

I came across an image circulating the internet which was making the argument that Jesus knows the difference between devil worship and a two-year-old dressed as a pumpkin for Halloween. At first glance, the statement seems reasonable. A toddler wearing a pumpkin costume is not consciously engaging in devil worship. A family handing out candy is not necessarily attempting to communicate with evil spirits. We should not pretend that everyone celebrating Halloween is deliberately participating in occult practices.

But the argument raises a more important question. Does the absence of an evil intention automatically make a practice spiritually appropriate for Christians? That is where we need to exercise discernment. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to look beyond appearances, cultural acceptance, and personal enjoyment. We must examine our decisions in light of the Bible rather than simply accepting what the world considers harmless.

The question is not whether Jesus can distinguish between a child dressed as a pumpkin and someone practicing witchcraft. Of course He can. Should Christians participate in a celebration whose customs and imagery have historical associations with death, spirits, witchcraft, and the supernatural? Are we teaching our children to follow Christ, or are we teaching them to follow the world whenever its practices appear entertaining?

SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN

Halloween did not originate with pumpkins, candy, children's costumes, and trick-or-treating. Its history includes connections to Samhain, an ancient Celtic festival marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter. Samhain was associated with beliefs concerning the dead, supernatural beings, and the boundary between the living and the spirit world.

Over the centuries, customs associated with Samhain became intertwined with Christian observances such as All Saints' Day and All Souls'

Day. Halloween's historical associations with occult practices should concern Christians when it comes to Samhain, the Druids, costumes, jack-o'-lanterns, and the significance of Halloween within certain modern occult traditions.

Halloween's associations with death, spirits, witchcraft, and the supernatural are not merely inventions of modern entertainment. These themes have been part of its historical development and remain prominent in contemporary celebrations.

It is also important to recognize that Halloween has religious significance for modern practitioners of witchcraft and Satanism. Does that mean everyone who celebrates Halloween shares those religious beliefs? Certainly not. But does changing the packaging necessarily transform the spiritual character of everything being celebrated? No more than putting lipstick on a pig.



A Christian should not automatically condemn a practice simply because it has a complicated history. Neither should we automatically accept a practice simply because society has made it entertaining. It is necessary to examine what we are celebrating and whether our participation is consistent with the Bible.

FELLOWSHIP WITH IDOLATRY

One of the most important passages for examining Halloween is found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. The church at Corinth lived in a society where idolatry was deeply embedded in everyday life. Pagan temples, religious festivals, and sacrificial meals were familiar parts of the surrounding culture.

Paul addressed the question of whether Christians could participate in activities associated with the worship of false gods. He explained that an idol had no divine power of its own. Nevertheless, participation in pagan sacrificial worship was not spiritually neutral, hence his warning:

> *"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*
>
> *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." (1 Corinthians 10:20-21)*

Paul was addressing actual participation in idolatrous worship. He was not teaching that every ordinary activity with a historical connection to paganism automatically constitutes fellowship with devils. Nevertheless, his warning establishes a principle which Christians cannot ignore. We must not participate in practices that involve worshiping false gods or fellowshipping with evil spirits.

The same principle appears in Deuteronomy where God forbids divination, witchcraft, enchantments, consulting familiar spirits, and attempting to communicate with the dead.

> *"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth 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 unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee." (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)*

It is important to note that these practices are not presented as harmless entertainment. They are expressly forbidden! Modern Halloween celebrations frequently feature witches, sorcerers, devils, ghosts, and other imagery associated with the supernatural.

There is a difference between depicting something and practicing it. Wearing a costume does not by itself constitute witchcraft. Yet Christians should consider whether turning practices that God condemns into entertainment is consistent with the values they want to cultivate? We should not become comfortable with something merely because the world has learned to laugh at it.

THE PUMPKIN IS NOT THE PROBLEM

Consider the jack-o'-lantern. A pumpkin is part of God's creation. There is nothing inherently evil about growing pumpkins, carving them, or using them as seasonal decorations. But the jack-o'-lantern has a history beyond its modern use.



The tradition of carving illuminated lanterns is associated with folklore. Irish and British Halloween traditions included hollowing out turnips and other root vegetables, sometimes carving frightening faces into them and placing lights inside. Such lanterns became associated with keeping wandering spirits at bay. After Irish immigrants came to America, pumpkins proved larger and easier to carve, eventually becoming the familiar jack-o'-lantern.

Jack-o'-lanterns are among Halloween's most recognizable symbols today. But does carving a pumpkin automatically invite evil spirits into someone's home? A useful question to be sure, but that is not the only question Christians should be asking.

- What does the decoration represent?
- What are we celebrating?
- What are we teaching our children to associate with enjoyment?

Paul's instructions to the church at Thessalonica provide a useful standard by which we pass judgment.

> *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*
>
> *Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)*

The word "prove" refers to testing or examining something. Christians are not instructed to accept everything without question. We are expected to examine what is presented to us, retain what is good, and reject what is evil. The Bereans were commended for listening to Paul with an open mind and diligently examining the Scriptures to determine the veracity of his teaching.

> *"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)*

The emphasis then is not on fearing carved pumpkins, but on developing proper discernment.

DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD

One of the greatest dangers facing Christians is the gradual acceptance of worldly values. This does not necessarily happen through an intentional rejection of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it happens because we become so accustomed to the practices around us that we stop examining them.

> *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye*

may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:2)

Notice the contrast between conformity and transformation. Conformity allows the surrounding culture to shape our thinking and behavior. Transformation begins with the renewing of our minds according to God's Word.

Christians should not allow popularity to become the standard by which they determine what is acceptable. The fact that millions of families participate in Halloween does not establish its celebration as spiritually appropriate. Neither does the fact that something is enjoyable establish that it is beneficial. This is the distinction Paul wrote about to the church at Corinth.

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." (1 Corinthians 10:23)

Something may be permissible without being beneficial. Something may be enjoyable without contributing to spiritual growth. This principle is especially important for parents. When we encourage our children to participate in a celebration, we are doing more than providing an evening of entertainment. We are helping shape their understanding of what is acceptable, desirable, and worthy of celebration.

If we teach our children that certain spiritual practices are wrong, we should consider whether our entertainment choices reinforce or undermine that instruction. And if we find ourselves defending a particular activity primarily because everyone else is doing it, we should examine whether cultural conformity has become more important than obedience to Christ.

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." (Romans 12:9)

We are not instructed merely to tolerate what is good. We are to hold firmly to it. Likewise, we are not instructed to become comfortable with evil simply because it has become socially acceptable.

MAKING HALLOWEEN HARMLESS

A common argument is that Halloween can be made harmless by removing its darker elements. Instead of witches, demons, and frightening costumes, children can dress as animals, superheroes, or their favorite fictional characters. Instead of visiting haunted houses, families can attend neighborhood parties or a church-sponsored harvest party. These changes remove particular elements that Christians may find objectionable, but do they resolve every concern?

We should not assume that a child wearing an animal costume is engaging in the same activity as someone participating in an occult ritual. Scripture does not justify treating those actions as identical. At the same time, Christians should not assume that changing a celebration's outward appearance automatically resolves the culpability about participating in it. Consider the following instructions to Israel about the idol worshipers they were going to encounter in the Promised Land.

"Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.

Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods." (Deuteronomy 12:30-31)

The Israelites were warned against adopting the religious practices of the nations they were dispossessing. God specifically instructed them

not to inquire after the worship of those nations in order to imitate their practices. The underlying concern was that Israel would incorporate pagan worship into its relationship with God.

This passage addresses religious worship, not every cultural custom. Nevertheless, it establishes that God's people must not dishonor Him by adopting practices He has forbidden.

That principle should cause Christians to examine their motivations. Ponder the following question. Are we genuinely honoring Jesus Christ, or are we attempting to preserve a worldly celebration by removing just enough of its objectionable elements to make ourselves comfortable? The answer requires more than a change of costume. It requires an examination of the heart.

EVERYTHING MATTERS SPIRITUALLY

When discussing Halloween, Christians sometimes make the mistake of trying to separate their spiritual lives from their everyday activities. We may think of church attendance, prayer, and Bible study as spiritual matters while treating entertainment, celebrations, and cultural traditions as entirely separate. The Bible does not permit us to divide our lives into areas where Christ has authority and areas where His authority does not matter.

> *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)*

Paul's statement to the church at Corinth is short but comprehensive. Even ordinary activities such as eating and drinking are to be carried out in a manner that glorifies God. Logic would then dictate that our entertainment, celebrations, relationships, and family traditions should be approached with the same desire.

A cultural symbol does not necessarily possess supernatural power in itself. A jack-o'-lantern cannot summon a spirit simply because someone carved a face into a pumpkin. The spiritual question concerns what people believe, practice, celebrate, and choose to participate in. Scripture warns us against actual involvement with witchcraft, divination, familiar spirits, and other works of darkness, rather than teaching us to fear physical objects as though evil power resides within them. It simply means our relationship with Jesus Christ should influence every area of our lives.

> *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Colossians 3:17)*

The Christian life is not limited to a few hours on Sunday. If we belong to Jesus Christ, our decisions throughout the week should reflect that relationship. Therefore, when examining Halloween, we should not limit ourselves to asking whether a particular activity is explicitly prohibited. We should also ask whether our participation is consistent with the character of Christ and the life He has called us to live.

BEING CHILDREN OF LIGHT

Jesus described His followers as the light of the world.

> *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*
>
> *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*
>
> *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)*

Notice the purpose of our light. We are not called to be different merely for the sake of being different. We are called to live in a manner that directs others toward God the Father. Our conduct

should reflect the character of Jesus Christ. Paul develops this line of thought:

> *"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." (Ephesians 5:8)*

He then gives a further instruction:

> *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Ephesians 5:11)*



Christians are not simply called to avoid committing evil. We are also instructed not to fellowship with the works of darkness. This requires discernment because darkness does not always present itself in an obviously threatening manner. Sometimes it is presented through entertainment, humor, attractive imagery, or cultural traditions. The question is not whether every Halloween activity is equally objectionable. It is whether we are willing to examine what we participate in and reject anything that conflicts with our commitment to Christ.

We should also remember that being children of light requires us to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit. Our convictions should produce faithfulness, kindness, patience, and love rather than hostility toward people who make different decisions. The light of Christ should be visible not only in what we refuse to celebrate but also in how we treat others.

BATTLE IS NOT AGAINST PEOPLE

There is another passage of Scripture we must not overlook when examining spiritual matters.

> *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12)*

The Christian life involves spiritual warfare. But notice what Paul says about the nature of that warfare. Our battle is not against flesh and blood. It is not against the mother down the street who allows her children to go trick-or-treating. It is not against the family that decorates its home for Halloween. It is not against a child who enjoys dressing in a costume.

Those people are not our enemies. Neither should we assume that someone who celebrates Halloween is deliberately worshiping Satan or knowingly participating in occult practices. Our responsibility is to remain faithful to Christ while demonstrating His love toward others.

> *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,*
>
> *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." (2 Timothy 2:24-25)*

There is no contradiction between standing firmly on biblical convictions and treating others with gentleness. In fact, Scripture requires both.

We do not need to exaggerate the intentions of others to explain our own convictions. Nor do we need to condemn every family that reaches a different conclusion about Halloween. Our responsibility is to examine our own conduct, teach our children faithfully, and remain obedient to the Lord.

TEACHING OUR CHILDREN

Perhaps the most important aspect of this discussion concerns the responsibility of Christian parents. Children learn through instruction, but they also learn by observing what their parents value. They notice what we celebrate, what we permit, what we excuse, and what we refuse. When our words and actions contradict one another, our children receive conflicting messages. Consider the instructions God gave to Israel:

> *"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:*
>
> *And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)*

God's Word was not intended to be confined to formal religious instruction. Parents were to teach His commandments throughout everyday life. The same responsibility applies to Christian parents today. Our children need more than a list of prohibited activities. They need to understand why we make particular decisions and how those decisions reflect our relationship with Jesus Christ.

If we choose not to participate in Halloween, we should explain our convictions in a manner they can understand. We can teach them that God created the world and that His creation is good in relation to pumpkins. It is also necessary to explain why the Bible forbids witchcraft, divination, and communication with the dead. We can likewise teach them that death is not something Christians need to glorify as is common in Halloween, nor is death something we should fear because Jesus Christ has overcome it.

> *"That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Hebrews 2:14)*



Our children need to understand that the Christian faith is not centered on fear of evil but on the victory of Jesus Christ. The objective is not to make our children afraid of pumpkins, costumes, or their neighbors, but to teach them to recognize the difference between good and evil and to develop convictions rooted in Scripture.

That instruction must begin with the parents. We cannot reasonably expect our children to resist worldly influences if we continually demonstrate that cultural acceptance is more important than biblical conviction.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SET APART

God has always called His people to live differently from the world around them.

> *"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16)*

The word "conversation" refers to conduct or manner of life. Holiness is not limited to religious ceremonies or outward appearances. It concerns the way we live.

> *"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deuteronomy 6:7)*

Peter also describes believers as a people belonging to God.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

To be set apart means that our identity and conduct are shaped by our relationship with Jesus. It does not mean withdrawing from every cultural activity or refusing to associate with people who do not share our beliefs. The Son of God ate with publicans and sinners, yet He never compromised His obedience to God the Father.

Likewise, Christian parents must learn to distinguish between engaging with the world and conforming to it. We can love our neighbors without adopting every tradition they celebrate. We can demonstrate kindness toward children who come trick-or-treating without compromising our convictions, using it as opportunity to share the Gospel. We can participate in community life without making cultural acceptance the governing principle of our decisions.

We can explain to our children that following Jesus sometimes requires us to make choices that other people do not understand. Being set apart is not about establishing our superiority over others. It is about belonging to Christ.

Jesus makes it clear that He did not come to abolish the Mosaic Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them. He also emphasized that obedience to God's commandments matters greatly, including how we teach others to regard them.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17-18)

Jesus warned against disregarding even the least of God's commandments and commended those who both obey and teach them.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:19)

This is particularly important for parents. Our children learn about obedience not only through what we tell them but also through how we live. If we teach them to honor God's Word while making exceptions whenever obedience becomes inconvenient or unpopular, we undermine the very principles we are trying to instill.

Jesus also reveals that God the Father takes our obedience seriously. He distinguishes between those who disregard His commandments and those who faithfully practice and teach them. However, our reputation with God is not something we earn through outward conformity. We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), and our obedience is an expression of our love for Christ, not a means of purchasing His favor. Hence, the words of Jesus:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

Being set apart is not about proving that we are better than others. It is about belonging to Christ and demonstrating that relationship through obedience. Our responsibility as parents is to teach our children that God's approval matters more than the world's acceptance, and that following Jesus is worth whatever sacrifices obedience may require.

HONORING JESUS

When Christians disagree about Halloween, discussions frequently become focused on finding

the precise boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Is it wrong to wear a costume? What about handing out candy? Is carving a pumpkin acceptable? What about attending a church harvest festival?

However, we should not approach the Christian life as though our primary objective is to discover how closely we can approach sin without crossing the line. Our objective should be to honor Jesus Christ. Paul provides a helpful principle:

> *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8)*

This passage directs our attention toward what is worthy of our thoughts. It encourages us to cultivate a mind that values truth, purity, righteousness, and virtue. When we apply that principle to Halloween, several questions deserve our attention:

- Does this activity honor Jesus Christ and reflect the values He has taught us?
- Does it help my children understand the difference between good and evil?
- Am I treating something Scripture condemns as a source of entertainment?
- Am I participating because I believe it is right, or simply because I do not want my family to miss out?
- Am I demonstrating the kind of discernment I want my children to develop?
- Would I make the same decision if cultural popularity were not a factor?

These questions require us to examine our motivations rather than simply defending our preferences. In Romans chapter 14, Paul addresses the matter of Christian liberty and conscience, warning believers against acting contrary to their convictions.

He establishes that Christians should not act against biblical convictions. We should therefore avoid pressuring someone to participate in a celebration that violates their conscience. Likewise, those who abstain should be careful not to treat every cultural practice as though the Bible explicitly condemns it. We must remain faithful to what God has actually said. This is why Paul concludes that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).

If we cannot participate in an activity with a clear conscience before God, we should not allow cultural expectations, personal enjoyment, or the opinions of others to persuade us to do so. At the same time, we must distinguish between what Scripture explicitly forbids and matters in which believers may exercise differing convictions.

APPROACHING OCTOBER 31

Choosing not to celebrate Halloween does not mean Christians must retreat into their homes every time October 31st comes along and treat it as a day of fear. The date itself has no inherent power over those who belong to Jesus Christ. Every calendar day belongs to the Lord, and every day presents opportunities to glorify Him.

Christian families can choose to spend the evening together, participate in activities unrelated to Halloween, or use the occasion to demonstrate kindness toward their neighbors. Churches may organize gatherings that emphasize fellowship, biblical teaching, and the gospel, rather than having a harvest party which is no different than what everyone else is doing.

Some Christians choose to distribute candy along with Scripture or gospel literature. Others use the evening to build relationships with families in their neighborhoods. These activities should be

evaluated on their own merits rather than automatically equated with participation in occult practices. There is an important distinction between using an occasion to share the gospel and adopting religious practices that contradict Scripture. This is why Jesus said the following:

> *"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." (Matthew 9:37)*

The opportunity to minister to others does not disappear simply because a particular day has connections to something objectionable. We should be prepared to demonstrate the love of Christ regardless of what the surrounding culture is celebrating. The objective is not merely to avoid Halloween. It is to use our lives, our homes, and our opportunities to glorify Jesus Christ.

JESUS IS WORTHY OF OUR OBEDIENCE

Let us return to the image that prompted this discussion. Jesus certainly knows the difference between devil worship and a two-year-old dressed as a pumpkin. But the statement does not settle the question of whether Christians should celebrate Halloween. The absence of an intention to worship Satan does not automatically establish that every activity is beneficial, appropriate, or consistent with biblical principles. At the same time, the Bible does not teach that wearing a costume or carving a pumpkin automatically constitutes occult participation. Christians should neither dismiss Halloween as harmless nor make unsupported claims about every person or activity associated with it. Instead, they should carefully examine their participation according to Scripture.

For my family, I want our decisions to be shaped by our commitment to Jesus Christ rather than by the expectations of the surrounding culture. I want us to be intentional about what we celebrate, what we normalize, and what we invite into our home. I want our children to understand that following Jesus is not merely about avoiding certain behaviors. It is about loving Him, obeying His Word, and developing a heart that desires what is pleasing to Him.

That means being willing to say, "We do not participate in that," even when others consider it harmless. It also means explaining our convictions with patience and treating those who disagree with kindness. We should not make decisions out of fear, nor should we make them simply because we want to fit in. Our decisions should be grounded in Scripture and motivated by our love for Jesus.

> *"If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)*

That is the standard we should strive to follow. Our children do not need everything the world has to offer, but it is essential they know Jesus Christ, understand His Word, and learn what it means to follow Him faithfully. And if we are going to teach our children that they are called to be set apart, we must be willing to live set apart ourselves. Not because we are afraid of pumpkins. Not because we believe everyone wearing a costume is worshiping Satan. Not because we consider ourselves more righteous than our neighbors. But because Jesus Christ is worthy of our love, discernment, and obedience.

The issue is not how much of the world we can embrace while still calling ourselves Christians. The question is how faithfully are we willing to follow Jesus Christ when the world invites us to do otherwise?