

Counterfeit Voices
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When I was a kid I would sometimes come home upset about something someone said to me. My mom would say, “Son, don’t listen to them. Consider the source.”

What did she mean by “consider the source”? The source is where something originates – where it begins. My mom wanted me to think about where those comments originated. Those people’s opinions did not matter, were not true and I should not allow them to affect me. She wanted the source of what I thought about myself to come from a different source: from God and not from people.

As Christians, we should depend upon God as our source, the one we look to to meet our needs, the one we go to first. The one whose voice we hear the clearest. So, today I want you to consider your source. Who’s your source?

We’re in a sermon series The Voice. We are learning the discern God’s voice and our premise is that God is speaking and you can hear Him!

My sermon today is called Counterfeit Voices. Just as our Father God is speaking – so is our adversary, the devil. 1 Peter 5:8-9 says

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith...

Notice that Satan roars – which means that the main way Satan attacks is through words. So Satan uses words to tempt and accuse, but his main tool is deception. According to John 8:44

There is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

If the devil’s lips are moving, he’s lying! He lies about God – He lies about himself – He lies about you. We must be so grounded in the truth of God’s Word and familiar with God’s voice that we can instantly identify a counterfeit voice.

You see – the devil’s not going to come to you and say, “This is the devil speaking. I want you to do this or that.” No! He’s much more subtle. In fact – the first mention of Satan in the Bible is found in Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent was more subtle and crafty than any living creature of the field which the Lord God had made. And he (Satan) said to the woman, Can it really be that God has said, “You shall not eat from every tree of the garden?”

The law of first mention is very important in Bible interpretation.

That first mention usually gives us a lot of insight. And we see here what Satan attacks – God’s word. And he attacks God’s word with his words. He wants keep you out of God’s word – but if he can’t do that – he will twist God’s word to make you believe something that is not true.

We need to be so familiar with the truth that we easily recognize lies! We need to be so familiar with the voice of God that we recognize the counterfeit voice of the enemy.

In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 – the Bible talks about men who are –

...false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

There is not one kind of spiritual experience or ministry position that Satan will not try to counterfeit. He tries to counterfeit everything from salvation to the gifts of the spirit.

Back in the old days before they had pens that could detect counterfeit money – they had to train bank tellers to detect it. You would think they would sit them down in a classroom and give a lecture on how to detect counterfeit money. And there was some of that. But the problem was that counterfeiters were constantly coming up with new ways to deceive people.

So the main way they trained bank tellers was to have them count piles and piles of real money. They would spend days handling real money so that whenever they came across a fake, they would immediately recognize it. They were so used to the real that the false was obvious to them.

The Bible tells us to do the same thing! We should be so familiar with truth that a lie seems obvious. Romans 16:19 says

I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

When you are familiar with good, evil is obvious.

When you are familiar with right, wrong is obvious.

When you are familiar with the God of the word, the god of this world is obvious.

When you are familiar with truth, error is obvious.

When you are familiar with the real, the counterfeit is obvious.

By the way – I am very concerned about a generation coming up now that believes that the Bible is old and outdated and irrelevant to current times. Yes – the Bible is an ancient book – but it was written by an eternal God. That means God is outside of time and He knows the end from the beginning. So when God inspired people to write the Bible – He did so from an eternal perspective.

That means that God was very aware of the times we are living in now! And the book we wrote applies to all people in all places at all times! It is the unchanging revelation of an eternal God!

Yet – today many people are rejecting God’s voice and that makes them susceptible to Satan’s counterfeits.

Prior to the captivity of the Jewish people, God said this in Jeremiah 2:13

For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns -- broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Of all the sins of Jerusalem, these two were singled out by God as the most severe. These two sins remain severe today: forsaking God as our source and building broken cisterns. We stop listening to God’s voice and start listening to counterfeit voices.

Please understand the Satan does not care what you trust in as long as it is something other than God. That’s the second sin Jeremiah mentioned – first – forsaking God and then making for themselves cisterns that would not even hold water.

A cistern is much different from a spring-fed well. It is a manmade reservoir for storing water, which is collected from rainfall or is hauled in from some other source. Unlike a well, which is continually being replenished without any human effort, a cistern requires the effort of people in order to keep it filled with water.

When our missions’ teams went to Honduras, every house on Magote Hill had a cistern. The houses we built had cisterns. It had a gutter that caught rain and filled the cistern. Here’s the problem: they were in the dry season and there was no rain. So everyday water trucks came up the hill and people paid to have their cistern filled with water.

Spiritually speaking, a cistern is man’s substitute for God’s well of living water. It is a spiritual replacement that the person hopes will be much better than the well that God has provided.

So - you get to choose your source. Either it’s God and you do things His way, or build your own cistern and see how that works out for you. We build broken cisterns when we look to other people and things to meet our needs, rather than God. Broken cisterns can be of our own making, but they can also be demonic. That’s what I want to address today.

It’s amazing the things some Christians put their trust in – things like:
Psychics / fortune telling / tarot cards / palm readers / astrology / horoscope

Some even dabble in things obviously demonic:

Séance / calling up the dead / Oujui board / witchcraft / sorcery / wizardry

The word occult is usually defined as the action or influence of secret supernatural powers. This includes the practice of any supernatural power (other than God's) that people believe can affect the way things happen.

The word "occult" literally means hidden from view or exposure; to extinguish light, to cover up; not easily detectable. This is so opposite of what God wants!

When you come to Jesus – you change kingdoms from darkness to light. Satan operates in darkness, but God operates in light. Satan wants to be hidden, but God wants to be found. In John 8:12 Jesus said -

I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

Colossians 1:13 says:

He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.

God saved us out of darkness and He wants us to have nothing to do with darkness. Ephesians 5:1 says:

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

God wants us to expose the darkness in order to save people. Acts 26:17 says

I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

When the Bible speaks of darkness, it speaks of the kingdom of Satan. Remember, the word occult means to extinguish light. Satan's goal is to extinguish the light of God – but when we walk in the light as God is in the light – the darkness can never extinguish the light!

One of the main ways we walk in the light is walking in the truth of God's word. Psalm 119:104-105 says

Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

We overcome darkness by walking in the light of God's Word which specifically forbids us to be involved in any occult activity. Deuteronomy 18:10-15 says

Don't practice divination, sorcery, fortunetelling, witchery, casting spells, holding

séances, or channeling with the dead. People who do these things are an abomination to God. It's because of just such abominable practices that God, your God, is driving these nations out before you. Be completely loyal to God, your God. These nations that you're about to run out of the country consort with sorcerers and witches. But not you. God, your God, forbids it. God, your God, is going to raise up a prophet for you. God will raise him up from among your kinsmen, a prophet like me. Listen obediently to him.

God speaks to us through prophecy, words of knowledge and words of wisdom. Satan tries to counterfeit that with fortune tellers and psychics.

There are definite Scriptural commands not to be involved in any kind of darkness. Yet it's amazing how many Christians listen to counterfeit voices by calling psychic hotlines or reading their horoscopes.

Research was done on the top 25 psychics to see how much of what they said came to pass. Do you know what the findings show? 92% of what they say does not happen. And the 8% that does is either coincidence or a good guess.

Yet I know of Christians who call psychic hotlines. Listen, those things have been proven to be frauds. There's no psychic on the other end. There's a minimum wage person in a call center reading answers off a script – if you say this, they say that. It's a proven scam. Yet Americans spend \$3 billion a year on them!

One of the first call-in psychics was Miss Cleo, who was proven to be a fraud and shut down by the government. If she was a psychic, shouldn't she have seen than coming?

Why don't we ever hear of psychics winning the lottery? Because they are fake! Counterfeit! Those few that do seem to have a supernatural gift do in fact have a supernatural gift. But it's not from God. It's a demon the Bible calls a "familiar spirit." There are demons that are familiar with your dead grandmother who you think is talking to you from the other side. So you're not conversing with Grandma – it's a demon!

If you get involved with psychics or fortune tellers or anything like that you are opening the door to demons! Here's another way people open the door to demons. Many Christians who crack their Bible, but they can't go through a day without reading their daily horoscope. But do you know what the Bible says about people who put their trust in those things? Isaiah 47:13-15 says:

All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. ...there is not one that can save you.

In other words, God is saying, “If you want to put your trust in astrologers and psychics and other broken manmade cisterns, go ahead. But know this: they cannot save themselves and they cannot save you.”

And if you put your trust in them, you open the door to Satan and you cut yourself off from the true power, which is God’s power!

What I want you to understand is that there are only two sources of supernatural knowledge and power in the universe: either God or Satan. People who pursue the occult want knowledge that’s not from God and power that’s not from God.

And there are two branches of the occult – the power branch and the knowledge branch. The power branch of the occult is called witchcraft. Its goal is to control people and circumstances through the use of spells or curses. 1 Samuel 15:23 says:

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft...

The Bible says that witchcraft is a sin. It is rebellion against God.

The knowledge branch of the occult includes divination and sorcery. Divination is trying to obtain supernatural knowledge of the future through the practice of fortune-telling, crystal balls, palm reading, séances, tarot cards and astrology. Here’s what God says about those things in Isaiah 8:19-22

*And when the people (instead of putting their trust in God) shall say to you, "Try out the fortunetellers. Consult the spiritualists. Why not tap into the spirit-world, get in touch with the dead?" Tell them, "No, we're going to study the Scriptures." People who try the other ways get nowhere — a dead end!
And they (who consult mediums and wizards) shall pass through the land sorely distressed and hungry; frustrated and famished, they try one thing after another. When nothing works out they get angry, cursing first this god and then that one, Looking this way and that, up, down, and sideways — and seeing nothing, A blank wall, an empty hole. They end up in the dark with nothing.*

God says if you turn to witchcraft, psychics and the like – you are turning to darkness and when you look for God’s help – you won’t find it! Why? Because you turned on God! This is serious!

Many movies these days have beings with supernatural power. I’m not here to try to legislate or control what you watch – but I am here to warn you to be careful what you expose your children to.

And if you choose to let them watch these movies – you need to explain God’s truth to them. Research is showing that the younger generations are becoming more open to spiritual things but less open to Christianity.

You might not think movies can affect you. But remember Hosea 4:6 –

My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge.

When Deb and I were dating we went to see a movie called the Exorcist. Our lack of knowledge made us think it was no big deal. But when we got home that night – we sensed the most evil presence in the room that we had ever felt in our lives. We were Baptist kids who knew nothing about spiritual warfare. We just started praying and I just felt led to call out “JESUS!” And that evil presence left immediately. We learned that movies can definitely impact you!

And as your pastor, I am trying to help you shut the door to the devil. And we do that by repenting of looking to anything other than God as our source.

If you are putting your trust in manmade or demonic cisterns – repent of it today. Turn from it today! Give it up now! Turn back to God immediately.

The second thing we must do is choose to seek God first in all things. Psalm 121:1-2 says:

I lift up my eyes to the hills--where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Where do you look when you need help? Who is your source? We have the promise of God in 2 Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

God wants to show Himself strong on your behalf! But He requires you to put your trust totally in Him and nothing else!

This is how you shut the door to the devil in your life:

- You trust God for everything, not yourself or anyone else
- You follow God’s ways, not man’s ways
- You seek God’s wisdom, not man’s
- You walk in the light of God’s Word, not in darkness

I want to leave you with this encouragement today. Stop listening to counterfeit voices and start hearing God’s voice!

When you need help:

Don’t seek man’s wisdom – seek the Lord!

Don’t get your advice from Facebook – get your face in God’s book!

Don’t call Miss Cleo – call Father God!

Don’t consult with psychics – consult with Jesus!

Don't seek out familiar spirits – seek the Holy Spirit!
Don't read your horoscope – read the word of God!
Don't study astrology – study theology!
Don't conduct a séance – conduct a prayer meeting!
Don't cast spells on people – cast demons out of people!
Don't speak curses – speak blessings!
Don't look to a palm reader – look to the nail-scarred hands of Jesus!

Stop listening to counterfeit voices and start hearing God's voice!
That's how you shut the door to the devil today!