

Paranormal

Biblestudy and Discussion Guide

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You've seen the movie - now talk about it! Take time on your own or with a few friends to investigate how the issues highlighted in *Paranormal* influence your life.

Each topic is divided into three key components: *Starting Points, In The Word*, and *Now What?* Feel free to direct questions or feedback about this study or the film to producers@crossshadowproductions.com.

The Sighting

Starting Points: *Paranormal* begins with the PII team searching a haunted building for a ghost or entity. What do you think? Are ghosts real or not?



In the Word: Read the following words from Matthew 14:25-27:

During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

The apostles believed ghosts existed, as did many in biblical times. Many today continue to believe in the existence of such beings. The Bible does not deny that there is "something out there," but rather clearly defines supernatural beings as either angels or demons.

Now What? When a conversation comes up with a friend about ghosts or a similar topic, mention that you recently watched a film about this issue and that even the Bible mentions ghosts. Use the moment to build a bridge between our culture's view of the paranormal and the Bible's perspective of spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12).

The Assignment

Starting Points: Best-selling author Greg Evans finds himself frustrated at his inability to write a sequel to his previous hit book. However, he soon decides to investigate his son's fascination with the paranormal. Do you think it is a good idea to research topics related to evil and the paranormal? Why or why not?



In the Word: Read what 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22 shares on the issue of testing good and evil:

Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.

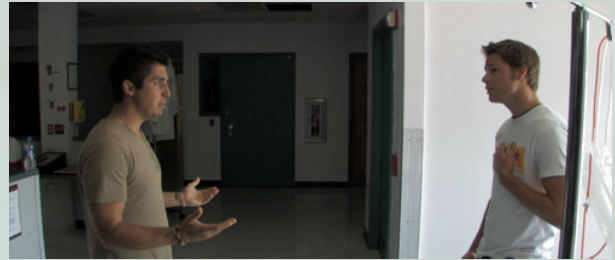
The apostle Paul taught that Christians were not to avoid tough topics, but to test them and then to avoid those that were proven evil. However, there is a significant difference between testing and involvement. It is often possible to read about a topic or find out more about it without participating when it is an issue that might be

inappropriate for your beliefs. For example, there's nothing sinful for a Christian to read about witchcraft to discover what it is about, but it would be sinful to participate in its practices (Galatians 5:19-21).

Now What? When you encounter a controversial topic at school or work, offer to look up information you may not know to answer the question. When others see you are unafraid to find answers to tough questions as a Christian, it can open up doors for other faith issues that can help in both outreach to unbelievers and encourage believers in their spiritual growth.

Team Tension

Starting Points: As Doug and Chris attempt an on-camera introduction at the Apex County Sanitarium, emotions take over and tension turns into an outburst of anger. What causes you to become angry? How do you deal with anger in your life?



In the Word: Ephesians 4:26-27 share these words related to anger:

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

Three key responses are addressed here: 1) Anger is okay, but should not be used as an excuse to sin; 2) Deal with anger on the same day rather than letting it last long-term; and 3) Do not allow the devil a grip into your life by not controlling your moments of anger.

Now What? Over the next week, when you find yourself growing angry, pause to remind yourself of the above verses. Commit the key phrase to memory "In your anger do not sin."

Ouija Flashback

Starting Points: When Greg observes the use of a Ouija board by his son and his friends, he hears the name of his deceased daughter. This surprise turns him to anger and on a search for answers. His involvement raises the question, is it okay for a Christian to use a Ouija board? Why or why not?



In the Word: 1 Timothy 4:1 records the following relevant words on this topic:

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

While Ouija boards are never directly mentioned in Scripture, the apostle Paul equates those who follow deceiving spirits with those who abandon the faith and follow the teachings of demons. As Christians, any attempt to communicate with evil

spirits expresses a lack of confidence in Christ to answer the needs in our lives. The proper approach is to avoid any appearance of evil and depend on the far greater power found in the Holy Spirit.

Now What? How often do you talk with God and not just *to* God in prayer? Focus your prayers over the next several days as more of a conversation with God, patiently listening to His voice and meditating on His Word, knowing that His power and wisdom are far greater than any other alternative.

The Investigation

Starting Points: At one point in the film, Greg Evans has PII investigate his own home for a haunting. He is desperate for any evidence to answer his questions about the supernatural experiences he is encountering, yet is unwilling to consider that something spiritual might be at work. What would you say to someone who is struggling with questions related to the supernatural? What advice would you give?



In the Word: Ephesians 6:10-12 offer these powerful words on the supernatural:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

The answer to questions about the supernatural is not to downplay their reality or to depend on human solutions, as Greg demonstrated through much of the film. Instead, Scripture calls us to stand strong in the Lord and to be aware of the spiritual battle at work among us.

Now What? Perhaps you could begin each morning over the next week with a brief prayer, acknowledging God's power as sufficient for your life and reaffirming your commitment to follow Him throughout the day. It could also be helpful to write down the above verses in a place where you will see them frequently, such as your mirror, locker, or next to your computer.

About Demons

Starting Points: Eventually, Greg turns to the Church for answers. He approaches Reverend Cobb, asking his thoughts on whether his house is haunted. What did the Reverend say? What did you think of his response about the real voice who claims to be Greg's daughter?



In the Word: At the end of 1 Timothy (6:20-21), we find the following warning:

Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.

The apostle Paul felt compelled to warn Timothy that he was to watch out for ideas that would turn him away from the faith. If any voice, human or otherwise, advises a choice or teaching that is contrary to God's Word, it cannot be from God. In Greg's case, the voice could not be an angel since it was telling him to kill himself. The only other option was that the voice was from an evil spirit.

Now What? The best way to guard against being deceived is to know the truth. How has your study of the Bible been recently? How would you like it to be different? Make a commitment to studying God's Word more deeply, perhaps choosing a friend who can read with you or sharing in keeping one another accountable in this area.

Showdown

Starting Points: The end of *Paranormal* results in a showdown between the evil in Greg's house versus Greg, PII, and Reverend Cobb. Do Christians really possess this kind of power over evil spirits? What do you think? Why or why not?



In the Word: The following verse is the one quoted by Reverend Cobb in the close of the movie from 2 Corinthians 5:7:

We live by faith, not by sight.

Evil spirits are powerful but certainly do not compare to the power of God living in believers through the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, Jesus and many of His followers cast out evil spirits, an activity some claim to still do today. Whether or not you ever cast out a demon, the focus of Scripture is that the power within you is greater than the power of Satan. There is no reason to fear the evil we encounter in this world, no matter how dark it may be. As 1 John 4:4 says, "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."

Now What? When you are tempted to become fearful, remember these words: we live by faith, not by sight. On your own at home, make a list of some of the ways you live by faith. If you are unsatisfied with your list, add some new goals to aim for in the next week.

For more information on *Paranormal* and other films from Cross Shadow Productions, log on to www.ParanormalTheMovie.com.

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