

LIVING HOLY

Life Application: Applying Biblical standards to our choice of recreation options.

Key Verse for Meditation: Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.
– 1 John 2:15-16

Focus Scriptures: Psalms 101:2-4; 119:37; Proverbs 4:14-15; 15:26; Romans 8:6-7; 12:1-2; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-16,19; Colossians 3:16

Secular music is the only worldly area that I had any curiosity to explore. Looking back, I recall that I always felt guilty for listening to it, but the thrill far outweighed any sensitivity. There was pride involved because the music would make me feel “lifted up” and self-satisfied. My mind would drift to worldly things like possessions or fame—things that would cause people to be impressed by me, maybe even look up to me.

I am ashamed when I realize how the music I listened to grieved God’s Spirit in my life. I had decided that I was different than other Christians and that it did not affect me spiritually

Music Matters!



to listen to the wrong kind of music. At times I would try for a while not to listen to anything but Christian music, but eventually my taste for worldly music would win out.

There was a period in my teens when I drew especially close to the Lord and during that time, I craved Christian music. This was a very sweet time of closeness to the Lord, and once I had drifted away from it, I would think with sadness that I didn’t have it anymore. I could cry and pray by the hour, wanting to give God everything, but

I was afraid to commit my music to Him or promise that I would give it up, for fear of taking it back. The devil told me I couldn’t



Lesson Key: Paul said, “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Corinthians 6:12). As Christians, we must be spiritually sensitive in the decisions we make regarding our recreation choices, carefully protecting holiness and guarding our minds from influences that would fuel the flesh instead of the spirit.

live without my worldly music, and I believed him!

One day I got news that someone I looked up to very much had backslidden. As I tried to understand how that had happened, God spoke to my heart and told me clearly that if I did not give up my secular music, I could not stay saved. I had never wanted to sin, but He let me know that without Him in my life, I would be totally unrecognizable, the opposite of who I was with Him living in me. The person I saw shocked me. How could music do that to me? Somehow it was tied up in pride and idolatry.

With a broken heart, I told God how sorry I was to have grieved Him in this. If He hated what I was doing, I wanted to hate it too. I asked Him to change my taste in music and help me to feel like He felt. I committed to never again choose to feed my spirit with the world, to never again choose

to grieve His Holy Spirit living inside of me.

The Scripture, "Come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18) became very real to me. I noticed after a while that if a secular song I used to like would come over the speakers while I was in the grocery store, it made me feel kind of sick in my spirit. God had truly answered my prayer—He changed my desires.

Now I understand how music feeds the spirit. Secular music made me feel lifted up, whereas Christian music lifts up the Lord. Secular music caused me to look at temporal things but Christian music causes me to focus on eternal things. I thank God for the change He made in me! – Rosie Lambert



"If one's favorite activity would be measured by what he does voluntarily by choice, and by length of time involved, watching television would be the clear winner."

– Ronald Williams, pastor and director of a home for trouble teens

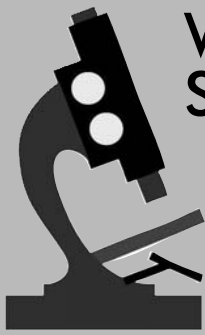


For Personal Study

1. Jesus prayed that His followers would be kept from the evil of the world, even though they were in the world (see John 17:15-16). How will a purpose to keep ourselves separate from the world affect our recreation choices?

2. What guidelines should we develop and apply as we make those choices? See Psalm 101:3; Proverbs 14:16; Isaiah 30:21 and Philippians 4:8.

3. How does the use of our time relate to media? See Ephesians 5:15-16.



Word Search

Perhaps one of the most succinct statements of Christian ethical principles is found in 1 Corinthians

10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Can you think of any words more encompassing than "whatsoever" and "all"? These words should be the measure for every aspect of our lives, including our recreational choices.

Since its introduction into American homes in the late 1920s, television has played an increasingly significant role in shaping the lives of its viewers. Usage has steadily increased; children aged 2-18 spend a daily average of 5.29 hours in media usage. Countless studies have implicated TV viewing as a factor in aggressive or violent behavior, declining academic scores, early sexual activity, a rise in obesity, and increased substance abuse.

As Christians, how should we control our TV viewing? *Focus on the Family* offers the following suggestions:

- Schedule viewing rather than watching whatever is on.
- Set defined limits on TV viewing.
- Watch TV with your children.
- Talk back to the TV; point out wrong messages.
- Plan weekly family nights without TV.
- Use your VCR or DVR liberally; you have more control.
- Be a good example in your media usage habits.

Concepts taken from "Directing TV's Role in Your Home" at the *Focus on the Family* website, www.fotf.org

How's Your e-Life?

If you are anything like me, many of your everyday activities have some connection to the internet. I read the newspaper online, pay my bills, shop, e-mail family, talk to friends, look at pictures, and send work documents to my colleagues. Clearly, the internet affects the way most of us live our lives!

So, what does the internet have to do with our spiritual walk? I am thankful for a relationship with God that is relevant to every area of my life. Philippians 1:27 says, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." The word *conversation* refers to our conduct or way of living. Paul said that if we have committed our lives to Christ, we should live in ways that are worthy of Him.

What does it mean to conduct ourselves worthy of the Gospel of Christ in connection with the internet? Here are some points to consider:

- o Does the content of what we put on the web draw people toward Christ or push them away? Do the pictures we post and the music we link to line up with our testimonies? Is what we choose to view edifying, or does it distract us from our purpose to lead holy, committed lives?

- o Does the time we spend online distract us from our responsibilities to God and others? There are certainly many ways of spending time on the internet—videos, games, music downloading, instant messaging, and social-net-working options are unlimited. It is easy to get sucked into something online and suddenly realize that hours have disappeared!

- o Are we online to satisfy selfish desires? The internet certainly offers that—we are constantly bombarded with promotional, suggestive, and pornographic materials, and the latest get-rich-quick schemes.

- o Does our internet use glorify God? We can look for opportunities to build rich and meaningful relationships with friends who will encourage us to draw closer to God. We can reach out to those who are hurting or looking for God. We can spend our time on sites that are uplifting and help us to grow in our walks with Christ. Do we?

Every day we are given new and exciting ways to reflect Christ and what He has done in our lives, and the online world is one of the great mission fields for our generation. I am confident that God will strengthen us, enabling us to conduct ourselves online in a manner worthy of Him. – Adapted from a Higher Way article by Tricia Downey





Watch Out for the Garbage Truck!

If you looked out your window and saw a garbage truck about to empty its load on your front lawn, you would be out your door in a hurry. You would make it abundantly clear to the driver that his garbage was not welcome in your yard!

Satan has acres of garbage he wants to bury you with. If he can get you to accept a load, he knows that he will have gained a foothold in your life. Since his goal is your spiritual overthrow, you must move decisively when his truck comes around.

What are we talking about? Your eyes, ears, and thoughts are Satan's targets. He will daily tempt you to look at or read things that are at odds with holiness. He will try to pour music or conversations into your ears that will draw you away from God and toward the world. He will attempt to direct your thoughts to any number of subjects that will grieve the Holy Spirit and please the flesh.

Determine that you are not going to be defiled by the devil's garbage. Purpose, like the Psalmist, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Psalm 101:3). If you have some doubt as to whether something is garbage or not, do not take a chance—stay away from it. Pray that you will be sensitive to what is good and what is harmful.

Be aware that it is all too easy to get desensitized to a little filth, and before long you will be taking in more and more. Draw the line for holiness in your life and maintain it! – From *"Thirty Days on the Road to Eternity"*



Bible Background

Our focus verses, 1 John 2:15-16, warn against having a love of the world. Worldliness is internal, for it originates in the heart. It is revealed by three attitudes: the "lust of the flesh" (preoccupation with that which pampers the appetites), the "lust of the eyes" (craving and inordinate acquiring of things), and the "pride of life" (focus on one's self or importance). These attitudes in the heart will be reflected in choices that do not align with a standard of holiness. That may well include our choices for recreation.

Today, what captures your attention? What do you spend your time thinking about? Do your choices reflect the world's values or God's values?

4. Paul said, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6:12). How might a form of media usage become something that is not spiritually expedient?

5. How can we maintain holiness and grow even closer to God despite the influences of an unholy society? See Mark 12:30 and 1 Timothy 6:11.

6. What might be some warning signs that we are having problems with Satan's attempt to regain control of our hearts and minds through lawful activities?
