

# 'The Secret' Book and DVD Deception.

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Last Friday an 8<sup>th</sup> grade girl came into my classroom with a deep concern on her face. "Mr. McDowell" she said, "have you heard of *The Secret*?" She proceeded to tell me how she watched a DVD her friend loaned her and it was deeply rattling her faith. After watching the movie over the weekend I was well aware of why *The Secret* has become an international phenomenon, and sadly, why many Christians are being deceived by it.

*The Secret* is a number one bestseller in Australia, England, and Ireland, and is scheduled to be translated into 30 languages. There are now 5.3 million copies of the book in print in the United States and publisher Simon & Schuster reports that 150,000 copies are selling per week. The DVD version has sold at least 1.5 million copies (I had to pay \$35 at Barnes & Nobles for one copy!).

So, what is *The Secret*? The book is based on "the law of attraction," which is the idea that our thoughts determine reality. In other words, the universe will rearrange itself in response to our thoughts and feelings. And according to the author, the law of attraction works *every* time, like the law of gravity.

It is very revealing to consider why *The Secret* has been so successful. In fact, we can learn much about contemporary beliefs by understanding its lure. Consider the worldview(s) behind *The Secret* and how it contrasts with the Bible:

1. Gnosticism: Similar to the The Da Vinci Code phenomenon, The Secret promises hidden knowledge only available to a select few. The DVD begins with a riveting tale of how great minds (Einstein, Churchill, Emerson, etc.) knew a powerful secret that has remained hidden throughout history until now (Ironically enough, the author went on Good Morning America, 20/20, Oprah, and many other news stations to reveal the secret. If so many people know it now, is it still a secret?)

Romans 1:20 says, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." The most important knowledge in the universe is not secret but has been known by all since creation. The problem is not lack of knowledge, but the wickedness of the human heart (Jeremiah 17:9).

2. Materialism: The promise of *The Secret* is that we can have whatever we want—money, power, a new car—simply by wanting it enough. "You can have, do, or be anything you want," says one of the "gurus" on the DVD. The message is that material things bring happiness.

Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Biblically speaking, true happiness is found *not* in material good but in living a life in pursuit of the Kingdom of God.

3. Self-centeredness: The entire premise of *The Secret* is that YOU can have whatever YOU want, be whoever YOU want to be, and do whatever YOU want to do simply by believing it. The focus is on the desires of the individual rather than others. In *Generation Me*, Dr. Jennifer Twenge says "[This generation] believes, with a conviction that approaches boredom because it is so undisputed, that the individual comes first"[u](#)

Matthew 16:24 says, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Following God involves a denial of my self interest for the sake of the kingdom.

4. Universalism: The author of *The Secret* is careful to incorporate multiple religious and philosophical perspectives into the presentation, without overtly disparaging any of them. The "experts" on the DVD quote Scripture and talk about generic religious principles such as gratitude, love, and courage. One of the "gurus" in the DVD claims, "Every tradition has told us there is something bigger than us."

Acts 14:2: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

5. Entitlement: In the DVD Bob Proctor says, "Life can be absolutely phenomenal, and it should be, when you start using the Secret." In other words, we are entitled to happiness, money, and success. We deserve it.

Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." The only thing we are entitled to is death. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

6. Feel-goodism: In the DVD we are challenged to focus on positive feelings and to ignore negative ones. If we focus hard enough we can get rid of all pain, suffering, and negative experiences in this life. The key is to constantly feel good and to avoid pain.

James 1:2: "Consider it all joy my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." Suffering has redemptive value for believers as we are drawn more into the image of Christ. In fact, it is often through suffering that we most experience the power of God (Philippians 3:10).

Friends, it is difficult to imagine a message more contrary to the Bible than *The Secret*. There is nothing new in it but merely a repetition of the original lie-"You shall be like God." The fact that so many Christians-and especially young people-have fallen for it is a reminder of the great task before us.