

PURITY IS POSSIBLE

7 Learning Discernment

Main Goal: Students will come away with a greater understanding of the importance of growing in discernment, and with practical tools to help them make wise choices when it comes to their media consumption.

Prep & Prayer: As you head into the last session, take a look over the last six guides and pray about whether or not there is anything you feel you should come back to during this meeting. Be mindful as you prep to also prayerfully consider your own discernment when it comes to what you watch, listen to and engage with.

REVIEW

What we talked about last week:

- We looked at different spiritual practices and developed a plan going forward to help them continue to move towards Jesus in all areas of their life.

Take-Home Follow-up:

- Your take home from last week was finding 2 or 3 ways you could be intentional about connecting and growing in your relationship with Jesus? What did you do? Did you find it helpful for connecting with Christ? Was it difficult to create space for your time with Jesus? What would you like to repeat, and what will you do different this week? What is one other practice you could try this week?

INTRO

Can you believe we're on our LAST guide!? Last week we looked at how we can be intentional about growing in our relationship with God. As we wrap up this part of our journey together, we want to talk about how we can practice discernment when it comes to what we watch, listen to, and how we engage with our digital world.

Warm Up Question: What's your favourite tv show? Movie? Artist?

What's the definition of discernment?

dis·cern·ment
/di'sərnmənt/

noun

the ability to judge well.

The Bible actually has a lot to say about how we should live in our digital world, especially when it comes to the content we experience, and the platforms we use. Our friend Walt Mueller sums up God's basic message to us about media consumption this way...

Because I love you, I tell you this: Imitate and think about me! Avoid imitating and believing those themes, messages, and behaviors that I say are wrong. They will slowly steal your heart, harm you, and destroy you. But go ahead and indulge yourself in and celebrate those themes, messages and behaviors that I say are pure, true lovely and admirable. Let me ask you this...does your music/media lead you closer to me and my ways? Or, does your music/media pull you away from me and my ways? Prayerfully and deliberately look at the world of all music/media through the "eyes" of my Word. Use your head to guard your heart.

Walt Mueller's ministry the Center for Parent and Youth Understanding is a fantastic resource when it comes to understanding culture. You should definitely check out his website at cpyu.org. Much of what we talk about in this session really comes from his teaching.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Think through the different media platforms (iPhone, TV, computer, gaming console, etc), that you use during your week.

What are the top 3 platforms you use?

What do you use each of those platforms for?

How much time do you think you use each of those platforms in a day, and in a week?

If you had to give up one of those platforms for 1 week, which one would be the hardest to give up? Why? Which one would be the easiest? Why?

GOD'S VIEW

Colossians 2:8 (NLT)

Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.

What is Paul's primary concern for us in this verse?

What do you think it means to be "captured" by empty philosophies?

We really want to emphasise the idea that we are never just being "entertained" by our digital world, but we are always being "educated". To be captured, is to begin to believe the lessons, values, and beliefs in our digital world that are contrary to God's lessons, values and beliefs.

When you think through our media/music/digital world, what are some of the primary lessons, values and beliefs that are consistently being promoted?

If your student is mature enough, try and get them to think beyond just content. Try to get them to think about things like what they post on instagram or snapchat, why they post, how others responses to their posts make them feel etc.

What are ways people can keep from being "captured" by empty philosophies and high sounding nonsense?

This is where you want to move them from simply "isolating themselves or turning things off, to thinking critically and making decisions that are discerning.

RESPONSE

The best way for us to respond is by learning to become good critical thinkers. Some people might say we need to “learn to discern” when it comes to our media/music/digital worlds. Our good friend Walt Mueller, has come up with three steps to becoming a good critical thinker.

Help your student be discerning about what questions apply to what part of their digital world. Certain questions are more about content of a song, movie etc. Certain questions apply to a platform, app or device.

Step 1: Discover

Take some time to think through either a piece of art (music, tv, movie etc), or a platform (phone, computer, TV etc.) or an app, and ask a few questions.

What you’re going to think through: _____

How much time do I spend listening to, playing, watching, or using it?

What do I observe about how it makes me feel or act?

What does it say about what is right or what is wrong with our world?

What does it say about how to make our world right?

Step 2: Discern

If we are talking about a song, show or movie, what is the main message being presented?

As a follower of Christ, what can I affirm about it?

As a follower of Christ, what should I not affirm about it?

Are there any negative consequences that could be experienced by how I engage it?

Are there any positive consequences that could be experienced by how I engage it?

Step 3: Decide

Do I need to change anything about how I am interacting/using/experiencing it?

What can I do this week, in response to what I have discovered?

Who can I tell to help hold me accountable?

TAKE HOME

Choose a song, movie, tv show, app, device, platform, and take some time this week to work through Discover, Discern, Decide regarding the item you have chosen. Over the next few weeks, create some space to talk about how the exercise went for you.

Since this your last week of this guide, spend some time talking about how these sessions together have affected you. What has been helpful? What has not been as helpful? What is one thing you have take away from these times together?

Finally, spend some time praying for each other. Thank God for what He has done over the weeks you have spent together. Thank Him that He will always be with you and for you. Ask Him to continue to give you the desire, strength and wisdom to pursue purity.

FIGHTER VERSE

Fight the Lie: Watching or listening to inappropriate music/media is no big deal. It won't really affect me.

Colossians 2:8 (NLT)

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PRAY to wrap up your time together!