

Chapter 10

THE DANGER OF THE OCCULT

“Please pray for my son,” the desperate father pleaded. We were in the Chapel at the Bible School near Mexico City with a room full of students. The 16-year old boy was obviously deeply troubled. He had a very dark look on his face and was looking at the floor, muttering to himself and unable to communicate with anyone else. The father told us that his son had been acting strangely for several years and that about 6 months before he had become violent to the point that now his mother was afraid to be alone with him. He said, “We don’t know what is going to become of the boy,” and again he asked us to pray for him. I said, “First, let me ask if you or your family have ever been involved in witchcraft or occultism.” He said that before he became a Christian he and his wife were both priests in the spiritist church and that his father and mother before him had been involved in the same practice.

We had him forgive his parents and grandparents and repent of his involvement in spiritism and then renounce and break the generational curses over himself and his family, and particularly over his son. When he spoke those words, I looked around at the boy and saw that he was looking up and smiling. The young man no longer had that strange look on his face. He went to lunch with the Bible school students and conversed normally.

In the Ten Commandments, God says, You shall not make (or worship) an idol, and if you do I will visit that iniquity upon your children to the third and fourth generations (Paraphrase, Exodus 20:4-5). Again, Deuteronomy 27:15 warns, *“Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molten image.... and sets it up in secret to worship it”*.

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God has pronounced a curse regarding idolatry: making and bowing down to idols. This poses a problem, idolatry that is in a person’s heart and mind rather than the the idol itself – which can be an inert object, a living person, an ideal (nationalism), or any one of innumerable addictions. If demons are involved, as Scripture clearly reveals, isn’t it logical that the demons would somehow be “attached to” and plaguing the idolater’s mind, soul, or body? Wouldn’t the solution be for the idolater to repent and get the idols out of his mind and heart? Is iconoclasm a sensible solution: that is, to get a hammer and break up the idol? Couldn’t that lead to simplistic campaigns by zealots, such as was demonstrated by the Taliban in Afghanistan when they destroyed the two huge statues of Buddha that had been carved into a mountainside centuries ago?

Idolatry always accompanies rebellion: when the real God is cast down from the throne of man's heart, *something* must fill the vacuum and take His place. Idolatry is apparently considered the single greatest sin of mankind. It is addressed and forbidden in the first two of the Ten Commandments: You shall have no other gods before the one true God; and you shall not make an idol or bow down to it. If you do those things it indicates that you "hate" God.¹ The pattern in the Book of Judges, repeated again and again for some 325 years, was that the children of Israel forsook the Lord God and followed other gods, bowed down to them, serving Baal and the Ashtoreths.² God's prescription for the sins of the people was two-fold, as exemplified in His instructions to Gideon "...tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it (and burn the image); and build an altar to the Lord..."³

God brought judgments against Israel and they repented and cried out to Him. Then, He mercifully raised up a "judge" (defined as one who rules with wisdom) to deliver and lead them. Of course, God is our Judge, and he sent a Deliverer to release us from our bondage of idolatry and its consequences.

The pattern for us is similar: we can't serve two masters, God and Mammon(4); we are to "turn to God from idols"⁵; the new converts at Ephesus brought their books of magic (occultism) worth 50,000 pieces of silver, "and burned them in the sight of all."⁶ Obviously, this means that first we displace the idols from our hearts and minds and turn to the true God with all of our hearts. But it also means that we destroy or get rid of any physical representation of that idolatry. Note: we are to destroy our own idols but have no mandate to destroy the idols of others, e.g., the Taliban.

In my understanding, an **idol** is a magnified sin. **Idolatry** is loving, fearing, trusting, serving anything or anyone more than the one, true God. Idolatry may include a "bowing down" to:

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2. Physical, material idols of wood or stone (Buddha, snakes, bulls, men)
3. Mental idols (ideologies, pornography, celebrities)
4. Gods of religions that deny Jesus Christ
5. Mammon, the pagan god of money
6. Addictions
7. The occult, including drugs and alcohol
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The word *occult* means hidden - hidden wisdom or hidden truth - and denotes a false truth or a false wisdom. Anything that people value more than they value God can become an idol, and 1 Corinthians 10:19-20 indicates that behind every idol is a demon, as does Ps. 106:36-38. In other words, behind the worship of every false god is a demon and behind every demon is the devil. Satan's desire from the beginning was that people should worship him. He said to Jesus in the wilderness, "I'll give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me."⁷ To give our hearts to an idol is equivalent to falling down and worshipping Satan.

Deuteronomy 18 says, "*When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. 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."⁸ Scripture makes it very clear: these occultic practices accompany idolatry.

These practices continue today and are endorsed and trivialized by popular media and entertainment. Horoscopes, astrology, tarot cards, spiritism, and contact with the dead through mediums are regular features in newspapers, on the internet, and in broadcast media. We live in a time when psychic hotlines are promoted on television. I think of the psychic hotlines as "Dial-A-Demon" services. Halloween, by the way, is full of witchcraft and occultic practices, and Ouija boards, witchcraft, and sorcery are commonplace. The Greek word for sorcery, *pharmakia*, refers to those involved with drugs, so the influence of drugs and alcohol are related to sorcery. Eastern religions and their thoughts influence Western worldviews in popular and academic cultures and in secret organizations which operate as respected social institutions, for example, Free Masonry.

Occultism is being introduced into public education via such methods as "guided fantasies" which encourage students in all grades to get in touch with their personal "wise person," which turns out to be a spirit guide.⁽⁹⁾ Although many parents may be unaware that their children are being involved, when children's groups are questioned about friendly guides or spirit helpers, many of the children will raise their hands that they have played these games or participated in meditations," says Kathleen Hayes, an author, journalist, and elementary teacher in Denver.⁽¹⁰⁾ The alleged purpose of having these games with imaginary guides is to increase children's academic achievement. They say it is to build confidence and self-esteem. What it does, however, is to introduce the child to forces and spirits which are directly antagonistic to God. It teaches them to find their own spirits for help. Spirits of the dead are often used "because the dead would possess great stores of information we all must have."

Hypnotic suggestions progress with the higher elementary grades. For example, with the window blinds open and the lights turned off, children are instructed to sit up straight with eyes closed. The teacher then reads a three-page script describing a guided journey to Hawaii (one of the favorite places). When they mentally arrive on the beach, the children are told to look up at a beautiful rainbow. As they concentrate upon the rainbow, they will find peace and calm as each color is focused upon individually, every color evoking an emotion. As the child grows with the habit into later life the emotions are no longer tranquil but become dangerous, often resembling the disturbing chakra energies that can lead to emotional disorders. While in this hypnotic state, the children must repeat to themselves, "I like myself; I am happy; I am in perfect health; I have full control of myself." After this rainbow exercise, says educator William Hewitt, the next lesson encourages them to build a workshop in their imagination, a private place where they can go anytime they wish and invite any helper they need, whether the helper is dead or alive.

"In this session you will meet your two advisors....Now press the control button (on the chair of your mind) to open the door into your workshop. Now mentally say, 'I welcome my male advisor into my workshop. Please enter and sit in your chair. Greet your male advisor. Ask him his name. Study his appearance. Thank him for coming.... Now, mentally say, 'I welcome my female advisor into my workshop.'"¹¹ "Public schools are not safe havens," Dr. Hewitt says, speaking for other educators, "and now private schools are beginning to be involved." Replacing Christianity are the concepts of yoga, meditation, imagery, and altered states of consciousness. Control of the mind becomes easier when rendered neutral by hypnosis or any of the altered states. It is during this neutral time that the brain's electronic computer board becomes easily accessible for "others" to reprogram, which is like opening the

door for a stranger and thief to come in and steal your mind. Christian schools are no longer immune. Many traditional churches are permitting new programs of “visualization techniques” and “positive thinking” within their teaching. Programs offer updated courses for creating miracles for one’s self. If adults are using spiritual imagination for self-improvement, why not their children?¹²

Some professional Learning Centers are available through TV guides or local newspapers in most every city to improve efficiency in learning. They guarantee to improve your child’s skills and aptitudes, but they don’t mention the involvement of spirit guides. Parents may not be aware of the hidden agenda. “Think of the generation of children” states educator Eric Buehrer, “who will grow to adulthood relying on demonic counsel for their decision-making process. These children will be our future judges, legislators, mayors, governors, and presidents. It is incumbent upon all people, including parents who home-school or send their children to private schools, to work to change this dangerous trend in public education.¹³

Our American practice of Halloween teaches our children that the occult is fun, that it is a harmless game, but according to Scripture that lesson is deception, as are the Harry Potter books which glorify the occult rather than portraying it as a representation or manifestation of evil. In Deuteronomy 28, God through Moses proclaimed an extensive list of curses on those who engage in idolatrous practices; including spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical problems.

We frequently minister to people who have problems because of their involvement or the involvement of their parents or grandparents in various aspects of occultism.. They are plagued in each of the areas listed some 3,000 years ago in Deuteronomy 28:

- A. Spiritual problems: some can't worship or pray, and they may hear threatening voices or have “visitations” especially at night*
- B. Mental problems: mental illness, confusion, learning problems
- C. Emotional problems: child abuse, depression, fear, and bad dreams
- D. Physical problems: instances of epilepsy, deformity at birth, cancer, and early death

** An amazing number of people hear frightening voices cursing and threatening them, and they may be visited by “ghosts” or dark figures during the night. Many times people think they are crazy and are afraid to tell anyone about these experiences, but often it is because a forbidden door has been opened by the person or by their previous generations. These voices at night, and the other unexplainable experiences, can also be caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain, so we need discernment and wisdom, and possibly a conference with a medical doctor, in order to help us determine the source.*

Some examples of ministry experiences follow:

The anecdote related at the beginning of this chapter regarding the Christian father who brought his 16-year old son for ministry is a sobering reminder that the curses pronounced by God that go down to succeeding generations are still in effect. Spiritism is the practice of communicating (supposedly) with the spirits of the dead. This practice is specifically forbidden in the Bible, and, in fact, the Bible says that there

is a chasm fixed between the living and the dead that cannot be crossed.¹⁴ There are many spiritist churches in Mexico that routinely claim to communicate with the spirits of the dead. They do communicate with spirits but not the spirits of the dead. They communicate with demonic spirits that may counterfeit a deceased loved one and relate facts about that person that only the dead person – or a spirit familiar with that person – knows.

I was ministering on the Pacific coast several years ago to a woman who came forward for prayer regarding her breast cancer. She had been in pain for over a year and the doctors said it had advanced so far that they were unable to do anything. As we were trying to figure out what the root of this breast cancer was, she said that she had been involved in witchcraft before she was a Christian, and that after she had become a Christian there was a time when she got terribly angry at her husband and slipped back into witchcraft for the purpose of placing curses on him. Shortly after that experience she developed cancer. We had her forgive her husband and repent of the witchcraft, and then we cut the root of those curses and had her renounce Satan. Then we anointed her with oil and prayed for God to come and heal her of the breast cancer. She felt the Holy Spirit resting on her and felt tremendous heat for about 10 or 15 minutes; and we who were sitting around her also felt the heat emanating from her. Then she opened her eyes, smiled and said, "All the pain has left." Apparently, she was instantly healed by God.

I prayed for a little 4 year old boy who had pain in both arms. I learned that his parents had been involved in spiritism and other occultic practices prior to becoming Christians. I had them repent, renounce, break curses, etcetera, and the pain left this boy's arms.

We prayed for a 20-year old woman who was having a spiritual/emotional problem. She was tormented at night with nightmares, visitations, and fear. I learned that her father was a witch or warlock and he had committed his daughter to the devil when she was born. This was revealed through a word of knowledge that came to a member of the team as we were praying. It is a very powerful thing for a father or mother to make a pact with the devil and to tie their child to that pact. That pact has to be specifically renounced and broken. When this girl forgave her father and then renounced and broke this pact through the authority of Jesus Christ, she was immediately set free. She no longer had the nightmares and the torment. She looked and acted differently.

The god that some religious folk worship in Mexico is the Virgin of Guadalupe and many of them name their girls Guadalupe or Lupe. We have found that mothers often commit their children to the Virgin of Guadalupe or to the Virgin of Pain, etc. Hundreds of these "Virgins" are venerated and supposedly all of them are reincarnations of the Virgin Mary. In reality, they are usually representations of the pagan gods of the native Indians: the corn god, Aztec gods, etc. In fact, the Virgin of Guadalupe is sometimes pictured emerging from an ear of corn. When mothers commit their children to these "Virgins" or to a Saint, they are doing so in love. Because it is a cultural thing to do, we never speak condemnation to the mothers or

about the mothers. But, in effect and without any evil intent, they are making a pact with an idol which binds their child in a spiritual covenant until the child forgives the mother and renounces and breaks that pact, or until the mother renounces and breaks it. *A mother brought her 13 year old daughter for prayer for chronic migraine headaches. I noticed that the daughter's name was Lupe. I asked the mother, "Did you commit her to the Virgin of Guadalupe?" She said that she had. I led the mother to renounce the commitment, and immediately the girl's headache ceased.* Because of experiences we have had such as this, when parents bring their children to us for prayer for physical, emotional, or mental problems, we commonly ask them if the child has ever been committed to a Virgin or a Saint in order to have the parent renounce and break that pact.

We find that people who are deeply involved in alcoholism and drug addiction sometimes have the same kinds of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual problems as people who are involved in other aspects of occultism. Drugs have been commonly used in the practice of sorcery as an aid to enter into the spirit world. They may see visions of demons and terrible creatures. They may hear voices threatening them. They might not be able to worship or pray. On numerous occasions, as I have started to preach, certain persons in the congregation would instantly fall asleep. I recognize in those instances that a blocking spirit is at work. Many preachers have told me about similar experiences. Addicted people, along with people otherwise involved in occultism, may have mental confusion, learning problems, depression, fear and so forth. As an aspect of occultism, addiction to alcohol and drugs is also idolatry. Another spirit is involved, and addicted people need to repent and renounce their involvement with that spirit. Also, they usually need to forgive their alcoholic father and break the generational curses.



Witchcraft Curses

Curses can be placed on people and open the door for the enemy's torment, not only by occultic sins, but also by witchcraft. On every trip we take to Mexico, we minister to many people who are being tormented because someone - perhaps someone in the family, an acquaintance, or even a stranger, has for some reason placed spiritually powerful curses on them. My observation is that people involved in witchcraft or Satanism are being greatly controlled by the enemy and are filled with hatred, so they don't need a logical reason to place curses on someone. Many times I have ministered to afflicted people whose own grandmother or grandfather had placed witchcraft curses on them!

In a church in Mexico, I ministered to a woman whose husband had abandoned her for another woman.

Ever since he had abandoned her, she had been very sick and had many problems with her female organs and with headaches and pains in her head. She also had psychological problems. When we interviewed her, she said that the woman her husband took up with was a witch and was placing curses on her. So we had her forgive her husband and forgive this woman who was placing the curses on her. Then, we had her renounce those curses by using the authority of the blood of the cross of Christ to break those curses. She started vomiting, which is nearly always a sign of a demonic infestation, and then we prayed for her healing and she was completely set free. All pain and confusion departed. We prayed for her and instructed her in ways to maintain her freedom.

During a seminar in a prison in Colorado, a man named George asked for prayer because of deafness in his right ear. I asked him when this deafness had first appeared and what had happened at that time. He said that when he was 7 years old his older sister got involved with an Ouija board and then started getting deeper into witchcraft. She tried to draw him into these practices but he was afraid of them. One day when she was trying to talk to him about it, he covered his ears with his hands and ran away from her. She pointed at him and said, "You are going to become deaf!" Immediately he became deaf in his right ear. I had him forgive his sister and say, "In the name of Jesus Christ who became a curse for me, I break and renounce that witchcraft curse on my hearing." He said that his right ear popped and instantly he was able

to hear.

The good news is that Christ became a curse for us,¹⁵ and by the authority we have as believers we can break those curses! I know there are many different ways to minister to people who have these kinds of problems, and only God's grace permits any of us to share in His great ministry. There have been times when people's deep bondages that were formerly intractable were broken by using the insights in this teaching. This Scriptural method that I have learned (from John and Paula Sandford and John Wimber and many others) has proven to be effective for many.

Steps of Ministry

Have them confess Jesus Christ, make sure that they know Him as their Savior; confess and repent of their own occultic sins, or alcoholism or drug addiction, etc. Have them confess the sins of their parents and preceding generations, which is a scriptural action.¹⁶ Have them say, "I confess that my parents and grandparents were involved in spiritism or witchcraft, or my dad was involved in alcoholism or drugs, and I forgive him for that." Then, "I place the cross of Christ between myself and my father and my mother and my grandparents to the fourth generation and I break every word, curse, and spell. (And this is not a formula. Your own words will be just as good.) I renounce Satan and all his works. I renounce the spirit of witchcraft, I renounce the spirit of alcoholism, etc. I forgive the person who placed a curse against me or

against my family. I place the cross between my family and that person who placed a curse. I break that curse. I reclaim the ground stolen from me and my family." Usually they will also need a prayer of deliverance to cast out any demons that have entered. Then pray for their hearts to be healed. Instruct them to get rid of all occult paraphernalia, idols, Buddhas, books on occultism, horoscopes, Ouija boards, records, and symbols of the demonic. (See the chapter on SPIRITUAL HOUSE CLEANING.)

Time of Reflection

- Have you at any time been involved with: Ouija board, tarot cards, ESP, hypnotism, horoscope, fortune telling, witchcraft, "cleansing", spiritism, spirit guides or advisors, contact with the dead, Eastern religions, Mormonism, Christian Science, Masonry, pacts or agreements with the devil, blood pacts, astral travel, yoga, crystals, pyramids, pendulums, automatic writing, mantras or chanting connected with martial arts. Also addictions to alcohol or drugs, including prescription drugs?
- Ask the Lord to bring to your mind any forgotten involvement with occultic practices, false religions or false teachings. Also any ungodly commitments your family might have made over your life.
- Ask Him to bring to mind or to reveal any participation by your parents and ancestors in any of these practices.
- Express to God your forgiveness of your family. (Your family may have been involved in these sins completely innocently or with full understanding of their actions.)
- Ask God to forgive and cleanse you of your involvement in any of these abominations.
- On the basis of Christ having become a curse for us (Gal. 3:13), verbally renounce and break any and all curses over you and your children and grandchildren, and over your extended family.
- Do you know or suspect that someone has placed witchcraft curses against you or your family? Forgive them, and break and renounce all curses as above.
- Remove and destroy anything in your home or on your person that connects you with these practices or with witchcraft that may have been placed against you. See Chapter 11, "Spiritual House Cleaning."
- Ask the Lord to wash you, cleanse you, fill you with His Holy Spirit and His peace.

Endnotes

1. Exodus 20:4-5
2. Judges 2:11-18
3. Judges 14:25-26
4. Matthew 5:24
5. 1 Thessalonians 1:9
6. Acts 19:19
7. Matthew 4:9
8. Deuteronomy 18:9-12
9. Beverly Galyean, Language from Within (Longbeach: 1976) 91 as told by Dave Hunt in Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust (Eugene: Harvest House, 1982), 78
10. "New Age Plan for the 1990's, Audiotape by the Kathleen Hayes Ministries
11. William Hewitt, Beyond Hypnosis: A Program for Developing Your Psychic and Healing Power (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publication, 1990), 154
12. Eric Buehrer, The New Age Masquerade, (Brentwood: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1990), 101
13. Maurice S. Rawlings, M.D., To Hell and Back, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), 194
14. Luke 16:26

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16. Galatians 3:12
17. Daniel 9, Ezra 9, Nehemiah 9, Psalms 106:6, Jeremiah 14:20