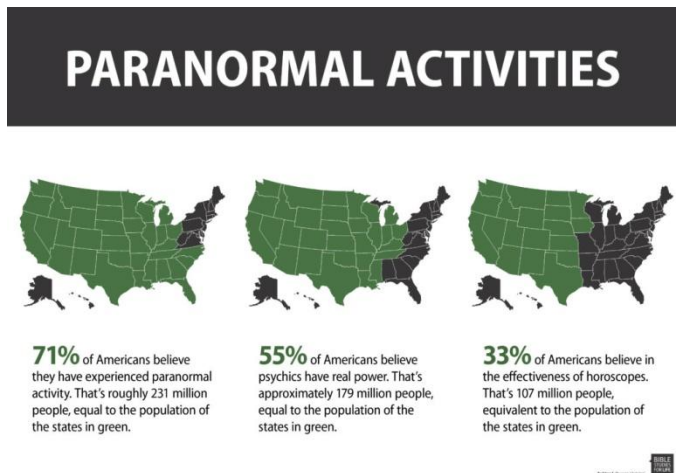


When Interest in the Paranormal Becomes Normal

Why are we so fascinated with the paranormal?

As I was developing a study on the paranormal for the Bible study curriculum I work on, I was blown away by the wide-spread practice of things associated with the occult and the paranormal. My team developed this poster/visual:



And then there's the movies. Movies about ghosts and the paranormal have been around since the earliest days, but these days we're flooded with them. Just consider the popularity of films like *Paranormal Activity*, *Insidious*, and their three thousand sequels.



The House of the Devil from 1896 was the first horror movie—but it wasn't the last.

Ask someone why they're interested in the paranormal, and most of them will say, *"It's just for fun. It doesn't mean anything."*

But they still haven't answered the question. If it doesn't mean anything, why the fascination? Interest in the occult and the paranormal boils down to three reasons.

1. An interest in powers and forces beyond ourselves.
2. The potential to use those powers to manipulate our circumstances.

3. The desire to use those powers to see and control our future.

At the heart of these three reasons is the root problem in our sin nature: **we want to be in charge.**

God has placed a desire in each of us to seek Him. He is the only power we need, but we seek to fill that need with everything else but Him. Along comes the occult and the paranormal, and it points to powers beyond us that we have the potential to control. *I can't control God, but if I can learn to control these supernatural forces, well, maybe I can get what I want.*

There's a problem with that. The paranormal and the occult never deliver. Never. And any time we take our eyes off Christ, it's dangerous.

God offers us something far better: Himself. After condemning occultic practices in the law, Moses said:

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him" (Deut. 18:15).

Look to His Word which He spoke through His prophets. And look to the ultimate Prophet and Word: Jesus Christ.

We don't come to God as a power to control or manipulate—even though He has all power. We come to God for a relationship. We come to know Him, to walk with Him, to discover in increasing measure the joy and fulfillment Jesus Christ brings into our lives. If we trust Him and rest in His control, we have all we need and will ever want. We don't need to know the future or manipulate our circumstances. We trust and rest in the One who is Lord over our circumstances and future.

"Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33).