

Dangerous Powers

By Levi Schofield

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 3**Focus:**

Don't give into evil.

Lesson 3**Bible Basis:**

1 Samuel 28:1a, 3–19

Lesson 3**Memory Verse:**

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

—1 John 4:1

By discussing current trends, your students will develop an understanding of how the devil uses media to trap us into giving in to evil.

Materials:
 Internet access

Begin today's lesson by discussing with your class why magic is such a common theme in movies and television.

If you've spent any time scrolling through television channels, social media, or bookshelves, you're sure to discover very quickly that our culture is obsessed with magic. Whether it's titles like *Twilight*, *American Horror Story*, *Supernatural*, or the biggest of them all, *Harry Potter*, Hollywood loves the idea of dark and mysterious powers beyond our control.

Since the launch of the *Harry Potter* franchise, it has brought in over \$25 billion in revenue, sold 400 million copies, and has been translated into 68 different languages.

- **Why do you think stories like these are so popular?** (The idea of having the power to do things beyond our human abilities is very alluring.)
- **Have you ever wished that you had the ability to perform magic in your day-to-day life? Why could this be dangerous?** (Many of us have at one time wished we could become supernaturally powerful in order to be better at sports, relationships, or become more successful in general. At some point, this temptation could become too hard to resist.)

Magic and dark power are so captivating that some people have lived their lives in pursuit of mastering them. Before you start the clip, remind your students that they should *not* try this at home.

Play the following video for you students [2:16; stop video at 1:08]:

Title: Magic For Humans | Phone In A Bottle | Netflix

Source: YouTube.com

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CP6MVPRpQY&feature=youtu.be>
Short Description: Justin Willman performs a magic trick with a cell phone.

Justin Willman has become famous through doing magic, and it's easy to see why. His tricks are captivating, and there's even a Netflix series about his tricks. Although some of his tricks have been proven to be nothing more than slight-of-hand, many believe that other powers are at play.

- **Do you think there's something dark or mysterious about his tricks? Why or why not?**
(Accept all reasonable answers.)

Although media today paints witchcraft and magic as nothing more than harmless fiction, there is some very real and dangerous evil at play in our world. Let's take a look.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

middle school



Lesson 3 / September 20, 2020

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Lesson 3

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Materials:

- Pens/pencils
- Evil vs. Truth printouts (1 per student; template found here or below)

<https://dcc-web-1.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/RLD+Assets/Evil+vs.+Truth+Handout.pdf>

Before class, print out enough Evil vs. Truth evaluation sheets so that each student has a copy. The template can be found at the end of this step. If your class is meeting online, email the handout to students ahead of time and invite them to bring the printouts to class.

Today, we've read of the destruction that dark powers can cause. For most people, the temptation to stay away from occult meetings or séances is easy to resist; however, becoming involved in the dark arts isn't something that happens overnight. It's a dangerous trap that begins with media normalizing its practice and rationalizing its use, until it takes hold.

This may sound like a rare occurrence, but with the themes of magic and witchcraft so heavily saturated in our culture, it can be tricky to separate fact from fiction. It's up to us to spot the lies.

Hand out the Evil vs. Truth evaluation sheets along with pens/pencils. Inform your students that this series of questions will help them separate truth from lies, in the depictions of magic that they are exposed to. Although some sample questions are provided on the evaluation sheet to get the ball rolling, allow your class to draft their own thoughts through discussion and biblical research to add to the list.

Give your students an example of how to use the evaluation sheet by having them analyze the video clip they watched in Step 1. Read each question to your students as they follow along and help them work to respond accordingly.

Once you have completed the practice run, challenge your students to use the list to analyze every instance of magic they come across in the following weeks. Encourage them to work with their parents to answer the questions and spend time in prayer, in order to understand God's truth and reject the devil's lies.

Close in prayer.

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Evil vs. Truth

1. How does the portrayal of magic, in this particular instance, differ from what the Bible says about dark powers?
2. How do these differences shape the way magic is used and perceived by the characters involved? By the audience?
3. Does viewing this make you (even minutely) want to engage in this activity? Why or why not?
4. How could the devil be using this portrayal to trap us into evil?