



# THREE DAYS OF FOCUS

## Three Days of Focus: Session TWO MEDIA and DISTRACTIONS

*"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."—Philippians 4:8*

*"How many days have I gazed into the eye of the idol in my family room."—From TLB "Every Day Idol" from Thrift Store*

A few years back I decided to spend an evening with my family. It was a treasure being able to spend some much awaited, quality time with my mom, dad, and three younger brothers. After supper we retired to the living room and sprawled out to enjoy a relaxing video together. The film chosen was a familiar action movie that we had seen on various occasions but for some reason this time the idea of it made me flinch. I couldn't let go of the feeling so I suggested to the group, "Do you guys think there may be a little too much fowl language in this movie?" Everyone looked at me as if the thought had not occurred to them until right then. "I don't think it's too bad," responded one of my brothers, "I mean, it's not any worse than many other flicks we've seen lately, is it?" That seemed true enough but I still felt unsettled with the profanity which I vaguely remembered. We debated the matter for a moment more among ourselves. In the end we presented ourselves a challenge. We would watch the movie and count exactly how many curse words there actually were.

The movie began and we started to count. As the opening car chase scene began we each became stunned by what we heard. All of us had seen this movie but none of us ever realized how bad it was. In the first few minutes, we counted 36 profane words! It was at that time we turned off the TV and were convicted that something had to change.

How can good families who love God like my own become so conditioned to **not** notice so many curse words in the opening scene of a movie? Certainly we would remember if an actual visitor screamed obscenities within our home. However the paradox is that this same kind of profanity, violence and sensuality commonly enters our homes practically unnoticed on a television or computer screen.

In our culture the media can be one of the strongest distractions that exist in living our faith to its fullest potential. It is capable of gradually taking our attention off of what are *pure, excellent and praiseworthy things* and exchanges that attention for a colorful window that defines our perception of *morality, normality and reality*.

In short, the media often changes our focus from the DIVINE to the DISTORTED.

There are many ways that the media **DISTORTS** our perception of reality. Consider a normal sitcom you may have seen recently. Many of the comedic scenarios include unrealistic and abrasive dialogue between characters. People trash each other constantly and no one is hurt for any longer than the current episode. However, in real life our words have consequences. In the movies, assassins never run out of bullets, premarital sex is always okay, and accepted unbiblical lifestyles are the norm. Even “*reality TV shows*” are seldom real life situations but awkward situations with hand picked contestants to make the show interesting. This constant pouring of worldly ideas and points of view slowly began to change what we think is acceptable and real.

Now before we toss our television out a window let’s establish that media, music and internet of themselves are not bad things. In fact, there are lots of awesome uplifting movies, Christian songs and Godly websites. However, these “pure forms of media are becoming few in comparison to everything else we are bombarded with. Unfortunately, what often ends up happening is we are watching a nonstop commercial for the world and its values.

Compare this with what we ought to be meditating on: **God’s Word**. In his word we are given a perfect example of what a meaningful life should look like and the sort of things we should value. As you pursue his Word through reading the bible, it becomes increasingly more evident that this guideline for life is in stark contrast to things we absorb through the media.

Likewise, we can also lose touch with the fact that the rest of the world is not in the same bubble as we are. As we find comfort and relaxation in this “false reality on television” many are blindly unaware that there is a completely different world out there that is filled with children that God loves as dearly as us. Children we can bless if we would only give them the attention.

**Check out these verses! 1) Psalm 119:9-10  
2) James 1:26-27**

**What do these verses say about how you can keep our focus right?**

**What can you do to change your focus to “true religion”?**

Another way that the media can negatively impact our lives is it **DISTRACTS** us. By this I specifically mean that we often allow television, cell phones, music and the internet to hold us back from other more fruitful things we could be doing.

According to statistics, the average American places a comparably enormous amount of attention on different elements of the media. You may have discovered this from your own media survey among your youth group. According to one survey many youth spend 15-25 % of there waking hours engaged with some element of the media.

What a sad reality!

When I was living at my parent's home there was a time when my family always ate supper in front of the big screen. This robbed us our conversations and our real time together. Many people struggle to find time to exercise, finish school work or keep in touch with loved ones, but still know what's happening on American Idol or their favorite reality TV show. And the greatest tragedy of all is that many people make time for the TV but fail to make time to study the bible. As in the lyric in the song *Everyday Idol* says,

*When's the last time I ever thought to linger on some thought provoking scripture seems forever,  
where's the time?*

*Yet I bow down seeming daily to the eye which ever bades me. There's no tiresome dedication, we  
come willingly.*

God's word is powerful and capable of changing us. It is absolutely necessary for each of us to cast off our distractions and begin to read it! If we truly want to be radically different, we must allow God's Word to consume us more and more.

It's time to wake up and give God our all!

### ***The Good Stuff: Check out Romans 13:11-14***

- 1) *Why do you think that now is the time to wake up?*
- 2) *What are some ways that you can personally put aside the deeds of darkness?*
- 3) *What are some ways we can clothe ourselves with the LORD Jesus Christ?*

## ***Final thoughts from Travis Lee***

### ***Real and Radical***

Are you a Christian who wants to truly love Jesus with all you are? If so I want to challenge you with this thought. Imagine this same Jesus that you love showing up at your house on any given evening of the week. What would happen if he were to sit down on the couch next to you and watch television with you? Would this holy God be glorified by what you watch or would you have to apologize for some things? Would you have to change the channel?

*Being **real with God** starts with **realizing** something needs to change. What needs to change in your life and what are you prepared to do about it?*

Being radical is when you go against the norm of this world and do what it takes to be real. I have seen people throw away their TV sets to put God first. I have seen new Christians break their worldly CDs in half. People have given up their cell phone plans and used the money to sponsor children in third world countries. What do you need to do?

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