



*feeding...gathering...carrying...leading. (Isiah 40:11)*

Greetings, Family!

Bo recently ended the One Another series with *submit to one another*, and Stuart's last message was an exhortation not to quench the Spirit. I saw Sunday's message as a very practical application and testimony about one topic that has needed the exhortation of both those messages for my personal discipleship with Christ. For me the thing which commonly gains my attention and may contribute to a lack of submitting to God, as well as a quenching of the Spirit, is technological entertainment.

Now defining entertainment can be very broad. In its raw form it simply means something in which we take amusement or enjoyment. I referred more to its modern day technological forms – tv, movies, and video games but you could also include in that novels or types of social media. Entertainment can commonly be called a “gray area”, meaning that there isn't a black and white solution to this topic, so definitive statements can often be unhelpful and disputable. Much of Sunday's message, therefore, was shared from my own continued wrestling with this area in my life - my questions, temptations, and hope for maturity and growth in Christ when it comes to entertainment. Thus, if you were not there, I encourage you to listen to it if you find the topic intriguing.

One author on the subject, D. Brent Laytham captures well the impact this topic can have on our discipleship. “*In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, entertainment became a cultural superpower. That has, inevitably, inescapably impacted Christian discipleship, though not always in the most obvious ways. Unlike so many authors that focus on the content or message of our entertainments, I write with the conviction that entertainment's massive impact on us is rooted mostly in its mundane everydayness: in the way it shapes our subjectivism, affects our affections, cultures our choices, and permeates our possibilities. This power isn't accidental; as a commercial enterprise, entertainment indents to shape our patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting.*” ([iPod](#), [YouTube](#), [Wii Play](#), pg. 1) And therein lies its impact on discipleship, which also seeks to help us learn from Jesus how to think, feel and act in the world.

Years ago, the Lord highlighted something to me in the story of the golden calf which Aaron built for the people of Israel when Moses was on the mountain getting the 10 commandments. Each of the people of Israel was asked in Exodus 32 just to give their earrings of gold as a contribution. A small piece of something that was good, but in the hands of a bad desire it became an idol. Contrast that with the building of the tabernacle just a few chapters before in Exodus 25 when Moses asked the people similarly to give their simple possession gold, thread, linen - simple things but this time in the hands of a good desire to build the tabernacle of God. Two things stand out to me in these juxtaposing passages – first, it's the everydayness, the little, seemingly insignificant, good things that end up creating big places of worship and second, it's all about the offering those little things in relation to the will of God. God desires to enjoy life with me, but what little things am I giving day after day to the building of something that does not foster the relational joy of the Lord in my life?

It is foundational for me to remember that God created labor and leisure, and desires to be a part of both aspects of my life. Often leisure time, becomes me-time, and enjoying that time with God is not part of my mindset. But entertainment largely happens in stories, and stories are largely how God chose to communicate to His people. God is the greatest story teller! He is the Author, remember! There is something in us that longs for good stories, for The Good Story, and our Great Story Teller. Entertainment may help feed that deep part of us which is created in the image of God. Unfortunately, I found that many times my engagement with entertainment wasn't met as a relational gift from the Lord, but as a source -an end in itself, and therein was the heart of my issue.

Ephesians 5: 1-21 has been a valuable lens through which to assess my motives, desires and actions with entertainment. Here are some points I outlined on Sunday.

**1. Be Imitators of God (5:1)**

So how do we imitate God in entertainment? Sometimes I have to ask myself if it is even possible! But I think it is, it goes back to that motive that we saw in the building of the tabernacle and the building of the calf. Am I participating in this with God or apart from God? Can we enjoy this together? Whether for rest, education, community, teaching or for pure enjoyment? We can be imitators of God when it comes to entertainment! God and entertainment don't have to be seen on two opposite ends of the spectrum, two different spheres of life. I think this is when we get in trouble!

**2. Question Content (5:3-7, 11)**

I have largely been talking about motive or the underlying desire that brings us to entertainment. But we cannot ignore the concept of content, it is important. And this scripture honestly freaks me out a little! "Let it not even be named among you." Have NO fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." I don't fully have an answer to this question. I think it just needs to be left as a question we engage, instead of dismiss to the winds of legalism. This is where the grieving of the Holy Spirit might come in. Maybe it doesn't impact me, but how does it impact the Holy Spirit that lives within me?

**3. Redeem Time (5:15-17)**

On the other side of the coin from grieving the Holy Spirit, is quenching the Holy Spirit. This is where the issue of time may come into play. I can grieve the Holy Spirit with content of what I watch, and quench the Holy spirit with the time I spend watching. When time is such a desired commodity, one that I often feel I don't have much of, it humbles me to assess how I spend the free time I can spend watching forms of entertainment.

**4. Submitting to One Another (5:21)**

I have already referred quite a bit to submitting to God, instead of culture. But what about submitting our entertainment choices to one another? Due to the fact that it impacts us differently, it seems almost unfair to give someone else a right to offer advice on my choices. Ultimately, I fear submitting my entertainment choices to someone because I cringe at the thought of being judged. Which takes me to my last point...

**5. The Ultimate Invitation (5:8-10)**

"...finding out what is acceptable to the Lord!" What an invitation! We get to know what the God of the universe thinks about things?!?! The word "finding" is a present progressive verb indicating a continuing action. How perfect for this area of discipleship in our lives! Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord, is really good to do with other people! This spurs me to invite this topic into conversations with my friends and community. It isn't about judging what is good and bad in me, it is about discerning and judging together what is the will of the Lord. That makes submitting this to one another much easier to swallow.

As I bring this area of everydayness into relationship with God, it brings a whole new life to my leisure time! It is so good to know I serve a God who longs to kick-back and enjoy some movies with me every now and then, and as single woman, I've got to say that companionship means a lot.

In Pursuit of Christ,  
Monique