

# Shepherd's Staff

October 2025

We gather to worship, we go to serve our Lord.

**"You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth!"**

Parkersburg Christian Reformed Church

Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m. ~ Church School 10:45 a.m



## SHOULD CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN?

**Source:** <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/should-christians-celebrate-halloween/>

**Author:** Rhonda Robinson

**Halloween can feel like harmless fun—but for Christian parents, the question goes deeper. Is it just cultural, or does it carry spiritual risks?**

Is it a sin to dress your children in their favorite superhero costume and escort them around the neighborhood? No.

Can Christian parents celebrate Halloween? Yes.

The bigger question that needs more thought and consideration is: *Should Christians celebrate Halloween?*



### A Personal Turning Point

Personally, my family stopped celebrating Halloween in 1984. At the time, it was not because of religious conviction. We were young parents, and I really hadn't given it much thought. After all, I grew up in the '60s. In spite of the perpetual rumors about razors in apples, and LSD-laced candy, I had fond memories of my childhood Halloween nights. We made our own costumes, and always came home with buckets full of candy. However, all of those memories melted into sheer *disdain* for the holiday after one horrific day.

On October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1984, in Decatur, Illinois, my hometown, three little girls went out to trick-or-treat. Only one came home. Actually, she was found and brought home. This traumatized 7-year-old had spent Halloween in a vacant building watching as her sister and cousin were raped and strangled to death. 12-year-old Sherry Gordon and 9-year-old Theresa Hall's brutal killings haunted my soul. It would be decades later, with the advent of DNA testing, before the killer would be found.

That tragedy forced me to ask myself, *Why am I participating in a holiday that routinely targets children and glorifies death and terror?*

You could argue, that crimes are committed every day of the year. And you would be correct. Nonetheless, because Halloween so often centers on darkness, death, and the occult, the question lands differently for us as Christian families.

To make a wise choice, it helps to understand the holiday's roots and how they've changed, and most important what does the Bible say.

So, let's begin with exploring just exactly what Halloween is.



### **What is the True Story Behind Halloween?**

Whether or not Christians should celebrate Halloween, is a question that has been picking up steam since the 1960s.

What comes to mind when you think of Halloween? There's a good chance you think of it, as I once did, as nothing more than good family fun, and a chance to create childhood memories. However, the origins of Halloween extend all the way back to a group of Celtic pagans living in the Iron Age.

In fact, Halloween originated with the pagan ritual Samhain.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica: *Samhain, in ancient Celtic religion, one of the most important and sinister calendar festivals of the year. At Samhain, held on November 1, the world of the gods was believed to be made visible to humankind, and the gods played many tricks on their mortal worshippers; it was a time fraught with danger, charged with fear, and full of supernatural episodes.*

Throughout centuries, Samhain continued in mutated forms until around 609 A.D. when Pope Boniface IV declared a new celebration. Initially, Pope Boniface IV created All Saints' Day or All-Hallows Day to be celebrated before summer. All Saints' Day focuses on celebrating martyrs and saints who sacrificed their lives for the Christian faith. Later, Pope Gregory III moved the celebration to the fall season to coincide with Samhain.

Over the years, All Saints' Day or All-Hallows Day continued its evolution into the modern celebration of Halloween. Samhain's sacrifices evolved into Halloween's handing out a different kind of offering: candy. Nevertheless, Halloween still contains its roots in a pagan celebration of death and rebirth. In short, today's Halloween is a far cry from Samhain, but its historic associations with death and the supernatural are still very much on display throughout neighborhoods and local grocery stores. It permeates the entertainment industry, and even some elementary classrooms.

### **What is the Spiritual Truth Behind Halloween?**

Before we can answer the question, should Christians celebrate Halloween, we need to check the scriptures. Obviously, Halloween is not mentioned in the Bible. However, believers have always lived among unbelievers, death, and wickedness.

#### **Warnings in the Old Testament**

- **Leviticus 18:3-4** - Israel was told not to follow the customs of Egypt or Canaan: *"You must not do as they do...you must not follow their practices."*
- **Deuteronomy 12:29-31** - God explicitly warned against copying how other nations worshiped their gods: *"You must not worship the Lord your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates."*

#### **Examples of Israel's Failure**

- **King Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:32-33)** – He invented alternative feast days to turn people from God’s appointed ones.
- **Prophets’ Rebukes** – Many prophets (Isaiah, Hosea, Ezekiel, etc.) denounced Israel for mixing pagan celebrations with their worship of Yahweh.

### New Testament Guidance

While the New Testament doesn’t directly mention Jewish feasts being replaced by pagan ones, Paul warns against mixing Christian faith with idolatrous practices:

- **1 Corinthians 10:20-21** - *“The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too.”*
- **Galatians 4:8-10** - Paul cautions against turning back to *“special days, months, seasons and years”* tied to former pagan observances.



So how do Christians apply these principles on October 31?

### Why Can’t Christians Celebrate Halloween?

On a general level, Halloween is a time of the year celebrated by advocates of Wicca, a network of practicing witches. As the official religion of witchcraft, Wicca believes October 31 to mark the time when the separation between the spiritual and physical realms is the thinnest. In other words, Halloween is the best time to try and interact with the supernatural realm, according to Wiccans. Many Christians understand, there are hidden traps within Wicca, and it has become very attractive to our teens.

Going further, some of those otherworldly connections align with Satanism. Halloween has always maintained a relationship with occultism. Additionally, Halloween’s premise includes an intentional and public display of imagery, mischief, and behavior generally looked down upon any other time of the year.

All things considered, this leaves Christians in a difficult place. On one hand, there are elements of Halloween that are harmless and fun. While on another, Halloween contains sinister influences and promotes behaviors that present troubling realities for families of all backgrounds.

So, let’s explore a few more key questions about Halloween.

### Is Halloween the Devil’s Holiday?

If we base our answer on the historical origins of Halloween, then the answer is no. However, that doesn’t exclude its overarching associations with death and paganism.

Within the context of Christianity and biblical references, Satan’s, or Lucifer’s, origin has little to do with Halloween. Yet, the relationship between the Devil and Halloween exists for a reason. The reason has developed over centuries because of the original emphasis upon death and even more sinister elements.

### Is Halloween a Christian Holiday?

To most historians, it’s unclear how long the ancient celebration remained strictly a pagan holiday. However, the early church held yearly celebrations and vigils for martyrs and deceased saints. Then, throughout the Early Middle Ages, various figures within the Catholic Church adopted influences from Samhain. Yet, it is fair to say that the modern interpretation of Halloween hardly resembles anything associated with Christianity or the Bible.

### Is it a Sin to Celebrate Halloween?

For followers of Christ, our actions and behaviors are judged according to our obedience to Christ. Within the context of celebrating Halloween, this truth remains. We are defined by our actions and how closely our heart is aligned with God's desires.

Whether it is a sin for Christians to celebrate Halloween depends on how exactly you plan to celebrate. For some families, this might require more intentionality in discussing how you plan to celebrate Halloween. For other families, these discussions might lead to a change in your plans. And that is a perfectly acceptable response.

It's true, the Bible contains no direct references to Halloween by name. However, Scripture carefully instructs Christians against participation in pagan practices directly involving witchcraft, the occult, and the worship of other deities.

In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul writes, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Our obedience to God requires a careful understanding of how much God cares about our choices. In deciding whether to participate in Halloween, you and your family can consider how your actions might align with God.

Just as it wouldn't be a sin to do the same thing on April 1. However, consider how you represent Christ matters—especially on polarizing days such as Halloween. Remember how you portray Jesus in your behaviors, how you interact with people and even your costume choices.

### **What Does the Bible Say About Halloween?**

Since the Bible doesn't address Halloween, many Christians liken the celebration to other moments where the Bible discusses witchcraft, sacrifice, and worldly behaviors. The Bible contains various teachings on how to behave or interact with the world's troubling celebrations.

In Deuteronomy 18:10-12, the Lord establishes rules for the Israelites concerning a wide variety of practices. These include human sacrifice to conjuring spirits to telling fortunes and even those who practice sorcery. These verses provide clarity for what Christians should not do. Yet some might ask: how many Christians are making human sacrifices or telling fortunes on Halloween?

Well, hopefully, none at all. While that is a far cry from hanging spiderwebs and skeletons in your yard, the New Testament expands upon how Christians should approach situations that can arise from things connected with Halloween.



### **What Bible Verse is Against Halloween?**

#### **Ephesians 5:7-15 - Living in darkness and light**

Within this section of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul discusses the negative effects of "worthless deeds of evil and darkness." Paul compares sin and our harmful decisions to living in darkness. But there is a way to live in the light and walk in obedience with God.

When it comes to living within our modern world, our decisions and obedience to God still operate in the same way. With Halloween, what matters is how you interact with others, your decision-making, and how you represent Jesus to others.

For example, it doesn't really scream "Jesus loves you" if you are wearing a fake bloody hatchet on your head as you open the door for your neighborhood trick-or-treaters. On the other hand, a smile and kind words greeting the children at your door can bring light into a dark holiday.



## Can Christians Celebrate Halloween?

For Christians, in the end, it is a matter of conscience.

Since I shared with you my family's stance on Halloween as my children were growing up, I thought it only fair to tell you the rest of the story.

My youngest had a natural disdain for Halloween. She refused to go with me to the grocery store as soon as all of the decorations were out. She didn't understand why they would want to hang up scary decorations. Naturally, when she grew up and started her own family, she took her childhood experiences with her. Halloween was not a holiday she wanted to celebrate. However, her husband also brought his childhood experiences along too.

He loved dressing up his entire family in movie themes. One year they transformed a wagon into a Jurassic Park rolling cage, and filled it with dinosaur toddlers. Mom and dad dressed as park rangers. Fun was had by all. The neighborhood he grew up in, still creates a safe environment for families to celebrate Halloween. The discussion as to whether or not Christians should celebrate Halloween is still a subject of discussion in their home, as their family and faith grows.

C.S. Lewis argued that "conscience reveals to us a moral law whose source cannot be found in the natural world, thus pointing to a supernatural Lawgiver."

For my family, the memory of three little girls seared my conscience and brought the evil of Halloween into the spotlight as a young parent.

However, today, I have no children at home, instead we live in a neighborhood where children are escorted by watchful parents to the doorsteps of kind neighbors. We will be passing out blessings and prayers over each child that finds their way to us.

You, too, have the freedom in Christ to follow the conviction of your own heart through the Holy Spirit. So that, whatever your family decides, others might see Christ working through you, and you can be a light in the darkness of a fallen world.







10/7 Twila Jansen  
 10/8 Janet Venenga  
 10/16 Stacy Ascher  
 10/23 Ken Mehmen  
 10/24 Kenneth Kramer



10/15 Ken & Rhonda Meester



**Reminder:** If you have anything you'd like included in the Shepherd's Staff, please try to have it to Wendy Armstrong by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. The goal is to have the newsletter in your mailboxes on the last Sunday of the month.

