

Should a Christian play fantasy games online like World of Warcraft or tabletop RPGs like Dungeons and Dragons?

Multi-player RPGs (role-playing games) exist in a variety of forms. Whether they're in a massive online world (MMORPGs) like World of Warcraft, or sprawled across the table like Dungeons and Dragons in the form of pens, paper, dice and explosive imaginations, both are enjoyed by millions of people across the world as a unique form of entertainment and adventure. On the screen or spanning the table, the aim of the RPG is for each participant to explore a new world through their personalized character(s)'s quests, conflicts, goals, and interactions, generally while hunting for gold, fighting battles, and gaining experience points (XP).

Levels of "objectionable content" in RPGs vary depending on the game or, in the case of D&D, the Dungeon/Game Master (DM/GM). Some of the potential red flags with fantasy RPGs are their heavy inclusion of magic, bloodshed, and general mischief. In the case of video game-based fantasy RPGs, female characters tend to be portrayed in skimpy outfits. Sometimes RPGs will encourage flirting or even offer the option to pursue sexual encounters. Regardless of genre, RPG video games are intended to be so detailed and complete that it's easy to forget about the "real world" in favor of the video game world.

When we look at the big picture, all games are entertainment. Whether it's Hi Ho! Cherry-O, Monopoly, Uno, or even Dungeons and Dragons, they all fall under the same category of "entertainment." And, biblically, we are free to enjoy entertainment. Entertainment in and of itself is not sinful, and neither is hanging out with friends and playing a game.

But we need to be aware that entertainment *can* trigger sinful thoughts or actions if we're not careful or if we are sensitive about certain topics ([James 1:14-15](#)). What may be a neutral point for one person may be a harmful experience for another ([Romans 14:22-23](#)).

As with so many things, the Bible does not directly address RPGs. After all, they didn't even exist yet! But the Bible does offer many principles to guide our choices down a wiser path.

Whenever making a decision, whether great or small, it is important to remember [Colossians 3:17](#), "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father," and [1 Corinthians 10:31](#), "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Is it just fine or really bad for you to play RPGs? Since the answer is going to be different for everybody, here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Is the focus appropriate and healthy?

Some people avoid fantasy altogether because it's easy to get lost in. Are you able to tell reality apart from fantasy? Are you able to see the line between right and wrong in the real world even if you're playing an assassin for the evil overlord in-game? Does the exposure to spells, chants, and false gods muddy your understanding on how God views the occult in reality? Some Christians don't have a problem with these sort of themes, though someone still discovering the groundwork of their faith might have a harder time distinguishing truth ([Romans 12:2](#)).

It's also important even for mature Christians to be aware of what might cause them, or those around them, to stumble ([1 Corinthians 8:9](#)). [1 Peter 5:8](#) says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

2. Is evil praised or encouraged?

There are some games out there where evil is the goal. Maybe the point of the game is to kill as many people as possible, or characters might take on more lewd characteristics that give the player freedom to do something in-game that would never be allowed or condoned in real life. This feeds fantasies that may poison the well of our thinking and goes against [1 Thessalonians 5:21-22](#): "But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil."

[Philippians 4:8](#) also says, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."

3. Is this game negatively affecting my real life and relationships?

When a game—or anything, really—begins to take priority over God, our families, our work, and/or our school responsibilities, then there's a problem. At this point, the game has become an idol or obsession. Idols are damaging because they're so alluring and distracting. They take our minds and focus off of what's most important. In fact, the Bible tells us to run away from anything that we might be tempted to idolize ([1 Corinthians 10:14](#)).

Another question to ask is whether or not the game in question is replacing, damaging, or otherwise hindering the relationships we have with people in person. While online communities can be a wonderful blessing, they should never replace our local community. If online friends try to keep you from your local relationships, then the legitimacy of those friends should be called into question. True friends will want the best for you, and an in-person group of supportive friends is definitely a good thing.

In the end, you must decide.

It's up to you and God whether or not you decide to join up with a multi-player fantasy role-playing game. You know yourself and what your trigger points are. Be honest and really evaluate how taking on an alternate personality for an RPG would affect you.

Not sure if this is something that would benefit you? Pray about it. [Philippians 4:6-7](#) says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

God is interested in every facet of our lives, including the ways we choose to be entertained. He wants us to direct all our worries and problems His way ([1 Peter 5:7](#)). God knows what's in our best interest, and He'll be the best one to tell you whether or not pursuing fantasy RPGs will be beneficial or detrimental to you and/or those around you.