

LOVE THE LORD



Lesson Thirty-two - How do I recognise witchcraft and what should I do about it?

August 2023

Summary of key points

- Satan and demons tempt us to seek for wisdom, understanding, counsel, power and knowledge, but outside of God, without the fear of the Lord. This is in essence, what witchcraft is about.
- At the heart of witchcraft is the desire to manipulate reality according to our personal goals and desires. We want to play god. It is a form of rebellion.
- Witchcraft is so prevalent that we have become desensitised to it (with examples).
- Witchcraft and sorcery cleverly target the desires of our sinful nature.
- Any form of witchcraft subjugates people to demonic manipulation and control, no matter how innocent or common the rituals may seem to be.
- Witchcraft joins us back to Satan and demons. This is why any believer who practises witchcraft will be cast into hell.
- When a believer is under the influence of witchcraft, it can appear as if they are in some sort of trance and the truth can't seem to get through to them (with 8 examples).
- Repenting of witchcraft restores our relationship with the Holy Spirit and He can begin a greater work in our lives (with guided prayer).

Watch the lesson online

<https://youtu.be/Eg9i-oR2VKM>

Transcript

Welcome to lesson 32 of Love the Lord where we look at witchcraft and its effect on people, including believers.

We will begin by inviting God to speak to us personally through this study. Please follow along as we pray together. Click pause at any point if you need more time.

First, let's thank God for His perfect character and His perfect will for us.

Next, please tell Him about the things that have been stressful and ask for His help and guidance.

Let us put down our burdens of sin and confess the ways we have sinned against God and sinned against others, and ask for His forgiveness.

Please also confess the ways others have sinned against us, and forgive them in Jesus' name.

Next, let us ask God to purify and open our hearts to receive His teaching.

Finally, please repeat these words, "In Jesus' name, I silence all distractions and voices that are not from God. Amen."

Let's begin the lesson for today. How do I recognise witchcraft and what should I do about it?

The Bible tells us that God's Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Isaiah 11:2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. (NLT)

The devil and demons also tempt us to seek for wisdom, understanding, counsel, power and knowledge, but outside of God, without the fear of the Lord. This is in essence, what witchcraft is about.

Let's take a look at how witchipedia defines witchcraft. That's right, there's even an entire encyclopedia dedicated to witchcraft. That's how established and widespread it has become in our world.

Witchcraft involves the "*knowledge and skills... that allows one to manipulate reality in positive or negative ways through the use of personal energy in the form of focused thought or emotion, the casting of spells and the creation of magical items using natural materials.*" (witchipedia.com)

Notice that at the heart of witchcraft is the desire to manipulate reality according to our personal goals and desires. We want to manipulate and control events that are not ours to control. We want to choose what it is that we want, when we want it, and how we want it. In other words, we try to play god.

Witchcraft is so prevalent that we have become desensitised to it. Witchcraft often plays a role in our cultural customs, family traditions, wedding superstitions, baby dedications, children's games, and even school activities. It is so embedded into our day-to-day that we don't ever think to stop and ask the Holy Spirit if the rituals we take part in are pleasing to God or not.

Let's take a look at how another website describes how witchcraft works in practice.

First, there is dark magic, which uses spells, curses, and hateful emotions to bring harm to other people, as well as light magic, which aims to manipulate situations with the hope of bringing positivity and love. In this category, you will find written omens, drinking potions, and things like lucky charms.

Let us remember that God has already ordained a plan for our lives even before we were born, which includes the highs and lows of living on this earth. When we try to manipulate God's plan according to our will, we begin to overturn His hand over our lives for ourselves, as well as His protection.

Look at how God taunts those who practise any form of magic or sorcery, through the prophet Isaiah. Let's read from Isaiah chapter 47 verses 10 to 12 together, "*... your 'wisdom' and 'knowledge' have led you astray... So disaster will overtake you, and you won't be able to charm it away... "Now use your magical charms! Use the spells you have worked at all these years! Maybe they will do you some good. Maybe they can make someone afraid of you..."*" (Isaiah 47:10-12 NLT)

God has strong feelings against all forms of witchcraft. We really need to reconsider if we want to take part in any form of magic or sorcery, even if we believe it is harmless, just for fun, or don't want other people to reject us, because all this will, without a doubt, provoke God's indignation and contempt for us.

Another aspect of witchcraft is spirit or ancestor work. This is based on the false belief that if you pay respect to spirits or your ancestors, that then they may look favourably upon you and help you.

Outside of the Holy Spirit, there is no spirit anywhere that will help human beings without exacting a cost on our souls and drawing us away from God. Only the Holy Spirit will draw us closer to God. Moreover, the Bible clearly states that the dead cannot help the living.

Let's read Ecclesiastes chapter 9 verses 5 to 6 together, "*... but the dead know nothing. They have no further reward, nor are they remembered. Whatever they did in their lifetime—loving, hating, envying—is all long gone. They no longer play a part in anything here on earth.*" (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6 NLT)

Jesus died on the cross to give us eternal life. When we call on or pay respects to the dead, what can we expect to reap instead?

Next is the belief that we can, and ought to, tap onto the energies of the universe or things such as jade and other crystal stones for healing, relationships, power, luck, meditation, or knowledge.

In this category, you will find the belief in chakras or meridian lines of the body, as well as the belief in lunar cycles, birth charts, star signs, and other beliefs related to astrology.

Let's read Isaiah chapter 47 verses 13 to 14 together, *"All the advice you receive has made you tired. Where are all your astrologers, those stargazers who make predictions each month? Let them stand up and save you from what the future holds. But they are like straw burning in a fire; they cannot save themselves from the flame. You will get no help from them at all..."* (Isaiah 47:13-14 NLT)

Next, we are told that all forms of witchcraft are centred around the devotion of a deity. This may include some universal force, higher intelligent power, spirit being, god or goddess, and so on.

As we mentioned in an earlier lesson, Satan and demons will take on any form that will appeal to our desires and our contemporary times. Witchcraft comes in different forms and names. Even if it is re-labelled as something good, it is still a form of rebellion that God hates.

Let's read from Jeremiah chapter 2, *"This is what the Lord says: 'What did your ancestors find wrong with me that led them to stray so far from me? They worshiped worthless idols, only to become worthless themselves... On every hill and under every green tree, you have prostituted yourselves by bowing down to idols.'*" (Jeremiah 2:5,20 NLT)

God's Word describes anyone who persists in worshipping idols as being like "worthless prostitutes". These are harsh words. Is the Lord opening your eyes to see the witchcraft that He hates?

Now that we have taken a look at how the experts at witchcraft describe what witchcraft is all about, let us take a look at common rituals and customs, to examine if they too are rooted in witchcraft as well.

Would you consider ancestor worship or idol worship to be a form of witchcraft? Would your answer be "yes" or "no"? What about rituals that people use to cleanse their homes, such as burning sage? Or feng shui? Or fortune telling? What about the use of lucky charms or dream catchers? Is the source of horoscopes or zodiac signs also through witchcraft? What about hypnotism? Does it manipulate our consciousness? Lastly, what about the use of talismans, which are objects deemed to have power to protect us or change our destinies?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Ancestor or idol worship | Yes/No |
| 2. Rituals to cleanse the home | Yes/No |
| 3. Feng shui | Yes/No |
| 4. Fortune telling | Yes/No |
| 5. Lucky charms, dream catchers | Yes/No |
| 6. Horoscopes/zodiac | Yes/No |
| 7. Hypnotism | Yes/No |
| 8. Talismans (objects with power) | Yes/No |

The correct answer to all the above is yes. All these are rooted in witchcraft, regardless how they are re-packaged, re-named, or disguised. It has become common for companies to host witchcraft rituals at their offices, shops, and work sites, because of a desire to bring balance and profits to their businesses.

In Revelation chapter 21 verse 8, Jesus warns us that all *“those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”* (Revelation 21:8 NLT)

Why would Jesus, who came to save us, send anyone to the fiery lake of burning sulphur, which is hell? This is because any form of witchcraft subjugates people to demonic manipulation and control, no matter how innocent or common the games or rituals may seem to be. Witchcraft joins us back to Satan and demons. This grieves God deeply. All believers are meant to stay loyal to His Son, Jesus.

This is why witchcraft is considered equivalent to prostitution in God’s eyes.

Let’s take a look at what God said to His people in Leviticus chapter 20, *“I myself will turn against them and their families and will cut them off from the community. This will happen to all who commit spiritual prostitution by worshiping Molech. I will also turn against those who commit spiritual prostitution by putting their trust in mediums ...”* (Leviticus 20:5-6 NLT)

Most people are blinded to the true nature of witchcraft and sorcery because it cleverly targets the desires of our sinful nature.

Galatians 5:19-20 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: ... sorcery, (NLT)

We don't see what are the true dark powers behind it witchcraft and sorcery, because Satan and demons will target our desires for:

1. Healing and well-being,
2. Higher wisdom,
3. Power,
4. Wealth,
5. Inner peace,
6. Good luck,
7. To stop misfortune, or even
8. To send misfortune.

Let us now go through each of these desires, one by one, and see what God's word says about what we are to do with them, starting with healing.

Demons can entice us to keep lucky charms, drink special magical potions, use singing bowls, attain optimal vibrations or energies, or practise alternative medicine to protect our health and boost our well-being.

The Bible reminds us that it is God who is our true Healer. He keeps us from terrible diseases when we listen to His voice and do what is right in His sight.

Exodus 15:26 He said, "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you." (NLT)

Next is the desire for higher wisdom. Demons will try to attract us with promises of superior intelligence and knowledge if we consult fortune-tellers, psychics, summon spirits, practice astrology, or unlock our minds or spirits through meditative techniques. All this is also witchcraft.

The Bible reminds us that only God has the highest wisdom and it is the Holy Spirit who will tell us the truth. All we need to do is to ask God for wisdom. Turning to any other source will only open ourselves up to greater deception and spiritual decay.

Daniel 2:20 He said, "Praise the name of God forever and ever, for he has all wisdom..." (NLT)

Demons will also tempt us to idolise displays of exceptional strength and energy in superhero stories, mutants, monsters, magic shows, or festivals. This is how some people are lured into inviting spirits to give them the power to withstand physical attacks on their bodies, endure numerous piercings, lift very heavy items, bend objects or even levitate.

God's Word reminds us that when we forget our Creator, Lord, and Saviour, and glorify ourselves in our quest for a piece of momentary glory, we corrupt our souls and will perish.

Deuteronomy 8:17-19 He did all this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.' And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. (NLT)

Demons will tap on to our anxieties about financial security or our desire to have more and more prosperity. They will lead us to practise feng shui, ask our ancestors for help and blessings, bow before false gods, cast spells on business partners, visualise our preferred future, and so on.

The Bible reminds us that it is God who gives us the ability to produce wealth. When we trust Him, we will have more than enough to pass on to the next generation as a blessing. When we rebel against Him and seek our own way through witchcraft, we only invite demonic curses upon our families.

Deuteronomy 8:18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth... (NIV)

Demons will try to lead us into seeking for a counterfeit type of peace by teaching us to empty ourselves, meditate on certain ideas, soak in forest environments, self-hypnotise by chanting, immerse in bath rituals, and so on. None of these involve spending time with God and being renewed and cleansed by the Holy Spirit.

Only God can give us “God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.” Instead, we just become more and more defiled through our allegiance with demons. The enemy of our souls will never lead us to peace, only to more anxiety, bondage, and torment.

Philippians 4:6-7 Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (NLT)

Demons will target our instinctive desire to receive God’s blessing by luring us to seek good luck and fortune through other gods. Here, demons will lead us to invite certain spiritual masters to conduct house or office blessings, hang up prosperity signs, follow superstitions out of fear of misfortune, toss money into fountains, select lucky numbers, objects, times, dates, animals, and lucky figurines. They will also lead us to follow certain superstitions or consult the horoscope for wedding dates, marriage ceremonies, baby names, and even baby delivery times. Even though witchcraft promises prosperity or good luck, it only leads us to be enslaved to superstitious practices and greater anxiety, because we have taken ourselves outside of God’s protection.

The goodness of our lives is not based on luck, but on God’s eternal and promised favour and honour for those who obey Him and love Him.

Psalms 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. (ESV)

Demons will target our fear of misfortune and suffering and lure us to pray to different gods to protect us, to wear certain amulets, such as the evil eye, to dedicate our children to different spirits for their guardianship, to display certain objects in our doorway, to watch out for omens, and so on. Ironically, all this just opens the door even wider to Satan and his demons.

Only God can truly protect us from trouble. He is the One who guarantees our salvation. Demons guarantee our eternal destruction.

Psalm 91:14-16 The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation." (NLT)

Demons will also tempt us to take matters into our own hands to harm people we don't like or cause trouble to those we envy or feel threatened by. They will incite us to cast spells or curses, summon dark spirits, pronounce words of hatred, violence, and death, or at least consult someone who can do that on our behalf.

God's Word explicitly tells us not to curse anyone. Once we become a vessel for such blatant evil, we can be sure the Holy Spirit will not want to dwell inside us.

Romans 12:14,17 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. (NLT)

Do you recognise different forms of witchcraft in your own family?

It is impossible to list all the examples of all the types of witchcraft here because it has proliferated so much over the centuries. We see it in children's toys, storybooks, movies, games, homes, businesses, and even the civil service. New forms of witchcraft have been exported and adopted internationally. There is now a global market for digitised witchcraft apps.

We hope, however, this guideline of desires can help you identify the witchcraft that you have been involved with, either through your own actions or the actions of your family, so that you can repent of these forms of rebellion before God and ask Him to cleanse you of the ways that demons have defiled your spirit and perverted your spiritual gifts.

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|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Healing, well-being2. Higher wisdom3. Power4. Wealth |
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5. Inner peace

 6. Good luck

 7. Stop misfortune

 8. Send misfortune

You can ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember and list all the family and personal witchcraft that He wants you to confess and repent of. Remember, witchcraft is just a counterfeit of the Holy Spirit's power, counsel, and knowledge. Please click the "pause" button now and take as much time as you need to remember and reflect.

Welcome back.

Witchcraft is very prevalent throughout Asia and it is not surprising if you have taken part in some form of witchcraft. Even if your family hasn't actively practised witchcraft, you probably have visited places that do or participated in rituals where you were not aware of their spiritual significance. This can happen during visits to tourist sites, where you are sold souvenirs that have spiritual significance for idol worship or witchcraft, or participate in festivals or shows that honour demons.

We must keep in mind that God hates any form of witchcraft. He calls it an abomination. Let's read from Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 10 to 12 together, *"... And do not let your people practice fortune-telling, or use sorcery, or interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord..."* (Deuteronomy 18:10-12 NLT)

There is no higher power or authority than God Himself. He alone is the Lord. God is present everywhere and He sees everything. We cannot hide our witchcraft from Him, even if we hide it from other people.

Nehemiah 9:6 “You alone are the LORD. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve them all, and the angels of heaven worship you. (NLT)”

Unfortunately, many people don't take God's warnings about witchcraft as seriously as He does. Even the apostle Paul had to warn the church in Galatia at least twice that anyone who dabbles in witchcraft will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Paul said, “Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.” Apparently, some of them needed more than one reminder.

Galatians 5:19-21 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery... Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (NLT)”

No lucky charm or fortune teller we have ever consulted will save us from being destroyed eventually. Isaiah 47 states that disaster will overtake us, and we won't be able to charm it away. Is playing around with witchcraft and sorcery really worth it? We pray that we will all see the severity of this form of rebellion against God and repent.

Isaiah 47:11 So disaster will overtake you, and you won't be able to charm it away. Calamity will fall upon you, and you won't be able to buy your way out. A catastrophe will strike you suddenly, one for which you are not prepared. (NLT)”

Our Father in heaven is good, faithful, and perfect in love, and beyond our ability to understand. He knows all our needs and promises to give us everything we need when we first seek the Kingdom of God above all else.

Matthew 6:32-33 These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (NLT)”

Satan, on the other hand, will try to blind us from seeing God's glorious good news for us, so we don't understand that all that all our desires can be satisfied in a relationship with God Himself.

2 Corinthians 4:4 Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. (NLT)”

In the next part of today's lesson, we will discuss the effects of witchcraft on someone and what they can do about it.

The apostle Paul was grieved when he noticed that the Galatians appeared as if someone had cast an evil spell on them. They seemed to miss the meaning of Jesus' death even though it was made very clear to them. Notice that the apostle Paul was addressing believers, not those who practise pagan religions or those outside the church.

Galatians 3:1-2 Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross. Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! ... (NLT)

When a believer is under the influence of witchcraft, it can appear as if they are in some sort of trance and the truth can't seem to get through to them. No matter how hard they try, they will find that they ...

1. can't focus on reading the Bible and will
2. find God's Word dull, it can't seem to enter their hearts.
3. They will have difficulty understanding God's Word and
4. tend to forget God's Word almost immediately
5. They fall asleep when God's Word is being preached and
6. pray repetitive, meaningless prayers
7. They cannot seem to break free from addictive sinful habits and
8. sense an invisible block between God and themselves

Basically, there is no true power in the walk with God and they seem to lack real spiritual vitality.

We will not experience peace in our minds and hearts as long as we do not get rid of the idolatry and witchcraft in our lives.

2 Kings 9:22 ... Jehu replied, "How can there be peace as long as the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother, Jezebel, are all around us?" (NLT)

But how is it that believers who have been baptised in Jesus' name can still be affected by witchcraft? 2 Corinthians 6 shows us that there is a very crucial step that we need to take when we turn to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. We need to acknowledge and confess our sin of spiritual adultery and prostitution, separate ourselves from all aspects of witchcraft, and no longer be in contact with any thing that is related to witchcraft.

2 Corinthians 6:15,17 What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil ... Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. (NLT)

This is essentially what the believers in Ephesus did. They confessed their sinful witchcraft practices and burnt their incantation books in public. They did not even try to recover their cost of several million dollars or try to sell them or give them away. They made it clear that they wanted a clean break from Satan's kingdom, and not curse anybody else with those objects.

Acts 19:18-19 Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars. (NLT)

We too should make a clean break from Satan's kingdom. Those who repent of witchcraft and renounce their ties to Satan often marvel that they will gain

1. A clearer, quieter mind
2. A more joyful, peaceful heart
3. A feeling of lightness
4. A refreshed and more glowing appearance
5. Things around them look brighter
6. They discover more spiritual gifts
7. Sometimes, their family relations improve and become more peaceful without any particular effort on their part

This is because repenting of witchcraft restores our relationship with the Holy Spirit and He can begin a greater work in our lives.

We have now come to a time where we will repent of all forms of witchcraft in our lives and expel all demonic powers that have gained a foothold. This prayer does not depend on our maturity in Christ, it is a legal declaration of separation from Satan and the eviction of demons in the powerful name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Please now refer back to the list that you had prepared earlier and use it to go through this prayer. It is important that you do not rush through this meaningful time. Be as thorough as you can, because every unrepented point of witchcraft leaves a foothold for the enemy to remain. This is because Satan and demons will use any breach of God's law on idolatry as a legitimate reason not to leave you.

As you pray this prayer, you may feel some discomfort as the enemy resists you. Do not be discouraged or deterred. In fact, be even more determined, because the Holy Spirit is helping you drive out darkness out of your life as you pray. Trust God to help you through this time.

As you begin this prayer, please feel free to click pause at any point if you need more time. Let's begin.

“Father God, I recognise that I have rebelled against You greatly by turning to witchcraft. Please forgive me! I repent of turning to (please list all rituals, ancestor and idol worship, offerings, food and potions, altars, statues, books, cards, ornaments, charms etc.) Today, I destroy these objects. I renounce all ties to (fengshui masters, psychics, mediums, fortune tellers, tarot card readers, temples I have associated with etc.) Please take your time to list all their names, if possible. I command all demonic powers that have gained a foothold to leave me and my household now. In Jesus' name, amen.”

Praise God for your deliverance as God forgives you and releases you from the enemy's grip. If you faced any difficulty in saying the prayer today, please follow up by asking your group members to pray along with you as you renounce all ties to witchcraft.

We have now come to the end of today's lesson. Here are the reflection questions for you to prepare answers to before your small group meeting as well as a testimony to watch. We pray that you will be blessed. See you next time.

Time for reflection

1. How would you respond to someone who asks you to accompany them to a fortune-teller in future?
2. The things we wear can also invite witchcraft spirits. Can you give a few examples?

Watch the testimony for this lesson



Personal notes