

It's that time of year again. You may or may not agree with me on this, so if you don't, create your own blog and feel free to contradict everything I'm about to say. I hate Halloween. As a Christian, I despise it. I get the whole 'kids love candy and there's no harm in the cute costumes' and all. To be honest, raising my grandsons, I have let them partake in this ritual, simply because I'm getting too old and I'm choosing my battles differently than when I was raising my own kids. But I hate everything it stands for. I've always said our Lord has such a sense of humor, because my baby Benjamin will be twenty-three years old on, you guessed it, October 31. I'll write about that 'good part' in my next blog. I'm not here to give a history on how all of this came to be. You can visit Google if you'd like. I simply wanted to share some firsthand experiences that I believe have justified my distaste for this particular day. Also, having recently experienced a spiritual high and trying to keep my focus on my Heavenly home, I feel it's my duty to share what I know. I will leave it to you to make your own decisions.

I was in the sixth grade when my friends and I had our first séance during a slumber party. For some reason, we kids liked the thrill of scary things and telling ghost stories, as I guess kids today still do. Back then, things like Ouija boards and séances were talked about all the time. I remember at other slumber parties we would stand in the bathroom with the light off, and while looking at the reflection in the mirror you would say "Bloody Mary, Bloody Mary, Bloody Mary." Supposedly a grotesque Medusa type character would appear in the mirror. I honestly don't remember if I saw her, but the thought of this horrible apparition appearing was enough to make us scream and then roll with laughter.

There was another slumber party when we had the smallest girl lay on the floor with all of us encircled around her. We all placed the first two fingers of each hand under her body and proceeded to chant over and over, "She's as light as a feather." Call me crazy, but that little girl

rose about four inches off the floor that night, because I remember her waking in midair! It scared all of us to death.

When I was around eighteen years old, I was spending the night at the house of my friend Robin. We must have been desperate for something to do, and my brother had received a Ouija board for Christmas of all things. We decided it might be fun to bring out the Ouija board, just to play around with it. Robin and I started asking silly questions to see if the board would answer. If you have never used a Ouija board, there is a triangle shaped device with a small round window and needle that dangles down in the middle that points to the letters and numbers as it moves over the board. At the top left side of the board is the word 'Yes' and the on the right top side, the word 'No.' At the bottom of the board is the word 'Goodbye.' The alphabet and the numbers 0 through 9 are in the center of the board. Those asking the questions are to gently place their fingers on the device while it moves about the board. As you ask your questions, the 'spirit' moves to a specific answer or spells out your answer in letters.

Well Robin and I learned more than we ever wanted to know while using that Ouija board. We started with asking questions like, "Who will I marry" and "What will his name be?" I kid you not, the answer that was spelled out to that question was C – H – R – I – S – T, then moved downward to the word 'Goodbye.' I was starting to become extremely uncomfortable after that. I had always believed in God, but this was just not feeling right. We continued to receive generic answers to various questions, but then I asked the specific question, "How old will I be when I die?" When the device started to move, it clearly pointed to the numbers, 1 0 3, and then again moved down to the word 'Goodbye'. I asked the question, "How will I die?" The device spelled out, "Jump off building, Ha, Ha!" This 'thing' was beginning to mock me! We found a notepad and pen and started to write down each question we had asked, as well as the answers that the Ouija board was spelling out.

Robin and I became rather obsessed with our conversations with whatever or whoever had been 'answering' our questions. It was intriguing, but thoroughly frightening as this 'thing' started saying some scary things to Robin directly. So much so, that I was becoming afraid of her. We continued to ask questions, seeking answers, for three whole days. Because I had limited knowledge of religion or faith, I wasn't sure what to do with this situation, or the awful and terrifying things it was spelling out. I actually drove home for the specific purpose of getting a rosary that I had received from my limited Catholic background, from years before. I took the rosary back with me to Robin's house, and in the middle of our questions I just laid the rosary on the board. Without our even asking a question, the device spelled out, "Christ doesn't live here." I can't even describe to you the fear that had overtaken me. I couldn't wait to leave her house. It was as if we had invited evil in, and I was truly afraid.

The experience with the Ouija board upset me so much, that later I went to the library trying to find any information available on how to help me find peace. I found one book offering information about the occult and how the dangers are very real. A few days too late for me, in my case, but I was desperate. The authors stressed how we shouldn't even play with occult paraphernalia. They said that to bring these items into your house is like an invitation to Satan himself. They also stated that the devil 'thrives on fear' so I knew my first plan of action was to find a way to remove my fear.

One of their suggestions was to talk to a clergyman, and even go as far as to having your house blessed. My mom and I had visited an Episcopalian church one time, so that was the only religious direction I knew to go in. Yes, I felt stupid, but my fear was stronger than my pride. I spoke to a priest there, and I can say he wasn't much of a comfort. I'm sure he thought I was a lunatic, but the truth was that I was ready to hear from God. I believe that had I died during that

time, my blood would be on that priest's hands because he didn't bother with taking the time to tell me about God's redeeming love.

When I got home, I did the only thing I knew to do. The authors of the book also said you should throw away anything in your house that may be considered occult paraphernalia. Actually, I think they said you should burn it, but I was afraid to do that too. After I threw the Ouija board away, I went into my room and prayed for God to remove my fear. I told Him that I knew His power was so much stronger than that of Satan and that there was no room for this evil in my life. I can tell you I did feel a tremendous relief from the fear I had been walking in. In that prayer, I also told God that I would do everything in my power to tell others about the dangers of Ouija boards, séances, and anything to do with the occult.

To this day, it angers me when I see Ouija boards in the games section in stores. I'm too much of a coward to pick them up and throw them in the trash because I know there are security cameras, and frankly, I don't want to go to jail. But whenever possible, I try to shove the Ouija boards behind the other games, so they won't be seen by shoppers who come behind me.

My last memory to share involves a dream I had about a very special friend I had known when we lived in California. He was like a golden child and was a friend to everyone. He was so handsome and was genuinely kind to everyone he met. Unfortunately, his life was cut short at sixteen years old when he was killed in a car accident. For a short span of time, there were no cliques in our high school. It was as if we were all walking in a daze, grieving over the loss of our friend, Russ. To help ease our pain, his own parents printed mass copies of Russ's journal and shared them with anyone who wanted a copy. In his journal, which I still have, he spoke from his heart, and shared his faith in a God that I didn't really know but wanted to.

This dream happened around the same time as the Ouija board incident. My mom was still awake, sitting at the dining room table. My dream felt so real that I woke up in a cold sweat. I

ran down the hall to where I saw the light on and as soon as I saw my mother, I just broke into tears. I tried to explain what I was feeling as I sobbed to my mother but couldn't find the right words.

In my dream, I was standing inside the screened-in porch that I remembered from my childhood when we lived in Wisconsin. It was dark outside. I looked up and a figure appeared in front of me outside the screen door. I knew immediately that it was Russ, except his eyes weren't there. It wasn't grotesque or anything like that...his eyes just weren't there. They say our eyes are the window to our soul. Anyway, seeing him frightened me, so I started to scream, telling him to go away and leave me alone! He appeared to be saddened by my reaction and turned and walked away. I felt sorry for hurting him, so I begged him to come back, but he never did. It was at that moment when I woke up. I can't tell you the meaning of this dream, other than I took it as another seed from God. He was calling me somehow through this dream. When I saw my mom and started to cry, I couldn't explain to her what I was feeling. I was overwhelmed.

One thing I do remember from this, is that I don't think I have been the only person who has had dreams of this sort, specifically regarding Russ's eyes. I think about images of ghosts, with white, flowing bodies, but they always have big and dark, haunting eyes. As I have said so many times, there are spiritual realms that we know nothing about. As a Christian, I'm a firm believer in good vs. evil, and that this battle is evident all through the scriptures, and in our present world. God is not the author of fear, God is love. Pray over your homes, pray over your children. Protect them from the evil in this world. Don't encourage them to make light of it. Lecture finished.

**“Greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)**