



Living By Faith

"The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:17

August 1, 2010

4th & Stewart Church of Christ

Contact Us:

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Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:45 AM
Worship..... 10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service..... 2:30 PM
Worship..... 6:00 PM

Tuesday:

Redstone Class..... 9:30 AM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class..... On Break
Bible Study..... 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister Jim Moore
.....
Don Smith..... James Thomas

Preacher:

Ryan Smithey

Works We Support:

Belize Mission & Kindergarten
Cherokee Home for Children
Food Pantry
Gospel Broadcast Network
Gospel Chariot Missions
House to House, Heart to Heart
Lake Cisco Camp
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
The Truth in Love
World Bible School

Let us know if you want to study the Bible to know more about Christ and His Church.

THE MEDIA GOD

By Mike Baker

Have you ever considered how many gods there are in the world? Roman and Greek mythologies provide us with a veritable smorgasbord of gods: Zeus, Jupiter, Poseidon, Apollo, Aphrodite, Mercury, and Mars. Each god had charge of a certain area of life or a part of the universe. The apostle Paul dealt with multiple gods when he faced the men of Athens in Acts 17. They had erected altars and temples to all kinds of gods, including one that was to the "unknown god." Paul began talking about the unknown god they worshipped and then showed them the God they should be worshipping.

Most people would think of a god as an object of worship of an organized form of religion, either ancient or modern. But a god does not have to be a molded idol or even a physical object. It can be anything that we elevate to the position of god in our lives. One definition says, "something that is worshipped or idealized; money was his god."¹ Wealth certainly can become a god, but power can as well. The quest for that "almighty dollar" has driven many people to abandon all connection with the real God in their goal to acquire more and more wealth.

But you don't have to be rich to have such a god. Some find a god in exercise and the eternal quest for youth. Others find a god in watching a favorite television personality and following every word he or she conveys. Anything can become a god in our lives. I doubt that anyone reading this article has a golden calf in his or her living room or an altar in the backyard for sacrifices to Baal. Yet I wonder if we really do have gods in our homes. The gods I'm speaking of would include the gods of media: Internet, television, music, cell phones, movies, etc.

Did you know that Americans spend almost 10 hours a day with some form of media?² We read the newspaper, listen to the radio, watch television, and surf the Internet. It really doesn't take very long to see how much time we spend with media. Of course, not all media exposure is bad. The difference is in the content and what is transmitted, and if the use of media adversely affects one's life.

In defense of the media explosion in our culture, we can find many positives. We have information literally at our fingertips. It provides an excellent means of inexpensive communication. It entertains us and also educates us. For the most part it is also readily available, on demand, and instant.

However, there are also negatives that come with the exposure to media. It can very quickly become something that consumes too much of our time. Many sinful activities and thoughts find their start within media. Anti-Christian views are often peppered in teaching venues as well as in news reporting. In many cases, exposure to the wrong uses of media can lower our morals, cause less social interaction, take us away from family time, lead to obesity, and often become very addictive.

Do you remember the days when there were only three channels on the TV and



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*"The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked:
but he blesseth the habitation of the just.
Surely he scorneth the scorners:
but he giveth grace unto the lowly."*

Proverbs 3:33-34

Examine Yourselfs

It may be hard to believe, but there is no denying the fact that it is indeed the first day of August! The year is now well over half way gone and quickly we will be saying hello to 2011. However, never wait for a new year to make the changes that you need to in your life. We are reminded in 2 Corinthians 13:5 to “examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove our own selves...” ever examining ourselves before the mirror of God’s Word (James 1:22-27) and make corrections as needed that we might have the confidence of the psalmist to say, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24). I believe these verses, as well as others, remind us of the need to constantly examine our lives and make sure that we are walking in that which is good and right (1 John 1:7, Matthew 7:21), that we do not have misplaced priorities (Matt. 6:33), and that we are setting forth the right example to those about us (1 Cor. 11:1).

I hope that sort of examination is what you have done this last month in regards to what you allow to influence you, particularly in the area of media and even more specifically regarding television. I do not know how many may have taken the challenge to turn off your television for the month of July and I am not asking for you to identify yourselves. However, if you did, as August is now here and you turn those sets back on, hopefully you will do so with a renewed carefulness as to what you allow into your home regarding programming and the amount of time that is spent watching whatever programming you do consume. To those who did not, I hope that you did or will at least take some time to consider the influence that television can have on you and the amount of time that it can consume and possibly make some changes based on that reflection.

I am printing one more article this week as part of this series that again comes from the pages of *Think* magazine, published by Brad Harrub and others at Focus Press. Also I am making available at the back of the auditorium another article that appeared on the pages of *Think* that is a Christian Media Resource Guide, pointing out some of the resources that you might use to help determine the wholesomeness of various forms of media before it comes into your home. One resource not specifically mentioned there is the magazine itself. I rarely make such recommendations, but if you enjoy and are challenged by some of the articles from *Think* that I publish here from time to time, why not consider subscribing to it for your home each month? It is full of good material that I believe will help you and challenge you to become a better Christian and equip you for some of the challenges you face in our society.

Let us be like Job and make a covenant with our eyes (Job 31:1) not to look upon those things we should not but rather think on those things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praise worthy (Phil. 4:8).

~Ryan Smithey

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when the only remote in the room was the closest child? Things have changed dramatically since then.

The average child in America lives in a house with 3.6 CD or tape players, 3.5 televisions, 3.3 radios, 2.9 VCR/DVD players, 2.1 video game consoles, and 1.5 computers. Various forms of media are present in their lives nearly every waking hour.³ One study showed that children ages 8-18 spend more time (44.5 hours per week) in front of computer, television, and game screens than they do for all other activities except sleeping.⁴ However, it is not just the children that face a problem with overexposure to media. Adults also are affected.

So how can a person determine if media has become a god in their life? Here are a few questions to consider.

- ◆ Does it dominate your time? Do you spend more time reading the newspaper in one day than you do reading the Bible in one week?
- ◆ Does it direct your thoughts? Are you becoming desensitized to immoral speech and images due to exposure through media?
- ◆ Does it detract from righteous actions? Have you found a preference for personal entertainment with media over interaction with others?
- ◆ Does it deceive you into believing all kinds of lies? Are your views more favorable toward sex outside of marriage, cursing, nudity, evolution, etc., after being conditioned by media?

I suspect that most of us can find ourselves drawn into the lure of media. But remember, media in and of itself is neither good nor bad. What makes media good or bad is the content being transmitted and the time that one spends with it.

Here is another set of items to consider when evaluating the impact of media on your home. Media might have become a god in your house when:

- ◆ You know more about the lives of television characters than you do about one another.
- ◆ Your children know how to navigate to the 30th level of some video game but cannot lo-

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Television	God’s Plan for Redeeming Man	Bible Reading Schedule
<p>The Truth In Love (Eddie Parrish) Sunday @ 7:00 am on KTAB</p> <p>In Search of the Lord’s Way (Mack Lyon) Sunday @ 7:30 am on KTAB</p> <p>Gospel Broadcasting Network Online: 24/7 @ gbntv.org</p> <p>Good News Today: Sunday @ 6:00 am on Dish: 259, DirectTV: 364, Harris: 208</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Radio</p> <p>Preaching the Word (Michael Light) Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Hear Learn the saving message of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)</p>	<p>Sunday...Job 28-29; Acts 25</p> <p>Monday...Job 30-31; Acts 26</p> <p>Tuesday...Job 32-33; Acts 27:1-12</p> <p>Wednesday...Job 34-36; Acts 27:13-44</p> <p>Thursday...Job 37-38; Acts 28:1-15</p> <p>Friday...Job 39-40; Acts 28:16-31</p> <p>Saturday...Job 41-42; Romans 1:1-17</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)</i></p>

News & Notes

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cate a book of the Bible.

- ◆ You find that personal or family time for Bible reading, prayer, and devotional life is limited or eliminated in favor of time with media.
- ◆ You no longer blush or are embarrassed when evils and sins are displayed-cursing, nudity, fornication, homosexuality, violence, etc.

Our culture is full of many gods. We even have a popular television program where we vote to elevate someone to be our own national idol...at least until the next season comes around and we toss that one aside for a new one.

If you realize that media has risen to the point of becoming a god in your house, what can you do to reverse course? Here are a few suggestions.

1. Evaluate your family's current media time. How many forms of media are in use and how many hours are they used?
2. Establish reasonable rules about media use. Remember, both content and time are involved in turning something good into something bad. Balanced and responsible use of the media should be encouraged. (Consider a token system...and when the tokens for the week are used up then the media is turned off.)
3. Engage all family members in this process. Discuss why a review is necessary and consider the impact on each family member.
4. Enforce the rules you establish. Some might consider eliminating all television or Internet, or just reducing the time to use them. Whatever your rules, keep them or justify why they should be changed.

Encourage responsible use of all media.

This is a great time to be alive. We can access thousands of years' worth of knowledge in seconds without having to go to a library. We can carry our entire music library with us and play any song on demand. We can be entertained, informed, educated, and connected to others with all of the wonderful media devices around us.

But we need to be careful to keep media from becoming a god in our lives. Our God is a jealous God (Exodus 20:2-6) and He knows that there are no other gods including the ones that we create and worship in His place. Be careful to keep God first and to never elevate media to the status of a god in your life.

1. *American Heritage Dictionary*
2. *Statistical Abstract for the United States, 2007.*
3. www.mediafamily.org/facts/facts_mediause.shtrnl.
4. *Ibid.*

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Visitation Program

Remember our **visitation meeting following the evening worship services**. Last week **19 contacts** were made.

Mark Your Calendars

- ◆ **Today: 1st Sunday Fellowship Meal** following the morning worship period, please plan on joining us.
- ◆ **August 3: Summer Youth Series** hosted by 5th & Grape in Abilene, begins at 7 PM.
- ◆ **August 10: Summer Youth Series** here at 7PM. Hamburgers will be served; there is a sign-up sheet for the chips and cookies that are needed at the back of the auditorium.

Food Pantry Needs:

We need some help restocking the pantry; suggested items include: Rice, Dry Beans, Pasta, Spaghetti & Sauce, Peanut Butter, Can corn, Tuna/Canned Meat, Soup/Stew, Can Fruit.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY TO:

August Birthdays: Michael Fuller (10), Don Smith (14), Betty Bailey (28), Roy Dodson (29).

August Anniversaries: Kaci & Matthew Churchwell (15), Pam & Terry Teague (16), Darlene & Don Smith (29).

"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)
Mistakes? Left Out? Let Ryan know...



	Recent Records	July 18, 2010	July 25, 2010
Bible Class		54	73
AM Worship		71	92
PM Worship		37	53
Wednesday PM		41	50
Contribution		\$1185	\$1934

Privileged to Serve	08/01/10 - AM	08/01/10 - PM	08/08/10 - AM	08/08/10 - PM
Greeters	Allen & Linda Griffith		Ken Makuta, Hank Wheeler, And Peggy Luker	
Scripture Reader Scripture Reading		Hank Wheeler Matthew 4:18-22		James Fuller
Opening Prayer	James Fuller	Jim Moore	Paul McClung	Michael Bickford
Wait on Table	Ken Maninger*, Garrett Barnum John Barnum, Ken Makuta	Ken Maninger	James Thomas*, John Barnum Gene Bannister, Hank Wheeler	James Thomas
Closing Prayer	Gene Bannister	Tom Wilcox	Ken Makuta	Matthew Churchwell
Attendance Cards	Chase Churchwell Seth Smithey		Chase Churchwell Seth Smithey	
Wednesday Devotionals	August 4 Jim Moore	August 11 Don Smith	August 18 James Fuller	August 25 Ken Makuta

Studies For The Week of August 1st:

Sunday Class.....1 Corinthians (Chap. 11-12)

Wednesday Class*Amos (Chap. 9) & Hosea*

Wells of Water

Our desire should be like the Psalmist whose soul thirsteth for God (Ps. 42:1-2); the reason why is easy to see in the contrasts of various wells of water recorded in the Bible:

- Psalm 63:1** – contrast between a dry, thirsty land that offered nothing and God which offered great blessings (Ps. 63:4, 8). We must be reminded that there is no well to drink from apart from God (cf. Jer. 10:23; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 1:3; Rev. 2:10).
- Jeremiah 2:13** – yet, some would turn from God to idolatry even as the prophets warned them they they were turnign to emptiness:

God:	Cisterns:
Revealed to them	Carved out themselves
Fresh water	Stagnate wate
Abundant supply	Limited supply
Flowing water	Broken, holds no water

- How many carve out their own wells for fulfillment in money, fame, sinfulness, immorality, violence, drugs/alcohol, etc?
 - None quench your thirst (Heb. 11:25; Gal. 6:7-8; Eccl. 12:13).
- John 4:10, 11, 1, 14** – The woman at the well only thought of that which was physical, even in her question of worship (v20); but Jesus wanted her to think of what was spiritual (v24).
 - He could offer water springing up into eternal life but water from this physical well only satisfied thirst for a moment.
 - Are we concentrated on what is physical/temporal or spiritual/eternal (Matt. 6:19-21, 33; Col. 1-2).

Hints On Fishing For Men (Matthew 4:18-22)

Fishermen are usually interested in how to catch the most fish and are often enthusiastic about their task; as Christians we should have such zeal in being better fishers of men. Perhaps these tips will help:

- Go Where the Fish Are** – Be among the people and the lost teaching them at every opportunity (cf. Lk. 5:1-4; Matt. 9:10-12; Lk. 19:10; Acts 8:4, 31-39; 13:14; 16:1, 30-34).
- Associate with Great Fishermen** – Learn from others and do likewise (Matt. 4:17-20; Acts 4:13).
- Use Ingenuity** — see what works; don't compromise the message but adapt to different hearers (1 Cor. 9:109-22; Col. 4:6; Jude 22-23).
- Follow the Guide Book** – we have God's word to guide us in every good work and to teach about salvation (1 Tim. 3:14-16; Acts 20:32, James 1:21).
- Use the Best Bait** — what works? 1 Cor. 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:2; the gospel, the drawing power of God unto salvation is what works and what people need to hear (John 6:44-45; Rom. 1:16).
- Don't Get Discouraged** – even great fishermen come back empty-handed sometimes; don't give up (Gal. 6:9; Rev. 2:10; Lk 5:5-6; Matt. 13:3-9; John 6:66; Heb. 12:1)

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4th & Stewart church of Christ
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Return Service Requested

CHRISTIAN MEDIA RESOURCE GUIDE

Brad Harrub, Ph.D. and Jim Palmer

As Christians, husbands, fathers, and editors of *Think*, we never want to come across as advocates for increased media exposure. But we also recognize that not all media is bad. As men who have little free time, we can appreciate the pleasure of just "vegging" with our families and watching a good movie. Thus, we wanted to give our readers some recommendations for those nights when you are craving some popcorn and you need a few laughs.

There is a growing trend that many Christians are taking advantage of in an effort to protect their families from sinful media. Rather than turning on the television or stopping in at the local theater and "hoping" the show is wholesome and entertaining, some families are proactively opting to do some homework prior to making the trek to the theatre or popping in a video.

The most universally recognized rating system for movies is put out by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). One would be hard pressed to deny that this system has changed to allow more immoral material into once "family-friendly" ratings. Even a Harvard study indicated the MPAA has allowed more violence and sexually explicit content into films with a lower rating than those of a decade ago. Thus, this rating system is not a good barometer for Christian families—at best serving as a starting point in a "review process."

Other steps in the process of screening and filtering appropriate media for yourself and your family should include one or more of the following.

REVIEW GUIDES

MOVIES

Kids in Mind (<http://www.kids-in-mind.com/>) This system gives three numerical designations that allow parents to quickly discern the content of a particular movie. The scale is 1-10 with 10 being worst. The three categories are: 1) Sex and Nudity; 2) Violence and Gore; and 3) Profanity. An example of their numerical rating would be 3.4.1 (The rating given for *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs*). By clicking on that particular movie, you can learn the specific scenes that lead to their ratings.

Christians Spotlight on Entertainment (<http://ChristianAnswers.Net/spotlight/>) This is a DVD club (similar to a book-of-the-month club) that promotes "mom-selected/mom-approved movies." Their story is that of a mom who worked in the

movie rental industry, only to see firsthand "the destructive influence of movies and television on American families from the front lines." But it was only when she became a mom for the first time that she despaired of the lack of dependable, wholesome "family" entertainment. She found that most TV programs and movies contained images and content inappropriate for family viewing.

Screen It! (<http://www.screenit.com/>) According to their Web site: "We are a small but growing team of reviewers who are not affiliated with any political, social, or religious group thus assuring that we'll provide unbiased reviews ... We started this service after so many parents asked whether certain movies would be okay for their children ... After checking around, however, I found that there wasn't a way for parents to find out about the content in movies or videos (especially in an unbiased way), and that most didn't trust the MPAA ratings (G, PG, etc...)"

Moral Metric (<http://moralmetric.org/>) According to their Web site this company offers movie reviews "designed to give you the tools to make a quick decision about the moral content and value of a movie. You can quickly look at the light system or read the bottom line to understand the positive and negative aspects of a movie. We do the in-depth research so that you can find a simple answer about the movies your family wants to watch. **Each review has four parts:** 1) Light System with an associated number; 2) Bottom Line; 3) What reviewers are saying; and 4) Links to More Reviews. The Light System works like a traditional stop light: green means go; yellow is caution; and red means at least stop and look carefully. The black light represents movies that have no moral value, and are not fit for any audience."

Plugged In Online (<http://www.pluggedinonline.com/>) "Shining a Light on a World of Popular Entertainment."

TELEVISION

On January 1, 1997, a new rating system went into effect on television programs due to the amount of sexual content, graphic violence, and strong profanity that was showing up in regular prime-time television shows. (available at www.tvguidelines.org) However, similar to our opinion of MPAA, we feel it makes more sense to do our own research at a site like the one below.

Common Sense Media (<http://www.common-sense-media.org/>) This is a great site that not only reviews television, but also movies, video games, music, and books! Their site states: "We exist because media and entertainment profoundly impact the social, emotional, and physical development of our nation's children. As a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization, we provide trustworthy information and tools, as well as an independent forum, so that families can have a choice and a voice about the media they consume."

VIDEO GAMES

Unlike movies and television, video games are rated according to the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). The ESRB ratings are designed to give parents concise information regarding the content of the games. The ESRB ratings are composed of two components: 1) rating symbols, which recommend age appropriateness; and 2) content descriptors, which indicate things that caused the ratings or things should be of concern to parents.

EC	Early childhood	T	Teen
E	Everyone	M	Mature 17+ only
E10+	Everyone 10 years and older	AO	Adults only

Guide2Games (<http://www.guide2games.org/>) According to their Web site, "Christian Spotlight's Guide to Games exists to assist gamers and parents in making wise decisions in their choice of electronic games. Many games contain objectionable material, behavior, and attitudes. Although some game companies provide a simple rating system, it is not based on a Christian worldview."

Christ-Centered Gamer (<http://www.ccgr.org/reviews-mainmenu-31>)

Family Friendly Gaming (<http://www.familyfriendlygaming.com/>)

Far too many resources exist for parents to take a "blind eye/head in the sand" approach. While some of the available resources cost money, others are free and very user friendly. Parents would do well to keep a list of trusted sites like these handy and put them to use regularly. Parents should also never lose sight of the fact that the Bible is the best resource guide and rating system! ▲