

Lesson 1: Getting our Entertainment Bearings

Colossians 1:9–12: *...that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*

Primary Objectives:

1. Explore why entertainment is a relevant topic.
2. Clarify our disposition toward entertainment.
3. Develop a working definition of entertainment.
4. Determine how the bible addresses entertainment.

1. Explore why entertainment is a relevant topic.

1.1. Consider what the following statistics demonstrate about the role of entertainment in American society. How much of this is cause for concern, or just the reality the digital age?

Media Consumption:

- **Television:** The average American watches 3 ½ hour per day. (Nielsen, 2023)
- **Streaming:** In 2023, 87% of American households had at least one streaming service subscription, with the average household subscribing to 3.6 services. (Statista, 2023)
- **Music:** 91% of Americans listen to music regularly, with streaming as the most popular method (78%). An average of 3 hours and 10 minutes of music per day. (Statista, 2023)
- **Video Games:** 70% of American households have at least one video game console, and 65% of Americans play video games regularly, on average 6+ hours weekly. (Statista, 2023)

Teens (13-18 years old):

- **Daily screen time:** 8 hours and 39 minutes, with TV/videos taking up the most significant chunk at 3 hours and 16 minutes. (Exploding Topics, 2024)
- **Social media:** 1 hour and 47 minutes on TikTok alone, followed by 1 hour and 12 minutes on Snapchat. (Exploding Topics, 2024)
- **Gaming:** 1 hour and 46 minutes daily. (Exploding Topics, 2024)

Young adults (19-24 years old):

- **Daily screen time:** 7 hours and 40 minutes. (Statista, 2023)
- **Streaming services:** Watch an average of 5 hours and 25 minutes of streaming content per day. (Statista, 2023)

1.2. The following list provides some reasons entertainment can be controversial. Mark the ones most pressing or challenging for your context? What would you add to the list?

- **Moral and Ethical Content Concerns:** Disagreements over what is and isn't acceptable moral and ethical content in various forms of entertainment.
- **Influence on Behavior and Attitudes:** Controversy from differing views on the extent to which entertainment influences behavior and attitudes.
- **Freedom vs. Censorship:** Balancing Christian freedom with the desire for moral standards can be controversial among believers.
- **Addictive or Distracting Nature:** Differences on the degree of the addictive or distracting nature of certain forms of entertainment can create controversy.
- **Parental Concerns:** Parents within the Christian community may have varying perspectives on age-appropriate content and its potential influence on children.
- **Cultural Relevance vs. Separation:** Disagreement on the balance between engaging with contemporary culture and maintaining a separation from secular influences.
- **Theological Differences:** Controversy can arise due to differing interpretations of biblical principles and how they apply to entertainment.

Others: _____

2. Clarify our disposition toward entertainment.

2.1. Identify which of the following best characterizes your disposition toward entertainment. Which one do you think the teacher most identifies with?

Positive Engager: Views entertainment as a way to relax, enjoy creativity, and find inspiration. Sees value in finding positive and uplifting content in entertainment options.

Moderation Advocate: Believes in enjoying entertainment in moderation. but emphasizes the importance of balancing it with other aspects of life and spirituality.

Selective Participant: Adopts a more selective approach, carefully choosing entertainment that aligns with their values; avoids content that conflicts with their convictions.

Cautious Skeptic: Approaches entertainment with a level of caution, skeptical of content that contradicts their faith. Seeks to discern messages, beliefs, values portrayed.

Avid Abstainer: Abstains from certain forms of entertainment altogether, due to concerns about negative impact of content that conflicts with Christian beliefs and values.

2.2. Listen to the overview and aims of the class. Note what interests you most and what you hope to get out of the class.

This class aims to guide us in navigating the complex landscape of entertainment within the context of our Christian faith, so that we may live out our calling to honor God in all of life.

Primary Aims of the Class:

1. **Not to Impose a Prescribed List of Rights and Wrongs:**
2. **Equip with Better Grasp of Entertainment's Influence:**
3. **Provide A Biblical Framework for Entertainment Choices:**
4. **Offer Practical Tools for God-Honoring Entertainment Decisions:**
5. **Facilitate Mutually Beneficial Discussions:**

Interests & Outcomes: _____

3. Develop a working definition of entertainment.

3.1. Categorize the following activities as either (E) entertainment or (N) non-entertainment:

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Watching football on TV | Touring Christmas Lights | Watching webinar on investing |
| Reading news on internet | Reading a novel | Going to a music performance |
| Writing a letter | A weekend camping trip | Taking a class on photography |
| Skiing at Mount Shasta | Meeting friend for coffee | Playing a board game with family |
| Eating out for dinner | Playing a video game | Viewing friend's TikTok video |

On ***what basis*** did you determine if something is entertainment or not?

Would you ***distinguish*** between *entertainment* and *recreation*? How?

3.2. Evaluate the following definition of *Entertainment*. Does it leave anything out or require further clarification?

Entertainment: A diverse range of activities, experiences, or content designed specifically...

4. Determine how the bible addresses entertainment.

4.1. Describe how entertainment today is different from the era when the bible was written. Can you think of any examples where entertainment is mentioned or addressed in the bible?

4.2. List some of the things people do as they engage in entertainment.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | |

Can you think of examples of where the Bible addresses these things?

4.3. Identify a common theme addressed in the following verses. How might these passages be relevant to questions about entertainment choices in our current context?

Genesis 3:6: So when **the woman saw** that **the tree was good** for food, and that it was a **delight to the eyes**, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

2 Samuel 11:2: It happened, late one afternoon, when **David** arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king’s house, that he **saw from the roof a woman bathing**; and the woman was **very beautiful**. (Esther 1:11-12)

Psalms 101:3: I **will not set before my eyes** anything that is **worthless**. I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.

Matthew 5:28: But I say to you that **everyone who looks** at a woman **with lustful intent** has already **committed adultery** with her **in his heart**.²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.

Luke 11:34: Your eye is the lamp of your body. When **your eye is healthy, your whole body** is full of light, **but when it is bad**, your body is full of darkness.

1 John 2:16–17: For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and **the desires of the eyes** and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.¹⁷ And the **world is passing away along with its desires**, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Homework: Search for other passages related to the items in your list above. Ask the Lord to show you how these passages speak to God-honoring entertainment choices.

Next Week: Entertainment & How We View the World