

# The Darkness of Twilight: A Christian Perspective

*Sue Bohlin examines the message of Twilight from a biblically informed, Christian perspective, helping Christians understand how they should approach such popular fare.*

## Demonic Origin of *Twilight*?

The *Twilight* saga is a publishing and movie phenomenon that sweeps tween and teen girls (and a whole lot of other people) off their feet with an obsessive kind of following. Millions of Christian girls are huge fans of this series about love between a teenage girl and her vampire boyfriend-then-husband. But it's not just a love story made exciting by the danger of vampires' blood-lust. I believe the *Twilight* saga, all four books and their corresponding movies, is spiritually dangerous. I believe there is a demonic origin to the series, and the occult themes that permeate the books are a dangerous open door to Satan and his hordes of unholy angels.

I was stunned to learn about how the idea for *Twilight* came to the author, Stephenie Meyer. She tells this story:

I woke up . . . from a very vivid dream. In my dream, two people were having an intense conversation in a meadow in the woods. One of these people was just your average girl. The other person was fantastically beautiful, sparkly, and a vampire. They were discussing the difficulties inherent in the facts that A) they were falling in love with each other while B) the vampire was particularly attracted to the scent of her blood, and was having a difficult time restraining himself from killing her immediately.[\[1\]](#)



“Fantastically beautiful, sparkly, and a vampire”? Consider what vampires are, in the vampire genre that arose in the 1800s: demon-possessed, undead, former human beings who suck blood from their victims to sustain themselves. A vampire is evil. And the vampire who came to Stephenie Meyer in a dream is not only supernaturally beautiful and sparkly, but when she awoke she was deeply in love with this being who virtually moved into her head, creating conversations for months that she typed out until *Twilight* was written.

When I heard this part of the story, it gave me chills. Scripture tells us that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, which is a perfect description of the Edward Cullen character.

Then I learned that “Edward” came to Meyer in a second dream that frightened her. She said, “I had this dream that Edward actually showed up and told me that I got it all wrong and like he exists and everything but he couldn’t live off animals . . . and I kind of got the sense he was going to kill me. It was really terrifying and bizarrely different from every other time I’ve thought about his character.”[\[2\]](#)

I suggest that if the *Twilight* saga is demonic in origin, it is dangerous, to Christians and non-Christians alike.

# Vampires, Blood, and Salvation

I explained above how the *Twilight* saga was birthed in an unusually vivid dream that I believe was demonic in origin. So it's really no surprise that the books are permeated with the occult.

The *Twilight* vampires all have various kinds of powers that don't come from God. They are supernaturally fast, supernaturally strong, able to read others' minds and control others' feelings. Some can tell the future, others can see things at great distances. These aspects of the occult are an important part of what makes *Twilight* so successful.

In both the Old and New Testaments, God strongly warns us not to have anything to do with the occult, which is part of the "domain of darkness" (Col. 1:13) where demons reign. He calls occult practices "detestable," which tells us that He is passionate about protecting us. One of the reasons *Twilight* is so dangerous is that readers can long for these kinds of supernatural but ungodly powers; if not in real life, then in their imagination. And this is a doorway to the demonic, which is all about gaining power from a source other than God. *Twilight* glorifies the occult, the very thing God calls detestable (Deut. 18:9). This is reason enough for Christ-followers to stay away from it!

For a growing number of people, vampirism is not make-believe. In a special report on the Fox News Channel, Sean Hannity reported, "there's actually a vampire subculture that exists in the United States right now and spreads into almost every community in this country."[\[3\]](#) Joseph Laylock, the author of a book on modern vampires, explains that there are three general categories of people who "believe they have an 'energy deficit,' and need to feed on blood or energy to maintain their wellbeing."[\[4\]](#) Some drink real blood, others feed only on "energy" they draw from other humans, and "hybrids" who are a bit of both.[\[5\]](#)

My Probe colleague Todd Kappelman, a philosopher and literature critic, observed that Stephenie Meyer took unwarranted liberties with the genre. Vampires are evil, and you can't just turn them "good" by writing them that way.

You can't have vampires strolling around in the daytime. You can't make evil good and good evil, putting light for darkness and darkness for light [Is. 5:20]. It's a law of physics: light always dispels the darkness. You can't have the bad guys win. There is no system in the world where evil is rewarded with "happily ever after"; it violates our sensibilities too much. Either the extremely ignorant or the extremely childish would fall for it. And apart from the moral aspect, it's doing violence to the genre—like putting Darth Vader in a Jane Austen novel.[{6}](#)

Writer Michael O'Brien comments,

In the *Twilight* series we have a cultural work that converts a traditional archetype of evil into a morally neutral one. Vampires are no longer the "un-dead," no longer possessed by demons. There are "good" vampires and "bad" vampires, and because the good vampire is incredibly handsome and possesses all the other qualities of an adolescent girl's idealized dreamboat, everything is forgivable.[{7}](#)

Closely connected to the occult is drinking blood, which is a focus of the vampire literary genre; vampires feed on the blood of humans. In *Twilight*, we are supposed to embrace the "good" vampires who have learned to feed on the blood of animals, calling themselves vegetarians (which is an insult to all vegetarians!). Interestingly, in Lev. 19:26 God connected the occult with ingesting blood 3200 years before the vampire genre was invented.

God understands the importance of blood; in both the Old and New Testaments, He forbids eating or drinking it. Not only did this separate His followers from the surrounding pagan

cultures, but it also separated out the importance of blood because it atones for sin. In the Old Testament, animals were sacrificed as a picture of how the spotless Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, would pour out His sacred blood to pay for our sins. God doesn't want people to focus on the wrong blood![{8}](#)

*Twilight* is also spiritually dangerous in the way it presents salvation. When Daddy Vampire Carlisle turns Edward into a vampire, it is described as saving him.[{9}](#) He ended a 17-year-old boy's physical life and turned him into an undead, stone cold superbeing, which Edward describes as a "new birth."[{10}](#) Vampire Alice describes the process as the venom spreading through the body, healing it, changing it, until the heart stops and the conversion is finished.[{11}](#) Poison heals, and changes, and converts to lifelessness? Healing poison? This is spiritually dangerous thinking. Isaiah warns us (5:20), "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"

This upside-down, inside-out way of thinking is rooted in Stephenie Meyer's strong Mormon beliefs. *Twilight's* cover photo of a woman's hands offering an apple is an intentional reference to the way Mormonism reinvents the Genesis story of the Fall. LDS (Latter Day Saints) doctrine makes the Fall a necessary step, called a "fall up."[{12}](#) At the beginning of the book you will find, alone on a page, Genesis 2: 17—"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Stephenie Meyer explains:

The apple on the cover of *Twilight* represents "forbidden fruit." I used the scripture from Genesis (located just after the table of contents) because I loved the phrase "the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil." Isn't this exactly

what Bella ends up with? A working knowledge of what good is, and what evil is. . . . In the end, I love the beautiful simplicity of the picture. To me it says: choice.{13}

Echoing Satan's deception of Eve with the temptation to become like God on her own terms, the heroine Bella eventually becomes a god-like vampire, glorying in her perfection, her beauty, her infallibility. She transcends her detested humanity and becomes a goddess. This is basic Mormon doctrine, not surprising since the author is a Mormon.{14}

One of the messages of *Twilight* is that there is a way to have immortal life, eternal life, apart from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ; that there is a way to live forever without dealing with the obstacle of our sin problem by confessing that we are sinners and we need the forgiveness and grace of a loving Savior.

This is a spiritually dangerous series.

## **A Love Story on Steroids: Emotional Dependency**

Why are girls of all ages, but especially tweens and teens, so passionately and obsessively in love with Edward, the vampire in *Twilight*?

Edward is very different from the vast majority of young men today. He is chivalrous, sensitive, self-sacrificing and honorable. He wants the best for Bella, his teenage girlfriend and eventual wife. He is able to keep his impulses in check, which is a good thing since he lusts after her scent and wants to kill her so he can drain her blood. No wonder girls and women declare they're in love with Edward Cullen!

But one of the troubling aspects of the *Twilight* saga is Edward and Bella's unhealthy and dysfunctional relationship. Yet millions of female readers can't stop thinking about this

“love story on steroids,” which means it is shaping their hopes and expectations for their own relationships. That’s scary.

The best way to describe their relationship is emotional dependency. This is when you have to have a constant connection to another person in order for you to be okay. Emotional dependency is characterized by a desperate neediness. You put all your relational eggs in one basket, engaging in an intense one-on-one relationship that renders other relationships unnecessary. In fact, there is often a resentment of not only the people that used to be your friends, but you resent anyone in the other person’s world who could pull their attention and devotion away from you.

When things are going well, it’s like emotional crack cocaine. The intensity is addictive and exhilarating. When things aren’t going well, it’s an absolute nightmare. Emotionally dependent relationships strap people into an emotional roller coaster full of drama, manipulation, and a constant need for reassurance from the other.

When Edward leaves Bella for a time, she becomes an emotional zombie. The book *New Moon* is full of descriptions of the pain of the hole in her chest because when he left, he took her heart with him. She had withdrawn from all her friends to make Edward into her whole world, so she had no support network in place when he left. All of her emotional eggs were in his basket. Many readers see this as highly romantic rather than breathtakingly dysfunctional.

One or both people are looking to another to meet their basic needs for love and security, instead of to God. So emotional dependency is a form of relational idolatry. People put their loved one or the relationship on a pedestal and worship them or it as a false god. When you look to another person to give you worth and make you feel loved and valued, they become inordinately essential. When we worship the creature rather

than the Creator as in Romans 1, what results is a desperate neediness that puts us and keeps us at the mercy of the one we worship. They have a lot of power over us, which is one reason why God wants to protect us from idolatry.

*Twilight* is like an emotional dependency how-to manual. At one point, Bella's mother tells her, "The way you move—you orient yourself around him without even thinking about it. When he moves, even a little bit, you adjust your position at the same time—like magnets . . . or gravity. You're like a . . . satellite, or something."[\[15\]](#) The power of story, especially this story, is that it can set up readers to mistake emotional dependency and relational idolatry for what a love story should look and feel like.

On the Credenda blog, Douglas Wilson makes a powerful case for *Twilight* also serving as a manual for how to become an abused girlfriend and then an abused wife. Edward's moods are mercurial and unpredictable, and Bella just goes along with it, making excuses and justifying his actions.[\[16\]](#)

*Twilight* is spiritually dangerous because of its demonic origin and its occult themes, both of which God commands us to stay away from. But it's emotionally dangerous too.

## Emotional Pornography

The *Twilight* series is touted as pro-abstinence and pro-chastity because the main characters don't "go all the way" before they get married. A lot of parents hear that and give a green light for their daughters to read the books and see the movies. But the *Twilight* books are a lust-filled series, so embedded with writing intended to arouse the emotions, that it is legitimately considered emotional pornography.

Marcia Montenegro writes,

Much has been made of the alleged message of *Twilight*, that

it is one of abstinence and shows control over desire. In truth, Edward is controlling himself because he does not want to kill Bella; her life is truly in danger from a ferocious vampire attack from the one who loves her. Aside from that, a vibrant sensuality of attraction lies just beneath the surface. A TIME reporter who interviewed Meyer wrote, "It's never quite clear whether Edward wants to sleep with Bella or rip her throat out or both, but he wants something, and he wants it bad, and you feel it all the more because he never gets it. That's the power of the *Twilight* books: they're squeaky, geeky clean on the surface, but right below it, they are absolutely, deliciously filthy."[\[17\]](#)

The struggle with self-control is saturated with eroticism and lust. It's so sensual that teenage boys and young men will read it simply for that reason. The protest, "They don't have sex" is lame; the relationship is extremely sensual. One very insightful blogger writes,

To claim that the *Twilight* saga is based on the virtue of chastity is like calling the *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Edition pro-chastity because the girls are clothed.

Bella gives detailed first person accounts of her "make out" encounters with Edward—everything from trying to unbutton clothing, to how loud her breathing is and how this or that feels . . . these detailed first person descriptions are designed to arouse young girls—like a gateway drug to full blown romance novels or vampire lore. How can books in which the author has written detailed first person descriptions of actions leading to arousal help readers to be chaste? The words on the page defy chastity. Anyone who claims that the books promote chastity has to explain how a young girl can read detailed first-person descriptions of "making out" as a tool to preserving her innocence.[\[18\]](#)

The sensuality of *Twilight* is not lost on even the youngest

readers and movie-goers. Robert Pattinson, the actor who plays Edward Cullen in the *Twilight* movies, was asked in a *Rolling Stone* interview, "Is it weird to have girls that are so young have this incredibly sexualized thing around you?" He answered, "It's weird that you get 8-year-old girls coming up to you saying, 'Can you just bite me? I want you to bite me.' It is really strange how young the girls are, considering the book is based on the virtues of chastity, but I think it has the opposite effect on its readers though. [Laughs]"[\[19\]](#)

God's word says, "Flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22). Without a strong discernment filter in place, and without a strong determination to guard one's heart (Prov. 4:23), it will be very hard to obey that protective command when reading the *Twilight* books or watching the movies.

Recently at a youth discipleship camp, I asked the young men how they felt about *Twilight*. They booed. Real men don't stand a chance to be *enough* compared to the too-good-to-be-true Edward Cullen. When girls use the emotional porn of romance novels or movies, they are setting up impossible expectations that have no hope of being fulfilled by limited, fallible, all-too-human beings. It's a cruel twist on the way men can sabotage their relationships with real women by their use of internet porn. Is there much of a difference between using sexual porn or emotional porn? In both cases, fantasy creates unrealistic expectations that reality cannot satisfy.

Apart from the problem of unrealistic expectations, it is unhealthy to make such an intense heart connection with a fictional character. Some people choose getting lost in reading and re-reading the books over having connections with real human beings in community. One lady told me that she called a friend about going out to a movie, but her friend begged off: "Oh, I'm going to stay in with Edward tonight." A nail technician had one 60-year-old client who confided, "Don't tell my husband, but I'm in love with Edward."

In the first *Twilight* book, Edward sweeps Bella off her feet with the intoxicating description of his intense desire for her and why she desires him: “I’m the world’s most dangerous predator. Everything about me invites you in. My voice, my face, even my smell. . . I’m designed to kill. . . I’ve wanted to kill you. I’ve never wanted a human’s blood so much in my life. . . Your scent, it’s like a drug to me. You’re like my own personal brand of heroin.”[\[20\]](#)

I believe there is a spirit of seduction in the *Twilight* saga. Something supernatural draws millions of readers to fantasize about being desired, pursued and falling in love with a character that I believe has a deeply demonic component. It’s dangerous on several levels.

## **The (Rotten) Fruit of *Twilight***

*Twilight* is one of the most successful series ever published. Readers don’t just read the books; many of them re-read them, multiple times. In order to be discerning, we need to examine the fruit of this series to see its effect on readers. I believe that there is a spiritual reality of evil behind *Twilight* that explains three kinds of fruit I see.

First is the fruit of obsession. Literally millions of fans can’t stop thinking and talking about the books, the characters, the minutia of the *Twilight* world. There is an addictive element of the series for many people. Addiction is bondage; why willingly submit yourself to bondage?

Some girls talk about their daily reading and study of “The Book,” and they’re talking about the whole saga—not the Bible.[\[21\]](#) With social networking and digital media, fans have access to an ever-growing community of other *Twilight*-obsessed people, which allows them to connect with their God-given desire to be part of something bigger than themselves. But the transcendence of connecting to the *Twilight* world is so much

less than God intends for us to experience!

The second fruit is the spiritual warfare reported by Christians, especially those who disobeyed God's leading to get rid of the books—night sweats, hearing voices and other unusual noises, being gripped by a spirit of fear, loss of intimacy with God. Some thoughtful people have reported what one woman called “a stronghold I didn't want and couldn't seem to overcome. I became uncontrollably obsessed over this make-believe world. And fell into a pit of manic-depressive-suicidal state.”[\[22\]](#)

One Christian teenager, clearly under conviction, wrote this comment on a blog:

As a 15-year-old, reading those books was a . . . strange experience for me.

I didn't think they were too bad or morally lacking until I heard my old high-school chaplain [a thirty-something woman, I think. Never dared to ask ☐ ] praise them. And then something inside me clicked, because it struck me as wrong that a Godly woman would find this series good. . . .

Another problem with *Twilight* that I had is that it drives girls to think of love before they are emotionally and mentally ready for the idea. It pretty much skews their ideas of love up. I know it's done that to me. Because what this series has done is stick Edward Cullen in one category (i.e. “pure perfection”) and “everyone else” lumped together in another as a portrayal of pure “ocker”ness. I am now not sure to what percentage \*gentlemanliness\* exists in a normal, TANNED boy. So it's not really fair to guys, or girls, because of skewed expectations. . . .

Otherwise, I enjoyed the *Twilight* series, but I don't feel that I should have, so I'm going to pray about that one.[\[23\]](#)

The third fruit is a spirit of divisiveness. Some Christians

are inordinately defensive about *Twilight*, choosing the books over relationships with other believers who take a negative view of the series. One Christian speaker who shared her deep concerns over *Twilight* at a church conference was verbally attacked at the break by supposedly mature women. Some of them still refuse to speak to her.

Of course, we hear the refrain, "Oh come on. It's just a book. It's just fiction." But all forms of entertainment are a wrapper for values and a message, and we need to be aware of what it is. Remember, what we take into our imaginations is really like food for our souls. If something has poison in it, it shouldn't be eaten. Saying "It's just a book, who cares what it is as long as we're reading," is equivalent to saying, "If you can put it in your mouth and swallow it, it must be food." What are you feeding your soul? Goodness or poison?

Readers resonate with the important themes of life and literature: romantic love, family love and loyalty, beauty, sacrifice, fear, danger, overcoming, conflict, resolution. But these themes are laced with spiritual deception: "You, too, can be like God." You hear that *Twilight* is a love story on steroids, and people—especially young girls—are drawn to God's design for a woman to be cherished, protected, and provided for. They are drawn to the way Bella responds to Edward with love, respect and submission, which is also God's design. So it is especially devious that the elements that resonate with our God-given desires for love are poisoned as occult principles are interwoven with the story. [{24}](#)

One teenage girl made this comment on a blog: "I never thought of [the books] as arousing or erotic in any way. Like many other girls, I found myself falling for Edward as I delved into the story. Before I knew it, my heart was beating faster during the mushier scenes." Like millions of others, she is unable to discern the line between emotional and sexual arousal. Swooning because you are in love with a fictional character, when you long for this character when you're not

reading the book, means you've been taken captive (Col. 2:8). And God does not want us in bondage to anything except Him!

*Twilight* is dangerous because it subtly stretches us into accommodating that which God calls sin. People don't leap from embracing good to embracing evil in one giant step; it's a series of small, incremental allowances. Readers easily accept unthinkingly an unmarried couple spending every single night together when the Word says to avoid every form of evil and to flee temptation, not lie there cuddling with it! Readers are led to accept as heroes and friends vampires who murder human beings to drink their blood.

Commentator Michael O'Brien makes a stunning analysis of *Twilight*:

In the *Twilight* series, vampirism is not identified as the root cause of all the carnage; instead the evil is attributed to the way a person lives out his vampirism. Though Bella is at first shocked by the truth about the family's old ways (murder, dismemberment, sucking the blood from victims), she is nevertheless overwhelmed by her "feelings" for Edward, and her yearning to believe that he is truly capable of noble self-sacrifice. So much so that her natural feminine instinct for submission to the masculine suitor increases to the degree that she desires to offer her life to her conqueror. She trusts that he will not kill her; she wants him to drink her essence and infect her. This will give her a magnificent unending romance and an historical role in creating with her lover a new kind of human being. They will have superhuman powers. They will be *moral* vampires—and they will be *immortal*.

Here, then, is the embedded spiritual narrative (probably invisible to the author and her audience alike): You shall be as gods. You will overcome death on your own terms. You will be master over death. Good and evil are not necessarily what Western civilization has, until now, called good and

evil. *You* will define the meaning of symbols and morals and human identity. And all of this is subsumed in the ultimate message: The image and likeness of God in you can be the image and likeness of a god whose characteristics are satanic, as long as you are a “basically good person.”

In this way, coasting on a tsunami of intoxicating visuals and emotions, the image of supernatural evil is transformed into an image of supernatural good.[{25}](#)

*Twilight* is not dangerous because people will literally want to become vampires. *Twilight* is dangerous because, through the powerful medium of storytelling, dangerous ideas and messages go straight to the heart like a poisoned-tipped arrow, without being passed through a biblical filter. Beware the darkness of *Twilight*.

## **Addendum: Should I Let My Children/Grandchildren/Students Read *Twilight*?**

I have read all four books in the *Twilight* series. I strongly recommend against reading these books.

But I also understand that it's a cultural phenomenon, and lots of people are going to read the books no matter what anyone says. So allow me to attempt to redeem the cultural pressure inherent in these books' popularity by suggesting how you can help the tender, untaught minds of your loved ones to think critically as they read.

If your teen or tween expresses a desire to read the books, give an explanation for why you think they shouldn't. (“Just say no” just doesn't work with most kids. They need to know why, and that's fair.) I would suggest something along the lines of, “I love you and I want what is best for you, and that means protecting you from dangers you are not aware of. This series is steeped in the occult and in demonic influence,

both of which God strongly warns us against in His word. There is also a powerful emotional draw into unhealthy fantasy which could sabotage future relationships with real people. There are spiritual dangers and emotional dangers that I want to protect you from."

If you receive pushback, then you might respond by saying, "If you want to read the books, then I'll read them with you. We'll talk about them, a chapter or a scene at a time. The choice is yours." This gives your loved one the power of choice, but you remain involved in the process. What would be especially powerful for young girls is for Dad to read the books as well and talk to his daughter(s) about what's in them. Men would have a very different take on the emotional lust in these books, as well as a sensitivity to the unfair expectations of a lover that would be formed in their daughters' hearts. Girls need their father's input in this adolescent time of emotional and sexual confusion, and *Twilight* is almost guaranteed to add to the confusion.

Talk about the books' content frankly and openly; if they are embarrassed for you to know what they are reading, their well-placed shame will make a powerful statement about the wisdom of reading this kind of book. Make sure they know that you are completely aware of what they are taking into their minds and spirits, just as you would want to know if they were taking drugs into their bodies. Reframe the book's content in terms of what the Bible says, and ask questions: Does this agree with the Bible's explanation of life and reality? Does this help you draw near to God, or does it make you want to avoid Him and His Word? How do the descriptions of Bella's, Edward's and Jacob's thoughts and feelings make you think about the people in your real life? Are you tempted to look down your nose at the "mere humans" you do life with?

Even though this work is fiction, it is still making statements about reality. What is it saying about life on earth? About God? About sin? About love? About the soul? About

heaven and hell? About biblical truth?

How does the book compare to what the Bible says? For example, look together at the Ephesians 5 passage about marriage and why it is important. (Marriage is an earthbound illustration of the union of Christ and the church.) And what Jesus said about the nature of the marriage relationship in heaven in Matthew 22:30. (The marriage relationship is ended by death.) How does it compare with the ideas about marriage in *Twilight*? Look for the ways Bella relates to her father. Is it according to God's command to children to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20)? Does she get away with her deceptions and repeated acts of disobedience? (Yes.) Is this consistent with the Bible's teaching on the consequences of sin (Gal. 6:7)?

Talk about the gold standard for what God wants us to expose ourselves to: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Phil. 4:8). Look for what is true and not true, noble and not noble, right and not right, etc. The books are not without statements and ideas that are true, noble, and right; the problem is that they are mixed in with even more compelling ideas that are false, ignoble, wrong, impure, unlovely, and shameful.

"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 7:23). The things we think about by filling our minds and hearts will shape us. What are you filling your mind and heart with? Longing for the perfect lover that no human being can fulfill? Discontent with being human and wishing you could have supernatural powers? Will that serve you well?

Lia Carlile, a teacher at a Christian school in Washington State, offered these excellent critical thinking questions to help students think through *Twilight* or any other cultural phenomenon. Lia cites many Scriptures in her notes, which I highly recommend. [\[26\]](#)

## **Question 1 – Me and God**

- *How is this thing building my relationship with the Lord?*
- *How does my interest in this area compare with my time invested in my relationship with the Lord?*

## **Question 2 – Me and the People Around Me**

- *Is this creating conflict in my family or with others?*
- *Does it offend other believers or is it confusing them in their faith?*
- *What am I saying to my non-Christian friends or what example am I setting for others?*

## **Question 3 – The Bible**

- *What does the Bible have to say about this? Who does it glorify—God or Satan? Jesus or the things of the World?*

## **Question 4 – Me and *Twilight* (or whatever applies)**

- *How is this affecting what I think about; my attitude, heart, and mind?*
- *Does it help me to do what is right according to God? Or, does it promote things of the world?*
- *Does it distract me from the Lord and my relationships with others? Serving, praying, reading Bible, ministry, etc.*
- *Does it cause me to say, think, or do things that are contrary to Jesus and his life?*

## Notes

1. [www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight.html](http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight.html)
2. [www.Twilightgear.net/Twilight-news-and-gossip/stephenie-meyer-reveals-details-of-new-dream-about-edward-cullen/2493](http://www.Twilightgear.net/Twilight-news-and-gossip/stephenie-meyer-reveals-details-of-new-dream-about-edward-cullen/2493), March 29, 2009.
3. Steve Wohlberg, "The Menace Behind *Twilight*," *SCP Journal*: Vol. 32:2-33:3 (2009), p. 27.
4. Ibid., 28.
5. Ibid.
6. Personal conversation with the author, May 2010.
7. Michael O'Brien, "Twilight of the West," [www.studiobrien.com/writings\\_on\\_fantasy/Twilight-of-the-west.html](http://www.studiobrien.com/writings_on_fantasy/Twilight-of-the-west.html)
8. I am indebted to Steve Wohlberg's article cited above for this insight.
9. Stephenie Meyer, *Twilight* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2005), 288.
10. Meyer, *Twilight*, 342.
11. Meyer, *Twilight*, 414.
12. [http://www.truthinlovetomormons.com/basic\\_mormon\\_doctrine/doctrine/theo/fall.htm](http://www.truthinlovetomormons.com/basic_mormon_doctrine/doctrine/theo/fall.htm)
13. [www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight\\_faq.html](http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight_faq.html)
14. "As God now is, man can become. As man now is, God once was." James E. Talmadge, *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976).

See also Oscar W. McConkie, Jr., *God and Man* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Corporation of the Presiding Bishop, 1963), 5. Cited in Russ Wise, "Mormon Beliefs About the Bible and Salvation," [www.probe.org/mormon-beliefs-about-bible-salvation](http://www.probe.org/mormon-beliefs-about-bible-salvation).

15. Stephenie Meyer, *Eclipse* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2007), 68.

16. Douglas Wilson has written a series of insightful reviews of *Twilight* at Credenda: [www.credenda.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=author&id=64&Itemid=127](http://www.credenda.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=author&id=64&Itemid=127)

17. Lev Grossman, "Stephenie Meyer: A New JK Rowling?" *TIME* Magazine, April 24, 2008, [www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1734838,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1734838,00.html)). Cited in Marcia Montenegro, "A Girl and Her Vampire: The Frenzy Over *Twilight*." [www.christiananswersforthenewage.org/Articles\\_Twilight.html](http://www.christiananswersforthenewage.org/Articles_Twilight.html)

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19. [bit.ly/9m4Nje](http://bit.ly/9m4Nje)

20. Meyer, *Twilight*, 268.

21. [www.radicalparenting.com/2009/05/14/the-new-bible-Twilight-mini-article/](http://www.radicalparenting.com/2009/05/14/the-new-bible-Twilight-mini-article/)

22. [spesunica.wordpress.com/is-Twilight-anti-christian-yes/](http://spesunica.wordpress.com/is-Twilight-anti-christian-yes/)

23. [bit.ly/aSKdWL/](http://bit.ly/aSKdWL/)

24. I am indebted to the wisdom shown in the comment by Jae Stellari on [spesunica.wordpress.com](http://spesunica.wordpress.com).

25. O'Brien, "Twilight of the West."

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# The World of the Occult : A Christian Worldview Perspective

*Dr. Pat Zukeran explains why Christians need to be wise and discerning concerning the occult, both recognizing its power and danger, and not going overboard either.*



*This article is also available in [Spanish](#).*

## Occult Overview

In a popular TV show, the heroine calls upon spirits, spells, and magic to defeat demonic beings. In another show, teen-age witches use their white magic to defeat evil warlocks and spirits. Such popular shows deal with the world of the occult. The occult has thrived since the beginning of civilization. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, the prophets of God confronted the problem of the occult.

The term *occult* is derived from the Latin word “occultus,” which means to cover up, hide, or those things which are hidden or secret. A brief definition of the occult is the practice of attaining supernatural knowledge or powers apart from the God of the Bible. Through these practices occultists seek to influence the present or future circumstances, of their lives or the lives of others.

Why is there such an interest in the occult? Experts point to several factors. The first is disillusionment with the church

and organized religion. The second factor is curiosity. There is an attraction to the occult that appeals to our interest in the unseen. Many begin with "harmless" dabbling, but this can often lead to more. Third, there is the quest for power. People want control over the future, spirits, or over other individuals.

There are three primary categories of the occult world: divination, magick, and spiritism. Divination is the attempt to foretell the future and thereby shape our lives accordingly. The divination arts include astrology, zodiac charts, crystal balls, tarot cards, palm reading, psychics, numerology, and horoscopes.

The second category is magick or paganism. Those in magick attempt to control the present by ceremonies, charms, and spells. The magick arts include witchcraft, white magic, black magic, sorcery, Satanism, black mass, and witch doctors.

Then there is spiritism. Those involved in spiritism attempt to communicate with the dead and receive information or help from them. Spiritism involves ouija boards, sances, necromancy, and ghosts.

The world of the occult not only brings a false message, but a dangerous one as well. Experiences with the occult drive us away from God and bring us into contact with the demonic realm. Jesus said the Devil is "a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44) In dealing with the demonic, you cannot expect them to deal in truth. The Devil and his legion only seek to "steal, kill, and destroy." (John 10:10) For this reason, Deuteronomy 18 labels the practices of witchcraft, sorcery, divination, and necromancy as detestable to the Lord. It was these practices that brought judgment on the Canaanites and expelled them from the land. God did not want such teachings to infiltrate any culture. The church must not only present the danger of the occult, but the message of life and victory found in Jesus Christ over the principalities of

darkness.

## **Dangers of the Occult**

“What’s wrong with joining the Vampire Club or attending a sance?” your child may ask. For some, exposure to the occult via fantasy games, the media, or music may lead to greater involvement in a dangerous world.

The primary danger of the occult is that it is a path away from God that can bring us into contact with the demonic realm. The demonic forces seek to deceive and destroy individuals. Therefore, contact with the demonic breeds numerous problems.

First, cult experts and psychologists have documented the connection between occult involvement and psychological and emotional disorders. Participants spend numerous hours studying, practicing, and playing games that involve conjuring demons, sacrificing creatures in cruel rituals, controlling sinister forces, and casting spells to disable and kill their enemies. This can affect a person’s spiritual, mental, and emotional state.

Second, there is the danger of spirit possession. The occult arts often require one to empty one’s mind and invite foreign spirits to control his or her intellect and body. For example, in operating a ouija board, participants are asked to empty their minds to allow other forces to guide them as they attempt to attain messages. In other games, participants are encouraged to call upon a spirit being to help guide them. These techniques open the door for spirit possession.

Third, there is the danger of violence to oneself and others. Many cases of violence and suicides are connected to the occult. Dr. Thomas Redecki, a psychiatrist and chairman of the National Coalition on Television Violence, has given expert testimony at a number of murder trials that were connected to

fantasy role-playing games. He states, "I've found multiple instances of attitudes, values and perceptions of reality that were strongly influenced by an immersion in these games. When someone spends 15 to 30 hours a week dreaming of how to go out and kill your opponents and steal treasure, it's not surprising that the desire to act it out in real life occurs."[\[1\]](#)

Real cases include the famous black occultist Aleister Crowley. He ended up in an insane asylum for six months after attempting to conjure up the Devil. Not only that, his children died and his wives went insane or drank themselves to death.[\[2\]](#) In Florida, a group of three teenagers were charged with bludgeoning to death the parents of a fourth girl in their group. These teenagers were involved in the fantasy role-playing game *Vampire*.[\[3\]](#)

There is no benefit that comes from dabbling in the occult. God's Word tells us to avoid the occult because it can be addicting and harmful. Instead, Philippians 4 says to spend our time dwelling on what is true, noble, right, pure, admirable, and praiseworthy. What we focus on affects our actions and outlook on life. Therefore, we should dwell on what builds the mind, body, and spirit.

## Investigating Occult Phenomena

Can seers foretell future events? Can mediums really talk to the dead? How do you explain psychic phenomenon? Dealing with the occult calls for a balanced approach. The biblical worldview acknowledges both the physical and spiritual realms. There are physical beings but also spiritual beings of good and evil. We cannot ignore the supernatural, but we should not be obsessed with it either. C.S. Lewis commented, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and

hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”[\[4\]](#) Lewis’ call, as well as ours, is for a balanced approach.

There are numerous claims of supernatural occurrences in the occult world. However, not all occult phenomena should be attributed to the supernatural. There have been cases where people have quickly attributed unexplained events to the demonic, only to later discover other natural explanations. This often causes embarrassment and hurts the individual or group’s credibility. We must be careful to investigate all possible explanations.

Most occult phenomena are mere trickery. Techniques such as sleight of hand, physical or mechanical deception, luck or mathematical probability, and body reading can explain many accounts. For example, Jewish psychic Uri Geller was believed to have supernatural powers such as the ability to move or bend objects from a distance with his mind. He even managed to fool scientists with his feats. However, his alleged powers were eventually shown to be false when magician James Randi performed the same feats, exposing the charlatan’s tricks.

Other phenomena can be attributed to psychological factors. For example, someone demonstrating many personalities and speaking in different voices may have a multiple personality disorder that should be treated with medication. Unusual changes in personality or the fear of objects or names may be due to some kind of chemical imbalance. One should be careful and investigate these possibilities before concluding occult powers at work or demon possession.

The fourth explanation can be attributed to our sin nature. James 1:14 states, “but each one is tempted when, by his own desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” Too often Christians are quick to attribute bad habits and conflicts to the demonic and fail to take responsibility for their actions. For example,

addiction to pornography is the result of yielding to our sin nature, not necessarily satanic activity.

Before ascribing events and difficulties to the demonic realm, we must first determine if it is consistent with demonic activity as described in the Bible and cannot be explained naturally. Then we can consider the possibility that it is demonic.

## **Witnessing to Those in the Occult**

What should you do if you discover a friend or child involved in the occult? In witnessing to occultists, we must understand that they view Christians as intolerant and mean-spirited. They feel misunderstood, and quick condemnation often causes the person to retreat and delve further into the occult. Many people enter occult organizations because the church and their peers have rejected them. So, in witnessing, we must remember to be firm, but loving and sensitive as well.

I remember one situation at a Six Flags amusement park. While waiting in line, two Christian men noticed a student wearing a shirt promoting a band with clear connections to the occult. In a very condescending manner they questioned the young boy as to why he would wear such a shirt. "I like their music," was the response. To which the men rebuked him harshly. Soon a short and heated argument ensued. The boy was left feeling angry and condemned while the two Christian men congratulated one another on a fine job of "witnessing." Such incidents unfortunately are too common. The first step in witnessing is demonstrating gentleness and respect.

Second, do some research in the area so that you know what you are talking about. People in the occult do not view their activity as dangerous and consider others' warnings as naive and misinformed. Therefore, being able to point to specific examples of concern goes a lot further than generalized accusations. If you are not able to find information, sit down

and patiently listen to the person explain why and how he got involved. As you listen, ask questions that would cause the person to examine his beliefs. Listening always goes a long way in any kind of witnessing.

Third, point out the danger of addiction that can be the result of spending numerous amounts of time and money on occult activities. 1 Corinthians 6:12 warns us not to “be mastered by anything.” Addiction to the occult leads to bondage, but God’s truth sets us free.

Fourth, know what the Bible says about the occult. Point out that the nature of the Adversary is to deceive and destroy. God’s nature is truth and love. Dwelling on the false teachings of the occult can distort one’s view of reality. This message ultimately leads to ruin, while God’s truth leads to life. Share God’s message of love and demonstrate it in your actions.

Finally, present the message of life, truth, and hope found in Christ. The occult only offers a false message that brings destruction because the force behind it is the father of lies. The deception of the occult leads to bondage, but truth sets you free. In engaging the world of the occult, Christians need not be afraid for we have authority over the demonic through Christ who triumphed over all powers and authorities by the cross. (Colossians 1:15)

## **Deliverance from the Occult**

If you have been dabbling in the occult or know someone who wants to come out of it, what should you do? First, permanent deliverance and restoration begins with a relationship with Jesus Christ. If you have not trusted Christ, receiving Him as your Lord and Savior is the first step. When this happens, you are set free from the Kingdom of Darkness and are now under the authority of the Kingdom of Light. 1 Peter 2:9 states that it is Christ who “called you out of darkness into his

wonderful light.”

Second, recognize and confess your sin of involvement in the occult. Then accept God’s forgiveness by faith. 1 John 1:9 states, ‘If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Third, remove all occult objects. This example was set for us in Acts 19:19-20. Those who had come to Christ burned their objects publicly. Having occult items around such as game boards, cards, and statues may provide a source of temptation to return. Removing all such objects helps avoid facing that temptation and dealing with memories.

Fourth, break off all medium contacts and occult associations. Spirit guides and friends in the occult will encourage you to abandon your trust in Christ and return to participating in the occult. One must courageously trust that Christ will protect you from demonic retaliation and provide new friends who will encourage you in the Lord.

Fifth, if you are finding the transition difficult, seek a Christian counselor with knowledge in this area. Only a Christian counselor understands that healing comes when we deal with not only the physical, mental, and emotional aspect, but the spiritual as well.

Sixth, join a fellowship of Christians who will pray and care for you. Also, strive to grow in your new walk with Jesus Christ. You have been filling your mind with the teachings of the occult and now you must, as Paul says in Romans 12, “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” This comes by filling your mind with God’s truth and fellowshiping with Him.

In seeking deliverance from the occult, we cannot stop halfway. We must be committed to turning from our sin and following Christ with all our heart. Believers must heed Paul’s exhortation to put on the spiritual armor of God. In

Ephesians 6, Paul reminds us that, "Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Only Christians who come in the authority of Christ can engage the world of the occult and those protected by His armor can resist the Adversary and be delivered from the occult.

## Notes

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