

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Quote: “The question is not, ‘How much may I indulge in and still be saved?’ God forbid!” R.A. Cook.

Amusement is a means of “entertaining through a pleasurable diversion.”¹ Amusements can be wholesome and profitable, or they can be detrimental and destructive. They must be evaluated by the standard of God’s Word and in light of a judgment that is future, personal and permanent. Solomon is one who learned this the hard way. This person who began his service for God with such noble intentions sank to the depths of wickedness before God rescued him from himself. Concerning his pursuit of pleasure, he wrote, “Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun....”² His unbridled pursuit of pleasure led Solomon to violate grievously the clear instructions that God had given to Israel’s kings.³

Much later in his life, Solomon came to his senses by God’s grace, and offered wise counsel to those who would come after him. “Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; *But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.* Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, And put away evil from your flesh, For childhood and youth are vanity. Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’”⁴ (old age). In other words, “live life to the fullest,” but to do not be driven by “mindless self-indulgence” for which God will someday judge you.⁵ Solomon ends Ecclesiastes with the standard by which all amusements should be evaluated. “Let us

hear the conclusion of the whole matter: *Fear God and keep His commandments,* For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.”⁶ A definition of the fear of God that I teach my students is that it is an attitude of AWE and ADORATION whereby the child of God guards and guides his thoughts, words and deeds by the Word of God for the glory of God.

Here are some questions that can help us make choices that offer **P-R-A-I-S-E** to God as we seek to grow and “glow” through the things that we enjoy—

God’s A Honor Roll, Amusements

Praise: Could I participate in this amusement and praise God for the opportunity to do so? “Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.”⁷

Restraint: Could this become a *controlling habit* in my life? “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but *I will not be brought under the power of any.*”⁸

Advantage: Does this make a *profitable contribution* to my life? “All things are lawful for me, but *not all things are helpful*; all things are lawful for me, but *not all things edify* (“build up”).”⁹

Imitate: Does this imitate the *example of Christ*? “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk *just as He walked.*”¹⁰

Salt: Could this activity harm my *testimony*? “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”¹¹ “Do not let your good be spoken of as evil.”¹¹

Effect: Could my involvement *hurt or help others*? “Let no one despise your youth, but *be an example to the believers* in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”¹²

May God grant us the grace to put Him first in all things, including our amusements!

1 Webster’s 2 Eccl.2:1-10 3 Deut.17:16-18 4 Eccl.11:9-12:1 5 ESV 6 Eccl. 12:13-14 7 Rom.14:22-23 8 I Cor.6:12 9 I Cor.10:23 10 I John 2:6; I Cor.11:1 11 I Thess.5:21-22; Rom.14:16 12 I Tim.4:12