



Media Matters
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P_{review}

The average teen spends over 7.5 hours a day consuming media--half of his or her waking hours! When it comes to media intake, it's crucial to make responsible, godly choices.

List the order, from greatest to least, that these forms of media influence your thinking: Television, the Bible, and music. Now list three quotes from a television show or movie, three Bible scriptures you know by heart, and three songs you've memorized. Which was hardest to do? Easiest? Does this reveal what truly influences you most?

P_{raise}

Say **Philippians 4:8** as a prayer. ("Dear God, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest . . . if there is any virtue, if there is any praise, I will think on these things.")

P_{arable}

Imagine a friend gives you a cupcake. The cake is soft and moist, and a creamy swirl of frosting layers the top. Now imagine you take a huge bite . . . and find a dead fly inside. Kind of disgusting, huh? But when you show your friend, he just laughs it off. "It's just one little fly," he says. "The rest is good."

When it comes to the media we consume, many people are just like the friend who laughs it off. "It's mostly good," they say. "There's just one little bad spot." But those little bad spots can spoil the whole song or movie or video game, latching onto our thoughts and lurking in our minds long after the music and images have faded.

P_{resent}

Whether you realize it or not, all media promotes a worldview. Songs, movies, and magazines communicate ideas that are often in direct opposition to God's Word. It's your responsibility to critically analyze what you see and hear. Can you imagine Jesus watching this show? Singing this song? If not, you should find a better entertainment choice.



Read the psalmist David's commitment in **Psalm 101:3**. What you look at impacts you! You can't control every little thing your eyes see, but you can control your media choices. You have the option to consume material that draws you closer to God or pushes you away.

Take a look at the following passages: **Proverbs 4:23**, **Romans 12:1-2**, and **I Peter 1:13**. These passages are all concerned with the cleansing and renewing of your heart and mind. Your heart is your life source--both spiritually and physically. If you regularly ingest violence, lies, hate, immorality, and materialism, not only do you begin to take on those characteristics, you poison your heart. Your mind quickly becomes so crowded with unholy concepts that you can no longer recognize God's truths.

We should "cast down imaginations that exalt themselves against God and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." (**II Corinthians 10:5**.) One way to "capture" your thoughts is to monitor the ideas you allow into your head in the first place.

Romans 1:18-32 describes a generation of people who are involved in every wicked sin imaginable. Some Christians who read this passage would never dream of partaking in such things, yet they have no problem soaking up entertainment that promotes or makes light of the very same behaviors. According to verse 32, if you enjoy watching other people commit sins, it's as bad as sinning yourself.

God is holy beyond what our minds can comprehend (**I Peter 1:15-16**). When we allow unholy ideas to shape our lives, God cannot dwell in us. We can take comfort in the promise of **Isaiah 26:3**. In a world overcome with war and disaster and chaos, who wouldn't want perfect peace? The fastest way to experience true peace is to focus your mind on things that glorify God. Don't be short-changed by bad entertainment choices.

Pactice

1. Your posts on social networking sites reflect your values and how you think. What are some guidelines can you follow to make sure your social networking always honors God?
2. **Ephesians 5:1** says to imitate Christ. How can you do that through your music, reading, and viewing choices?

Pray

Pray that God gives you a desire to please Him. Ask Him to transform your heart so that you no longer want to entertain ungodly worldviews. Thank Him for showing you how to use media in positive ways, and praise Him for the promise of perfect peace.



Plus

This week, take at least one day to spiritually “detox” by fasting from all unnecessary use of media and technology. Journal about your experience.