
Words of Truth

Is Entertainment Authorized In The Life Of An Individual Christian?

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The Scriptures teach us that we must have authority for all that we say and do (Colossians 3:17). We have to be able to prove what is acceptable to the Lord (Ephesians 5:10). We should test what we are considering saying or doing and only hold to that which is good according to God (I Thessalonians 5:21). We have to be sure not to be selective in this process. We can do 99% right and that 1% wrong will cause us to be lost (James 2:10-12).

We also have to realize that there is a difference in what we may do in our personal lives and what we can do collectively. For example (I will use this example as it is CLEAR and IRREFUTABLE), an individual Christian is authorized to have sex (I Corinthians 7:1-5) whereas the local church cannot assemble to have sex. Thus, as we proceed in this study, let's be clear that we are talking about entertainment in the lives of individual Christians; NOT the church. We should all realize that the kingdom of God (the church; Colossians 1:12-18 and Hebrews 12:22-28) is not to be involved with social activities (Romans 14:17).

Having covered the two points we have discussed already, we should understand why the question of this article is important. We need authority for what we do in our lives. Many of us have televisions, gaming systems, etc. Many of us even share time together playing games and other "non-spiritual" things. Is this right? Of course, we should have those answers BEFORE we ever engage in such things (Romans 14:23), but some have never really asked these questions. For those of us who have studied these things, it is good to review them (cf. II Peter 3:1-2). So, does God permit us to do things other than work (Ephesians 4:28 and I Timothy 5:8), worship (John 4:23-24 and Philippians 3:3), and Bible studies (John 5:39 and Acts 17:10-11)?

Is It Wrong To "Enjoy" Carnal Entertainment

The Scriptures teach us not to be carnally minded (Romans 8:4-8). Yet, the Scriptures also say this: "*And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh*" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). God knows that we cannot always study and think about spiritual things. God knows that we all have a carnal side that needs attention. For example, God allows us to be married and care for the things of the world to fulfill the carnal desires of our mates (I Corinthians 7:32-34). Clearly, when sexually pleasing our mates, we are not worshipping God or studying His word. Sex is ALL about the satisfying of the flesh. While marriage is not solely about sexual pleasure (I Peter 3:7), sexual pleasure is a large part of why one gets married to begin with (Proverbs 5:18-19 and Hebrews 13:4).

While marriage is one thing that God has given us to fulfill our carnal desires, such is not all there is to discuss. God does not expect us to be “all work and no play”. We are Scripturally permitted to carnally enjoy the fruit of our labors (Ecclesiastes 2:24-26, Ecclesiastes 5:18-20, and I Timothy 6:17). We may spend time with people, even non-Christians (though there must surely be caution here; James 4:4), at carnal events such as feasts (I Corinthians 10:27-31). John the Baptist was “all about business”, but Jesus took time out for entertainment purposes (Matthew 11:18-19). Jesus attended social events such as a marriage (John 2:1-2). Jesus went to dinners (John 12:1-2). Jesus authorized taking a break and time for leisure (Mark 6:31-32).

There is not a Scripture that says, “relax and watch TV”. However, provided that what we watch is not filthy (Psalms 101:3 and Philippians 4:8), we have seen that we can rest and have time for leisure. There is no Scripture that says, “have your friends over for some game time”. However, we have seen that we can have our friends over and spend social time with them provided that we are not keeping the wrong company (I Corinthians 15:33 and II John 9-11).

Balancing The Issues At Hand

Obviously, God is supposed to be first and foremost in our lives (Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:37, and Colossians 3:1-4). Yet, God also gives us authority to have things in our lives other than Him. We may get married (Proverbs 18:22). We may love our wives/husbands (Ephesians 5:25 and Titus 2:4). We may have children (Psalms 127:3-5). We may take the time to train up those children properly (Proverbs 23:13-14 and Ephesians 6:4). Having a family is a distraction from worship and Bible study. However, it is authorized. From the beginning of the existence of mankind God has provided us with companions that take time away from Him (Genesis 2:18-25). We do not need to feel guilty when we enjoy the blessings God has given us.

The balance comes in when we have to realize not to allow these “distractions” to take precedence over our God. For example, God commands us to be hospitable people (Romans 12:13 and I Peter 4:9). Having people into our homes is not working to provide necessities, it is not worship, and it is not Bible studying. Yet, it is an authorized carnal activity. Yet, there is a balance. While we are expected to open our homes up for others and be hospitable, we cannot allow this AUTHORIZED activity to distract us from our spiritual responsibilities. Notice: *“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her”* (Luke 10:38-42).

Conclusion

The Scriptures we have examined prove that we may have entertainment in our lives. There are even times when spiritual things may lead to carnal entertainment (Luke 15:11-32). The caution is in not allowing these things to be our priority. We can enjoy the things of this life (Ecclesiastes 3:22) as long as they don't become our lives (I John 2:15-17).