

Walking in Freedom over Uncleaness and the Occult

In this lesson, let's close some doors to the enemy's work in our lives – and take some of his hooks out of us while we're at it!

Let's explore several dangers which have the potential to sidetrack us, limit our effectiveness, destroy our ministry, keep us from perceiving spiritual truth, and stop us from flowing in the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit.

We need to talk about some things and practices that God has forbidden us to engage in – and for good reason! Let's see what effect they can have on us, and how we can walk free from them.

It's not possible in 40 minutes to give an exhaustive study on anything we'll say tonight, so I want to offer several things to you.

1. I'll make available to anyone who wants it my complete pulpit notes for this evening.
2. We have articles available as handouts which you can take tonight on several topics. If we run out, we can also e-mail them to you in PDF format.
3. We can also get you a cassette or a CD of the teaching tonight or tomorrow night's teaching, whichever we think comes out better.
4. If you think you would like the notes, the PDFs or an audio copy of the teaching, please let us know by e-mail; we just can't remember it if people just mention it to us on the way out the door tonight.

What's the Problem?

In His Word, God forbids His people to engage in certain practices and behaviors.

- Idolatrous acts and worship
- Sexual practices and other practices which God condemns
- Contact with supernatural beings which do not obey the God of the Bible, or using supernatural power which is not from Him

God forbids these practices for several reasons.

- God is a jealous God! What does it mean to say that God is jealous for us? Human jealousy is very ugly. But God has a holy jealousy, which is part of His love. He doesn't want you to get away from Him, and He wants the best for you, without harming you. His jealousy is the passionate intensity He has for you to belong to Him alone. He has bought us at a great price – the blood of His Son – and so He wants us to walk in His own plan for our lives, which will provide a better future for us.
- God knows that these practices are destructive to individuals, relationships, and society. The harm they create may be physical and/or emotional, as well as spiritual.
- God knows that these practices expose human beings to the risk of *demonization*, which simply means that when we engage in these practices, demonic spirits will be able to obtain a foothold in our lives.

God loves us and wants to free us from all demonic influence in our lives.

- Through the “**4 R’s**” we have been studying we can experience God’s freedom and cleansing from all demonic influence.
 - **Revelation:** the Holy Spirit shows us the enemy’s door or foothold
 - **Repentance:** we turn away from the things that have offended God
 - **Renunciation:** we reject the things which created a doorway for the enemy
 - **Receiving:** we obtain grace from the Lord to walk in victory over those things
- This process will not only close doors to the enemy but remove any footholds he has obtained in our lives

Possible Pathways to Demonization

What does it mean to be “demonized?”

- To say that someone is demonized simply means that there are one or more demonic spirits which are at work in a person's life.

Why should we not use the term “possessed?”

- The normal New Testament word for demonic activity in a person's life is *daimonizomai*, which we should simply translate as "demonized." This word was translated by the translators of the King James Bible as "possessed by demons."
- While "possessed" might have been the culturally understood term in the 1600's, it is not an accurate translation, as it implies that people may be "owned" by demons or the devil.
- "Possession" has more to do with stories of "selling your soul to the devil" than biblical reality. Except in the very rarest of cases, a person who is under the influence of demonic spirits can be delivered from their control and is not "possessed" by demons.
- When talking about people who are afflicted by evil spirits, the New Testament simply says that they are "demonized" or that they "have a demon."

Christians must awaken to the reality of spiritual warfare!

- Although Christians cannot be "possessed," they can certainly be influenced by demonic spirits. Christians must realize that although there is protection in Christ, sin and occultic practices can allow the enemy to have a foothold and create a stronghold in their lives.
- The New Testament makes a number of statements and warnings about demonic activity which would make no sense whatsoever if it were not possible for the enemy to harm us.

- Christians must realize that we are in a real war, with a real enemy. *“Be sensible and vigilant, because your adversary the Devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking someone he may devour...”* (1 Pet. 5:8) But sadly, Western Christians commit dangerous errors when they:
 - *Pretend the power of the enemy is not real.* The Bible assures us that the devil and his demons are real, and powerful.
 - *Act as if the reality of demonic activity doesn't affect them.* The Bible teaches us to walk carefully because the enemy is looking to “pick off” someone from the herd.
 - *Engage in activities which give the enemy a legal right to afflict them.* God condemns in the strongest terms possible occultic activity because he knows that it opens a door to the enemy's work in your life.
 - *Walk in ignorance or apathy of the risks when we engage in dangerous practices.* The devil doesn't “play fair” and to say that you were just having harmless fun is no protection when you go onto his territory.
 - *Hope the enemy won't bother them if they don't bother him.* This is wishful thinking – and dangerous. He is committed to your ruin and makes no truces!

The Doorway of Uncleanness

The door of illicit sexual relationships

- Because of the way he has designed families and individuals, God forbids us to engage in behaviors that: (1) are contrary to nature; (2) should be viewed as dishonorable and shameful; or (3) are destructive to the human personality.
- God is not against sex – He invented it! As Pastor Glenn might say, that will mess up your theology! What God *is* against is sexual activity outside the boundaries of the marriage relationship. The general term for this in the Bible is *fornication*. More modern translations of the Bible may render this word as “sexual immorality.”
- God’s attitude towards sexual sin is simple: “*Flee fornication.*” (1 Cor. 6:18a)
- When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He was bringing them out of a pagan world that did not understand the boundaries. Because of this, the Law of Moses gives a very specific listing of practices He considered evil, so there could be no doubt: rape, incest, close marriages, incest, homosexuality, etc.

Are sexual sins are worse than other sins?

- Our sexuality is such an important part of our God-designed humanity that sexual sins are indeed worse than most other sins. Sexual sins deform and damage our personality at a fundamental level, such that one can even be confused about the most basic identifying mark of his own humanity – whether he is male or female.

- When we commit sexual sin with another, we can bring untold damage to that person as well. Even sexual sins committed in isolation harm others; they can not only become destructive to our personalities, but also create barriers to real intimacy with our spouses.

Recognizing and breaking the power of soul ties

- God has also forbidden illicit sexual acts because whether we care to discuss it or not, sexual intercourse is a spiritual experience as well as a physical one.
- *Do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." (1 Cor. 6:16)*
- God has not designed us for a multitude of sexual partners. There is a spiritual connection which takes place in the marriage act, not merely a physical one. What we call a "soul tie" can be created in which the person's will and heart can become bound to the sexual partner. People can thus become emotionally bound to people with whom they had sexual intercourse in the past. Sadly, the modern world is full of tragic stories of obsessive relationships and their bad fruit.

Other unhealthy soul ties

- Besides unhealthy emotional bonds between sexual partners, there are other kinds of unhealthy soul ties. Some people are excessively devoted to other relationships such as "co-dependent" friendships or parent-child relationships that are beyond the bounds of what is emotionally healthy.

- Even non-sexual soul ties can create a doorway for the enemy's work in our lives as unhealthy human relationships breed fear, grief, manipulation, control, etc.

The Doorway of the Occult

In general

- The word *occult* comes from the Latin *occultus*, which means *hidden*. It refers in general to hidden or forbidden wisdom or knowledge.
- God has forbidden us to worship other Gods, or to seek supernatural power or knowledge from any other source but Him. The Bible cannot be more clear than when it says: *“Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord”* (Deut. 18:10-12, NIV)
- A person who contacts supernatural beings other than God or who seeks supernatural knowledge apart from God will easily become ensnared by demonic spirits who will deceive and afflict him.
- This also applies to attempts by people to develop some supposed abilities of the human soul. It may indeed be true that the fallen human soul retains some of the abilities it had before the Fall of Man; nonetheless, we are never encouraged by

God to make use of these abilities. Apart from Christ, people lack the maturity and wisdom to make use of such powers, assuming they even exist. People who seek to develop their “psychic” abilities typically become demonically influenced.

- There are several main categories of spiritual dangers which can expose a person to demonic influence and which can create a demonic stronghold in a person’s life. It is not possible to provide a complete list of these dangers; in general, the Bible advises us not to do anything which we cannot do to the glory of God! (1 Cor. 10:31)

Idolatry

- Idolatry is the sin of worshipping any God other than the one, true God. In order to avoid the sin of idolatry, we must clearly understand Who this God is. While we cannot “define” God, it is not difficult to distinguish this God from other gods:
 - He is the Creator of all things
 - He describes Himself as “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”
 - He is the author of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures
 - He describes Himself as a triune God, eternally existing in three Persons: the Father, the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit
 - Jesus, Who is God the Son, became a man and died to redeem Man to God

- Any religion which cannot give its agreement to these points is certainly idolatrous. This includes Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, paganism, Wicca, worship of nature spirits, etc.
- Idolatry is not simply mental belief, but includes participation in the prayers, worship and ceremonies related to any such religion.
- By biblical definition idolatrous prayers include supposedly Christian prayers made to Mary, the mother of Jesus, to angels, and to deceased “saints.” (1 Tim. 2:5)

Participation in Cultic Groups

- Quasi-Christian or other groups with unbiblical views of Jesus Christ. This includes groups such as Christian Science, Scientology, Unification Church (“the Moonies”), Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Unitarianism, Masonic groups, various New Age groups, Spiritualist churches, and groups teaching reincarnationist beliefs.
- In general, nearly all cultic groups attack the Person of Christ (Who He is) or the Work of Christ (What He did). This is always a quick and good barometer as to the safety of any group.

Divination

- Divination is obtaining knowledge about people, events and situations through supernatural means.
- Common divination practices include: astral projection, Ouija board, telepathy, fortune-telling, tarot cards, palm-reading, horoscopes and astrology, dowsing, mind reading, mediumship (“channeling”), séances and conversing with the “dead” or with “ghosts,” automatic trance writing, “psychic readings,” and interpretation of omens.
- Satan’s practice of revealing information to people through the work of familiar spirits is a counterfeit of the Holy Spirit’s gift of the word of knowledge.

Witchcraft and sorcery

- At its most basic level, witchcraft is a work of the flesh, according to Galatians 5. This means that there is a normal tendency in fallen, human flesh towards manipulation, intimidation, and domination of others.
- At a deeper level is the reality of supernatural witchcraft, which is the using of objects, spells, chants, curses, and demonic assignments to manipulate or control persons, places or events. Sorcery by a strict definition involves the use of potions and drugs to achieve the effect.

- Under the category of witchcraft and sorcery would also come such things as black magic and “white magic,” manipulation and control by religious figures, use of dedicated objects such as amulets or jewelry, and sacrifices of animals or human beings.
- Christians should not be naïve about materials and objects that are dedicated to the enemy or have been used for witchcraft or for false worship in general. Demonic spirits may attach themselves to places, to animals and even to physical objects such as idols, artwork, and jewelry. Scripture warns us to keep an accursed thing away from us, lest we become an accursed thing like it! (Josh. 6:18)

Deceptive Adaptations

- Of special note and danger today are practices which have been deceptively adapted to the beliefs of our society in order to conceal their occultic or idolatrous nature.
- These practices are usually re-packaged for Westerners as a philosophy, an exercise, a psychological therapy or a medical treatment.

- Although commonly accepted in America, these practices are based on and still contain their spiritual foundation and can lead to demonic bondage. They include
 1. Yoga. (*See handout.*)
 - The postures of yoga are actually postures of worship to Hindu gods.
 - Many of the mantras or chants which people do as they practice yoga are actually the names of Hindu deities.
 2. Other practices or “therapies” which involve the manipulation or transfer of “life energies” such as “kundalini,” “chi,” “prana,” etc. This includes ta’i chi, feng shui, traditional Chinese acupuncture, reiki, certain massage therapies, and related practices. (*See handouts.*)
 - All of these things are based on adjusting or regulating the flow of supposed energies within the human body.
 - The acupuncturists believe that there are 72,000 meridians or lines which channel energy in the body. Even if this is true, how did they acquire this knowledge 4,000 years ago.
 - God has an answer for our healing.
 3. Hypnosis and similar therapies which involve suspension of the human will, such as regression or past lives therapies.
 4. “New Age” medicinal practices or “holistic” medicine practices which incorporate any of the elements described in #'s 1, 2, and 3, above. This

includes homeopathic medicine and may include chiropractic medicine, depending on the practitioner. (See *handouts*.)

5. Any martial art which retains its spiritual component, particularly any martial art which involves manipulating the *chi* or *ki*. This includes traditional karate. (See *handout*.)
6. Participation in the religious ceremonies of occultic or idolatrous groups, especially receiving objects, prayer, or “blessings” from practitioners.
7. Contact and conversation with “aliens,” “ascended masters,” “spirit guides,” or similar beings, or supposed “angels” who do not obey Jesus Christ.
8. Transcendental Meditation or any form of meditation designed to empty the mind, or to bring someone to a different or altered “state of consciousness.”
9. “Gaia” or nature worship.
10. Role-playing games (i.e., games in which the participant assumes the identity of another character), especially games with occultic themes, such as *Magic: The Gathering*, and *Dungeons and Dragons*.

Response

- It's important to know that if you are practicing anything occultic or even questionable along those lines, or if you have engaged in sexual immorality, God is not condemning you!
- However, God does want you to be free. His Word says if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- He also wants you to walk free through the power of the HS and the power of the Word.
- Let me say something to you if you are unsettled about any of the things we talked about: God is a good god.
 - He is not opposed to healing – Jesus said that healing is the children's bread. Actually, in the story where Jesus said that, the children's bread was actually deliverance from a demonic spirit.
 - God is not opposed to your being healthy and being in good shape: He says that bodily exercise is of some profit, but godliness is more profitable.
 - We need to ask ourselves what benefit we have derived from the things we have been practicing. What field are we sowing into? Take the time you have been sowing into the gym and compare it to the time you are sowing into your relationship with the Lord.

- I'm not here to argue with you and I won't argue with you about your yoga, your acupuncture, or praying to Mary. I will say that if you examine these things biblically you will find them to be either improper for you or questionable. And if it's questionable, why would you do it anyway?
- I'm not saying this to judge you, but I'm asking you to examine what you are doing in the light of God's Word and be honest with yourself and God about your life... we've been praying: "Search me, O God!"
- God says, in Deuteronomy 30: "I call Heaven and earth to record today against you. I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live, so that you may love the LORD your God, and that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him."
- If you can't honestly say that you're flowing in the life and blessing that God wants you to have, then you should at least take inventory of your life and see if there is anything spiritual there that is displeasing to God.
- Let's be wise and realize that we cannot play at a spiritual smorgasbord. You can't say, well, I'll take a bit from God's table, and a bit from this other table that I think is OK. Ouija boards work by the power of evil spirits. So then, how much Ouija board is a little Ouija board? Well, how much cyanide is a little cyanide?

- If you really want God to search you, and if you really want to choose life, if you just want to eat from His table only, then we're going to pray the same way we prayed a couple of weeks ago when we spoke on forgiveness. We'll ask the Lord to reveal to us by the Holy Spirit anything in these areas which is offensive to Him. Then we'll ask His forgiveness and renounce these things together.
- Let's ask the Holy Spirit to show us right now if there is anything related to the occult or uncleanness or an unhealthy soul tie or relationship that is holding us back or which is creating a foothold for the enemy in our lives.
- **Pray this:** Father, I come to You in the Name of Jesus. I ask you to forgive me for committing or practicing this thing. (Speak it to yourself in a whisper, or speak it into your hand so no one will hear.) Right now, I renounce this thing in the Name of Jesus. I ask You to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. I ask you to break the power of any soul ties or relationships that are unhealthy. Bring all my relationships into healthy emotional balance. Give me the strength to walk in victory over everything I have named to You tonight. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I choose life and not death. I choose blessing and not cursing. In the Name of Jesus.
- (Worship together again.)
- Create opportunity for people to receive prayer with anointing of oil, or to remain in worship. No group time.