



# Answers for a Changing Culture

## 04 Can Christians Play Pokémon?

*Scripture forbids real occult practices, but Christians should distinguish those practices from imaginary powers while discerning what entertainment portrays, celebrates, and produces in us.*

### EMBARK

Christians have disagreed for years about entertainment involving magic, ghosts, witches, psychic powers, and other supernatural themes. Pokémon has sometimes been included in those concerns because it includes creatures with unusual powers, Ghost and Psychic types, curses, mythology, and even something called “evolution.”

Some Christians therefore conclude that Pokémon and similar fantasy are spiritually dangerous. Others respond that because everything is imaginary, there is nothing to think about at all.

Neither response requires much discernment.

Before we ask, “**Can a Christian play Pokémon?**”, we need to ask, “**What does Scripture actually forbid, and how should those commands shape the way we evaluate fantasy?**”



1. When you hear words such as *magic*, *witch*, *ghost*, or *psychic* in entertainment, what makes you more likely to be concerned or unconcerned?

### EXAMINE

**READ Deuteronomy 18:9–14 and Isaiah 8:19–20**

2. What specific practices does God forbid in these passages?
3. What do these practices have in common?
4. What is wrong with seeking spiritual knowledge or power through these means?

**READ Acts 19:18–20 and Galatians 5:19–21**

5. How did conversion to Christ change the Ephesian believers' relationship with magical practices?
6. Why does Paul include sorcery among the works of the flesh?
7. What do these passages tell us about how seriously Christians should take actual occult practice?

**READ Romans 14:1–6, 13–14, and 22–23**

8. How can Christians reach different conclusions about matters Scripture does not directly prohibit?
9. Why should neither personal liberty nor personal conviction become an excuse to judge other believers carelessly?
10. What role should conscience play when deciding whether to participate in particular entertainment?

**READ 1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23–24, 31 and Philippians 4:8**

11. Why is “Is it allowed?” not always the best or only question a Christian should ask?
12. What is the difference between enjoying something and being mastered by it?
13. How should God's glory, the good of others, and what occupies our minds shape our entertainment choices?

### EXPOSE

*We can make bad decisions about fantasy when we either **call everything occult** or **dismiss everything because it is fictional**.*

**We confute fantasy with occult practice**

Scripture condemns attempts to gain spiritual knowledge or power apart from God through divination, necromancy, sorcery, and similar practices. But imaginary abilities are not automatically equivalent. Dragons breathing fire,

Superman flying, or Pikachu producing electricity simply alter the rules of a fictional world. ***The question is not merely, “Is something supernatural happening?” but “What kind of thing is being portrayed?”***

#### **We let words do our thinking for us**

Words such as magic, ghost, psychic, spell, or evolution can trigger reactions without telling us what something actually means. Pokémon “evolution” is fictional transformation; psychic abilities may simply be imaginary powers; a Ghost Pokémon is not biblical necromancy. ***Evaluate what something represents, not merely the vocabulary attached to it.***

#### **We confuse depiction with endorsement**

Scripture portrays idolatry, adultery, witchcraft, violence, and demonic activity without approving them. Likewise, the presence of witches, curses, ghosts, or other dark elements does not settle the moral question. Ask: ***What does the story want us to admire?*** Does it commend courage, sacrifice, loyalty, and justice, or rebellion, cruelty, occult power, and evil?

#### **We assume fiction cannot influence us**

Imaginary does not mean spiritually meaningless. Stories shape imagination, desires, fears, and moral instincts. There is a difference between ***imagining an impossible world*** and ***becoming fascinated with forbidden spiritual practices in the real one.*** The more entertainment encourages divination, spirit contact, occult rituals, or attempts at supernatural power, the greater the concern.

#### **We may overlook the clearer spiritual problem**

For many children, Pokémon’s greater danger may be covetousness, conflict, uncontrolled spending, obsession, neglected responsibilities, or simply being mastered by entertainment. Christians can become preoccupied with hidden occult dangers while overlooking problems Scripture addresses much more directly.

## **ENGAGE**

### **Step 1: Clarify — What is it actually portraying?**

Am I reacting to what something actually is, or merely to words and imagery that make me uncomfortable? Is this imaginary fantasy, or does it resemble something Scripture actually forbids?

### **Step 2: Evaluate — What is it asking me to admire?**

Does it merely portray evil, or encourage me to admire it? Does it make courage, loyalty, sacrifice, and justice attractive, or does it cultivate sympathy for rebellion, cruelty, or occult power?

### **Step 3: Discern — Can I participate with a clear conscience?**

Does anything here encourage curiosity about real occult practices? Can I enjoy it before God without violating my conscience or encouraging someone else toward sin?

### **Step 4: Apply — What is it producing?**

Is this entertainment serving me, or beginning to master me? In me or my child, is it producing healthy enjoyment and imagination, or fear, obsession, covetousness, conflict, neglect of responsibilities, or unhealthy fascination?

## **MEMORIZE**

**1 Corinthians 10:31 CSB** “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.”

***Remember...*** Scripture clearly forbids real occult practices, but imaginary supernatural abilities are not automatically occult. Fictional power should be understood according to what it actually represents within the story, and depicting something is not necessarily the same as approving it. Christian liberty does not eliminate the need for wisdom and conscience. Entertainment matters because what we repeatedly enjoy can shape our affections and imagination, and something permissible can still become spiritually unhealthy when it begins to master us.

***So, can a Christian play Pokémon?*** There is no sufficient biblical reason to declare Pokémon categorically sinful. Most of its fantastic powers function as properties of an imaginary world rather than the occult practices Scripture condemns. But that does not mean every use of Pokémon, or every piece of fantasy entertainment, is automatically wise for every Christian. We should understand what we are watching or playing, evaluate what it celebrates, respect conscience, watch what it produces in us, and refuse anything that draws us toward practices God actually forbids.

### **CHOOSE ONE CONCRETE STEP...**

learn enough about a game, book, or show to evaluate it rather than reacting only to its reputation  
talk with your child about the difference between fantasy and real occult practice  
evaluate one entertainment choice by asking what it **portrays, celebrates, and produces**  
remove something that is violating your conscience or creating an unhealthy fascination  
address a clearer heart problem such as obsession, covetousness, conflict, or being mastered by entertainment