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Leisure and Entertainment

Mind Games Survival Course Manual



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Leisure and Entertainment

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IV. How do we begin to analyze the mediums of entertainment?

A. Don't put too much stress on the medium itself.

For instance, the rhythm of rock music is not evil; television is not evil; movies are not evil; costumes are not evil, etc.

2. *Remember that people have a sin nature with which they can abuse entertainment.*

People who provide entertainment and people who use it can abuse it. A basic premise of theology is that man has a sin nature. We are prone to abuse all things.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5).

The intent of man's heart is evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21).

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23).

3. *Consider what your conscience is saying.*

1. Consider your conscience before the entertainment.

Is there something about what you've heard or seen that brings discomfort? Are you in doubt about its content for some reason? If so, this may be a signal to stay away from it.

2. Consider your conscience during the entertainment.

If you're already watching, listening, etc., are you uncomfortable? If so, you may need to get away from it.

3. Consider your conscience after the entertainment.

Now that it's over, what are you thinking, feeling, etc.? Be alert to what the Lord is showing you.

4. Consider what others have to say.

1. Consider what the advertising says.

Frequently the ads you see for various entertainments will tell you things concerning the content and intent of the producers.

The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart (Matt. 12:34).

2. Consider what friends say.

The things you hear from them may indicate warning signs, especially if they are Christian friends who are also attempting to think Christianly about these things.

3. Consider what critics say.

They will often make important statements that will help you make a good decision.

5. Consider the content.

If you're already involved, are you listening/watching closely? What is the message?

1. Realize that all entertainment is making a statement.

A world view is being espoused.

2. Realize that entertainment can affect your life if you are not alert and responsible.

3. Realize you are in a battle for your mind.

The world of entertainment is one of the battlegrounds.

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).

5. What are some common objections to what we've discussed?

A. *That's reality!*

Is reality a legitimate guideline for living? Do we derive an "ought" from an "is"? Saying that something portrays reality says nothing about the way things ought to be.

2. *I'm just killing time!*

You may be doing exactly that, but what else is being killed in the process? Could it be your mind and its sensitivity to godly things?

3. *It won't affect me!*

Tragically, these can be the proverbial "famous last words." You're not a prophet. You don't know the effect that is yet to come. In addition, you may not recognize the effect if it appears.

4. *There's nothing else to do!* This is a sad commentary on contemporary life. If that is true, then God has done a poor job of supplying us with imagination.

5. *Everybody's doing it!*

The word everybody is misapplied. It is highly doubtful that it is true. In finality, though, God's principles don't rely on democracy. You may be called to stand alone.

6. *No one will know!*

Humanly, this is absurd. You know! You're somebody, and you have to live with yourself. And your world view informs you that God knows. Are you pleasing yourself or Him?

7. *It's just entertainment!* No, *it's not just entertainment!* (See VII above.)

6. What should we do?

A. *Should we become separatists?*

No!

2. *Should we become consumers?*

No!

3. *Should we become salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16)?*

Yes! And in the process we need to grow into spiritual maturity and cultivate the art of *discernment* (Heb. 5:14).

Conclusion

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ (Col. 2:8).

For Further Reading

Lawhead, Stephen R. *Turn Back the Night: A Christian Response to Popular Culture*. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1985.

The author calls for discernment as the key to dealing responsibly with popular culture. Television, movies, books, and music are used as illustrations.

Medved, Michael. *Hollywood vs. America: Popular Culture and the War on Traditional Values*. New York: HarperCollins/Zondervan, 1992.

The author, co-host of Public Television's *Sneak Previews*, offers a scathing indictment of contemporary entertainment. He examines how Hollywood has broken faith with its public, creating movies, television, and popular music that exacerbate every serious social problem we face, from teenage pregnancies to violence in the streets. His case is principally based on demography, but a Christian can read it with absolutes in mind.

Myers, Kenneth A. *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture*. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1989.

An insightful and revealing examination of Christian engagement with popular culture and the general lack of understanding by Christians of how popular culture shapes Christian thinking and feeling about itself along with culture in general. Myers begins to lay the necessary foundational analysis about the forms of culture so that the reader can begin to deal with both the forms and content of culture in developing a sound cultural witness.

Ryken, Leland, ed. *The Christian Imagination: Essays on Literature and the Arts*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1981.

A fine collection of essays by various Christians who are leading spokesmen in their fields, including the philosophy of art, literature, the visual arts, and the musical arts.



Schaeffer, Francis A. *Art and the Bible*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1973.

A helpful little introduction to a biblical view of the arts and some criteria for judging them.

Schultze, Quentin J., et al. *Dancing in the Dark: Youth, Popular Culture, and the Electronic Media*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991.

An excellent series of essays concerning electronic media, youth culture, and the effect each has on the other.

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