

3 Things You Should Know

ABOUT *The Secret*

Why this book does not offer the secret to life. By JoHannah Reardon

*W*hy wouldn't I buy a book that promises me anything I want? That's what *The Secret*, which is No. 1 on the New York Times bestseller list, assures me.

So what is the secret? It's simply the power of my thoughts. If I want to be rich, I must think about it continually. If I want to be thin, I should decide on my ideal weight, and I'll get there. How can this be? According to the book, "Thoughts are magnetic, and thoughts have a frequency. 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."

That sounds nice, but what if I'm not good at thinking positively? According to *The Secret*, all the bad that happens to me is also a product of my thoughts. If I'm poor, sick, or even in an accident, it's because of my negative thoughts.

So what's wrong with this idea? The following three flaws are why it is doomed to fail.

FLAW #1: ANY SYSTEM THAT FOCUSES ON THE SELF BREAKS DOWN.

The appeal of *The Secret* is that it's all about me. I become the all-powerful one who determines my future. This is way beyond taking responsibility for my course in life—this is making my life all about what I want, no matter what.

The Secret promises happiness, but selfish people are the least happy people in the world. When every person is only concerned about what profits him or her, who cares what happens to everyone else? And what does this do to relationships? Other people are merely the means to get what I want, so the only reason to be kind is to further my goals.

Jesus tells us that just the opposite is true. He challenges us to give our lives away in service to God and others. When a rich man asked him what he must do to get eternal life, Jesus told him to "go, sell all your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me" (Matthew 19:21).

FLAW #2: THE UNIVERSE HAS NO POWER.

According to *The Secret*, your thoughts plug into the universe, which is a benevolent force that wishes to grant your every heart's desire. But the universe is a created thing. It has no power on its own. When Job questions God in the Old Testament, God answers with "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?" (Job 38:4). God holds sway over the universe. It is at his command.

FLAW #3: BAD THINGS HAPPEN BECAUSE OF EVIL, NOT BECAUSE OF BAD THOUGHTS.

How would this book fly in the Darfur region of Africa, where thousands of people suffer because of the evil others have inflicted upon them? If those who lost family members to brutality had just thought positive thoughts, would it have turned out differently? Those things happened because of evil, not because these victims thought negatively. Psalm 14:6 says, "You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge."

JoHannah Reardon is an associate editor of ChristianBibleStudies.com

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:

The Secret Is OUT— A Bible study on what's wrong with *The Secret*.
"The Secret Exposed" by Mel Lawtenz, *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, June 2007