

7 Spiritual Dangers of Yoga

Is the phrase “Christian yoga” an oxymoron? Can Christians practice yoga without compromising their faith? What spiritual influence is behind this popular megatrend? The answers to these questions may shock you.

In 1970 I was a teacher of Kundalini Yoga at four universities in Florida, with over 300 students following my teachings. I also ran a yoga ashram—until an encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ drastically changed my heart, life and worldview.

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Having experienced yoga in its depth firsthand, I urge Christians never to practice yoga because of the following seven reasons:

1. Spiritual foundation: Yoga is inextricably based on Hinduism. Two aspects of the simplest kind of yoga (asanas: physical exercises; and pranayama: breath work) are purported to be the third and fourth step of an eight-step discipline leading a participant to Samadhi (enlightenment; God-consciousness).

2. Spiritual perception: Yoga is part of a belief system that endorses ideas like pantheism, the concept that the universe is an emanation of God, so all things have a divine essence. That leads to self-deification: the idea that we are God—absolutely wrong.

3. Spiritual deception: There is a satanic influence behind the practice of yoga. The “power” unleashed through the practice of yoga is called the “kundalini” (meaning serpent power). Yet a serpent is a symbol of Satan (see Gen. 3; Rev. 12).

4. Spiritual transfer: Serious students of yoga usually desire something called shaktipat (a guru's power to transmit a spiritual awakening of the kundalini). Yet this is nothing more than the transference of a demon spirit. It can result when the word "OM" is chanted, or by assuming various yoga postures that are dedicated to Hindu deities.

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5. Spiritual intrigue: People who get involved in the basic physical exercises often get intrigued by the deeper philosophical aspects of yoga and end up being wooed away from the firm foundation of biblical revelation.

6. Spiritual endorsement: Even if a yoga class is seemingly benign with no spiritual emphasis and no Hindu trappings, and the teachers are Christian and Christian worship music is played, still, by participating in a yoga class, Christians are endorsing a non-Christian belief system. That is wrong and an insult to the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Spiritual compromise: The word "yoga" means yoke, and by involvement, we are automatically being yoked together with nonbelievers. The Bible warns against that (2 Cor. 6:14-18). On the other hand, Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you," (Matt. 11:29).

This article is derived from Mike Shreve's book, "7 Reasons I No Longer Practice Yoga."

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