

Intro:

Last week we answered a question about why immorality is more damaging than other sins.

This week we are going to turn to a question that is somewhat related, or perhaps a subset of the question is related.

Here is the question: “What should Christians do about media?”

How to answer this question?

I take “media” to mean things like movies, music, video games, internet, etc.

My Merriam Webster dictionary gives these definitions:

1. a medium of cultivation, conveyance, or expression¹
2. Mass Media (or members of the mass media)

Under Usage, it has this comment:

“The singular *media* and its plural *medias* seem to have originated in the field of advertising over 70 years ago; they are apparently still so used without stigma in that specialized field. In most other applications *media* is used as a plural of *medium*. The great popularity of the word in references to the agencies of mass communication is leading to the formation of a mass noun, construed as a singular (there’s no basis for it. You know, the news *media* gets on to something - Edwin Meese 3d) (the *media* is less interested in the party’s policies - James Lewis, *Guardian Weekly*) .”²

These days, I think we mean more than simply the press (or MSM, “main stream media”)

¹ Frederick C. Mish, ed., *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

² Mish, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*.

A website called “Techopedia” says:

“Media is the plural form of medium, which (broadly speaking) describes any channel of communication. This can include anything from printed paper to digital data, and encompasses art, news, educational content and numerous other forms of information. Anything that can reach or influence people, including phones, television, and the Internet can be considered a form of media.”³

That covers about everything!

Our world is awash in media! In a sense, we could say media *is* our world.

I started looking through my notes and resources. It seems that there are subjects related to the question that I’ve taught over the years. In 2010, we had a lengthy Bible study on “Godliness and Worldliness,” which certainly touched on the theme. That was 13 years ago! None of you will remember it, even if you heard it the first time!

I don’t plan on resurrecting that whole series, but I may use material from its notes.

I plan to start to answer by laying some foundations, some of it is material you’ve heard before.

I. The reason we ask the question

A. The profound change brought about by conversion

2 Cor 5.17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Ep 5.8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

1Th 5.5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;

³ “Media,” *Techopedia* (blog), December 23, 2020, <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/1098/media>.

Rm 6.17-18 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

- B. Because of the change, we sense that the things of this world are alien to our new nature

¹ Jn 2.15-17 ¶ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.¹⁷ The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

By asking the question, “What should Christians do about media?” we are standing on a premise (proposition): there is something wrong with at least some of the media.

II. Recalling fundamentals of sanctification

- A. In November, when we were in 2 Peter, I gave a message on the “fundamentals of sanctification”
1. Basic premise: there are some things about sanctification (and worldliness) that Christians *automatically* understand (Spiritually discern)
 2. There is a Christian instinct that we need to turn away from the world (even Christians who don’t turn far away are aware of this)

B. The contrasts in Scripture between virtues and vices

1. The virtue lists

2 Pt 1.5-7	Gal 5.22-23	Jas 3.17-18	Phil 4.8
<p>2 Pt 1.5-7 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in <i>your</i> moral excellence, knowledge,⁶ and in <i>your</i> knowledge, self-control, and in <i>your</i> self-control, perseverance, and in <i>your</i> perseverance, godliness,⁷ and in <i>your</i> godliness, brotherly kindness, and in <i>your</i> brotherly kindness, love.</p>	<p>Gal 5.22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.</p>	<p>Jas 3.17-18 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.¹⁸ And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.</p>	<p>Phil 4.8 ¶ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.</p>

2.

3. The vice lists

Jas 3.14-16	Gal 5.19-21	1 Pt 2.1	1 Jn 2.15-17
Jas 3.14-16 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.	Gal 5.19-21 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.	1 Pt 2.1 ¶ Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,	1 Jn 2.15-17 ¶ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and <i>also</i> its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

4. Let's also consider each list in its context, putting the passages together as much as we can

- a. Gal 5.19-23
- b. Jas 3.14-18
- c. 1 Pt 2.1 and 2 Pt 1.5-7
- d. Phil 4.8 and 1 Jn 2.15-17

C. Some observations

1. Why spend so much time in the Scriptures here? To underscore the dichotomy between the Christian and the world (the flesh)
2. Christianity isn't just about being "nicer" than lost people (though we should be nice)

3. Christianity involves making decisions about the things of the world
 - a. Can we deny that “media” are infected by worldly attitudes and values?
 - b. Specifically: does music in our world exalt selfishness, jealousy and rebellion, or does it glorify God?
 - c. On the internet, do we find anger, immorality, drunkenness, jealousy, envying? (At least in some elements)
 - d. What about video games?
 - e. Or any of the arts of man? (movies, books, painting, sculpture, podcasts, what have you...)
4. Since the world infects everything that man produces, Christians will have to make a decision to stop consuming media *at some point*

Conclusion:

We haven't come to a full answer yet. We are basically saying, “good question, come back next week for more.”

The thing is, if you think about the passages we talked about this week, you will see the answer in them. We are in a new life. We need to identify those things in our lives that are part of the old life and turn away from them.

Come back next week for more!