



I received this question via email after the July/August Question for Pastor that dealt with the souls of people after they die.

After my mom passed away there have been a lot discussions in my family about the supernatural. Apparently, some extended family members had some "weird" experiences. I am seeking some advice from my local church/group, but if you have comments, I'd certainly welcome them, too!

The experiences mostly involve mediums. My Mom & her sister (my aunt) were very close. After Mom's passing, my aunt's grandson (22 yr old) said he was approached by a medium who told him a "whole bunch of stuff" about Mom & my aunt's relationship.

My response is "just because something seems Heaven-sent, doesn't mean that it is." And after someone's passing is also when we are most vulnerable to untruths. This kind of experience takes a great deal of care. Are there any other passages/comments you can think of?

I know this last topic is a doozy, but I do feel it is very important that I continue my discussions with my family members regarding this.

I realize this is a bit of a lengthy question, but I included a large part of it, because of the insights in the last two paragraphs. It is very true that "just because something seems Heaven-sent, doesn't mean that it is." It is also very important to continue discussions with people who are seeking answers to questions about the afterlife. Here's how I answered the question:

The family discussions about the afterlife that you've experienced are quite common. When someone dies it seems that almost everyone gives at least some thought to the "supernatural." People wonder what really waits for us after this life. "Is there a heaven? Is there a hell? How do I get to heaven and stay out of hell?" It may be the best time of all to point people to what God says about the subject.

Unfortunately this is also one of those times that Satan loves to jump in and direct people to the wrong sources with the wrong answers. Mediums would definitely fall into that "wrong sources with wrong answers" category. There are some point-blank passages in the Bible about turning to mediums (or anything other than God):

Deut. 18:9-13
Leviticus 19:31

If getting information from mediums/spiritists is "detestable" and causes us to be "defiled," it's pretty safe to say that the information they dispense is NOT coming from God. And if not from God, then the only other option is Satan. That's a pretty scary thought.

In Matthew 24:24 Jesus warned us that Satan would work through false Christs and false prophets who perform miraculous signs in order to deceive people. Rev 13:11-14 reiterates the idea of signs meant to deceive. I'd say that mediums claiming to have "inside info" on the supernatural fits into that "deceptive,

miraculous signs" category. So, your comment about not everything of a supernatural nature being sent from heaven was right on target.

Unfortunately people seem more willing to believe mediums and people with "near-death" experiences than the Bible. Based on Jesus' warnings we should not be surprised.

I also appreciated your comment that "this kind of experience takes a great deal of care." The people asking these kinds of questions are searching for answers. The challenge is to point them to the truth without putting them down for thus far coming up with the wrong answers.

(And we usually come up with wrong answers when we find someone who tells us what we want to hear. For example, surveys of Christians always show that less than half of them believe there is a hell. The Bible couldn't be more clear about the existence of a place of eternal suffering, but that's not what we want to hear, so we look for someone who tells us things like "A good God wouldn't sentence people to eternal suffering." Sounds nice, but it's not coming from God.)

As always, the best thing we can do is point people to God's word - and remember that it's not our job to convince them of the truth of the Bible. That's the Holy Spirit's job. Our job is to simply point them in the right direction.

I have a booklet called "Mediums, Magic and Moonbeams" that presents some real-life experiences with mediums, Ouija boards, horoscopes and psychics and is written in such a way that doesn't make people feel stupid for seeking out them out. Rather, the booklet points them to the biblical truth that the messages coming from mediums, etc... are not coming from God. I believe its no longer in print, but I have a couple extra if you think one would be helpful in pointing your aunt's grandson to the truth. Let me know and I can send you one.

Thanks again for your interest in knowing what God has to say. After all is said and done, it doesn't matter what we think or what anyone else thinks or what seems to make sense or sound good about a specific topic. What really matters is what God thinks.

NOTE: The booklet "Mediums, Magic and Moonbeams" is in our library. You can check it out, but please return it when you are finished as it is out of print and it's the last copy we have.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to <mailto:pastor@livingwordlutheran.net>