

Revealing the Hidden Spiritual Dangers of Hunting the Occult

Tony Merkel, host of “The Confessionals” podcast, recently shared a cautionary spiritual perspective in an interview with Charisma Media. His personal experiences on the spiritual dangers of hunting for portals and investigating the occult serve as a sobering reminder of the risks inherent in engaging with the demonic realm.

Merkel, who described his initial fascination with portals as “unhealthy,” opened up about the spiritual warfare he has faced as a result of his explorations.

“Doing this stuff definitely gets a target on your back,” Merkel said, likening the experience to being an active player in a game. “If you’re a Christian and you’re just riding the bench, nobody’s going to guard you. But as soon as you start becoming a problem, that’s when the opponent pays attention to you.”

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This acknowledgment of demonic attack exposes a spiritual reality often overlooked: engaging with supernatural topics, even out of curiosity, can attract unwelcome attention in the spiritual realm. Merkel’s experiences align with biblical warnings about avoiding practices rooted in the occult. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 states, “There must not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or who uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord.”

Merkel admitted that his obsession with portals would eventually lead him down a spiritually dangerous path. Reflecting on his conversation with Dr. Laura Sanger, he shared, "She walked away from the interview thinking I had an unhealthy interest in the topic of portals. And I confirmed to her, 'You're absolutely right. I did.'" Merkel later realized he had overstepped spiritual boundaries, saying, "I felt like God gave me a lot to be trusted with, and I felt like I abused that at certain points."

One particularly unsettling encounter involved visiting a property in Kentucky where a glowing portal had reportedly been photographed. "Hunting for portals—not a good idea," Merkel warns. "It's a doorway to another realm, and things go in and out of that. Trying to hunt down the doorway where things are coming in and out of...not a good idea."

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Merkel's experiences with the supernatural reflect a broader biblical truth. The spiritual realm is real, and engaging with it outside of God's guidance can have severe consequences. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us, "For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Merkel also addressed the phenomenon of so-called "Dog Man" or upright walking canines, which he believes could be linked to dark rituals, ancient demonic entities or even government experiments. "We wonder if what people are seeing are projections during rituals," he said. Despite the intrigue, Merkel's approach remains grounded in faith. "We don't need to conjure things. We just go out into the woods and exist in these environments to see what happens around us."

His team's prayerful approach—praying before, during and after investigations—is a stark contrast to the dangerous practices

of seeking out the occult. Yet Merkel's journey has not been without missteps. "I've done things I've regretted over the years," he admitted. "I've walked in ignorance, thinking God will protect me."

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Humility and willingness to learn from mistakes offer through Merkel's story a cautionary tale for those tempted to explore the supernatural without recognizing the spiritual risks. As Merkel put it, "When God calls you to do something, I firmly believe He's going to protect you and guide you through it. But that doesn't mean you should test the boundaries."

The Bible consistently warns against engaging with the occult, emphasizing the need for discernment and reliance on God's protection. Merkel's reflections echo these warnings, urging believers to avoid practices and pursuits that could lead to spiritual harm. His journey highlights the importance of staying within the boundaries of God's calling and resisting the temptation to delve into realms best left unexplored.

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James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.