

The Secret - A Biblical Critic

Rhonda Byrne, an Australian reality-TV producer, says that back in 2004, when her life was falling apart, her daughter introduced her to a copy of *The Science of Getting Rich* written in 1910 by Wallace D. Wattles.

- "Something inside of me had me turn the pages one by one, and I can still remember my tears hitting the pages as I was reading it,...It gave me a glimpse of *The Secret*. It was like a flame inside my heart. And with every day since, it's just become a raging fire of wanting to share all of this with the world."¹

What was the "glimpse of *The Secret*" that would cause Oprah Winfrey to devote two full shows to *The Secret*, Larry King to do an entire hour long show and two of the teachers, featured in the book, to be invited as guests on the Ellen Degeneres' daily TV show?

The Secret is a 198 page book written by Ms. Byrne, a best seller and a sensation that came out in November 2006, and a DVD by the same title.

As of this teaching, *The Secret* has been on the *New York Times* best seller list for 44 straight weeks and millions of copies of the DVD as well as the book have been sold.

So, what exactly is *The Secret* and what's the big deal that even *Newsweek* says, "could be the fastest-selling book of its kind in the history of publishing."²?

The official website of *The Secret* says, "This is *The Secret* to everything - the secret to unlimited joy, health, money, relationships, love, youth: everything you have ever wanted."³

In a nutshell, *The Secret* is the "Law of Attraction."

Simply stated, the law of attraction is "thoughts become things."

The Secret teaches, "Your thoughts become things! Say this over to yourself and let it seep into your consciousness and your awareness. Your thoughts become things!"⁴

"Everything that's coming into your life you are attracting into your life. And it's attracted to you by virtue of the images you're holding in your mind. It's what you're thinking. Whatever is going on in your mind you are attracting to you."⁵

According to the author, this secret has been known for centuries by people such as William Shakespeare, Robert Browning, Ludwig van Beethoven, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Plato, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sir Isaac Newton, Victor Hugo, Albert Einstein, Henry Ford and even Jesus.⁶

These men have known about the law of attraction and have passed it on to others in their literature, music, and paintings. It is the most powerful law in the universe akin to gravity.

Throughout history, certain groups have taught that "secret knowledge" was needed and held the keys to salvation.

The Secret is no exception to the rule and teaches this exact same concept:

- "The leaders in the past who had The Secret wanted to keep the power and not share the power. They kept people ignorant of The Secret."⁷

This is known as *Gnosticism* and it's based on the Greek word *gnosis* which means "secret knowledge."

Gnosticism is the belief that hidden and secret knowledge can be obtained only by the elite for salvation.

- "Gnostics claimed to have a secret knowledge which was the key to salvation"⁸

- “The Gnostic position asserts that over and above the simple Gospel... there is a secret, higher power reserved for the elite”⁹

The Secret is just another old rehash of the *Gnostic* teaching on “secret knowledge.”

According to the book, the law of attraction is so strong in our lives that it has been working all along even when we don’t realize it.

It even teaches that our current circumstances, our current positions in life, our current health and attitude are a result of this law of attraction.

The Secret teaches that, “Your life right now is a reflection of your past thoughts.”¹⁰

According to the book, we are “human transmission towers” and that our “thoughts are magnetic...As you think, those thoughts are sent out into the Universe, and they magnetically attract all *like* things that are on the same frequency. Everything sent out returns to the source. And that source is You.”¹¹

This law of attraction can bring you happiness, health, wealth, perfect homes, life partners, cars, houses, jobs, promotions, healing from chronic pain, depression, and disease. “It doesn’t matter who you are or where you are, *The Secret* can give you whatever you want.”¹²

From a Christian perspective, *The Secret* incorporates and inter-mingles *New Age* philosophies; *name-it-and-claim-it* theology that has its roots in the *Mind Sciences* and *New Thought* metaphysics, occultism and mysticism while wrapping itself in a pseudo science cloak of deception.

For example, at least seven quotes in *The Secret* come from two prominent *Mind Science* teachers, Robert Collier (1885–1950) and Charles Fillmore (1854–1948) and Ms. Byrne also acknowledges Jerry and Esther Hicks and the teachings of Abraham.

According to Hicks, Abraham is a collection of channeled nonphysical entities:

- Abraham has described themselves as "a group consciousness from the non-physical dimension...We are that which you are. You are the leading edge of that which we are. We are that which is at the heart of all religions."¹³
- "Abraham is not a singular consciousness as you feel that you are in your singular bodies. Abraham is collective consciousness. There is a stream or river of consciousness. As one of you asks a question, there are many points of consciousness that are funneling through what feels to be one perspective (because there is, in this case, one human Esther [Hicks], who is interpreting or articulating it), so it appears singular to you. We are multidimensional and multi-faceted, and certainly multi-consciousness. "¹⁴

These descriptions of Abraham bear an eerie resemblance of when Jesus healed a demon possessed man and asked the demon what its name was.

- Mark 5:9 says, "Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; *for we are many.*" (emphasis added)
- The corresponding verse in Luke 8:30 says, "Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," *because many demons had entered him.*" (emphasis added)

The Secret's law of attraction also falls in line with what is taught in *Wicca* since they use the same terminology and teach the same concepts:

- "Wicca teaches that thoughts are things; this is one of the basic principles of magick. We view that our thoughts have energy in our environment. Everything we think about sends energy out into the world which changes the world in some way. Most thoughts don't have enough energy behind them to actually do much, but some will set a chain of events into motion which will lead to something magickal happening in one's life."¹⁵

It's teachings like this that we, as Christians, need to defend against since there are literally millions of people out there buying into this concept. Since, as we will see, *The Secret* uses the Bible and Jesus as references for its teachings, we need to be able to "give a rational defense" for the historic Christian faith.

The art and science of answering these and other questions that are in contention with historic orthodox Christianity is called *Apologetics*.

Apologetics comes from the Greek word *apologia* and means "to give a rational defense of the Christian faith."

Webster's second edition defines apologetics as, "that branch of theology having to do with the defense and proofs of Christianity."

Titus 1:9 exhorts as in the context of qualified elders to "hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."

1 Peter 3:15 says "...and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.."

With these verses in mind, what I'd like to talk to you about tonight, over the next hour or so, is *The Secret*.

During this teaching, I'll be using the acronym S. E. C. R. E. T. to help you better remember the false teachings of *The Secret* and better equip you to share what the Bible teaches.

1. **S**elf-Centered life
2. **E**verything is God, But God
3. **C**hrist and His Teachings are Distorted
4. **R**eplaces Bible
5. **E**thical Relativism
6. **T**hankfulness to God

The first letter in the acronym of **S.E.C.R.E.T** is **S**, *The Secret* creates a *Self-Centered Life*.

1. Self-Centered Life

The Secret teaches that *you* are the center of your own world and by your own thoughts; you can attract those things that you desire and build your own kingdom just by thinking and believing.

Here are a few quotes from *The Secret* that pertain to encouraging you to live a self-centered and self-governed life: ¹⁶

- “Many people have sacrificed themselves for others...Wrong!...Your job is You. When you make feeling good a priority, that magnificent frequency will radiate and touch everyone close to you.”
- “Many of us were taught to put ourselves last...it is imperative that you tend to You first. Attend to your joy first. People are responsible for their own joy. When you tend your joy and do what makes you feel good, you are a joy to be around...”

In other places we're told to think about ourselves and how wonderful we are. It's about how we love ourselves and has nothing to do with aligning ourselves to what God wants in our lives.

- “...begin to think about all the things that are wonderful about You. Look for the positives in You...the law of attraction will show you more great things about You. You attract what you think about...Look for good things about You. Seek and ye shall find!”¹⁷

Forget about pleasing the Lord, forget about serving the Lord...it's all about you!

- “So your purpose is what you say it is. Your mission is the mission you give yourself.”¹⁸

In other words, our "mission" in life is not to give glory to God and live our lives in complete submission and surrender to His will, but our "mission" is whatever we decide it is.

And then to make matters even worse, if that were even possible, *The Secret* teaches that you will NOT be judged "now or ever" for your life and what you did with it!

- "Your life will be what you create it as, and no one will stand in judgment of it now or ever."¹⁹

If you read *The Secret*, you'll notice the capital "You" scattered throughout the book.

That's because, it's all about you and what you think about to create your reality.

In fact, the chapter on relationships in *The Secret* comes back to you.

- "There's something so magnificent about you. I have been studying me for forty-four years. I wanna kiss myself sometimes!"²⁰

And the summary at the end of the chapter on relationships, in the six bulleted points, "you", "your" or "yourself" is mentioned 25 times and is the overwhelming theme – because it's all about you!

According to *The Secret*, "The earth turns on its orbit for You. The oceans ebb and flow for You. The birds sing for You. The sun rises and it sets for You. The stars come out for You...None of it can exist, without You...You are the master of the Universe."²¹

Biblical Teaching

The Secret is about getting things or attracting health and wealth out of life and not worshipping the "only true God" (John 17:3) of the Bible.

Paul makes it clear that love of self is on the top list of things that displeases God:

- 2 Timothy 3:1, 2, 4 says, "But know this that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"

Biblical love is quite different from the type of love espoused by the world.

Biblical love is characterized as selfless and unconditional (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) while the love characterized by the world is as we see in *The Secret*, is a self-centered form of love or "self-love."

Romans 13:9-10 says, "For the commandments [against] ...adultery ...murder ...stealing ...coveting, and any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

- What this verse is saying, in context to "others", is treat other people as well as you would treat yourself. This is not a command to "love yourself."

John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

- Notice that the command is "new". The believer is to love others based on the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ and what He did for us. This sacrificial love is a sign to the world as well as to others that we are Christ's disciples. (1 John 3:14)

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave..."

- God showed the “ultimate of ultimates” of love by giving His Sons life for you and me.
 - John 15:13 says, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

John 12:25 says, “He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”

This is a far cry from what *The Secret* teaches. Self-centeredness revolves around one thing, self and when that’s all you care about; you will do anything to make you happy at the expense of everything and everybody else.

Whereas the Bible teaches “[Gods] will be done on earth as it is in heaven”, *The Secret* teaches “My will be done on earth...”

As for being told to “tend to You first...” in *The Secret*, the Bible gives the example of Jesus in John 13:3-7 washing the feet of His disciples.

John 13:4-5 says, “[Jesus] rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.”

Here we have the Creator of the universe, God in human flesh bending down, girding Himself with a towel and taking on the role of a servant ready to pour Himself out and serve others.

Jesus was “poured out” as an “offering” according to the following verses:

- Psalm 22:14 says, “I am poured out like water...”
- Isaiah 53:12 says, “Because He poured out His soul unto death.”
- Ephesians 5:2 says, “And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, *an offering and a sacrifice* to God for a sweet smelling aroma.” (emphasis added)

- Hebrews 9:28 says that “Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.”

Paul was also “poured out as a drink offering”:

- Philippians 2:17 says, “Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.”
- 2 Timothy 4:6 says, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering...”

The danger becomes when we become like the Dead Sea, always taking in and never giving, never “pouring” out.

In other words, the Dead Sea has an inlet (the Jordan River flows into it) but has no outlet (no place to pour out or the water to exit) and is dead thus nothing can live there; it cannot support life.

Moving on to the **E** in the acronym S.**E**.C.R.E.T., let’s talk about *Everything’s God, But God*.

2. Everything’s God, But God

The Secret holds to the New Age or Hindu teaching of *Pantheism*.

Pantheism is the belief that everything that exists is God.

The Greek words *Pan* means “all” and *theism* means “God” and thus, pantheism means “all is God” or “God is all”.

It's the concept that you, your dog, your cat, a rock, a tree, a leaf, a blade of grass, the moon, all is God; "all is God and God is all" is a common way of saying it.

In *The Secret*, Ms. Byrne refers to this pantheistic view or concept of God as "the Universal Mind."

- "all that exists is the One Universal Mind, and there is nowhere that the One Mind is not. It exists in everything. The One Mind is all intelligence, all wisdom, and all perfection, and it is everything and everywhere at the same time."²²

Not only is God the "One Universal Mind" that "pervades everything" according to *The Secret*, but also we're back to self-centeredness as well as a pantheistic worldview in the aspect that you and I are God!

For example, we read: ²³

- "You are God in a physical body...You are Eternal Life expressing itself in You...You are all power. You are all wisdom. You are all intelligence, You are perfection...You are the creator, and you are creating the creation of You on this planet."
- "So we are the creators...we are the creators of Universal destiny. We are creators of the Universe."
- "If everything is the One Universal Mind, and the whole of it exists everywhere, then it is all in You!"

The bottom line is that the "One Universal Mind" pervades everything and is in everything and knows everything and if you would just ask, feel and believe, you could bring whatever you desire into reality.

These views are straight out of New Age thinking that you and I are gods who can create our own realities!

Typically, New Age adherents do not refer to this pantheistic God, as "God" unless pressed on the issue. They typically refer to God as "the Universal Mind." And that is the exact title that Rhonda Byrne ascribes to God.²⁴

Biblical Teaching

There are three things I want to focus on here:

1. Pantheism
2. Only One God
3. You and I are not God

Pantheism

Pantheism is a contradiction of the Scriptures. If God is "all in all", then the totality of all things, including God, must include evil, and the Bible makes it perfectly clear, that's impossible.

God is not evil:

- Matthew 5:48 says, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

God is not "all in all" in a pantheistic sense, but separate from His creation:

- There is a distinction between the Creator and the created:
 - Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent."
 - Psalm 102:25-27 says, "Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them...But You are the same, and Your years will have no end."
 - See also Eccl. 5:2; Isaiah 31:3; 40:22-26; Romans 1:20-25.

- God created all things out of nothing:
 - Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
 - Nehemiah 9:6 says, "You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all."
 - Psalm 33:9 says, "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."
 - See also Psalm 89:11; John 1:3; Acts 17:24; Col. 1:16-17.

- Creation was a freewill act on the part of God:
 - In Job 38:4-11, God quizzes Job on the creation of the earth.

In these verses, we see that God uses irony to show Job's ignorance of God's creation and control over astronomy, cosmology, meteorology, and oceanography with probing remarks like "Tell me," in verses 4, 18 and "Surely you know!" in verses 5, 21.
 - In Psalm 33:1-9, we're told to rejoice in the LORD because "by the word of the LORD the heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."
 - Psalm 121:2 says, "My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth."
 - See also Zechariah 12:1; Hebrews 11:3.

Only One God

Let's look at what the Bible has to say about the "one true God" (John 17:3) and the possibility of any other gods.

- Isaiah 43:10 says, "'You are my witnesses,' says the LORD... 'before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me.'"
- Isaiah 44:6 says, "'Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer the LORD of hosts; *I am the First, and I am the Last*; besides me there is no God.'" (emphasis added)
- Isaiah 44:8 says, "'Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; *I know not one.*'" (emphasis added)
- See also Isaiah 44:24; 45:5, 6, 21; 46:9; John 5:44; 17:3; Romans 3:29, 30; 1 Corinthians 8:4; Galatians 3:20; James 2:19.

God is personal and distinct, not just a pantheistic mish-mash of "all in all" with your dog being god as well as the rock, tree and lawn chair in your back yard.

- Matthew 3:17 says, "And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"
- John 17:1-3 says, "Jesus spoke these words... 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You... And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.'"

We can also demonstrate Gods personhood when we find that He is referred to in Scripture with personal pronouns such as "He," "His," and "Him."

- Matthew 5:45 says, "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for *He* makes *His* sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (emphasis added)

You and I are Not God

The Bible makes it perfectly clear that you and I are not a god, have never been a god and will never be a god.

Remember, *The Secret's* teachings fall right inline with the teachings of the "New Age" movement that we are all gods.

The Bible's clear that mankind is...

- Deceitful and wicked - Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful [incurably sick] above all things, and desperately wicked."
- Full of evil - Jesus said in Mark 7:21-23, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man."
- Ungodly - Romans 5:6 says, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."
- Sinful - Romans 3:23 says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

While we are not and never will be a god, the reverse is also true in that "God is not a man" according to Numbers 23:19.

It's worth pointing out that man fell in the garden because of his desire to be a god (Genesis 3:5) and Lucifer fell from heaven because of his desire to be a god (Isaiah 14:12-15).

This leads us into our next topic, which is the **C** in the acronym S.E.**C**.R.E.T., let's talk about *Christ and His Teachings Distorted*.

3. Christ and His Teachings Distorted

According to *The Secret*, Jesus was not only a "prosperity teacher" but He also was a "millionaire" as seen in the following quote:

- "Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Jesus were not only prosperity teachers, but also millionaires themselves, with more

affluent lifestyles than many present-day millionaires could conceive of.”²⁵

This statement is of course false. All evidence in the Bible points to the fact that Jesus was a poor carpenter from Nazareth and in those days, carpentry was not a profession that brought one wealth.

Let’s look at some Bible passages that demonstrate this fact:

- His father Joseph was a carpenter (Matthew 13:55).
- Jesus was born to a common Jewish family from the small village of Nazareth (John 1:46).
- His mother Mary presented the sacrifice of a poor person who was unable to afford a lamb when baby Jesus was presented at the temple (Luke 2:24, see Leviticus 5:7).
- Jesus borrowed a boat from which to preach from (Luke 5:3).
- Jesus borrowed a colt for His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:2-3).
- Similar to a missionary, Jesus lived off of financial support of others (Luke 8:3).
- Jesus had to borrow a coin just to tell a parable about money (Mark 12:16).
- Jesus had Peter catch a fish with a coin in its mouth in order to pay their taxes (Matthew 17:27).
- When a man told Jesus that he would follow Jesus wherever He went, Jesus said that He had “no home of [His] own, not even a place to lay my head” (Matthew 8:20).
- Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb (Matthew 27:60).

It would have been the height of hypocrisy for Jesus to have been a very wealthy man and then tell people the following:

- Jesus says in Matthew 6:19-21, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - This one verse alone refutes all the prosperity teachers' claims as well as *The Secrets* claim that Jesus was a millionaire.
- See also Matthew 19:21-26; 1 Timothy 6:7-10 and Hebrews 13:5

In an attempt to give an air of legitimacy to its teachings, *The Secret* teaches that "the creative process" of the law of attraction was actually taught by Jesus.

In order to do this, *The Secret* takes the next two verses and rips them out of context to push its belief that God is a cosmic "bell-hop" or "Santa Clause" ready to provide you with whatever you can imagine.

- Matthew 21:22, which says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."
- Mark 11:24, which says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

The Secret then attempts to break down these verses into a process of three steps:

1. Ask
2. Believe
3. Receive

As with other groups that want to validate their false teachings with the Bible, they will pull a verse or two out of context and apply it to their brand of teachings as they see fit and wrap their words around in an attempt to validate their false teachings.

The Secret also takes part of Matthew 7:7 out of context and applies it in *The Secret of Relationships* chapter by using the law of attraction:

- "Look for the good things about You. *Seek and ye shall find!*"²⁶ (emphasis added)

Biblical Teaching

By using the *basic interpretive principle* that *Scripture interprets Scripture*, we can see that in context, Jesus was talking to His disciples when He made these promises and that they were to pray according to Jesus' will.

- 1 John 5:14 says, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, *that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*" (emphasis added)
- James 4:3 says, "You ask and do not receive, *because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*" (emphasis added)
- When Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Luke 11:2, He taught them "[Gods] will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

In other words, "the ask-believe-receive pattern is totally contingent upon an understanding of God, forgiveness of sins, and restoration of proper relationships with those around you. *The Secret* fails to acknowledge any of these conditions."²⁷

According to *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary*, "to ask" [Greek: *aiteo*] means "the petition of one who is lesser in position than he to whom the petition is made; e.g., in the case of men asking something from God." (See Matthew 7:7, 9-10; Acts 12:20; Luke 23:23; 1 John 5:14; James 4:3)

This is to be distinguished from "to ask" [Greek: *erotao*] which "more frequently suggests that the petitioner is on a footing of equality or

familiarity with the person whom he requests...used of a king in making a request from another king.”

It is highly significant that Jesus never used *aiteo* when making a request to the Father but always *erotao* that is, asking on equal terms with the Father. (See John 14:16; 16:26; 17:9, 15, 20)

Dr. John Ankerberg, President and founder of The Ankerberg Theological Research Institute, says:

- “Jesus never used *aiteo* when making requests to the Father, which indicates His deity. But when speaking of people requesting things of the Father, He used the word *aiteo*, indicating their creaturehood. In addition, biblically, Satan is the only one who makes demands of God (Job 1:11; Matt.4:3, 6; Luke 22:31).”²⁸

Context is everything when properly interpreting the Bible.

Prayer to God is first and foremost our lifting up of praise to God, praising His name and asking that *His will* be done on the earth.

God answers prayer according to His will and His glory because He is the sovereign Creator God of the universe.

While using an example for the “Creative Process” of the law of attraction, *The Secret* also uses the example of “Aladdin and his lamp” and the “Genie” that pops out and says, “Your wish is my command.”

This statement alone is informative as well as disturbing since the word “genie” comes from the word “jinn.”

The actual origins of the term *genie* (spelled Jinn...) dates back to pre-Islamic Arabia...genies were considered to be a separate race of beings created out of "smokeless fire."...Both good and evil genies were thought to exist...In the Qur'an, Satan is called a jinn (Sura 18.50-51). In Western culture, they are often seen as tricksters who may grant wishes in such a way as to harm the wisher."²⁹

As for the Matthew 7:7 passage, "seek and ye shall find!" notice who we are to address when we ask, seek and knock in verse 11.

- Matthew 7:11 says, "how much more will *your Father who is in heaven* give good things to those who ask Him!" (emphasis added)
 - This verse does not say, "how much more will the *One Universal Mind which is everywhere and in everything* give good things to those who ask *it!*"

We can clearly see that verses ripped out of context can be pigeon holed into any meaning that the author desires.

Over and over again, *The Secret* makes God out to be a cosmic bell-hop, genie and Santa Clause who is at your beck and call day or night to give you your latest desire or wish.

Moving on to the **R** in the acronym S.E.C.**R**.E.T., let's talk about *Replacing the Bible*.

4. Replacing the Bible

The Secret unabashedly quotes the Bible on one page and then turns around pushes it out of the way on another page suggesting that *The Secret* should be the source of "guidance and answers you are seeking."

- "If you are seeking an answer or guidance on something in your life, ask the question, believe you will receive, and then open this book

randomly. At the exact place where the pages fall open will be the guidance and answer you are seeking.”³⁰

The Secret places itself above prayer and above the Word of God.

Rhonda Byrne places her wisdom, her knowledge and her writings above the Bible when it comes to finding “guidance and answers you are seeking.”

As mentioned previously, Rhonda Byrne gives credit to being introduced to *The Secret* through a book written by Wallace D. Wattles called *The Science of Getting Rich*.

In this book, Wattles outlines his formulas for getting rich and says:

- “Read these creed statements over and over again; fix every word upon your memory, and meditate upon them until you firmly believe what they say. If a doubt comes to you, cast it aside as a sin. Do not listen to arguments against this idea; do not go to churches or lectures where a contrary concept of things is taught or preached. Do not read magazines or books which teach a different idea; if you get mixed up in your faith, all your efforts will be in vain.”³¹

Here we’re told to “read...and fix into memory, and meditate on these creeds...do not go to churches that teach or preach contrary things or read books that teach a different idea.”

Biblical Teaching

Again, we see a common theme among false teachers that their words or literature are more important than what the Bible has to say.

Bottom line, the Bible has been demonstrated to be the Word of God and in all matters that pertain to life, sufficient and complete.

When Jesus said "I am the truth" (John 14:6) and then said "When you have seen Me, you have seen the Father" (John 14:9), He was saying that God is truth and thus, His word is truth (John 17:17).

If God is true (John 17:3) and unchanging (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8) and does not lie (Numbers 23:19) and that all Scripture comes from God or is God-Breathed (2 Timothy 3:15-17), then logically, it stands to reason that the Bible is accurate and will not lead us astray.

We call this the *Infallibility of Scripture* and it simply means that the Bible cannot or will not lead us astray and give us wrong advice in matters of faith and practice.

- Psalm 119:89 says, "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven."
- Matthew 22:29 says, "Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.'"
- John 6:68 says, "But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'"
- John 17:17 says, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."
- 2 Timothy 3:15-17 says, "and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

The Secrets law of attraction, as defined by Rhonda Byrne, has no basis in reality.

No matter how hard you try, you cannot jump off a 30 story building and survive, swim the Atlantic Ocean or beam yourself to another location merely by believing "you can achieve and do anything you want with this knowledge."³²

The Secret is nonsense, plain and simple.

Jesus says in Matthew 16:26, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The Bible warns us against "false knowledge" and "philosophies in the tradition of men":

- Colossians 2:8 says, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."
- 1 Timothy 6:20-21 says, "O Timothy, guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge – by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith."

Notice that in Wallace D. Wattles book, *The Science of Getting Rich* we're told to "Read these creed statements over and over again; fix every word upon your memory, and *meditate upon them...*" (emphasis added)

The word "meditate" or "meditation" is used twenty times in the Bible so it would behoove us to look at the Biblical concept of meditation.

- Psalm 1:2 says, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."
 - The word *meditate* [Hebrew: *hagah*] means to "ponder by talking to oneself, speak, study or talk."
- Joshua 1:2 says, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it."
- Psalm 19:14 says, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer."

- Psalm 63:6 says that “when I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches.”
- See also Psalm 48:9; 77:12; 104:34; 143:5 and Psalm 119

So, we notice that we are to “meditate” or “ponder by talking to ourselves,” inwardly and outwardly about the word of God, about God Himself and His works and it should be from the heart.

Bottom line, we should not let any book or literature replace the Bible. We can supplement our readings with other literature that do not contradict Scripture, but the Bible should be the Christians main source of “daily bread” or “spiritual nutrition” and we should “meditate” on it daily.

Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Moving on to the second **E** in the acronym S.E.C.R.**E**.T., let’s talk about *Ethical Relativism*.

5. Ethical Relativism

The Secret promotes a philosophy called ethical and moral relativism.

Basically, this is the concept that there are no real ethical and moral laws that God has given mankind.

“In philosophy, **moral relativism** is the position that moral or ethical propositions do not reflect objective and/or universal moral truths, but instead make claims relative to social, cultural, historical or personal circumstances”³³

"Moral relativism teaches that when it comes to morals, that which is ethically right or wrong, people do their own thing."³⁴

The Secret tells you to: ³⁵

- "Be happy *now*. Feel good *now*. That's the only thing you have to do."
- "Follow your bliss..."
- "Don't delay. Don't second guess. Don't doubt. When the opportunity is there, when the impulse is there, when the intuitive nudge from within is there, act. That's your job. And that's all you have to do."

Being happy is paramount in Ms. Byrnes book. Everything revolves around you and in fact, "the earth turns on its orbit for you."³⁶

If it feels good, do it and "If it ain't fun, don't do it!"³⁷

Forget about rules or morals or even Gods commandments, live for the now and don't worry about the consequences because:

- "Your life will be what you create it as, and no one will stand in judgment of it, *now or ever*."³⁸ (emphasis added)

According to *The Secret*, do whatever makes you "feel good" and "keep doing that."

Go out and practice instant gratification: "Go test drive that car. Go shop for that home. Get in the house. Do whatever you have to do to generate the feelings of having it now..."³⁹

In a recent *Christian Research Journal* article on *The Secret*, it asked the logical question based on the unethical "do what feels good" approach pushed by *The Secret*:

- “Consider the pedophile who never feels more satisfaction with life than when he is sexually violating innocent children. Should he be encouraged to visualize and “test-drive” the things that make him feel good? Absolutely not!”⁴⁰

Biblical Teaching

Biblically, we can see that when we are hasty in our decision making, we can make poor decisions that can not only lead to short term heartache but can also lead to long term negative consequences.

For example, we read of Joshua and the Gibeonites in Joshua 9 and see that since Joshua “did not ask counsel of the LORD” (Joshua 9:14), the “wily” or “crafty” Gibeonites wasted no time in their deception to make a treaty with Israel.

Joshua had effectively let sin into the camp.

We can also see that when we exclude God from our everyday life and when we exclude His wisdom in decision making processes and “lean on our own understanding,” we are heading down a slippery slope.

We read in Judges 17:6 and 21:25 where “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

In the Judges 17 passage, we read of Micah who wanted riches, religion and respectability and by playing by his own rules ended up losing all three (Judges 18:24-27) because he was “doing what was right in his own eyes.”

In the Judges 19-21 passages, we read of the Levite’s concubine who is brutally murdered and dismembered. These chapters are “a narrative of savage justice, for a crime unspeakably horrible, as a result of which the tribe of Benjamin was almost wiped out”⁴¹ and they end with 21:25 where “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

The truth is, we are bondservants of the Lord (Philippians 1:1) and we were bought at a price (1 Corinthians 6:20) so we are not our own (1 Corinthians 6:19) to do "what is right in our own eyes."

We are morally and ethically *servants* [Greek: *doulos*]:

of God

- Act 16:17 says, "This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out saying, 'These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.'"
- Titus 1:1 says, "Paul, a bondservant of God..."
- 1 Peter 2:16 says, "...but as bondservants of God."
- Revelation 7:3 says, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."
- Revelation 15:3 says, "They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God..."

with the perfect example being Jesus Christ Himself

- Philippians 2:7 says, "but [Jesus Christ] made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men."

of Christ

- Romans 1:1 says, "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ..."
- 1 Corinthians 7:22 says, "For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave."

The Bible makes it clear that a day of judgment will be coming and every word and deed will be taken into account:

- 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ..."
- In Matthew 12:36, Jesus says, "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment."

As Christians, Jesus is our joy and it's foolishness to follow every desire and impulse that enters your heart. But "when the impulse is there," stop and pray for guidance from the Lord.

And finally, moving on to the **T** in the acronym S.E.C.R.E.T., let's talk about how *The Secret* errs regarding *Thankfulness to God*.

6. Thankfulness to God

One of the admirable things that can be said about *The Secret* is that Rhonda Byrne promotes some degree of thankfulness and gratitude.

- "Then as I get out of bed...I say "Thank" and "you" as my second foot touches the ground. With each step I take on my way to the bathroom, I say "Thank you." I continue to say and feel "Thank you" as I am showering and getting ready. By the time I am ready for the day, I have said "Thank you" hundreds of times."⁴²

Unfortunately as you keep reading, you realize that her "Thank you(s)" are not directed to the creator God of the universe, but to the Universe itself and they are designed to "set her frequency for the day."

- "You are the creator of your life, and so begin by intentionally creating your day."⁴³

The Secret removes all the glory that should be Gods and places it on you.

You are responsible for all the good things that you attract into your life.

Unfortunately, the flip side to that coin is that you attract all the bad things that happen to you in your life as well.

For example, when Joe Vitale, one of the teachers in *The Secret* was asked by Larry King whether Jessica Lunsford, a nine-year old Florida girl who was brutally raped and murdered, attracted this horror to herself, Vitale responded, "We are attracting everything to ourselves and there is no exception."⁴⁴

The Secret tells us that "They [Human Beings] have the power to intentionally think and create their entire life with their mind."⁴⁵

This book tells us that everything we attract in our lives, the people, the jobs, your good health, the cars and homes all come about because of our thoughts and not because God has graciously given it to us but because the Universe is the "supplier of everything".

For example, we read: ⁴⁶

- "You draw everything to yourself. The people, the job, the circumstances, the health, the wealth, the debt, the joy, the car you drive, the community you're in. And you've drawn them all to you... Your whole life is a manifestation of the thoughts that go on in your head."
- "The Universe is bringing all good things to me...The Universe is supporting me in everything I do. The Universe meets all my needs immediately."
- "The Universe is the Universal supply and supplier of everything. Everything comes from the Universe."

Biblical Teaching

Both the Old and New Testaments make it perfectly clear that everything that comes into our lives comes from God and it is to Him that we should be thankful:

- Deuteronomy 8:17-18 says, "then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth..."
- Proverbs 10:22 says, "The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it."
- Hosea 2:8 says, "For she [Israel] did not know that I gave her grain, new wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold..."
- John the Baptist said in John 3:27, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven."
- James 1:16-17 says, "Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

It's very interesting that James would write "do not be deceived" as if he knew (actually the Holy Spirit already did) that *The Secret* would be written 2,000 years later with this very concept in mind.

- The word *deceived* is derived from [Greek: *plane* or *planao*] and means to "err; stray from orthodoxy."
- Orthodoxy simply means "right belief, practice and worship."
- In other words, James 1:16-17 says, "Do not *stray from right belief, practice and worship*, my beloved brethren..."

It is the personal God who came down in the form of a human (Philippians 2:6-8) who created the universe – small 'U', bestows "every good gift and every perfect gift" (James 1:15-17) and supplies "all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)

Conclusion

As we have seen, *The Secret* errs in several areas in regards to:

1. **S**elf-Centered life
2. **E**verything is God, but God
3. **C**hrist and His Teachings are Distorted
4. **R**eplaces Bible
5. **E**thical Relativism
6. **T**hankfulness to God

The Secret says that there is a “time delay” between what we think and what we get. This time delay is unspecified and we should “Thank God” so that we can “reassess” and possibly “make a new choice.”

How convenient that there is no way to verify the claims that *The Secret* puts forth. Is the time delay ½ day, two days, two years or twenty years?

We read in Genesis 3:1-5 of the serpent tempting Eve with promises of eternal life, enlightenment and deification⁴⁷...sound familiar? You can almost picture him saying, “Pssst, come over here, I have a secret for you!”

The truth is, *The Secret* cannot back-up what it teaches, it’s unverifiable, it’s unreliable and it’s teachings go against every major doctrine of the Bible therefore making it also unbiblical.

The bottom line is that Jesus and His apostles did everything out in the open and didn’t teach any hidden truths or “secrets”.

Even Jesus said in John 18:20, “I have spoken openly to the world...I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in *secret*” (emphasis added) NIV.

The true secret is no secret at all but can be found openly in the pages of the Bible.

We'll end with Philippians 4:12-13 which says, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned *the secret* of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." (emphasis added) NIV

Resources used for this teaching and recommended reading material:

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2. *Exposing the Secret, Revealing the Truth about Rhonda Byrne's Law of Attraction*, An Ankerberg Theological Research Institute Publication, www.johnankerberg.org
3. *Is "The Secret" Compatible with Biblical Christianity*, John Ankerberg, www.johnankerberg.org
4. *The Truth Behind the Secret*, James K. Walker and Bob Waldrep, Harvest House Publishers, ISBN 9780736922982
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If you have questions or comments, please feel free to email info@calvaryCO.church.

Notes

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