

Freedom from Counterfeit

- I. Intro → When training to identify counterfeit money, the best thing to do is study what is truth
 - A. The problem is that even within the church we seem to have a problem with our truth barometer.
 - 1. AI, Instagram, TikTok culture catches us in echochambers of lies
 - 2. What is truth, people ask, the same question Pilate asked Jesus
 - B. Today we want to talk about counterfeit spirituality
 - 1. We could talk about many things from Hinduism and Islam to Jehovah's Witnesses or the Prosperity Gospel → it's all counterfeit
 - 2. The truth is in the Word clearly revealed
 - 3. 1 Timothy 4:1 speaks bluntly of these counterfeit faiths, *"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."*
 - 4. Doctrines of Demons – not very flattering
 - C. What is the greatest threat to Christianity in our culture? Is secularism the most significant threat, or is it a spiritual counterfeit that looks spiritual but opposes Christ?
 - D. A few weeks ago, we talked about how enlightenment has removed the spiritual, but now we see a resurgence to the "Old Ways"
 - 1. Only 4% of the population claims to be an atheist (probably not accurate)
 - 2. 70% of people identify as spiritual
 - 3. 30% consult tarot or astrology throughout the year
 - 4. 87% identify/incorporate some form of New Age in their life
 - 5. Statistically, you are more likely to believe YOU are God than to believe that there is no spiritual reality
 - 6. But are these counterfeit beliefs harmless? Where do they come from?
 - E. Background of occult practices
 - 1. Heaven and Earth combined and then separated (PLATES)
 - 2. Mighty war in heaven reflected here on earth (Gen 3 to 11)
 - a) Deuteronomy 32 says that after Babel, God chose Israel and the rest of the nations were given to the rule of rebel spiritual beings
 - b) These fallen beings influenced and taught the nations occult practices such as child sacrifice, divination, astrology, and sorcery.
 - c) 1 Enoch (extra-biblical but influential in 2 Peter and Jude) says that the rebellious angels taught humans:
 - (1) Sorcery and cutting of roots (magic arts).
 - (2) Astrology and signs of the heavens.
 - 3. So, TLDR → Demons taught the nations occult practices, essentially plundering God's glory for themselves in rebellion
 - 4. These occult practices, in broad strokes, are "earth reaching to heaven"

a) *Deuteronomy 29:29, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

5. These practices violate God’s commands, in large part, b/c they seek spiritual knowledge, power, or blessing without God (sometimes willingly and sometimes inadvertently), aligning people with demonic forces, leading them into spiritual counterfeit & maybe bondage.
 6. This is why cultures worldwide practiced child sacrifice, astrology, and sorcery: demons taught the nations these things to supplant YHWH
 7. All counterfeit yields false and temporary blessings at great cost
- II. Many of the counterfeit things in our world seem like harmless ways to seek knowledge, power, or blessing apart from God, but they are actually open doors to affliction with short term blessing and longterm cursing

A. *Deuteronomy 18:9–13, When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who **burns his son** or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices **divination** or **tells fortunes** or **interprets omens**, or a **sorcerer** or a **charmer** or a **medium** or a **necromancer** or one who **inquires of the dead**, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations, the LORD your God is driving them out before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.*

1. Burns his son or daughter as an offering

- a) Child sacrifice, often by fire, to pagan gods for favor, fertility, or protection. In Canaan, specifically Molech
- b) Today, this still happens in some occult rituals (Hindu god, Kali)
- c) Although conjecture, many have argued that this same “Spirit of Molech” is at work in abortion, sacrificing children for XYZ purpose

2. Practices divination

- a) Seeking hidden knowledge about the future or the unknown through occult means.
- b) Acts 16:7-18, Little girl... demon... spirit of Python
 - (1) Note that the Bible said she COULD divine the future, but the source was demonic
 - (2) In Greek mythology, Python was a serpent or dragon that guarded the Oracle of Delphi, where people sought prophecies and divination.
 - (3) The Pythia was the priestess at Delphi who would give oracles under the influence of this “spirit.”
- c) In our world → Tarot cards, palm reading, and crystal balls
- d) WARNING: The Christian gift of prophecy (God’s Word to you for another) can dip into sinful divination when we try to tell the future

3. Tells fortunes

- a) Literally soothsaying, using signs (often celestial) to predict the future.
- b) Ex: Babylonian astrologers (Isa. 47:13).
 - (1) Astrology comes from Babylon and God says in Isaiah 47 he will burn them with fire b/c of it
- c) For us? Horoscopes, zodiac signs, birth charts for guidance, or using "Mercury retrograde" explanations for life difficulties.

4. Interprets omens

- a) These are all similar, but this involves reading signs in nature or patterns to make decisions or predict the future.
- b) Well drilling → dowsing rod
- c) Also seeking hidden spiritual messages in random patterns, signs in nature, or unexplained events to gain insight over the future.
 - (1) Often this stuff is driven by fear, control, or curiosity, apart from dependence on God's revealed Word.
 - (2) God's word isn't sufficient... I need a SIGN!
- d) WARNING: If you read every natural disaster, blood moon, political event, or personal dream as a direct divine sign tied to prophetic timelines without a clear Scripture connection, you are actually practicing the "interpretation of omens".
 - (1) This might be why you feel inexplicable fear & anxiety

5. Sorcerer

- a) One who practices witchcraft, using spells or rituals to manipulate spiritual forces.
 - (1) ex: Pharaoh's magicians mimicking Moses' signs
- b) Modern examples include witchcraft, casting spells, and Wicca rituals. Also, plants and drugs for spiritual journeys & visions

6. Charmer

- a) An enchanter who uses incantations or binds with magic spells.
 - (1) Ex: Charmers called to control snakes (Ps. 58:5).
- b) For us, using chants, spells, or charms for protection or power. (Even Christian necklaces...). Also using "mantles, anointed prayer cloths, or impartation objects in a way that attributes spiritual power to the object itself." (Lots of Catholic mythology)

7. Medium

- a) One who consults or channels familiar spirits for wisdom
- b) Psychic mediums, spirit channeling.
- c) WARNING: Some Christians advocate for "Courts of Heaven" practices, seeking direct interaction with heavenly "voices" or councils apart from Christ's intercession. This includes engaging with "angels" directly for guidance, bypassing discernment and biblical boundaries. Often they will claim to spiritually travel to heavenly realms for secret knowledge. This is 100% occult.
 - (1) Hebrews 1. Jesus > Angels

8. Necromancer

- a) One who seeks information or power from the dead.
 - (1) Ex: Saul and the witch of Endor
- b) This would be like attempting to contact deceased loved ones through séances. Trying to communicate with deceased “saints” for guidance.

9. One who inquires of the dead

- a) Actively seeking guidance or communication from the dead.
 - (1) “My dead uncle gave me a sign...” || Did he? You sure?
- b) I think this more realistically looks like seances, using Ouija boards, graveyard rituals, and even some of the weird practices coming out from hyper-charismatic movements like grave-soaking

10. Let me put it this way: If you have practiced (or still do) practice astrology, tarot cards, psychic readings, the use of crystals, manifestation, law of attraction, yoga as a spiritual practice, spiritual meditation (emptying) vs. biblical meditation (filling w/ Word), Reiki, healing energy, ouija board, sage burning, numerology, drum circles, solstice rituals, karma, "old world" gods or idols... **You have embraced deception**

11. You might say, “Yea but I didn’t know what I was doing...” Doesn’t matter

B. 1 Corinthians 10:19–21, What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

- 1. Paul essentially argues that even your unintentional eating of a meal is participation with demons → ex: Hinduism commonly includes offerings of food to idols during worship, which is then distributed to participants.

III. Just because you used a Ouija board when you were 13 doesn’t mean you’re spiritually afflicted. So, what are the most common symptoms of occult affliction?

- A. Persistent, unexplained fear (the dark, during prayer, or when reading Scripture)
- B. Night terrors, sleep disturbances, Sleep paralysis with a felt “evil presence”
- C. Inexplicable suicidal thoughts or urges (what would it be like...).
- D. Evil, vile thoughts or physical side effects that come during spiritual activity
- E. Hearing voices commanding harmful actions or deprecating words.
- F. Sudden, intense anger or cursing when spiritual matters are discussed.
- G. Inexplicable hatred toward Christian leaders or spiritual authority.
- H. Testimonies of anxiety, depression, and PTSD
- I. Inexplicable physical ailments
- J. Of course, there are many, many more examples...

IV. Few things up front

- A. No matter your past, Jesus has defeated these powers (Col. 2:15) and has secured freedom. In Jesus, you are saved and your soul is secure
- B. I am not trying to say these things to scare you, but to point out that there might be more FREEDOM for you than you realize today.

- C. Let me use a metaphor: Imagine your heart has issues b/c of a lifetime of bad dietary decisions
 - D. The doctor tells you that you're at risk. You need to drastically change your diet and exercise, and you might need surgery
 - E. Diet and exercise is like the spiritual equivalent of daily discipleship
 - F. Surgery is like the spiritual equivalent of deliverance prayer
 - G. Even if deliverance happens (e.g. surgery), you need to embrace the daily walk
 - H. There is no substitute for a daily walk with the Lord – this is where 90% of freedom post salvation comes from
 - I. As we read we see TRUTH vs falsity
 - J. The HS points it out so we can REPENT and REPLACE
 - K. If we embrace a lifetime of Truth > Lies, we effectively "starve" out whatever we've been feeding from our previous occultic influences
 - L. There's also no shame in praying for one another, confessing to one another, for healing → that's really what deliverance prayer looks like: **DEEP Confession & repentance**
- V. Let's say you were to call the elders and ask for prayer, "I used to be a practicing witch," → what would we do? What could you expect?
- A. *Acts 19:18–19, Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.*
 - 1. **REPENT (Turning to God)** → A change of mind and direction, turning away from sin and turning toward God (This was counterfeit, God is true)
 - a) In Acts 19:18, believers confessed their sins, acknowledging that their occult practices were sin before God.
 - b) We begin by agreeing with God about the sinfulness of our occult practices, idolatry, or spiritual compromise, and choose to turn to Jesus as Lord, away from all counterfeit & forbidden arts
 - 2. **RENOUNCE (Breaking Agreement)** → Verbally rejecting and breaking agreement with past occult, idolatrous, or demonic practices.
 - a) Titus 2 says renunciation is saying "NO!" or "I am done with that!"
 - b) We verbally renounce these practices out loud
 - (1) Renounce the blessings, the curses
 - (2) Renounce the associated spirit/sin
 - 3. **REJECT (Continued walking away from)** → I said "No" to this and I want it out of my life. I am committed to being done with it.
 - a) Notice they acted... they didn't just say no, they burned it
 - 4. **EJECT (ekballō or cast out)** → In the authority of Christ, we can command these things to leave (if we are in Christ).
 - a) Sometimes there may be physical manifestations (shaking, loud cries, headache, pins and needles, nausea, crying out in fear).
 - b) Often there is immediate freedom and restoration for the afflicted person over time