

Question: "What should be the Christian view of Harry Potter?"

Answer from GotQuestions.org: As the popularity of the Harry Potter series continues to grow, Christian parents are left with some difficult questions. Some believe that the magical world of Harry Potter is little more than harmless fun and fantasy. Others fear that these books and movies are an invitation to the occult. Regardless of a parent's viewpoint, Harry Potter has become unavoidable, as he now boldly lines the shelves of children's bookstores, public libraries, and schools. Without question, Christians should have some concerns and need to use careful discernment in deciding whether or not to allow their children to indulge themselves in the world of Harry Potter.

Harry Potter books and films are full of stereotypical magic. Witchcraft and wizardry are central themes, and the lead roles are played by wizards, witches, and other magical creatures. Although the characters practice casting spells, reading crystal balls, etc., they do not communicate with spiritual (supernatural) forces. While this may be considered a positive, one definite negative is that there is no higher power to answer to at all.

Unlike other fantasy children's stories that contain witches and the like, such as C.S. Lewis' "The Chronicles of Narnia," Harry Potter does not have a positive biblical worldview. The distinction between good and bad can become blurred as both the "good" and "evil" characters participate in different types witchcraft and magic. The Bible clearly condemns all kinds of witchcraft, sorcery and spiritism (Deuteronomy 18:10-11). Philippians 4:8 tells us to "fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable." So does this mean that all Christians should avoid Harry Potter altogether?

For some families, the answer to this is yes. The Harry Potter series may not be for young or spiritually immature children, as they may not have the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, right and wrong, or good and evil. At best, they may be left confused about God's views about the occult, and at worst, they may become enchanted by the magical existence of Harry and his friends, becoming desensitized to occultic lifestyles. In addition, there are issues such as violence, lying, and mildly foul language that each Christian family will be sensitive to at different levels.

On the other hand, there are positive aspects to Harry Potter. Love is shown through selflessness and self-sacrifice; Harry's own mother died to save him. There is a sense of justice, as good always triumphs over evil. Harry faces his fears and finds courage, even risking his own life for greater good. Friendships are defined by loyalty and unending devotion, even to the point of death.

To any family that is facing the debate with their children about whether or not they should be allowed to watch or read Harry Potter, good advice is found in the Scriptures: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). The Bible tells us that God cares about what happens to us, and so we should give all of

our worries to Him (1 Peter 5:7).

Christian parents have the responsibility to not only teach their children about the virtues that please God, but also about the spiritual forces that we are up against (Ephesians 6:12). When a child gets to a point where he or she has a personal relationship with God, and is able to fully discern between what is good and bad according to God's standards, reading Harry Potter books or watching the movies can serve as not only entertainment, but can empower parents to raise up wise Christian thinkers.

Recommended Resource: Bible Answers for Almost all Your Questions by Elmer Towns.