

Closing The Door On The Devil

You Didn't Get Ambushed. You Gave Permission.

A Four-Lesson Study on Access, Authority, and Shutting the Door for Good

DOORS OPENED THROUGH SIN AND THE OCCULT

Where Curiosity Knocks and Counterfeits Answer

Fortune, Fun, And Fine Print

Welcome back. Last week we saw that the enemy works by invitation, not invasion. The key verse was [Ephesians 4:27](#): don't give place to the devil. Today we start naming the doors. And we're starting with the one most people don't even think is a door.

Here's a number for you. A fall 2024 [Pew survey](#) found that 30 percent of American adults consult astrology, tarot cards, or a fortune teller at least once a year. And when Pew asked why, most of them said the same thing: it's *"just for fun"*.

"Just for fun." Hold onto that phrase, because it's the on-ramp. Nobody walks into a spiritual trap under a sign that says trap. They walk in with a horoscope app, a party game, a friend who reads cards. It's harmless. It's curious. And curiosity, as we're about to see, is exactly what the New Testament calls it.

So today we're looking at three things. What God said about these doors before anybody asked. What happened when a whole city decided to close them. And what Scripture does, and doesn't, say about the price of closing one.

Posted Before The Peril

Start with Moses. Israel is standing at the edge of the Promised Land, and God hands them a list. Not a vague warning. A list. Listen to it: *"There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead (Deuteronomy 18:10-11)."*

Count them. Nine doors named in two verses. Witchcraft. Omens. Spells. Mediums. Calling up the dead. God didn't leave Israel to figure out which practices were dangerous. He posted the list before the peril.

And look at the next verse: *"For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD (Deuteronomy 18:12)."* The Hebrew word is [to'evah](#). It's a strong word. It's the word for something God finds utterly repulsive. Not unwise. Not frowned upon. To'evah.

Old Doors In New Doorframes

Now you might be thinking, *"I don't know any witches."* Fair. But read that list again and swap in the modern packaging. Divination is the horoscope on your phone. Omens are the tarot deck from the bookstore. The medium is the psychic hotline. Calling up the dead is the Ouija board from the game aisle. The packaging changed. The category didn't.

God says it just as plainly in Leviticus: *"Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God (Leviticus 19:31)."*

Notice the verb. *"Seek"*. You don't have to practice anything. You just have to go looking. And notice the result: *"defiled"*. Seeking isn't neutral. It leaves a mark.

Saul's Midnight Shortcut

Want to see how this door actually opens? Watch King Saul. In [1 Samuel 28:6-7](#), Saul asks God for direction and gets silence. No dreams. No prophets. Nothing. So he does what a lot of us do when heaven goes quiet. He looks for a shortcut. He tells his servants to find him a medium.

The Chronicler gives the verdict: *“So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance (1 Chronicles 10:13).”*

Look at the order. First, he didn't keep the word of the LORD. The medium came second. And the very next verse ([1 Chronicles 10:14](#)) says he didn't inquire of the LORD. The door of disobedience was already open before the door of the occult.

That's the pattern worth remembering. The occult is rarely the first door. It's usually the second one, the shortcut people take after they've already stopped listening to God. Silence feels unbearable, and the counterfeit is always happy to talk.

Sorcery Sits In Bad Company

Notice something in Galatians. Paul lists the works of the flesh, and look who's sitting together:

“idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath (Galatians 5:19-20).”

Sorcery isn't on its own island. It's right next to hatred, contentions, jealousies, and outbursts of wrath. The Greek word is [pharmakeia](#), where we get the word pharmacy, and it carries the idea of drugs and potions used in spiritual practice. Paul puts it in the same list as the very ordinary sins we'll deal with next week.

That tells you something about how doors work. The occult isn't a different kind of door with different rules. It's the same principle at the extreme end. Paul puts the principle plainly: *“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? (Romans 6:16).”* Whoever you present yourself to, you end up obeying. Yielding is the door, whether you're yielding to a grudge or to a Ouija board.

Two Tables, One Seat

Paul brings this into the New Testament with a picture that's hard to forget. He's writing to Corinth, a city full of idol temples, and he says: *“I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons (1 Corinthians 10:20-21).”*

See that word “fellowship”? In Greek it's [koinonos](#). A partner. A sharer. Someone at the table because they're in on the arrangement. Paul isn't just saying stay away from demons. He's saying don't become their partner.

Now, a fair note. Paul's example is an idol feast, not a horoscope app. So I'm applying the principle, not claiming the verse names your phone. But the principle travels. Two tables, one seat. You can't sit at the Lord's table on Sunday and pull up a chair at the other one on Friday night. A table is a table, whether the food is good or not. That's why “just for fun” doesn't hold up.

Fifty Thousand Pieces Of Proof

So what do you do once you've walked through the door? Ephesus gives us the model. It was a city with a reputation for magic arts, and [Acts 19](#) tells us what happened when the gospel took hold: *“And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver (Acts 19:18-19).”*

Walk through that slowly. First, they came “confessing and telling their deeds”. These were believers, people already in Christ, and they came forward with the truth. Second, they didn't quietly toss the books in a drawer. They burned them “in the sight of all”. Public. Third, they counted the cost. Fifty thousand pieces of silver. Many commentators estimate a piece of silver at

about a day's wage, which would put that pile of books at something like a hundred and thirty years of a laborer's pay. And here's the thing. They could have sold those books. They burned them.

The Greek word for “magic” in that verse is [periergos](#). It literally means “working all around”. Over-busy. Meddling. Wandering around things you have no business being in the middle of. It's the same word the New Testament uses for a busybody. In other words, Scripture's word for the occult is curiosity that couldn't leave well enough alone. Which takes us right back to “just for fun”.

And look what happens next: [“So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed \(Acts 19:20\).”](#) The door shut, and the word of God moved through that city like it had been waiting for the room.

Half-Shut Is Wide Open

Here's the part that trips up sincere people. They close one door and leave another one cracked. They confess the Ouija board but keep the horoscope app, just in case. They pray in the morning and check the cards at night. They want God's protection and the counterfeit's backup plan.

That's not a closed door. That's a door on a chain, and a chain still lets someone reach in.

Jesus doesn't leave any wiggle room on this: [“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon \(Matthew 6:24\).”](#) Mammon was money, but the principle is bigger than money. Two masters means two claims on your obedience, and Jesus says it can't be done. Not shouldn't. Can't.

James has a word for the person who tries anyway: [“For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways \(James 1:7-8\).”](#) The Greek word is [dipsuchos](#). Literally, two-souled. A person with a soul in two places. James is the only writer in the New Testament who uses it, and he uses it twice. Unstable in all his ways. That's what a half-shut door feels like from the inside.

Israel knew this feeling. On Mount Carmel, Elijah looked at a people who wanted the LORD and Baal both and asked: [“How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him \(1 Kings 18:21\).”](#) And here's the verse that stings. The people answered him not a word. Silence. Because a divided heart has no good answer.

The Bible even shows us what it looks like when it's a way of life. After Israel was carried away, the people who were resettled in the land did this: [“They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods \(2 Kings 17:33\).”](#) Both. At the same time. Nobody there thought they were rejecting God. They just kept the other gods on the side. That's the very thing Paul warned Corinth about with the two tables.

So what's the way out? James gives it right after the verse we studied last week. In Lesson One we heard him say to resist the devil, and the verse just before it said to submit to God. Now listen to the verse that follows: [“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded \(James 4:8\).”](#) Notice he doesn't say try harder. He says draw near, and he says purify the heart. A single-minded person isn't someone who never feels the pull. It's someone who has stopped keeping a spare door. One more thing on the subject of what it costs to close a door. Back in Acts 8, a man named Simon saw the apostles' power and tried to buy it. Peter's answer is blunt: [“Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! \(Acts 8:20\).”](#) See [Acts 8:18-20](#) for the whole scene. The gift of God isn't for sale. What closes the door is the surrender, not a purchase.

Panic Is Not A Plan

If this lesson has your stomach in knots because you remember a Ouija board at a sleepover or a psychic visit in your twenties, breathe. Notice who showed up in Acts 19: believers. People already in Christ, walking in honest confession. Nobody in that story is told they're beyond help. They're told to bring it into the light.

So the goal today isn't terror. It's honesty. A door you can name is a door you can close.

Light The Match

Here's your assignment, and it's concrete. This week, walk through your home and your phone. A horoscope app. A tarot or oracle deck. A Ouija board in the closet. Books, charms, or good luck objects you've kept because you were afraid to throw them out. Anything you've been consulting for guidance instead of asking God.

Then do what Ephesus did. Tell somebody the truth about it. And get rid of it. Not donate it. Not sell it online. Destroy it. Break it, burn it safely, or put it in the trash. And if the thought “*it's just a deck of cards*” rises up in you while you're doing it, notice that's the very phrase we started with.

Next week we move to the quieter doors. No candles, no cards. Just a grudge you've been carrying so long you've stopped calling it anything. See you then.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).