


Insight Into

May / June 2024



“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

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Insight Into

General Information

Insight Into is the official youth periodical of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations in the United States and Canada.

As a Reformed magazine, *Insight Into* seeks to promote the knowledge of the truth and to give biblical guidance to young people in their daily lives.

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and Rev. John Owen

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MEDITATION

Friends of the Unjust Mammon

What is the meaning of the conclusion of the parable about the unjust steward?

Rev. B. Labee

Suggested reading: Luke 16:1-8

Worldly goods

Many parables are not easy to understand. Certainly the images are very striking, and the explanation seems clear. But when the disciples wanted to know why their Master taught through parables, Jesus said, *“Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given”* (Matthew 13:11). The parable of the unjust steward from the gospel according to Luke’s description (Luke 16:1-8) ends in several lessons. We are now only pointing out the first two. First of all, the children of the world, people who seek only the things of this world, are designated as “more careful” or wiser above the *“children of light.”* We read in verse 8: *“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”*

Each person receives a portion of control over the goods of the great Owner. It turns out that we are all committing “mismanagement,” as the accused steward in the parable. Many goods are not (entirely) legally obtained or are not used properly. However, every human being will be released from the position of steward in God’s time. If we are going to learn that, the question arises: “What should we do with our earthly possessions in the short time we have left?”

The Saviour points to the steward who makes friends! By reducing the debts of all debtors, he will bind them warmly to himself. This steward is praised for his active care for the future. *“Children of light,”* who seek the heavenly riches through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, must learn from the worldly people who are only busy with their retirement.

Heavenly riches

But there is more to come! The words of verse 9 state: *“And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into the*

everlasting habitations” (Luke 16:9). What does that mean?

Mammon is a description for the power of money and goods, linked to power and dominion. The name comes from an ancient idol with great jaws and large grasping hands. A paragon of scraping and sweeping together, a model of selfishness and gold fever.

Now we cannot serve God and mammon, but apparently, we can serve God with mammon. Or should we say: A true Christian does not serve mammon, but mammon serves them? Simply put, in the mild issuance of the gifts and goods we possess lies joy and blessing. It gives connection to all kinds of people if we do to all and most of all to the household of faith. And if all worldly goods are left behind at death, it will turn out that heaven knows of our stewardship. The text actually means that there will soon be people who will testify about this fruit of grace. Apparently dealing with money and goods is not neutral but linked to our eternal future!

Let this also be clear: Our gifts are not grounds for salvation, but they belong to the way of salvation. Reader, will it be spoken to us later: *“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”* (Matthew 25:21)?

“Oh my soul, examine well into your real state and condition before God! Do not be satisfied with how much you know, but see what effect the knowledge which you have attained has upon the heart and life! Are you acquainted with your fallen state by nature, and your added wretchedness through actual transgression? If this awful truth has been admitted into your understanding, so far it is well. But rest not here. This is merely intellectual light, if its rays extend no further. Search and see whether its piercing beams have reached your conscience, and, like forked lightning in the midst of Sinai’s thunder, struck you with conviction and dismay. Like Saul of Tarsus, has it struck you to the ground, and laid you low in the dust of deep humiliation? Without this self-abasing experience of the total corruption of your nature, and this heart-humbling sense of your own extreme depravity, all your knowledge is merely human, “taught by the precept of men,” and leaves you in a state of spiritual insensibility; the more dangerous, because the more liable to make you contented with the barren knowledge of your condition, and to substitute the shadow for the substance.”

~ Rev. Thomas Reade (1776-1841)

There is no Such Thing as Sin Culture

Rev. P. van Ruitenburg

Look around you through the lens of the Bible. In today's Western culture, there is hardly any place for the word "sin." This is a religious word that irritates many, and modern youths do not use the word "sin." Nowadays people are not talking about sin but about what is acceptable or not. You have to respect each other's choices, you can't judge anyone, you have to be tolerant. However, when you use the word sin, you are expressing bigotry, which is no longer allowed today. You have to respect people. The only people you can condemn are the people who still talk about sin and are therefore intolerant. Rather inconsistent, I would think.

Sadly, the concept of sin is also fading among church youth, and not only among young people. As churches, we cannot keep this relativization of the kind of thinking out. It comes in through the cracks. The media, the newspaper, books, movies, friends, or neighbours influence us and everything it breathes more and more the spirit of relativism. There is no black and white, no good and evil. Calling something a sin is close to discrimination! Even though church youth do not go that far, we are slowly being eaten away and it is becoming more and more difficult to convince you that something is sin, the sin against a holy but benevolent God. It is part of the end times, of the time predicted in the Bible, that young people no longer take their parents seriously and that it is more and more about our pleasure, while the (young) people who keep God's commandments are despised as pious.

The time is approaching when your status will become higher the more daring and indifferent you are. Be aware that young people are having an increasingly difficult time in today's world, especially if they still dare to call sin "sin," and they do not want to participate. Count on falling by the wayside.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good" (2 Timothy 3:1-3).

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 17:15).



Choosing a Life Partner

Mr. J. Van Der Brink

One of the most important parts of a young person's life is when they begin dating and looking for a life partner. The choices made in those few years can lead to a life of misery or a life of satisfaction. Choosing a life partner can be a very emotional experience, sometimes filled with heartbreak and disappointment, and often uncertainty. It is often not until much later that one can see the wisdom or folly of choices made.

The book of Ruth contains an account that provides much instruction for young people. It is an account of a young woman named Ruth who was brought by remarkable circumstances to Canaan and eventually to a desire to become the bride of a wealthy man named Boaz. Ruth came out of a heathen country; she had lost everything in her life, and there was nothing more for her to do but to lay pleading at the feet of a rich Boaz. This instruction shows the way Ruth as a spiritual bride is brought to see her need, and then later becomes united to Boaz who is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. We hope that our young people understand and may experience that lesson in their own hearts and lives.

But there is also some practical instruction in this narrative. Part of that instruction is seen when Boaz goes to sit in the gate of the city to speak there with the nearer kinsman and with the elders of the city. After hearing from the nearer kinsman that he did not wish to marry Ruth, Boaz publicly calls for all those assembled to testify of what they have heard. And they said, "We are witnesses." And then they blessed Boaz in the name of the Lord. In other words, they approved the intentions of Boaz and they wished him well. They hoped that his marriage to Ruth would be blessed by the Lord.

Young people, there is something important to observe here. When you begin to seek a partner in life, first of all, begin that search on your

knees. Ask the Lord to give you a good husband or a good wife, and ask that He would lead you to that person, and prosper you in your way. And then seek the advice and direction of your parents and those mature adults who know you and who know others. Seek a partner that you can know is the right person for you. That may not become immediately apparent, but there are some practical guidelines to observe.

For one thing, do not become involved with a person of a different religion or of no religion. Often young people do not realize how religion controls almost everything we do in life. Mixed marriages lead to mixed messages to children. Many times, children end up with an empty religion or no religion at all. It is true that the Lord can prevent that from happening, and sometimes that has happened. But do not make the exceptions the rule. Seek for a relationship where you can feel completely one with your partner in religion. Many older people realize, too late, the mistake they made here.

For another thing, be careful where you go to find a partner. Do not expect the Lord to lead you to a good spouse by going to places of vanity. You can avoid a lot of heartache and disappointment by looking in places where you are more likely to find someone who has the same principles and religion as those with which you have been raised. Some have proceeded, thinking they can lead a partner to the church, but it more often turns out the opposite.

Sometimes relationships that are forming are filled with warning signs and troubles. You and perhaps others can see that it just does not seem to go well. There is always some underlying issue which causes turmoil and strife. This may well be an indication that this person is not meant to be your life's partner. Do not persist and think it will get better. It probably won't.

Also, ask yourself if this is the person that you would like to make happy. Love is not about pleasing yourself, but about pleasing the other person. Often there is a mistake made here. When both partners desire to please the other person, not for selfish reasons, but out of love, there is a foundation for a good marriage.

Finally, in all seriousness, ask the Lord for His help and guidance. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Try to do that honestly and openly before Him. Then observe how the relationship goes. If your parents or others see a problem, pay attention. Ask a trusted friend. Ultimately, of course, the decision is yours. But there are many marriages today that end, or are full of troubles, because mistakes have been made when they were developing.

May the Lord bless each of you and grant unto you a life partner in His favour, that you may long live together in all godliness and holiness.

Leviathan

“None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before Me?”

(Job 41:10).

Mr. Steve Timmer

In Scripture, many animals are mentioned. Particularly in the last part of the book of Job, God asks Job many questions of which a variety of animals and their unique characteristics are pondered. Beside animals, God asked Job to explain aspects of the weather, the snow, the frost, the dew, and the several star constellations. He spoke of the horse which goes fearlessly into battle, and the majestic flight of the eagle high up in the mountain with its keen eyesight. The result of these many questions caused Job to be humbled and to exclaim, *“Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further”* (Job 40:4-5).

After Job’s humbling confession, God instructed Job in His great power to abase the proud. After this, two particular animals of fierce size and strength were introduced. One was named behemoth and the second was named leviathan. The first was a large land animal and the second a sea dragon with remarkable characteristics. Let us examine this second creature, leviathan.

The book of Job was written just after the flood. In the flood, multitudes of giant animals were rapidly buried and became fossilized. These fossils are a testimony of the destruction of the world before the flood. We can see fossil graveyards in places like Dinosaur Provincial Park in Alberta, Canada, and Dinosaur National Park in Utah. Not only do we find fossils all over the earth, but we also find flood rock covering three-quarters of the earth’s surface. Flood rock is evident in places like the Grand Canyon, or the gorge cut by the Niagara River north of the Niagara Falls. God’s justice is seen in the very rocks and landscape all over the earth. Though man denies the veracity of Scripture, he walks upon and witnesses the very truths God’s Word testifies of. What devastation sin has brought upon the human heart and mind to deny the obvious!

Two of every unclean animal were brought into the ark. This implies that the creatures living after the flood were among the kinds on the ark. Of course, not all animals needed to be in the ark, because many water-dwelling creatures like whales, sea urchins, starfish, corals, and fish could

survive in the water during the flood. Leviathan seems to be one of these water-dwelling creatures that was referred to in Job 41.

The descriptions of leviathan in Job 41 are very broad. It was the fiercest animal that God ever made. *“Upon earth there is not his like”* (verse 33). This animal was so dreadful that *“none is so fierce that dare stir him up.”* According to the first six verses, this creature could not be caught nor tamed. *“Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?”* (verses 1-2).

The next several verses indicate that the very sight of this animal was so terrifying it would frighten a hunter and it would be best to avoid a confrontation with it. *“Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him? None is so fierce that dare stir him up”* (verses 9-10). Here, in the midst of this chapter, God stated that if no one dare stand before this creature He created, then so much more could no person stand before an angry God.

In the next verses, we hear that the teeth of this animal are so terrible that no person would dare to open its mouth which are like doors. Several times its scales are referred to as being large, impenetrable to weapons, and very close together. This animal could not be killed with the *“barbed irons”* (Job 41:7), spears, swords, or darts. Weapons were distained by this creature; *“darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear”* (verse 29).

Verses 19 to 21 are of particular interest. *“Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.”*



<http://gettyimages.com/detail/illustration/mosasaurus-skeleton>

The description of this creature continues in that it has a very large neck and when it raises itself up, mighty men are very frightened. When it moves in the water, the water

goes into convulsions. This creature is the *“king ... of pride”* (verse 34). Apparently, its size, strength, and fierceness combine together to make it the king of all created beings where it seems to hold this position in pride.

The catastrophic events that have occurred upon earth are a testimony to God's anger against sin. The worldwide flood that destroyed all humans except eight kept alive in the ark, the earthquake in China in 1976 that swallowed up 240,000 humans, the Indonesian tsunami of 2004 that consumed 230,000 on a Sunday, etc. all testify that there are enormous wages for sin. Besides what we see with our eyes and hear with our ears, who can comprehend the eternal destruction by our choice of sin? This too is far beyond our comprehension.

Is there hope in the midst of all this destruction and death? Scripture repeatedly directs us where hope lies. *"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark"* (Genesis 8:1). In the midst of death, God is ever mindful of His covenant. The world could not yet end; a Saviour would yet have to be born whose sacrifice would bring in an everlasting righteousness. This acceptable sacrifice with whom God was well pleased was typified a few verses later, *"And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done"* (verses 20-21). Though no good transpires from man, yet grace, righteousness, and salvation emanate from a good-doing God. Should we not flee to Him as the only refuge set before us in this world of chaos?

"The eye may be watery and the heart flinty. An apricot may be soft without, but it has a hard stone within."

~ Rev. Thomas Watson (1620-1686)

"A well-grounded assurance is always attended by three fair handmaids: love, humility, and holy joy."

~ Rev. Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

Flies



Mr. T. J. Pocock

This subject came to me in reading a sermon by Mr. J. C. Philpot. Towards the end of his sermon, Mr. Philpot said: “I was once travelling by the railway, and a gentleman got into the carriage who appeared to have been fishing. He soon took out his book of artificial flies, of which he seemed to have a large and beautiful assortment. As he turned over leaf by leaf, a thought struck my mind as I looked silently on: “Ah, here is a fly for every fish that swims, differently made and differently coloured, for different seasons, different weathers, and different waters. Oh, what a picture is this of Satan and his book of artificial flies! How that angler for souls has a fly for every fish! How he knows exactly what fly to dance before our eyes! And when he handles his rod with all the artifice of which he is so complete a master, what but the grace of God can keep us from swallowing the hook?”

As some of you may not know how a fish can be caught with flies, I will try to explain. Many kinds of fish catch and eat the flies which fly just above the surface of the water. So what the fisherman does is he ties a little hook on the end of his line, carefully concealing it inside or under an artificial fly. Then, with his fishing rod he repeatedly “casts” his line onto the surface of the water and quickly pulls it off. His intention is that as the fly drops onto the surface of the water, and then quickly lifts off, a fish will see it and go after it, swallowing the fly and becoming caught on the hook.

Now, as Mr. Philpot pointed out, this illustrates something that is going on in our lives every day. The devil (or Satan as he is sometimes known) is continually seeking to catch sinners. This is very easy for him, because we all have a nature which loves sin. But as all people are different, Satan cannot catch them all with one temptation (or “fly”). It is not possible for me to point out to you every “fly,” but the Lord is able to do this for you. May He do so.

Especially with young people, Satan may use fashionable clothing as a “fly.” This is a snare, firstly because the most important thing is not how we look on the outside, but how we are inside. We may look very good in the eyes of the world, but be a very bad person inside – unkind, cruel, deceitful, jealous, proud, and hateful. It is also a snare when the fashionable clothing is contrary to the Word of God, because it is not modest or is contrary to Deuteronomy 22:5. As we look around, we can

see that many young people (and older ones) have been caught with this “fly.” The fact that we do see some people modestly dressed shows that it is still possible to purchase such clothing if there is the will so to do. If you are given the fear of God, you will desire to do what is right in His sight, not what pleases yourself or others.

Other “flies” are naturally attractive worldly possessions. One of the reasons for the present worldwide economic crisis is that people were ensnared in buying things that they could not afford. If we see an advertisement for something which we would naturally very much like to have, and if the seller offers to lend us the money to buy it, how easy it is to snatch after that “fly.” Today, it seems that for many, it is not sufficient to have, for example, a mobile phone – they must have the latest model. And one snare in this is that every technological advance encourages the user to waste more and more time using it. Mobile telephones and computers are very useful, but I sometimes wonder about young people with all their phone calls, text messages, e-mails, and so on. What I wonder is this – do you ever have communications from the Lord to your souls, and are you ever enabled to speak to Him on His throne of grace? That is vital. If we do not have that blessing, our life is only vanity and our death will be awful. Another of Satan’s “flies” in our present day is the Internet. This can be a very subtle and powerful snare. It is a vast source of information, and a useful tool in studying, purchasing, and doing business. But how easy it is to “click” from one thing to another. What interesting things we may find for our fallen natures, which have a great love of being entertained. So many hours are wasted, and our minds are filled with vain, unprofitable things (or even worse). But because it is so attractive to our fallen nature, we may become ensnared, and fall for it again and again.



Is There a Biblical Use of Technology?



Norwich Modern Media Committee

Today's world has been inundated with technology. Whether we are in an office at home, teaching at school, learning in the classroom, working in a hospital, busy in a meeting with people from across the world, looking at crop yield in the combine, or at the end of a long flight and ready to land, we are either using or benefiting from changes in innovation and enhanced technology. These uses of technology are appreciated, even by people in the Reformed circles. However, with all this “harmless” technology comes a new stream of modern media. Then “harmless” technology turns into a complete waste of time.

In the past, we have been very guarded against modern media, just as the television was rightly condemned. There was justified concern that the endless scrolling would draw viewers into sin, wasting their precious time, and gradually lead to viewing of questionable channels. However, the highspeed internet with access to anything has brought a different “television” into our homes. It's not just the channels that providers have decided to “show,” but even more so, you can find whatever you want, whenever you want.

So, the question comes, is there a proper use of technology? It is difficult to argue that technology is wrong. We all seem to appreciate it when the airplane needs to land in low visibility. We all seem to appreciate it when someone needs surgery where precision could make a difference between life and death. The question shouldn't be about the technology itself, but rather the use or misuse of technology. We may use technology, but we may not abuse it.

Let's look at what examples the Bible provides. In the Old Testament, there are many references to the smelting and refining of silver. In Jeremiah

6:29, it is used as an image to call the attention to Israel. Solomon writes of this in Proverbs 17:3 and 27:21. Malachi 3:3 speaks of the refiner's fire: *"And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."* Silver was not found in or on the ground ready to be used. Silver had to be refined, and could be made into a bright metal, able to come to a mirror-like polish. Moses had to make two trumpets of silver (Numbers 10:2). The trumpets were used to call Israel together. Moses must have known about the refining process, likely having learned about this in Egypt. It was a proper use of "technology" at that time. Much later in Acts 19, we read of the only silversmith in the Bible, Demetrius. He apparently belonged to a guild of craftsmen, and he made silver shrines of the goddess Artemis. Clearly this was an improper application to the refining of silver.

If there are few clear answers as to what is a proper use of technology, how are we supposed to look at technology today? The answer is that you need to consider a biblical worldview. Our worldview will influence the way we use technology and use modern media. Are we being pilgrims in the world? Are we seeing how close we can live with the world, or are we seeing how much of the worldly baggage we can leave behind? "A good example of an attitude which belongs to the pilgrim is that of moderation. In our current society, moderation is hardly promoted, except perhaps when it comes to smoking, alcohol use, or the sugar content in food and drink. When it comes to our money, homes, vehicles, recreational vehicles, clothing, pleasure, and vacations, there are very few voices actively promoting moderation."¹

Making good choices about technology in our families is more than just making a decision about using either Qustodio or Covenant Eyes. It's more than deciding how many hours of screen time you or your teenager should have. There are a number of attitudes that ought to be fostered and nurtured in a Christian home. You cannot purchase these attitudes, but rather they need to be planted by parents, nurtured in the home by the parents, and modeled by parents as well. The attitudes we must nurture in the home include but are not limited to temperance, resilience, and consistency.

Temperance

Temperance influences our entire life. It does not mean we need to go into hiding and dust off the rotary phone. Temperance is a measure that indicates how our heart cleaves to earthly things. By nature, we

¹ De Bruin & Hoogendijk-van Dam, *A Pilgrim in Media Land*, p. 10.

all cleave to the things of this world. But do we then tell our children, that's our human nature, so carry on? No! Temperance becomes evident in the characteristics of self-control and contentment. Solomon doesn't forbid good food and wine, but he does warn against gluttony, greed, and drunkenness.

The motto of the Epicureans was *"let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die"* (1 Corinthians 15:32). They intended to enjoy life to the fullest. That is precisely what social media tries to convince the viewer. Customers are lured with the promise of a world without limits; life to the fullest. Everything is at your fingertips. Offers appeal to our covetous nature. Today our young people grow up in a world of abundance, and our human nature is never satisfied. Maybe it's not even that we are looking for evil things, but when an activity devours hours of what could be quality personal and family time, are we being temperate? Then again, we ought to ask ourselves the question if what we are looking at is useful? Is there any merit to it? Do we spend just as much time reading God's Word and meditating on our spiritual well-being?

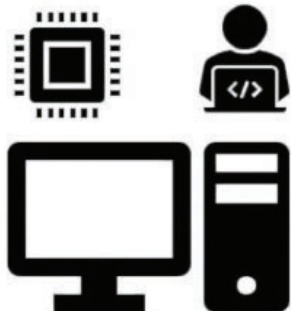
"And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7:31).

Resilience

Resilience refers to the ability to resist dangers and risks. Smartphones come with protections against different cyber risks as the user will have firewalls, passwords, privacy settings, etc. However, these protections are useless if the user does not adapt his media use accordingly.

We need to teach our children an awareness of our weaknesses (and we all have them), and the need to protect ourselves against them. The Bible accurately describes our heart as wholly corrupt. By God's grace, if that may be learned, then you will teach your children this, because you have experienced how weak we are by nature, and how prone we are to stumble. Young people, parents do not mean to be difficult when they say "no" to social media apps. They are genuinely concerned about you and your well-being. They understand more of who you are, because you were born in their image. Sadly, that image is black with sin.

Good intentions may be there to avoid and fight against temptations and to use our time wisely, but that is not enough. We need to stand firm like Daniel's friends who, with the Lord's



help, would not conform, but stood firm in the face of death. We also need to stand firm in what we believe. We need the armour of Ephesians 6 to protect us.

Resilience is inseparably linked to conscience forming. Knowing this, it is critical to form an open relationship with your children. This is not achieved by coming up with a long list of “do and don’t” rules. When our children and young people understand the deeper values, then they will also hopefully understand why there are certain “rules” in the household. That’s why waiting till your child is older before giving them access to a smartphone is wise. It gives our young people more time to mature.

“When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee” (Proverbs 2:10-11).

Consistency

The attitude of consistency comes from the Lord’s command to not serve two masters. We cannot live an “on-line” life where certain behaviours are accepted, and another life where we are seen by our neighbours and fellow church members. Rather, our media use and every detail of our life should testify that we seek to live to the Lord’s honour. God demands our whole heart. We cannot live a life where on Sundays we are members of the church, and during the week, we log in to all kinds of Internet entertainment or waste our time with endless reels.

In the raising of our children, we have to be alert that we do not allow them to become accustomed to sin. When we become accustomed to seeing sin, Satan is gaining a stronger foothold. We will only keep our distance from sinful behaviours if we are convinced that the behaviour is sinful. Therefore, if it is not to God’s honour, or the good of those around us, we should avoid it.

It is also counterproductive as parents to tell your children one thing, but live another. We as parents need to lead by example. We cannot raise a wall on a sandy foundation. If our life is not an example of prudent media use, all our efforts to train our children in prudent media use will fail.

“A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8).

Conclusion

By now you realize that we keep coming back to the same conclusion. Our media use has everything to do with what we set our heart on in this life. Media use cannot be detached from our deepest convictions.

This article does not come down hard on modern media, nor make a strong argument to avoid modern media. Instead, we wish to make clear our

responsibility as parents, that it is to show our children by our example that our worldview and actions need to be supported with a biblical viewpoint. Pray for those teachable moments. We must show our children the dangers of these things, for they only have one soul to lose. It is also important how we explain this to our loved ones. Maybe the question arises: If there are so many negative aspects to modern media, would it not be better to shun this media?

However, there is another side to this. Media use is unavoidable in our day. We all have it in our homes and employment. Of course, we could throw out all our smartphones, email, the Internet, and computers. However, we need to go through the world and yet not be of the world. The use and misuse need to be controlled, for we all have evil hearts.

We need to teach our children to be wise in their use of media, just as we teach them to look both ways before they cross the street, and just as we teach them not to go along with strangers anywhere. We need to lead by example.

The root of evil is within us all. Pleasure, honour, and favour in the eyes of man are dangerous snares. Therefore, it is not enough only to point young people to the dangers of the web. It is also important that we demonstrate how to use technology and social media in a correct and positive way. Remember that Satan works extra hard to keep our young people from meditating on the Word of God.

This is by no means an exhaustive study on the biblical attitude towards media use. However, hopefully it provokes some thought. May we as parents be more on our knees begging the Lord for wisdom and His caring and protecting hand, but above all that He would be pleased to work in the hearts of our children and youth, for His Name's sake. May our young people also reflect on how modern media seeks to control our lives by feeding us with endless advertisements, trying to convince us that with one thing or another, we will find happiness. What a stark contrast to what we hear on Sunday in God's house. May we learn to seek for that one and only true happiness.

"When men can live and plod on in their profession, and not be able to say when they last experienced any living sense of the love of God, or of the privileges they have in the blood of Christ, I do not know how they can keep themselves from being ensnared."

~ Rev. John Owen (1616-1683)

God's Word our Rule



Rev. George Swinnock (1627-1673)

Every part of divine worship must have a divine precept. As the first command teacheth us what God is to be worshipped, so the second command teacheth in what way He will be worshipped. The tabernacle and all the instruments thereof, yea, the very snuffers and ash-pans, were to be made exactly according to the pattern in the mount (Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:5), typifying that all the exercise of worship used by the church, whether in doctrine or discipline, must be conformed to the written Word (Galatians 1:8). Our religion must be not only rational but regular; our worship must be both universal and canonical. *“As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them”* (Galatians 6:16). The saints’ service must be word-service (Romans 12:1); so the word is rendered by our translators, *“the sincere milk of the Word”* (1 Peter 2:2). The institutions of Christ, not the inventions of men, are the rule of worship. Our work is not to make laws for ourselves or others, but to keep the laws which the great Prophet of His church hath taught us. That coin of worship which is current amongst us must be stamped by God Himself. We are to be governed as the point in the compass, not by the various winds (the practices of former ages, or the fashions of the present generation, which are mutable and uncertain), but by the constant heavens. Our devotion must be regulated exactly according to the standard of the Word. It is idolatry to worship a false god, or the true God in a false manner. Men indeed are no sooner plucked out of the pit of atheism, but

they presently climb the high places of superstition, delighting to go from one extreme to another. I have read of a popish lady in Paris, that when she saw a glorious procession to one of their saints, cried out, “O how fine is our religion beyond that of the Huguenots! They have a mean and beggarly religion, but ours is full of bravery and solemnity.” But as heralds say of a coat of arms, if it be full of fancy things and devices, it speaks a mean descent; so truly that manner of worship which is mingled with men’s inventions speaks its descent to be mean – namely, from man. *“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”* (Isaiah 8:20). Such may serve God with more pomp than others, but I am confident they serve Him to less profit than others. *“In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matthew 15:9). Their worship is in God’s account no worship. They who made temples, altars, and ceremonies of their own heads, thought that they had remembered God, but He tells them plainly that they had forgotten Him (Hosea 8:11-14). Men manifest abundance of arrogancy in undertaking to prescribe newer and neater ways of worship than God Himself, as if they excelled His Majesty in wisdom; but little do they think how exceedingly by such practices they provoke Him to fury. *“In their setting of their threshold by My thresholds, and their post by My posts ... they have even defiled My holy name by their abominations that they have committed; wherefore I have consumed them in Mine anger”* (Ezekiel 43:8). See also Ezekiel 6:9 and 2 Chronicles 7:20.

