

Remembering Your Creator

Lesson 1: Entertainment and Recreation

This first study concerns a matter that confronts the young Christian, every week, if not every single day. Before the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood set in, youth affords us more time than ever for entertainment and recreation. At the same time, however, we are the most susceptible to peer pressure, following the will of the majority in order to avoid sticking out or seeming different.

Contrary to popular belief, there are many forms of entertainment which are perfectly wholesome. One does not have to give up fun in order to live godly. Still, the majority of your friends and classmates are going to indulge at least a little in things that are not good.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Many people under the age of thirty literally spend hours each day on their computers, an invention that is neither good nor bad by its nature. What we do with the computer makes it good or bad. List six wholesome uses for the home computer:

2. The Internet can also be a dangerous and sinful thing. List six uses of the Internet that involve sin:

3. Music has changed incredibly since your parents were young and it is unlikely that they have embraced the kind of music that you enjoy. The fact is that much of the popular music in their day had some suggestive lyrics and sinful ideas, just as today's music does. To be true to Christ, we are compelled to choose our music with careful discrimination. List some themes common to popular music of any kind that are corrupt:

4. What about so-called "Christian Music"? Some songs employ instruments but mention God without becoming worship songs that would invoke the lack of New Testament authority. Others are plainly intended for worship and should be avoided as much as singing with a piano in church services. List two passages that give an approved example or command regarding our musical worship that might help us sort out this difficult issue:

5. About 15 years ago, the Motion Picture Association of America added a PG-13 rating in between R and PG, a decision which has allowed teenagers increased access to movies with morally questionable content. Do you know what three things are most likely to earn a picture an R rating? List them:

6. PG movies are most always morally acceptable while R movies are almost always laced or filled with sinful images and language. The PG-13 movies require the most investigation. Web sites like www.screenit.com review the movies for such content and offer a great deal of help. What danger (if any) is there in attending movies with sinful themes and images (cf. Phil. 4:8-9)?

7. Modern magazines often recommend that their young readers engage in safe sex. What do they mean? What is safe sex according to the Bible (Heb. 13:4)?

8. Galatians 5:19 condemns lewdness as a work of the flesh. Lewdness is defined in part as the unchaste handling of males and females and indecent bodily movements. What danger does popular dancing create?

9. List three reasons why swimming is good:

10. Why then is swimming with friends of the opposite sex a spiritually dangerous proposition (cf. Matt. 5:27-30, 1 Tim. 2:9-10)?

11. Most everyone loves a party and it is evidence of popularity to be invited. While there are good things about most parties, there can also be snares there. List three:

12. What is there on television that is worth watching? What is better left unseen?

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Lesson 2: Raising Parents

INTRODUCTION

Nearly every young person figures he could do the job of parenting better than his mother and father do. When the time comes, however, to begin our own families, it seems that our parents were not so dumb after all.

The Bible is filled with examples of parenting, both good and bad, and numerous admonitions about the relationship of child to parent. The key words are respect and submission, nurture and admonition.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who is the first Father in all the Bible? When did his son and daughter go astray for the first time?
2. Did God expect that his children were going to live sinlessly perfect lives forever?
3. With most of his children—his creation—God grew quite dissatisfied, but with one man, he was very pleased. Who was he and why did he find grace in God's eyes (Gen. 6:5-9)?
4. Would it be reasonable for your parents to expect you to be perfect, even sinless? What do you think it is reasonable for your parents to expect out of you?
5. What was the fifth commandment of the law of Moses (Exod. 20:12)? What was the promise attached to it?
6. List three ways that we can honor our parents.

7. The apostle Paul makes reference to the fifth commandment in Ephesians 6:1. What is his command for the New Testament there?

8. What rules do parents have that are often hard or unpleasant to obey?

9. This same passage puts two qualifiers upon the command to obey our parents. What are they?

10. How does the phrase "in the Lord" limit how far we must go in obeying our parents (cf. Acts 5:29)?

11. If parents are not to provoke their children to wrath, is the parent in sin every time the child gets mad? What does the warning mean?

12. What are parents' top three favorite forms of corrective discipline?

13. In your own words, summarize the teaching of Hebrews 12:1-12, especially as it relates to why parents must chasten their children, no matter how unpleasant it may be.

14. At what point does the relationship change and the children can become less focused upon obedience to their parents?

15. What fate is promised to children who are disobedient to their parents (Rom. 1:30-32)?

16. What do we owe our parents later in life when they may find themselves in need (1 Tim. 5:4, 16)?

7. Is it possible for young women to be led into sin in much the same way by immoral young men?

8. Dating is also an opportunity to prove one's maturity to his or her parents. How?

9. While it is wonderful to date fellow Christians, that does not always work out. What opportunities for good come from dating people who behave morally but are not members of the body of Christ (Matt. 5:13-16)?

10. Like it or not, dating is eventually going to be about finding a mate, looking for a person with the right qualities. While many of those qualities will vary from person to person, there are some that we should all desire to find. What qualities should a potential husband possess according to Ephesians 5:25-33?

11. If a boy is physically or emotionally abusive while dating, what kind of a husband is he certain to make? Can you then divorce him on the ground of this abuse and marry another?

12. What kind of a qualities should the young man be looking for in a potential wife, according to the following verses?

- a. Eph. 5:33:
- b. Eph. 5:24:
- c. 1 Tim. 2:9-10:
- d. 1 Peter 3:4:

13. List a few dating activities that could lead to sexual immorality.

14. How does the Holy Spirit emphasize the importance of sexual purity in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8?

15. What is the wise thing to do when that temptation seems to be getting stronger?

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Lesson 4: Character

A few years ago, one of our prominent presidential candidates found himself embarrassed by the mistakes of his earlier adulthood. His supporters defended him despite the accuracy of the charges against him, by arguing that “character doesn’t matter.” Subsequently, the nation learned a long and hard lesson about how much character does count. Many standards might be used to define good character, but the Bible is best equipped to tell us what it is.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. List a few attributes that you believe make for good character.

2. Read Hebrews 13:18. What is required to have a good conscience according to this verse?

3. Honesty is probably the first attribute to come to mind in a list of what makes for good character. Honesty is not only telling the truth, but also doing what is true. How widespread would you estimate cheating is in schools today? Can it ever become so common that we would be permitted to join in?

4. Under what circumstances are people the most tempted to tell lies?

5. Consider the life of Joseph, especially during the time in which he was the overseer of Potiphar’s house in Genesis 39. How much did Potiphar trust Joseph (39:6)? How did Potiphar’s wife threaten the trust Joseph had accrued? How did Joseph respond to her?

6. Trust is obviously important in our relationships with our parents. By behaving honorably, we gain the trust of our parents and greater freedoms. What can we do to improve their trust in us?

7. Much of our character as a Christian is going to be defined in the integrity with which we hold our convictions. Define integrity in your own words, considering that God did not apply that term to Job until after he had withstood Satan's initial assaults (Job 2:3).

8. Character also means taking responsibility for our mistakes, since none of us can live perfectly. Is it easy to admit when we are wrong? Why is it wise to "bite the bullet" and admit it anyway?

9. Character is also dependent upon the purity of our speech. When we become known for impure speech, our reputations are ruined. Read the following passages and identify what kinds of speech are condemned.

- a. Eph. 4:25:
- b. Eph. 4:26:
- c. Eph. 4:29:
- d. Col. 3:8:
- e. 2 Thess. 3:11:

10. Anyone of us can let down our guard and fall short of our convictions from time to time. What happens to our influence when we are caught acting in poor character (1 Peter 4:14-16 and Matthew 5:13)?

11. Good character is also built upon hopefulness and optimism. Corrupt people often think that everyone else is as corrupted as they are and pessimism about everything takes over. How should our hopefulness in life affect our ability to live joyfully and with contentment (Phil. 3:7-15)?

12. Although sexual chastity has come up several times in this series, it bears repeating here. In just a few moments, a person can destroy his good reputation, perhaps forever. King David learned this lesson the hard way. What can we do to prevent falling into sexual sin (2 Tim. 2:22)? Be specific.

13. Good character is likewise destroyed by behavior that is both unlawful and immoral. Experimentation with mind-altering substances like alcohol and drugs often begins in the teenage years. What are the moral dangers of using such things?

14. Read Proverbs 23:29-35. At what point does alcohol become dangerous?

15. How much is good character worth (Prov. 22:1)?

16. How easy is it to get a good reputation back once it has been soiled?

17. When young folks get jobs, how seriously should they take them (Col. 3:23-24)?

18. When another person has become the target of name-calling and ridicule, how should the Christian respond (Matt. 5:21-22, Rom. 14:19)?

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Lesson 5: Ambition

Youth is a time to become what we are going to be, to sort out the things that matter to us and begin arranging our futures to accommodate those ambitions. Our world is focused upon fleshly advancement, material prosperity and dying with the most toys. While the Christian can take his place in school and business, he or she must do so with an overriding understanding that spiritual priorities must remain paramount.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Besides spiritual considerations, what is your chief ambition in life? (Consider professional, business or homemaking pursuits for your answer.)

2. What will be required to achieve what you want to become?

3. Is your chief motivation in this pursuit the desire to get rich? Consider 1 Timothy 6:6-10. Why is such a motivation a bad one?

4. Is money the root of all evil? What evils will people commit in the pursuit of money?

5. What does Paul say is "great gain" in 1 Timothy 6:6? How much does it cost?

6. How is contentment made a part of our character (Phil. 4:11-13)?

7. Consider the account of Jesus's meeting with the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-31. What makes it hard for a rich person to enter God's kingdom?

8. The ambitious Christian must be careful not to focus so much on material advancement that he values his life more than his soul. Consider Revelation 3:14-22. How were the Laodicean saints rich? How were they poor?

9. Consider Revelation 2:8-11. How were the Smyrnan saints rich? How were they poor?

10. Advancement at school and work can be pursued safely, so long as one's priorities are firmly established and consciously observed. What things would take precedence over occupational ambition?

11. How can school work interfere with a priority on God?

12. How can a job interfere with a priority on God and family?

13. What kind of "understanding" is meant by Proverbs 23:4?

14. List a few purely godly ambitions that we might have.

15. Sometimes, our ambitions in earthly matters do not work out the way we plan. Can we still be successful human beings anyway? What is the whole duty of man anyway (Eccl. 12:13)?