. Ask yourself, am I like Naaman, expecting great things in my time and my terms, when in all reality all I am to do is walk by faith.

For this message, I will use the definition points from the Online Bible Greek Lexicon as ‘a kind of outline’, to show us some of the things in our own lives we may need to look at. And remember, even though Paul is talking about the works of the flesh, that usual outward visible appearance of sin, we want to focus more on the hidden, inward

things of the heart, things that would still be in the early stages before they become outward visible sin And make these warnings relevant to our lives in the here and now.

And the Online Bible Greek Lexicon's first definition was;

1) the use or the administering of drugs.

You see, Medicine or drugs is something we all come across and use all the time, and in some cases, even use on a daily basis. And I think we could divide them into three areas of use, the first would be drugs to heal us, second, would be drugs to help us, and thirdly drugs that are used to get people high. (an notice I used the term people and not us in that last one)

So, what do I mean with drugs that can heal, well there are many drugs in the pharmaceutical world out there that are used to heal our bodies, and almost all of us have use them in one form or another, and most of them would perfectly ok for us to use. An example of this would be a drug like penicillin.

Quoting the internet, It is estimated that Penicillin has saved between 80 million to 200 million lives, in that without its discovery and implementation, approximately 75% of people today would not be alive because their ancestors would have succumbed to infections long ago.

Others like chemotherapy drugs, designed heal our bodies in the recovery of various cancers. Drugs designed to heal our bodies.

The next category I would call ‘helping drugs’, and we have many different kinds and they come in many different strengths, and they would be drugs like acetaminophens, ibuprofens and morphine, and other of the like. Such are not designed necessarily to heal our bodies but are made to help our bodies with the relief of pain or ailments, even Paul told Timothy to ‘use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities’ because back then they didn’t have Tylenol or Advil or even Pepto-Bismol. These are also perfectly fine when used in their prescribed manner, but when they are overused, it then becomes something we have to be watchful for, because very often this is the place where people cross over to the drugs to not only get help, but becomes an addiction to get high. And I know this is a very touchy topic. And I don’t want to take away or belittle the pain of anyone. Not at all.

All I want us to look at, is that somewhere between the drugs that help us, which are good, to the other end to where there are drugs that are used as a high, are bad. Because somewhere in the middle is a line in all of that grey, that divides the good ones from the bad ones, or when good ones are used in excess and become bad, because in all reality they are all still all drugs.

Because if we look at Jesus works or ministry while he was here on earth when working with the people, as I noted in the introduction, what was one of the things the people sought from Him the most... to be healed. Jesus healed all kinds of diseases, cured all kinds of ailments, and it was through His great compassion He had on the people, that He heal them, and in some cases even raise them from the dead.

Jesus performed miracle after miracle in taking away the pains and infirmities of the people. Because as I said in the beginning of this message, is it not one of our greatest desires when we suffer... to be healed, to be well, to be free of aches and pains?

Now as a side note there are those out there who believe that if you are not healed from any disease or ailment, that you just don't have enough faith; or that physical ailments are always the product of some sin in your life. In my opinion these are both wrong teachings. First of all, the apostle Paul had some thorn in the flesh, some infirmity that he does not expound on, and it says three times he pleaded with the Lord to take it away and what did the Lord say?

"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Did Paul just, not have enough faith, I doubt that, God handpicked him from the world to be that light to the gentiles and commissioned him to write in what now makes up 25% of the New Testament. And second, in regards to it being sin in your life, even the disciples asked Jesus that question in John chapter 9, starting in verse 1 it says;

1 ¶ Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

And we live in an age where we have all kinds of advancements in the medical system, and as controversial as some of the more modern ones are, there are still some amazing advancements that have been made in the area of medicine in our world. But how far we go in search of that healing and how great a pain we may be in, is where that grey area lies. Again, I don't want to take away or disregard the pain anyone is going through, but ask yourself this one question, am I looking forward to the drug or am I still looking forward to Jesus?

I know I can't put up a picture of your pain and say I know what that feels like, I've had some painful things in my life, but they are all gone now, and I can't relate to someone who has some unbearable pain that is with them 24/7, I have no clue what such a person may be going through, in their struggles. All I know is that scripture, the word of God says;

...that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Romans 8:18

And Paul who also says in 2 Corinthians 4 16-18;

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

I know that this can be a touchy subject, and all that I would say is that we would examine ourselves whether we are looking forward to Jesus or the drug and be watchful and careful what we put into our bodies.

The second definition in the Online Bible Greek Lexicon is poisoning, which I assume and hope that none of us have practiced or participated in, unless we are trying to get rid of rats from under our woodsheds, then its ok.

But the third definition in the Online Bible Greek Lexicon says;

Sorcery, magical arts, often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by *it*.

Now we are definitely getting into the darker side of things. And I think these are the primary workings that Paul is referring to in the text of Galatians chapter 5, as being the works of the flesh. The one who delves into the questionable arts of this practice in order to fulfill their own personal gains or pleasures, and would then come along the lines of the forth definition which says;

4) metaphorically. the deceptions and seductions of idolatry

I think it is this that Paul is warning us about. There are a lot of things about this realm of sorcery that open the door to other larger things and will lead us into sin. And when we look at sorcery, as in the use of deceptions and seductions leading to idolatry, it will often start in the little things or the ignorant things that draw Christians in, the devil taking advantage of their lack of knowledge and understanding of what is behind some of these practices.

Warren Smith in his book titled ‘False Christ Coming, Does Anybody Care’ talks about the unaware church or ‘The Silent Church’ as he calls it and talks about how the church is not catching many of the New Age aspects creeping into their congregations, because many aspects of the New Age movement contain aspects of sorcery. From chapter 10 of his book he says and I quote;

Traditional Christian believers frequently mention the analogy of the frog that is so slowly and gradually boiled in a kettle of water that it dies before ever realizing what is going on. Yet many believers fail to realize that the very same thing is happening to them as they tell that story. How else do you explain the rapid rise of the New Age/New Gospel/New Spirituality movement with hardly a word of concern within the Church about what’s been happening?

As New Age advocates continue to publish best-selling books and flock to the air waves in ever-increasing numbers to advance their cause, there is a strange silence in Christendom. Does the church have any idea what is going on?

Somehow, Christians don't seem to grasp Jesus' warnings about the tremendous deceptions that characterizes the time of the end.

Are Christian leaders leading the church ever closer to the cross... Why is there almost no call for spiritual discernment within the church... Why are there so few warnings about a counterfeit New Age/New Spirituality movement that maligns the person of Jesus Christ and threatens the lives of His followers?

EOQ

Now the focus of this message is not the New Age movement, but there are definitely some of its aspects that could be included in this section. But it is to show us the fact that the church has fallen asleep to many of the things that are entering the congregations. We have already looked at the first 5 things in Paul's list, and how many of these are already accepted by the majority of Christians and are in many churches today.

As Warren Smith illustrates, there are many cooking frogs in our churches these days when it comes to the things of Paul's list and not only in regard to the New Age movement.

Remember it is the practice of magical arts that I think Paul is getting at, and like some of the other words we looked at like Uncleaness and lewdness; sorcery can encompass a vast array of things. All kinds of little beginnings and almost unnoticeable things in our world we may practice. Not that I think that any of us practice the big things, but like I have said with all of these, they all start small somewhere, somewhere they seem almost insignificant and inconsequential in their beginnings. And it is there that we must be ever watchful of such things that lead to sorcery.

And as I said in the last message many of these things come from looking for help when we cannot accomplish it by ourselves, it's when we fail to trust God for the things we are seeking relief from, or simply as Warren Smith says, allow in because of ignorance. And in turn we enter that sinful realm of seeking the health and wellness of our lives and souls in other things rather than God.

And again, we have to start by looking at some of the small, sometimes almost insignificant things in our lives, things that may make you think my my pastor you're really reaching far out in some

of these messages. I didn't think that my Christian walk was so picky on so many little things.

And it's not that I'm being picky, but that we be picky as to where these things can begin. And not that these little things would come under the category of sorcery when they begin, but to remind us that the devil will always take little steps, until one day, all these small almost insignificant thing has become a huge, very evident sinful thing in my life.

As Johanna Michaelsen concludes in her book 'The Beautiful Side of Evil' in which she relates her experiences of the occult practices and various psychic experiments and cures, says;

Remember there is a beautiful side of evil - deceptive, subtle, adorned with all manner of spiritual refinements, but no less from the pit of hell than that which is blatantly demonic.

EOQ

And just to note almost all of these as Warren Smith says, will come from our 'spiritual Adversary', the devil, to hinder us in our walk, and to deceive the church deeper and deeper into things that lead into the realms of sorcery.

And one of these would be the realm of holistic health. Ray Yungen in his book ‘Many Shall Come in My Name’ speaks about the holistic healing and alternative health movement and says this in chapter 6 of his book;

The term holistic means body, mind, and spirit. In other words, it includes the makeup of the whole person.

According to this perspective, to achieve optimal health and well-being, all three aspects of the person have to be working smoothly. If one aspect is out of balance, the whole human machine is out of balance. Holistic health practitioners claim their job is to restore balance between the physical, mental and spiritual elements of their patients. One holistic health source explains;

‘All agree that the healing is for body, mind and spirit, and that physical healing is only an entry point for higher spiritual teachings’

EOQ

He goes on later to say that there are many things that are useful in looking after our health such as nutrition, chiropractic treatments and massages which have no direct connection to the things of evil, but,

there is a door we must be watchful of when dealing with things call holistic.

As I said in the previous message on idolatry, of how people often seek the help and healing of things that are beyond our control, where people search for other means of help outside of the physical tangible means and turn to the spiritual. Ray goes on to talk about things such as Energy Healings, Reiki, Therapeutic touch, use of crystals, and acupuncture, all kinds of things that definitely are links to this theme of sorcery and will come through the guise of holistic health. As I said, many times some of these come in small beginnings, little alternatives, or unnoticed ignorant practices.

One example of an ignorant practice that I have seen much in my career as a mechanic is the display of dream catchers hanging from rear view mirrors in automobiles, automobiles of Christians who are ignorant of the meaning of such charms. Just listen to an internet quote regarding these catchers;

Their purpose was to protect sleepers, especially children, from bad dreams, nightmares and evil spirits. Native Americans believe that at night the air was filled with dreams, both good and bad.

EOQ

Many people, in general, ignorantly entertain such things and other things in their lives, by never giving thoughts of their real meaning and purpose and never bother to check it out. All kinds of things that have spiritual connotations and give the devil access points to the person through such uses, as Christians we must be ever watchful of the little ‘harmless’ things we allow into our lives. And if you didn’t get it I use the term harmless here sarcastically.

In Ken Lobbell’s book ‘War a Good Warfare’ he lists some of the many things that can ‘open the door’ to evil spirits in which they gain entry to the Christian, not all of these fall into the category of sorcery, but some of them do and are things we should avoid entertaining in our Christian life. Some of them are obvious, other are more subtle and he says they are things like;

...seeking information of the unknown *through* means of... -Séances, -Chrystal Ball, -Tarot Cards, -Tea Leaf Reading, -Astrology, -Horoscopes, -Consulting with psychics and mediums, -Ring or needle on a thread or any other such means...

-Witching of any kind, -Hypnotism, -Transcendental Meditation, -Yoga, -Karate, Judo and other forms of martial arts,

-Various kinds of acupuncture and other spirit healings, -Telepathy, -Automatic writing,

-Reading of occult or Satanic books and literature, - Watching demonic movies and videos.

-Spirit helpers, spirit guides and channeling, -Any kind of commitment or dedication to Satan or other spirits - Use of, or wearing Satanic symbols, on clothing or body or other belongings, -Fetishes of any kind, -"Charming" to remove warts or doing other similar things, -Making agreements or pacts with Satan or demons for their help, power, healing or anything else, -Superstitions of any kind, -Use of curses and hexes, -False religious experiences, These are very common among people who are looking for evidences of spiritual power.

EOQ

And I would simply add not only for spiritual power as was with Simon and Elymas but also with the health and wellbeing sought by

ordinary people. Again, many of these are very obvious things, but others can come in more subtle ways and little beginnings.

Ray Yungen in his book talks about the many things that can come with spiritual innuendos and New Age implications to infiltrate the Christian, and even talks about news papers, magazines, books, television and radio. Movies like Star Wars with its powers of the force, Harry Potter with its magic and dragons, and the Secret, with its psychic abilities.

All kinds of things are out there in which the devil is trying to get you to think that there is some higher power or higher level of knowledge to bring us to a higher level of spirituality. Or that there is a higher form of healing or wellness that can be achieved through other means. Or simply to just dumb you down so that you never give them a second thought and just class them as harmless entertainment. But almost all of these can be linked to some form of sorcery or another, to tempt us into the deceptions and seductions of idolatry.

You see, the devil will be ever so subtle as not to alarm us in the process. And what is the application of this message, that small piece of that big picture for your life, well I can tell you its not just reading

the word ‘sorcery’ in this works of the flesh, checking it off and saying ‘nope that doesn't apply to me’ and continue on with life. No, it has to do more with what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 21 and 22;

21 Test all things; hold fast what is good.

22 Abstain from every form of evil.

Test what?... All things. How much does all things include? All things! And what do we test all things to... the Word of God.

I know almost all of us distained homework when we were in school, I sure did, but God has not only given us homework, He has given us life work in the form of the bible. To test all things is your daily homework, test all things to the word of God, test the things you practice, what you watch, what you read, what you allow into your lives, your homes your church, what you put into your bodies. Test even the pastor you are listing to here this morning! All things should be tested and see where they come from before allowing them in. And when we have done that, as the word says, ‘hold fast to what is good’, and abstain from every form of evil.

And you don't need to do it all by yourself, there are good authors out there like the ones I quoted here in this message that have been

tested by others already and you have the power of Jesus through the Holy Spirit and His word, but it is still your duty to follow through with testing the things in your life. To watch out for the subtle things that can lead you to some form of sorcery or allow it to gain a foothold in your life.

We have to be watchful in that realm of magical arts, witchcraft, pharmaceutical promises, New age practices or holistic healing remedies because they all can come in such subtle forms that we may not even think of them or notice when they become evil.

Because man will do almost anything to feel better when he is sick.

Hebrews chapter 5 verse 12 through 14 talks about such weak or ignorant Christians by saying;

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Like homework... I think most of us do not enjoy exercise either, be it physical, mental, or even spiritual, because it takes effort and energy, and so often we find ourselves just too tired to do any of them. But we must, we must be on guard and watchful, we must test all things and hold to the good.

We must exercise our senses so that we can discern between good and evil, otherwise we will be consumed by the latter.

I know I cannot give you all the aspects and little details of the topic of sorcery that is before us today, even the things I have noted in the message are only the start of the many things that are out there in the world, things that the devil is trying to infiltrate our lives with. But that we would be as Ken Lobdell says in his book;

...KNOW THAT YOU MUST NOT BE IGNORANT OF
SATAN'S DEVICES.

And then references Isaiah 32:7a which says;

*Also the schemes of the schemer are evil; He devises
wicked plans To destroy the poor with lying words,*

Ken also says;

Many people are not aware of the many ways that Satan is able to work. God's Word warns us that Satan can gain an advantage of us if we are not aware of his devices.

EOQ

There is such a vast number of ways that the devil can entangle us, ensnare us, tempt us, to hold us in his ways and workings, as it would be almost impossible to ever list them all.

But one thing that the bible tells us to do is test all things that come into our lives, and that we are to do our homework, homework about all the things coming into our homes, our bodies, our lives. So that we are not ignorant of the devils' devices. Quoting Ken Lubdell again he says:

Many things Christians used to recognize as sin, are now accepted, and not only in their families, but have also come into the churches as acceptable.

EOQ

Many things are making their way into Christianity and one of them is the subtle forms of sorcery, not necessarily in the big picture we normally think of sorcery, but in the many subtle ways of making the

‘harmless’ things of sorcery ok in the lives of Christians and the church.

May we heed Paul’s words to Timothy in the end of 1 Timothy where he says;

...Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

And in conclusion when we look at this thing Paul calls sorcery, let us not think of the bigger things of the picture, the outright open sorceries of Simon and Elymas, but rather the more subtle things that can come under the same category, various drugs, questionable practices, and some of the holistic health measures that may cross the line into certain realms of sorcery.

And that we would not be as Naaman, expecting God to help us in our way, on our terms. But that as Christians we would walk in faith and do our homework, so that we would be as Paul says; have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

For if we do not, we will most certainly fall into the devils snares of evil practices.

And I just want to close with the final words of Warren Smith's book 'Deceived on Purpose' from the final chapters where he says;

In these times of heightened danger and treacherous deception. We must always go to the Lord for truth and direction.

Christians following deceived leaders will only end up deceived themselves. We must always measure everything by the true Word of God. Seek the truth and you will find it. Knock and the door will be opened. Ask God in sincerity and in true faith, and he will give you the wisdom you need.

still quoting he says;

May we always have a love of the truth. May God give us wisdom and spiritual discernment as we seek to contend for the faith. And may God give us all the strength and courage and conviction to endure the challenging time that are before us.