

The Nine Forbidden Practices
of the Occult:
Making Wise Choices in
Entertainment Media

I. Worldview Foundations

- Reality: What do you know?
- Knowledge: How do you know?
- Morality: How should you behave?

Reality

What do you know?

- Does God exist?
- What is the character and nature of God?
- How and why was the world created?
- What is the nature and purpose of humanity?
- What happens after we die on earth?
- What spiritual authorities exist?
- What is truth?

George Barna, *Think Like Jesus*, 48.

Knowledge:

How do you know what you know?

- The Bible

Morality: How should you behave?

- Our actions should be consistent with our beliefs about reality and our source of knowledge.
- “There is an integral connection between what you believe to be true, right and appropriate, and how you act.”

-George Barna

<http://www.georgebarna.com/research-flow/2018/10/17/survey-reveals-that-fewer-adults-have-a-biblical-worldview-now-than-two-years-ago>

II. Worldview Influences

The Influence of Media

- Every song is a sermon
- Every movie is a message
- Every TV is a teacher
- Every word is a weapon
- A picture is worth a thousand words

Media exerts a powerful influence in culture

- “The secular worldviews most common in the United States are constantly reinforced by the entertainment media to which people are consistently exposed.”

-George Barna

<http://www.georgebarna.com/research-flow/2018/10/17/survey-reveals-that-fewer-adults-have-a-biblical-worldview-now-than-two-years-ago>

- “Countless books, magazines, games, movies, and videos glorify sexual promiscuity, incest, rape, homosexuality, brutality, deceit, manipulation of others to one’s own advantage, and every other form of immorality and ungodliness. Many of those things are specifically occultic—involving magic, spell casting, witchcraft, sex rites, human sacrifice, and even demon and Satan worship. Moral and spiritual pollution is pandemic in modern society and is a degenerative and addictive form of idolatry. Tragically, it is being packaged and marketed to reach younger and younger ages.”

-John MacArthur

Romans 1–8. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

Let's study the Bible together on this topic!

- “In my opinion, the greatest sin in the church of Jesus Christ in this generation is ignorance of the Word of God.”

-J. Vernon McGee

Matthew—Romans. Vol. IV of Thru the Bible.

We have an adversary

- 1 Peter 5:8
- Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.

We should not be ignorant of his devices (schemes, designs).

- 2 Corinthians 2:11
- Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

A means by which Satan will attempt to get an advantage is by subtlety, (craftiness, cunning, treachery).

- 2 Corinthians 11:3
- But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Satan's disguises

- 2 Corinthians 11:14
- And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

III. Worldview Cautions

- What does the Bible teach about Occultism?

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

- 9 When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 “For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you.”

The Nine Forbidden Practices of the Occult

1. Making one's children "pass through the fire"
2. Divination
3. Witchcraft
4. Interpretation of omens
5. Sorcery
6. Casting of spells
7. Medium
8. Spiritist
9. Necromancy

Occult

- The word *occult* is derived from the Latin *occultus*, meaning “hidden or secret things.”

Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Occult*, 26.

Pass through the fire

- “who passes his son or his daughter through the fire.”
- The expression “pass...through the fire” is probably a euphemism for human sacrifice.

Harris, W. Hall, eds. The NET Bible Notes.

Divination

- “a diviner of divination”
- This was a means employed to determine the future or the outcome of events by observation of various omens and signs

Harris, W. Hall, eds. The NET Bible Notes.

Witchcraft

- “one who causes to appear”
- Such a practitioner was thought to be able to conjure up spirits or apparitions.

Harris, W. Hall, eds. The NET Bible Notes.

Interpretation of Omens

- “a seeker of omens”
- This is a subset of divination, one illustrated by the use of a “divining cup” in the story of Joseph.

Harris, W. Hall, eds. The NET Bible Notes.

Sorcery

- “a doer of sorcery”
- This has to do with magic or the casting of spells in order to manipulate the gods or the powers of nature.

Harris, W. Hall, eds. The NET Bible Notes.

Casting of Spells

- “a binder of binding”
- The connotation is that of immobilizing (“binding”) someone or something by the use of magical words.

Harris, W. Hall, eds. The NET Bible Notes.

Medium

- “asker of a [dead] spirit”
- This is a form of necromancy.

Harris, W. Hall, eds. The NET Bible Notes.

Spiritist

- “a knowing [or “familiar”] [spirit]”
- one who is expert in mantic (occultic) arts.

Harris, W. Hall, eds. The NET Bible Notes.

Necromancy

- “a seeker of the dead.”
- This is much the same as “one who conjures up spirits”

Harris, W. Hall, eds. The NET Bible Notes.

Nine Forbidden Practices of the Occult

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What word did God use to describe these practices?

- Detestable (Abomination)
- something disgusting (morally), i.e. (as noun) an abhorrence; especially idolatry or (concretely) an idol: — abominable (custom, thing), abomination.

What was to be the relationship between God's people and these practices?

- Don't do these things
- Don't learn to do these things
- "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret." (Eph 5:11-12)

What to do with occultic artifacts and paraphernalia?

- Deu 7:25-26
- 25 “The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.
- 26 “You shall not bring an abomination into your house, and like it come under the ban; you shall utterly detest it and you shall utterly abhor it, for it is something banned.
- “Abhor (detest, hate) what is evil; cling to what is good.” (Romans 12:9)

How far is too far?

- A question often asked in the context of moral purity.
- Rather than determining how close we can get to the fire before we get burned, we should resolve to heed Scriptural warnings and keep a safe distance from moral or spiritual impurity.

Defilement and Spiritual Adultery

- Lev 19:26 'You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying.
- Lev 19:31 'Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.
- Lev 20:6 'As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.

Be Holy

- 1 Peter 1:15-16
- But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Where was it written?

- Leviticus 20:6-7
- 6 “If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them, I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. 7 Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.

Did the Israelites obey?

- 2 Kgs 17:16-17
- They forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him.

Did the leadership of Israel obey?

- 2 Kgs 21:6
- He (Manasseh) made his son pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and used divination, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD provoking Him to anger.

What about the New Testament?

Acts 13:4-10

- [Paul and Barnabus] began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a magician (sorcerer), a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the magician (sorcerer) (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, 10 and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?"

- The occult always withstands or opposes the gospel.
- The occult always seeks to turn people away from faith in Jesus Christ, never toward the faith.
- The occult is full of all deceit or subtlety.
- The occult is a child of the devil.
- The occult is the enemy of all righteousness.
- The occult is a perverter (or a changer) of the right ways of the Lord.

Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Occult*, 643-644.

Hypothetical Question

- Don't do these things.
- Don't learn to do these things.
- What do you think about us reading some fictional books—purely for entertainment purposes—with characters who are learning to do these things and doing these things?
- It's only occultism-lite (“white magic”).

Anton S. LaVey.

Author of the Satanic Bible.
High Priest and founder of
The Church of Satan

“There is no such thing
as ‘white magic’, it's all
BLACK!”



What was done in the book of Acts with occultic books?

- Acts 19:19
- And many of those who practiced magic (magic arts, sorcery) brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Which vices are paralleled with occultism?

- Galatians 5:19-21
- 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Does media that glamorizes these vices edify?

- immorality
- impurity
- sensuality
- idolatry
- sorcery
- enmities
- strife
- jealousy
- outbursts of anger
- disputes
- dissensions
- factions
- envying
- drunkenness
- carousing

In the end times, what unrepentance is demonstrated in the hearts of mankind?

- Revelation 9:21
- and they did not repent of their murders
- nor of their sorceries
- nor of their immorality
- nor of their thefts.

What characteristic of Babylon deceived the nations?

- Revelation 18:23
- all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

Consequently, what is the ultimate end of those who do not repent of their occultic practices?

- Revelation 21:8
- But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

In the book of Malachi, God indicates that he will judge:

- Mal 3:5-6
- Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely . . . For I, the LORD, do not change . . .

Does the Bible warn
about vicariously
taking pleasure in sin?

Vicariously

- in a way that is experienced in the imagination through the actions of another person

Guard your heart

- Proverbs 4:23
- Watch over your heart with all diligence,
For from it flow the springs of life.
- Matthew 15:19
- For out of the heart come evil thoughts,
murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts,
false witness, slanders.

- Matthew 5:21-23
- You shall not murder; If you hate someone, you're a murderer at heart.
- Matthew 5:27-28
- You shall not commit adultery; If you look with lust, you commit adultery of the heart.

- If we warn against entertainment media that is designed to provoke lust and adultery of the mind/heart (pornography) and may result in physical adultery, should we not also warn against entertainment media that is designed to provoke defilement and spiritual adultery!?

- Rom 1:28-32

- 28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

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Questions?

- Can I read _____?
- Can I watch _____?
- Can I listen to _____?
- Can I _____?

Questions for you

- Based on what I've just taught, how would you apply the Scriptures?
- What worldview is being represented?
- Where does the power come from?
- Where is God in the storyline?
- What is the worldview of the author?

Case Study

- The author imagines a world without God, without Christ, without Christianity.
- The worldview of the author is clearly presented in media whose purpose is to inculcate (teach).
- Notice in a later interview the authorial intent present in the media.
- The author of this media was heavily into occultism!
- How much influence has this media (and others like it) had on listeners who have played it over and over in their minds?

John Lennon Imagine

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us, only sky
Imagine all the people living for today

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one

I hope some day you'll join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people living life in peace



- [Lennon] described the song's meaning and explicated its commercial appeal: "Anti-religious, anti-nationalistic, anti-conventional, anti-capitalistic, but because it is sugarcoated it is accepted ... Now I understand what you have to do. Put your political message across with a little honey."

Levy, Joe, ed. (2005). *Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Albums of All Time* (First Paperback ed.). Wenner Books, 87.

IV. Worldview Character

- The Christian Response to the Biblical Teaching on Occultism

Just say, NO!

- Isaiah 8:19-20
- When they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

Recognize that we live as strangers in a foreign land

- 1 Peter 2:11
- Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

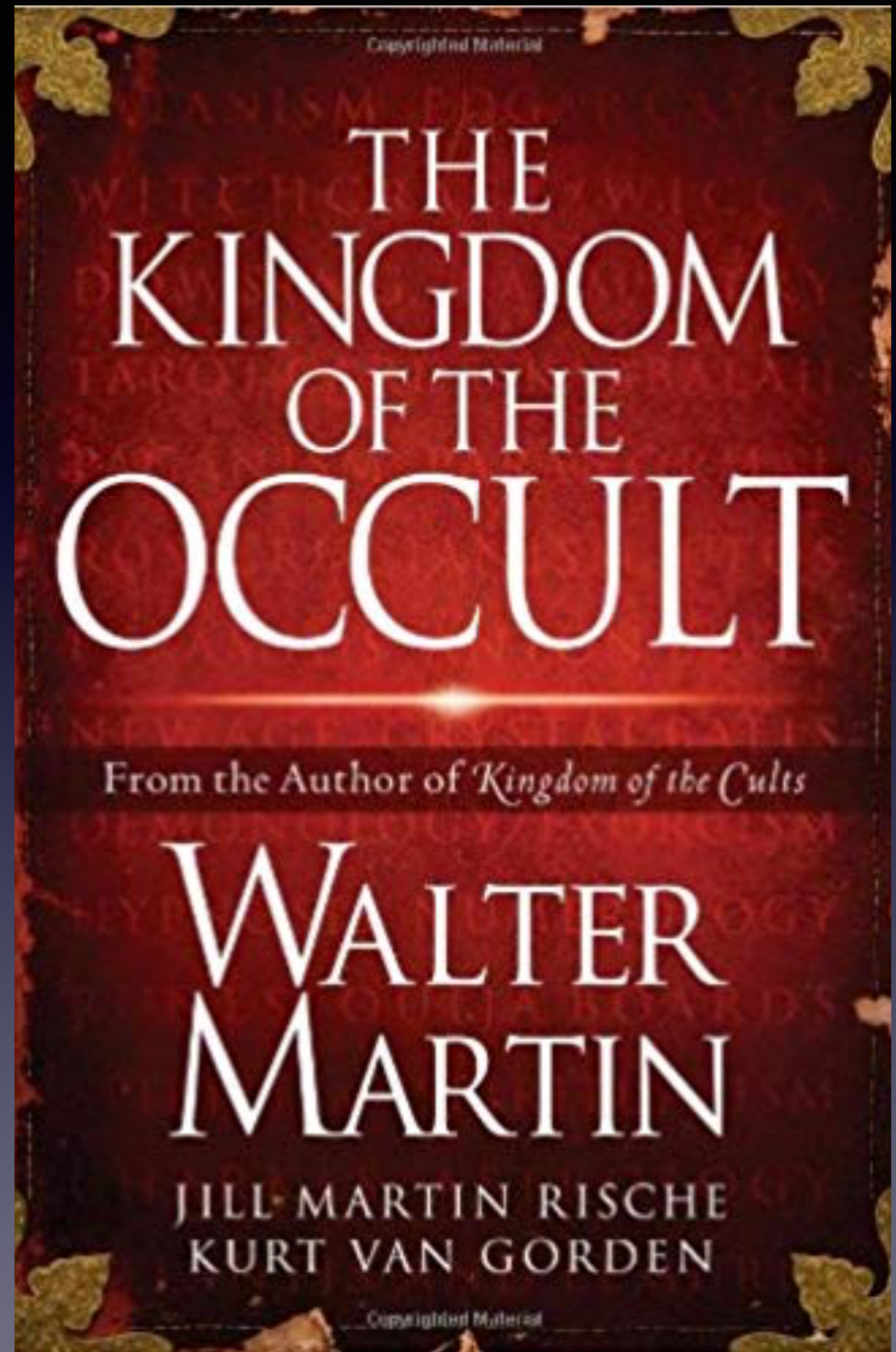
What should be the standard for our thought life and entertainment?

- Philippians 4:8
- Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

Whatever we do, we
should seek to glorify God.

- 1 Corinthians 10:31
- Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

For more
detailed
research on
this subject



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