

Is it Okay for a Christian to Be Hypnotized?

Dr. Roger Barrie Preach It, Teach It

Dear Roger,

I've often heard that people being hypnotized are under the control of the hypnotist. My pastor teaches us that we should never relinquish control of our minds to anyone. An open mind might open the door to a satanic attack. I'm confused. Hypnotherapy seems to work very well in helping individuals gain healing and relief in numerous areas. What should Christians think of hypnosis? Specifically, is hypnotism okay for Christians?

Sincerely,

Julie

Dear Julie,

I did not believe that hypnosis is a way of letting go of my own free will and control.

Where the Bible talks about how we are to yield our body, soul and spirit – it does not say “mind” and even if it did, and I know it says “mind” in other areas of the Bible, I do not believe I can yield my heart, soul, mind and body and spirit to God and use Hypnosis as a way to help my own behavior for the betterment of my own good.

God gave us all the sciences and I believe learning about the mind and the science of the mind is very important.

God will never force His will on us. God will never FORCE His own anything on us. And the way we communicate with God is via the Bible and thought. [prayer].

God will never ever take control of our own minds. The devil would like to but, if you are a Christian, you are saved by God's grace and that grace protects you from the roaring lion trying to devour.

NO MATTER WHAT.

Once saved, always saved and once saved, always protected.

Hypnosis is a hugely powerful tool to 'yes', change a behavior but at YOUR OWN will. Not mine nor anyone else.

And my caveat is, If that behavior changes for the betterment of the individual, all the glory goes to God, 100%.. Not to the Hypnotherapist. He/She was merely a tool!

Hypnosis Healing and the Christian

By John Court

The word hypnosis traces its origin from the third century B. C. The Greek word “hypnos” means “dream.” Today, many are the thoughts and theories about the success as well as the danger of hypnosis. Those who believe in and practice hypnosis arrange a positive definition. Those who don’t believe in it have a different definition.

Here is a negative definition: “The induction of a state of consciousness in which a person loses the power of voluntary action and is highly responsive to suggestion or direction.”

Here is a positive definition: “Hypnosis is a state of human consciousness involving focused attention and reduced peripheral awareness and an enhanced capacity for response to suggestion.”

Here is my favorite definition: “A state which resembles sleep but is produced by a person who can then make suggestions to which the person in this state can respond.”

While most people think of hypnosis as a way to get somebody to bark like a dog, or hop like a rabbit, or take off their clothes when a certain word is spoken, hypnosis can be a valuable tool in helping people overcome fear, reduce stress, and anxiety, conquer agoraphobia and stop smoking. For example, people who have been smoking for years, no longer smoke due to hypnotherapy and at a much higher rate than patches, gum, or drugs.

We might say that hypnosis consists of three types. First, Stage hypnosis is a comical, entertaining show. Second, hypnotherapy can be quite beneficial in helping reduce unwanted behaviors and enhance wanted ones. Finally, self-hypnosis can be quite effective in helping people enter into the positive aspects of meditation.

Is there any passage in the Bible that forbids hypnosis?

No. Opponents of hypnosis turn to Deuteronomy 18:9-13. As the Israelites are entering into the Promised Land God gives them a warning not to enter into the practices in the pagan lands ahead. God said: "let there be found no wanted sacrifices his child in the fire; stay away from those who practice divination and sorcery, engaging witchcraft; cast spells... Opponents focus on the Hebrew term "cast spells" as being the same as hypnosis. Their interpretation is really a stretch.

Luke 4:18 Authorized (King James) Version (AKJV)

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Genesis 2:21-22 Authorized (King James) Version (AKJV) 21

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Acts 10 There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 6 he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. 7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 8 and when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa. 9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10 and he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

Hebrews 2 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? 5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. 6 but one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

What are the benefits of hypnosis?

As mentioned earlier, hypnotherapy can tap the resources within us to help heal our hurts, cure unwanted or unhealthy behaviors and enhance our well-being.

Hypnotherapy gives a person the power to use what he or she already possesses, but has not been able to access or control. During hypnosis many people gain control over bad habits, fears, phobias, and anxiety- just to mention a few areas.

Since hypnosis is all about intense focus which removes peripheral distractions, we may use it as a tool for Christian meditation which is helpful in allowing us to experience the person and character of Christ. I suppose that this state is best produced through the process of self-hypnosis as opposed to the other kinds.

Let me recommend to you the book "Experiencing The Depths Of Jesus Christ," by a 15th century, fourteen-year-old French girl named Madam Guyon. Catholic Leaders of her time demanded that she recant the teachings of the book because her basic premise was that anyone, at any time, could come into contact with the living God- without having to go through a Catholic priest.

She teaches us how to quiet our minds and move into deep meditation focusing on a Bible story, event, person, verse or phrase.

What she's really doing is teaching us how we can experience Christ through the art of deep meditation, or what might be described as self-hypnosis.

What are the risks involved in hypnotherapy?

First, it is important to get a proper diagnosis before beginning. A wrong diagnosis could be harmful.

Second, the therapist, or hypnotist, must be appropriately trained and someone who you trust implicitly. Ascertain that their character and values line up with yours. In this regard, I would certainly opt for a Christian therapist. Remember though, just because someone is a Christian does not mean that they are best to the exclusion of all others. In other words, a well-trained and experienced non-Christian therapist might be much more effective than a poor-quality-Christian therapist.

Third, invite a family member or close friend to sit in on the session. After all, the therapist is working with your brain and it's important to have the safe back-up of a trusted companion to observe what's going on and be certain that all is well.

Can hypnosis open the door of my mind to a satanic attack?

In spiritual warfare it's important to remember that every area of our lives not under the direct care and influence of the Holy Spirit is open to control by a demonic spirit. Notice the difference between control and influence. God intends for us to be free to make our own decisions. He will never take control of our minds. However he influences us by the Spirit who lives within us.

On the other hand, Satan desires to take control of our minds. That's why Paul warns us to take every thought captive: "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Paul says that we must be careful to

guard what goes into our minds lest we open up an unprotected area where Satan can gain control.

So the question is, "Can hypnosis open my mind in any way that might allow Satan to get control of my thinking?" Unexpectedly for many of us, the truth is that during hypnosis, we often have more control over our minds than ever before. Just because we may be more susceptible to suggestions in no way means that we lose control of our minds and do things that we never intended to do.

Let me close with a word of caution. Not all hypnosis is safe. So be careful. For example, the occult world uses it as a staple. In the hands of the wrong people I believe that it can do much harm.

Well, Julie, I hope that I have cleared up some of your "confusion." May God give you grace and peace.

Sincerely,

Dr. Roger Barrier

Dr. Roger Barrier retired as senior teaching pastor from Casas Church in Tucson, Arizona. In addition to being an author and sought-after conference speaker, Roger has mentored or taught thousands of pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders worldwide. Casas Church, where Roger served throughout his thirty-five-year career, is a megachurch known for a well-integrated,

*multi-generational ministry. The value of including new generations is deeply ingrained throughout Casas to help the church move strongly right through the twenty-first century and beyond. Dr. Barrier holds degrees from Baylor University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Golden Gate Seminary in Greek, religion, theology, and pastoral care. His popular book, *Listening to the Voice of God*, published by Bethany House, is in its second printing and is available in Thai and Portuguese. His latest work is, *Got Guts? Get Godly! Praying to the Praying God**

Guarantees to Answer, from Xulon Press. Roger can be found blogging at *Preach It, Teach It*, the pastoral teaching site founded with his wife, Dr. Julie Barrier.

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Editor's Note: Dr. Roger Barrier went to be with the Lord on February 16th, 2024. Dr. Barrier's family is honoring his legacy by continuing the ministry of Ask Roger and preachitteachit.org for years to come as they share more than two thousand still-unpublished sermons and Ask Roger articles. All articles authored by Dr. Barrier that are published and republished are done posthumously.