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SESSION 4 | Worldliness and Media

I. Introduction

Importance: Media is everywhere, and it is powerful.

3 Questions:

1. What are the factors that determine what you watch/don't watch?
2. What is the basis of those factors?
3. What is the purpose of your viewing?

II. Principles, Practices, and Discernment

It is important to distinguish between clear biblical principles, to which every Christian is submit, and the practical outworking of those principles, which often are not clearly defined in scripture and where Christians might differ.

Ex: Ephesians 4:29 – “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

Biblical discernment

Hebrews 5:14 – “But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their power of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

Eph. 5:7-10 - "Therefore do not become partners with them, for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord."

Rom. 12:2 - "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Why it matters for media

1. Building and testing our own practices faithfully from biblical principles.
2. Maintaining loving fellowship with one another

III. Broad Principles of the Christian Life

A. The Christian is driven, in all of life, by the secure promises of the gospel.

Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 3:1-17; Phil. 3:12-21

The Olympian and the cookie store worker

B. The Christian approaches all of life with purpose and intentionality.

I Cor. 10:31 – "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Eph 2:10 – "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Eph 5:15 – “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”

Phil 4:8 – “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”

I Cor 6:19-20 – “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

There is no such thing as neutral. There is no such thing as a moment that doesn't matter.

Potential purposes?

1. Leisure
2. Enjoyment
3. Education
4. Relationship
5. Serving
6. Understanding the world

Suggested Questions: What is the best use of my time right now? WHY would I watch? “Should I watch” v. “Can I watch”?

C. Love

Love toward the Lord

Love toward others watching

Love toward those involved in the media

That man would be deemed, and justly deemed, of an inhuman temper, who in these days were to seek his amusement in the combats of gladiators and prize-fighters; yet Christians appear conscious of no inconsistency in finding pleasure in spectacles maintained at the risk, if not the ruin, of the eternal happiness of those who perform in them!¹

D. Freedom

I Cor. 6:12 - "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything."

I Cor. 10:23 - "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."

Gal. 5:13 - For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

It is true we have freedom as Christians. But our freedom needs to be properly understood in the context of belonging to Christ and being called to put others before ourselves. Don't forget the first two principles – true freedom is living intentionally, purposefully, driven by the promises of the gospel.

E. Self-Control

F. Idolatry

G. Consider the fruit

H. Consider the heart

¹ William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians, in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity* (Philadelphia: Key and Biddle, 1835), pp. 231-232. As quoted in Wayne E. Wilson, *Worldly Amusements: Restoring the Lordship of Christ to Our Entertainment Choices*. (Wayne E. Wilson, 1999), 115.

IV. Specific Principles for Media

A. Volume – How much am I watching?

Eph. 5:15-16 - Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

B. Worldview

Rom 12:2 - Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect.

C. Violence

Phil 4:8 - Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Violence is an effect of the fall, it involves the destruction men made in God's image, and the destruction of life given by God.

Violence in certain context is condoned in scripture.

Consider the heart, consider the fruit.

D. Immorality

Scripture takes sexual immorality very seriously.

Scripture takes the temptation to lust and the guarding of the eyes very seriously.

Scripture upholds a very high view of sexuality within marriage.

Consider the law of love.

E. Language

Crude language

Language that dishonors the Lord

V. Practical Examples

Invited to see Avengers 4

When is violence permissible in a movie?