

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

Holiness and Media

Intro.

In Rev. 4 we get a snapshot of what is going on around the throne of God right now. There is a worship service going on with these majestic beings worshipping God. In the presence of God there is one quality of God that is emphasized and exalted.

And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

Revelation 4:8

God is holy which means to be set apart. God is described as Holy repeatedly. This is the only quality of God that is repeated 3 times in succession to describe Him. It is done two different times in scripture. It is the only quality of God that is given such emphasis. It doesn't say love, love, love. It doesn't say just, just, just. It doesn't say gracious, gracious, gracious. All of those things are true but His Holiness is what is emphasized. God is set apart- His ways and His thoughts are so much higher and set apart than our ways and our thoughts. He is holy.

Repeat Rev. 4:8 together--three times.

God is holy but then He gets personal when he says this,

"YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." 1 Peter 1:16

How are we as believers doing at being set apart from the World?

A recent survey conducted by the Barn Group compares the morals of adults in their 20's and 30's with those of adults 40 and over. Younger adults are far more likely to regard sex outside of marriage, cohabitation, fantasies, and viewing pornography as morally acceptable. Perhaps most disturbing is that those who fit into the "born again" Christian category were not very different from their peers with regard to most measures of morality - especially sex. The research shows that young people reflect the morals of their peer group much more significantly than that of their faith. (Barna.org October 31, 2006)

The need for holiness among followers of Christ has never been greater.

We are going to talk about holiness this morning related to our media intake. God is after a holiness that starts in the mind and heart. Our media intake is directly related to that.

We are going to look at this workshop in three parts: why holiness in our media is so crucial, what God's standards are for what we let into our minds and how can we apply these truths to our lives.

I know that several of us have been through some or all of this before. But we since God repeated it 3 times maybe it won't hurt us to look at it again together. I have changed it up a little.

7 Reasons why media holiness matters

1. Entertaining unholy thoughts is sinful. “For out of the heart come **evil thoughts**, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man” Matt. 15:19-20, (Matt. 5:27-28, Rom. 8:6-7).

-God is after a holiness of heart and mind.

-If you have been there in your mind you have been there. If you lust you’ve committed adultery.

- This is why media is so powerful--It determines your thoughts and often they are evil thoughts.

2. When you sow to the flesh you reap corruption.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption...”Galatians 6:7-8, 1 Cor. 15:33, Galatians 5:19-21, Psalm 101:3-4

-Discuss: How do you think sowing to the flesh can corrupt us?

-appetite for God, His word, prayer --Appetite for more fleshly things grows-Ted Bundy,
--calloused heart--ex. Guy who was shocked by the language at first said he was laughing at it at the end

---Garbage in Garbage out is a biblical principle

3. Unholy media injections undermine God’s number one method of sanctification-renewing the mind.

“...do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by renewing your mind” (Rom.12:2). 2 Cor. 10:5 (Rom. 8:6-7)

----- God’s agenda for each one of His children is to transform us from worldliness to holiness. What is the key to this transformation? The mind is where the battle for our holiness plays out. God wants to renew it and the world wants to pollute it. God wants to transform us and the world wants to conform us.

---We need to renew our minds with the Word but we also need to filter out the garbage
---unholy media short circuits this process

Ex. Bottled water and dropper w/ muddy water

This bottled water has been renewed and cleansed but the cleansing process is negated by putting in some pollutants. Not much just a little bit.

God wants to make us holy and transform us and He does it by renewing our mind with His word. So it makes no sense to take the pollutants from the world and put in just a little into our minds. Its only a little bit. Its crazy.

---EX. Water in India- Found worm--we cleaned the water but didn’t keep out the junk, We got a new water provider and my digestive problems mysteriously went away.

---We diligently screen people at airports b/c of the war on terror. We are in a much bigger spiritual battle---God is saying we should have that kind of diligence for what we let in our minds. Is what I feed my mind in line with God’s thinking or the worlds?

4. A lack of holiness limits our usability. 2 Timothy 2:20-22 (2 Chronicles 16:9)

“Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” Joshua 3:5

--God wants to use clean cups according to 2 Timothy 2:20-22. What does God see when He reaches in His cupboard and pulls me off the shelf to use. Am I clean and usable or do I need to be set aside and cleaned before I am useful to the Lord for service.

--Joshua 3:5--throughout the Bible, throughout history there have consistently been at least two things that characterized revival among God's people--holiness and prayer.

Is it possible that God wants to do wonders among us but our worldliness is holding it back?

EX. ACHAN- God refused to use and bless Israel because of Achan's sin.

-- 2 chron 16:9--Is your heart completely His in the area of media.

5. A lack of holiness hurts our influence with God in Prayer. (Ps 66:18, 1 Pet 3:7,12) “...the effective prayer of the righteous man accomplishes much” James 5:16

---EM Bounds--He wrote this in 1900 and he said the church was worldly then. What would he think of our standard of holiness?

---What kind of influence do you have with God?

---Take 4 and 5 together. What do you want to see happen in your ministry target? On this campus.

6. Worldly mindedness hurts our intimacy with God. (Psalm 24:3-4, John 14:21)

“The pure in heart will see God” Matt 5:8

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and soul and **mind** and strength”

Matt 22:36-38

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” James 4:8 (1 John 2:15-17)

---You are as close to God as you want to be.

“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?

Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” James 4:4

---Are we friends with the world in our media in take? We are not like the world of course not, but we just want to be friends and hangout together some.

7. The fear of the Lord should drive our pursuit of holiness.

“...**let us purify ourselves from everything** that contaminates body and spirit, **perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.** 2 Cor. 7:1 (1 Peter 1:14-17, Romans 14:12)

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” 2 Cor. 5:10

---Think about that day. When that day comes what kind of standards are you going to wish you had on your media? Adopt them now. The fear and accountability of that day should motivate us for holiness.

---Which reasons are most motivating for you? Why?

Taking thoughts captive

God's standards for what we let in our minds

... we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Cor. 10:5

1. Stay away from that which is sexually provocative or immoral.

1Pet. 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

2Tim. 2:22 Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Rom. 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

What do these three verses say about lust? Most shows and movies are designed to provoke or stir up lust. This wages war against your soul.

James 1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

What does this say? Does the media twist God's morals given in the Bible? --Get rid of it.

2. Stay away from men of perverse speech.

Perverse-Hebrew word-iqqesh - *twisted, perverted*

Prov. 2:12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse,

Prov. 8:13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

Psa. 101:4 Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil.

What sticks out to you from these three passages?

“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.” Ephesians 5:3-5 (Matthew 12:35-36)

Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” 1 Cor. 15:33

-Through our media intake we are keeping company with lots of people with rotten morals. People we normally wouldn't allow to speak into our lives we invite in through media.

3. Hate media that profanes God's name.

Profane means to treat something that is holy as common. Anything directly associated with God was to be treated as holy. Ex. Of the elements of the temple How much more the name of God.

What attitude are we to have toward God's name?

Psa. 148:13, 1Chr. 16:29, Psa. 34:3, Psa. 48:10, Psa. 86:11, Psa. 115:1, Psa. 139:20, Luke 11:2

How does God feel about His name being profaned?

Deut. 5:11, Ezek. 20:22, 36:21, 36:23, 39:25, Malachi 2:1-3

What is promised to those who honor His name?

Mal. 3:16, Mal. 4:2, 1Sam. 2:30

--What would happen if Hollywood started making movies that used Mohammad's name as a curse word? Why do some many Christians actually pay money to listen to their God's name used as a curse word? It is insane and makes no sense.

What keeps Christians from living out these standards of God?

Living out Holiness in our media intake

"Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." James 1:21-22

What do you observe about the commands in these verses?

"Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" 2 cor. 10:5

"Get rid of all moral filth" James 1:21-22

"Purify yourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit" 2 Cor. 7:1

"Be holy yourselves in all your behavior" 1 Peter 1:15

"Make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts." Romans 13:14

7 Rationalizations that can keep us from living out holiness

1. I know a lot of committed believers who watch it and they're fine.

"... but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding." 2 Cor. 10:12, 1 Peter 1:15

2. Let's live by grace not legalism.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age" Titus 2:11-12, Jude 4- In this passage, Jude condemns false teachers who teach grace as a license to sin. That false teaching is still around today.

3. Taking in unholy media doesn't affect me. 1 Cor. 15:33, James 1:21-22, Gal 6:7-8 These verses warn not to think we will be unaffected by bad influences/sin in our life.

4. We need to watch some unholy media to be relevant and relatable. 1 Samuel 15:22, 1 Cor. 9:19-23.

We are told to make adjustments culturally not morally in order to win people to Christ.

5. I'm afraid I will be missing out if I adopt God's standards. John 10:10

6. I don't want to come across as holier than thou. Gal. 1:10, Prov. 15:2, 1 Peter 2:10, Then don't. You don't need to share your convictions with everyone.

7. You can't live out the standard perfectly so why try? Heb. 12:4

Steps to walk in holiness

1. Confess and forsake unholy media.

"He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion." Prov. 28:13 "Get rid of all moral filth" James 1:21

If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell. Matt. 5:29-30

Are you willing to hold your media collection (DVD's, music, etc.) up to the light of God's Word?

1Kings 3:3 ¶ Now Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except he sacrificed and burned incense on the **high places**.

Ex. Kings in OT who didn't clean out the high places, it became a stumbling block for them later, their repentance wasn't complete

--ex. From ACTS 19, ex. , Clean out your media collection with God's standards.

2. Set standards for the media you will and won't consume based on God's Word.

3. Read the label of media before you digest it. 1 Tim. 4:7-8

www.pluggedinonline.com

www.screenit.com

4. Teach these truths to others.

"For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel." Ezra 7:10 (Matt. 5:19)

How will you apply these truths to your life?