

MISSION: POSSIBLE

(Guarding Your Mind in a Sick World)

PURPOSE: TO CONVINCING MY YOUTH THAT GOD WANTS THEM TO AVOID PORNOGRAPHY AND OTHER HARMFUL MEDIA.

OBJECTIVE: BY THE END OF THIS SERIES, MY YOUTH SHOULD DEVELOP A PERSONAL CONVICTION TO AVOID PORNOGRAPHY AND OTHER HARMFUL MEDIA.

SHARPENING YOUR AX

(Partnering With Parents)

Your greatest asset to seeing your messages change lives may be neither an attention-getting introduction, nor a gripping illustration. It may be your youth's parents. Surprised? Then follow Andrew as he leaves your study on "Mind Pollution," resolved to keep his mind clear of those sex-saturated movies he's been seeing. Come Saturday, he and his family go to visit relatives. Andrew's older cousin Sam invites him to the local theater, and when they arrive, Andrew finds that "Sex Slut II" is showing. His conscience gently tugs at his shirt sleeve, but the teaching that seemed so reasonable last Sunday starts looking like "another universe, far, far away." There's no way he's going to look like a wimp before these guys. Andrew takes in the movie, but feels horrible about the images he has allowed into his mind.

But just think how a discerning parent could have made a difference. Prior to Andrew's leaving for the movie, a discerning parent could have asked perceptive questions and intervened to save both Andrew's face and his mind. But parents often need some motivation, some camaraderie with other parents of like values, and good information. Parents see their children every day and powerfully shape their values. Get them on your team, and expect to see your impact multiply. This week and next we will focus on partnering with parents.

BENEFITS

- Parents can **reinforce at home** what you teach at church.
- **Parents need input from you and fellow parents.** Many feel isolated and frustrated.
- **You need input from parents.** That youth who listens like an angel at youth meeting may be a terror at home. Parents can help you know their kid's needs, and creative ways the church can help.
- **Parents can make great chaperones and helpers** in your ministry.
- Some parents make **great prayer warriors for your ministry.**
- If sold on you and your ministry, **they will** adjust their priorities and schedules to **make sure their kids can attend your events.**

GETTING STARTED

- 1) **Introduce yourself** to your students' parents and let them know you are working with their children. Tell them you are praying for them and are open to their ideas. If parents feel comfortable with you, they're more likely to encourage their children to be involved with your activities.

2) **Keep them informed** of your activities, what you are teaching, and the direction of your ministry. They may change their schedule to make sure their kids hear a talk on “Guarding Your Mind.” Two ways to keep them informed:

- **Mail-outs.** If your church sends out a **weekly bulletin** that people actually read, try to get a slot to mention your youth activities and topics. Sometimes you may wish to send a **special mail-out** only to youth parents. For groups of just a few, you may write a **short note** to parents before a series you think is especially important, asking for their prayers, and urging them to let their children attend.
- **Parent’s Meeting.** Many youth workers find that a regular parent’s meeting is a must. A quality monthly or quarterly meeting is often better than a dreaded weekly meeting. Don’t take on more than you and the parents can handle.

Next week: Suggestions for leading a parent’s meeting on “Guarding Your Mind.”

INTRODUCTION

ILLUSTRATION: *In the movie “Mission Impossible” Tom Cruise plays Ethan Hunt, a CIA agent who finds himself accused of treason. To prove his innocence, he must obtain a highly classified list, which reveals the identities and whereabouts of America’s spies. So Hunt and his team proceed to pull off a spectacular penetration into the heart of CIA headquarters in order to access its meticulously protected computer. Get the picture: Only one man is allowed to access the computer. Only his unique handprint and voice can unlock the entrance to the room. Upon his departure, lasers crisscross the room, the disturbance of which will set off an alarm. So much as a slight change in temperature, a noise above a certain decibel level, or even a drop of sweat on the floor would signal a foreign presence, setting off the alarm system.*

DISCUSSION: Now, think with me for a minute about this computer. Why do you think it is so heavily guarded? (Because the spies’ very lives depend upon their anonymity.) So what would you think of the CIA if they allowed just any hacker to come in and repair, reprogram and tamper with this computer? (They would be irresponsible idiots.)

My thesis for the next couple of weeks is that many people have declared open season for any hacker to come in and reprogram their very personal computers: their minds. And the effects may be just as disastrous as for the loss of CIA information. I know, it sounds like I’m being overly dramatic. But I believe that by the end of this series you’ll see that I’m dead serious.

This series is entitled: “Mission Possible: Guarding Your Mind in a Sick World.” For some of you, this may hit so close to home that it’s hard to keep an open mind. So let’s pray for God to break through our defenses and make us teachable.

PRAY

BODY

I believe that we’re letting irresponsible hackers program our minds, and with disastrous results. But many today insist that all information is good—the more the better—and no harm comes from

looking at whatever pictures and reading whatever articles we want. So to get the issues out on the table, let's start with a friendly debate.

DEBATE: Today we hear much debate over public censorship: "Is it right to restrict certain information from certain groups of people?" But today I'd like us to debate a different issue—not *public* censorship, but *private* censorship: "Should I restrict *myself* from certain information." Divide into two groups. (Make sure that you have some uninhibited talkers represented on each team).

Team one will argue that that it's fine to read pornography, see xxx movies, or call dial-a-porn. **Team two** will argue that Christians should avoid certain movies and magazines. (Put some adult leaders on each team. If the youth run out of ideas, adults could suggest some of the following:

Team one could argue, 1) "Just show me a verse that says pornography is bad." 2) "I think people who act out rape after viewing pornography are sick people who would have been into these sins with or without their involvement in porno. You must prove that the porno caused their problems. Where's your proof?" 3) "You're advocating censorship, the same evil that Communism foisted on our country all those years. We need *more* access to information, not *less*." 4) "It's all harmless fantasy, and God's concerned with my actions, not my thoughts."

Team two could argue, 1) "I believe that constant viewing would have to influence people to act out these sins. How can you prove that it does not?" 2) If you knew that Jesus were coming to your house, would you feel comfortable having a copy of "Penthouse" in your hand when He arrived? Well Jesus *is* with you wherever you go." 3) "We have enough problem with sexual temptation without fueling those desires with pornography.")

Now that we've gotten some of the issues out in the open, let's look at what's going on with pornography and look to the Bible for God's perspective. Do you want to guard your mind? First, you must...

I. RESIST THE LURE OF PORNOGRAPHY

Some say that Saddam Hussein has enough germs stored up to kill the entire world several times. Pretty scary thought, huh? But another enemy has been subtly unleashing another kind of "germ warfare" on our society for decades. Here's the scoop:

A. The Enemy Attacks!

It seems you can't open your eyes today without seeing sex displayed everywhere. Look at the billboards on the way home and see what many advertisers use to sell their products. Plop down on the couch to vegetate in front of the tube and MTV will treat you to an average of 6 sexual references per video. But the most lethal germ warfare is the pornography that tempts you from the newsstands you see in the convenience mart. The biggest consumers, even of hard core pornography, are not dirty old men, but 12 to 17 year-olds. (Focus on the Family Citizen, October 21, 1991, by Edwin Meece III)

If you haven't already been hit in the face with pornography, you probably soon will be. So let's begin by looking to God's word to get His perspective.

B. God Sounds a Warning (The Case From Scripture)

BIBLE SEARCH: Raise your hands if you are willing to help the group by reading some verses out loud. (Give out only the main verses for each point. The "cr." [cross reference] verses are for your personal study.) After each verse is read, we will discuss as a group how we feel the verse relates to people's use of porno.

Now let's put together the verses into an acrostic to help us remember them over the next couple of weeks as we look at today's media through the lens of God's truth. We will call it the "FREE MINDS" test. (Translators: If you can't come up with an acrostic in your language, simply list each principle.)

F - Does it **Fuel** my lust? (Mt. 5:27,28; cr. Prov. 6:25; Rom. 1:24-27; II T. 2:22 ; Rom 13:14)

R - Does it **Reveal** things that should not be discussed? (Eph. 5:12 cr. Eph. 5:4; 4:29)

E - Does it lead people to do **Evil**? (Rom. 14:21)

E - Does it make me to **Enjoy** what I should hate? (Rom. 12:9)

M - Does it keep my **Mind** on the right things? (Rom. 12:2, Phil.4:8; Ps. 1:1-3, Ps. 119:48, cr. Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:15, Ps. 19:14)

I - Does it help me **Imitate** Jesus? (I Jn. 2:6 – "What Would Jesus Do?")

N - Would my parents say "**No**" ? (Eph. 6:1)

D - Is it morally **Dirty**? (Eph. 5:3,4)

S - Would I mind being **Seen** with it? (Lk. 12:2,3; cr. 8:17; Mt. 10:26; Mk. 4:22)

(Other principles that didn't fit into the acrostic, but would apply as well:

- **Could you imagine the apostle Paul doing it?** Could you recommend it to those who look up to you? (Phil. 4:9) Imagine this conversation:

Paul: "Hey Timothy, check out the babes that someone drew on this scroll! But whatever you do, don't let your mom or grandmom know I showed you these!"

- Can you think of other relevant principles?)

So, porno grandly flunks the FREE MINDS test, clearly cutting against clear biblical teachings. Can there be any doubt left that God wants us to abstain?

C. The Victims Suffer

One of our principles above was to hate what is evil. I've found that as I learn to love what God loves and hate what He hates, the Christian life becomes much easier to live. So how can we learn to hate porno? Let's try looking at how it hurts people.

Hint: In my effort to be thorough, I may be giving you more information that your youth can assimilate in one setting. Why not just use the top five of these that would be most convincing to your youth? Try making lecture segments interactive by regularly asking open-ended questions (can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no").

You see, pornography has become widespread in Central and Eastern Europe only in recent years. But in America, it has been growing and becoming more graphic over a period of 35 years. Social scientists have had time to study its impact, so that now we know what pornography does to people and why God is so concerned to protect us from it.

So, the following points are not just unproven ideas. Social scientists have studied thousands of people, exposing groups to pornography and noting how their ideas and values are affected. These scientists are telling us that pornography comes as a package deal. If you choose to use it, here's the part of

the package that you were never warned about:

- **Do you want to support an industry that hurts the people it films?** (Eph. 4:32) How do you think those modeling for pornography are hurt? The majority of pornography is controlled by organized crime. Now imagine that you were pressured or blackmailed into posing for some disgusting pictures a couple of years ago, and now you know that the pictures are forever loose on the Internet. Now you live with the constant shame and fear that people you meet may have seen the films. So, when you think of porno, don't think of an innocent, victimless thrill. Think of hurting people.

Sharpening Your Ax

Why use stats like these?

1) They help skeptics see the truth of the Scriptures. 2) Even our sharpest kids go through spiritual slumps. During a slump time they might not resist porno simply because they love Jesus. But they may resist because you scared them out of their wits with these facts. 3) They give ammunition to help Christians answer their non-Christian friends.

- **Would you like to become addicted to something that may control you for the rest of your life?** (II Pet. 2:18,19; cr. I Cor. 6:12) Pornography can be addictive. Many researchers call it an addiction, much like alcoholism or drug addiction. Even when some porno addicts feel horrible about their secret lives, porno has a grip on them that they can't break. The best way to avoid addiction is to never get started.
- **Would you like to struggle with really disgusting desires?** (II Tim. 2:22)

***ILLUSTRATION:** One of my favorite keys on my computer is the delete key. I can type my heart out with no fear of messing up, because I can always come back and wipe out entire paragraphs with the all-powerful delete key. What power! Unfortunately, we don't have a delete key under our ears to press when we want to wipe out what we just heard or saw.*

FACT: *Get this – Psychologists say that children who call “dial-a-porn,” can clearly remember the trashy conversations years later. So, years after you've forgotten the dates and names of all the British kings, you may vividly remember the disgusting pictures you have allowed into your mind.*

FACT: *Soft Pornography often leads to hard pornography. Scientists have found chemicals, sort of like adrenaline, which our bodies release when we see shocking materials. But as time goes on, the same material doesn't produce as*

satisfying a buzz, so that we crave increasingly more shocking materials. This is how people get into weird stuff, like enjoying watching violent rape. Believe it or not, things that would make you throw up if you saw it now, just give yourself several years of exposure to pornography and you could end up craving it.

- **Do you want to hurt your future marriage? (I Pet. 5:7; Eph. 5:25)** How do you think using porno can hurt a marriage? Here's what can happen:
 1. **Porno users become dissatisfied with their mates.** Don't fall for the lie that people into x-rated films and porno are probably dynamite in bed. Actually, studies have found that these people get dissatisfied with their wives. Some prefer their pornography fix to real sex with their wives. As you can imagine, this can lead to incredible marital struggles.
 2. **Porno users become distrustful of their mates.**
 3. **Porno users become less affectionate and caring toward their mates. (I Pet. 3:8)**

So, when you're tempted to look at porno, think: frustrating marriage.

- **Do you like feeling worthless? (Jn. 10:10)** Pornography increases people's feelings of worthlessness.
- **Do you like having the wool pulled over your eyes? (Heb. 2:13)** Pornography pushes many lies. One of the most dangerous: women like to be raped and beaten. You think, "That's crazy! Who could believe something like that?" Listen, given enough time with pornography, it messes with your mind. Many rapists think they are doing girls a favor. Their minds have been warped. And if *you* become a user of porno, you are more likely to start believing the lies yourself. No wonder date rape is so commonplace on our college campuses. Which brings us to the next point.
- **Want to become a rapist? (Eph. 4:32)** Do you know any girls who have been raped? I do. It's a devastating experience from which many never recover. But porno leads men to believe that although women struggle, fight and scream in terror, they really like it. So to the porno-programmed mind, rape and beating is a trivial offense.

Most of the people who molest women and children today probably grew up believing they would never do such a thing. Just like most of you are thinking now. They didn't just wake up one morning and decide, "I think this would be a great day to start beating my wife." No. Something started slowly messing with these people's minds. Step by step. Little by little. Month by month. Till eventually they became capable of things they once detested.

Now remember, these are not just theories. These effects have been demonstrated in many studies over many years.

Sharpening Your Ax

To make statistics intensely relevant, try wording them in a personal way that appeals to their likes/dislikes. Boring: "Porno use increases dissatisfaction in marital relations." Better: "Do you want to be dissatisfied with your future mate?"

Remember, these stats of people influenced by porno are real people. Want some examples?

ILLUSTRATION: "Sarah" is a suicidal wife whose unfeeling husband is ruled by porno.

ILLUSTRATION: "Pete" is a Christian college student who confided in a friend: "I'm afraid I'll have a hard time seeing the purity of marital sex, since I've always seen it as something dirty."

ILLUSTRATION: And then there are those who really go off the deep end with it. Like Ted. As a handsome, eloquent, former law student with an IQ of 125, you'd have thought he had it all together. Who would have ever thought that he would one day fry in the electric chair for brutally murdering over 30 women and girls? What happened? According to Bundy, he had given in to his inner lusts, becoming a pornography addict. In his own words, violent pornography "molded and shaped my thought processes...it crystallized it inside and I got to the point of acting it out." (p. 80)

Unfortunately, Ted's case isn't rare. Since pornography has become more widespread in the USA, we have five times as many rapes as before. One of the most consistent profiles of child molesters and rapists is that they consume pornography. But even if you never become a rapist from using porno, what if you become an insensitive, unfulfilled husband, or even a wife-beater, all brought to you compliments of the porno industry. I hope you're as disgusted as I am.

The bottom line? Porno can make its users dissatisfied with life. Porno corrupts. Porno kills. Knowing the horrors it causes, I hope you learn to hate the whole industry. Don't think of it as being something incredibly fun that God is trying to keep you from enjoying. You know the inside scoop now. It destroys people. Don't fall for it.

CONCLUSION

So, while the CIA takes incredible precautions to secure their computers from hackers, most people welcome a steady stream of programmers into their minds. What steps will you take to secure your mind? Consider these action points:

- 1 – Some of you are already plugged into pornography. You have magazines hidden in your bedroom. You've called dial-a-porn. Listen, there will be no easier time to unplug than now, while you are young, before the grip of addiction gets too strong.
- 2 – Others of you are not into it now, but will soon be tempted. Friends will pull it out at a sleep over. The best way to resist is to set your standard *now*, and decide *now* how you will respond.

I'll give you a moment in silent prayer to confess shortcomings and ask for His power to live out what we have studied.

PRAY

HOMEWORK – Tomorrow we will discuss TV and movies. For homework: 1) Record each day how much time you spend watching TV. Don't put your name on it. Next week you can drop it into a box and we will compare our viewing with national averages.

MISSION: POSSIBLE GUARDING YOUR MIND IN A SICK WORLD (WEEK II)

SHARPENING YOUR AX Partnering With Parents, Part II

Here's an example parent's meeting you could hold a week prior to your "Mission: Possible" series.

1. As parents begin to arrive: Have some tea and cookies around to make people more at ease. Get to know them and ask for **prayer requests** for their children. Put requests on a board. Have prayer.
2. **Announce** upcoming events and make sure there are no questions.
3. **Introduce your next series.** *Next week I will begin a series entitled "Mission: Possible (Guarding Your Mind in a Sick World)," trying to help our youth develop convictions about staying away from pornography, negative music and media. In my study I've come across some pretty scary studies about how widespread the problem is among youth, and the harm it's doing. Did you know that the biggest consumers of pornography are between 12 and 17 years old? (p. 188) Surveys have found that almost all high school and most Jr. Hi students have seen hard-core or x-rated material (p. 61).* (Give about a 5 minute synopsis of what you are going to teach: 1 – God's Word warns us to protect our minds. 2 – Bad media often harms our minds. 3 – Stay away from pornography. 4 - Be thankful for your parent's restrictions. 5 - Become a more discerning viewer. You may even want to put your teaching outline on an overhead, or hand out the student outline. Parents will think: "Wow! He's already got this thing all planned out weeks in advance! So they really *do* something at those meetings.")
4. **Generate some discussion.** *I will try to motivate your children to limit their TV viewing and stay clear of harmful materials. But I'm no parent of teenagers, and I'd like some of you to share your ideas of how you approach these subjects with your children. What are some of the limitations you try to enforce? How do you talk to your children about standards in viewing? Do you allow more flexibility as your children get older?* (Take notes of their ideas. This shows you are a learner and encourages them to learn from one another.)
5. **Share additional ideas** for parents. Pick the best of the following ideas, and share them if they didn't come up during the previous discussion.
 - Parents should **set an example** by their viewing habits. If parents subscribe to pornographic magazines, don't be surprised if your warnings fall on deaf ears. Be firm. Don't allow any porno in your home.
 - **Talk to your children about your convictions** concerning what you let into your mind. Al Menconi says, "Today's rock musicians communicate their values to your child every day. Do you?" Don't just plan one major talk. Let it be an open topic of discussion, where family members can disagree but still be liked. Let them know why you hold your convictions.
 - **Talk to your children about sex.** One study found over 90% of teens receiving their sex education from pornography, which presents a false picture of sex.

- **Set limits** on the total amount of time spent in front of the tube, even for decent programming.
- **Set standards** as to what programming you will not allow in your home. Producer Gary David Goldberg (“Brooklyn Bridge” and “Family Ties”) made this decision:

“My wife and I have pulled the plug on our eight-year-old daughter. No TV without a grown-up present. Not allowed. Period. That way, even if there’s something that violates our world view, it’s an opportunity for discussion...[Kids] don’t process information the same way adults do—and certainly not the same way as your average Hollywood writer or producer.” (Don’t Touch That Dial, p. 178, orig. from March ’92 TV Guide.)

- **Keep internet access and television in the main family room.** In the privacy of their bedrooms, we lose all control of monitoring.
- **Decide ahead of time what programs you want to watch**, rather than surfing channels. You may want to tape certain programs to be watched by the entire family.
- If you have a computer at home with internet access, **install a program which records all the web sites which are visited.** That way you will know where they surf when you are gone.
- Watch some programs together as a family, and **bring up important points for discussion afterwards.** Kids who watch TV and have no one to interpret it for them are more influenced by it’s messages. You could discuss, “What did you like about this movie?” (Good cinematography. Good action/adventure. Well written.) “Did anything bother you about it? One thing bothered me. This movie gave me the impression that all teens think nothing is wrong with having premarital sex. Did you know that in a survey of over 222,000 American teenagers, the great majority said that when people find out that a girl has had sex, it hurts her reputation at school? (USA Today, Weekend, Sept. 6-8, 1996) So this movie wasn’t very realistic in that area, was it?”
- **Take an interest in your children’s music.** Tell them you want to hear some of their music. Don’t just be critical. Comment on what you like. Laugh together about some of the similarities between today’s popular youth music and the music you listened to as a youth (adults hated some of it, some lyrics were stupid, etc.). But if some of the CD covers and lyrics promote non Christian themes, talk about how you have set standards for your music, and why.
- **Find movie reviews** that evaluate not only the acting and script, also the violence, decency, and communicated values. (Examples: Michael Medved is a conservative film critic for *New York Post* and co-host of “Sneak Previews” on PBS.) Research out some good movies and programs that are worth viewing. They are out there, and some are very educational and can provoke good family discussions.
- **Provide alternatives** for your teenage couch potato. Get with them to plan some family events that everyone will enjoy. Find out if there is good Christian music in a style your children enjoy. If he doesn’t enjoy the styles of 19th century hymns, you can’t expect him to excitedly spend his money on the latest choir and organ renditions.

6. Thank parents for coming. Ask if it has been helpful. **Close in prayer.**

INTRODUCTION

ACTIVITY TO REVIEW: Last week we evaluated porno from a biblical perspective. To review, let's imagine that a friend of yours pulls a dirty picture out of his pocket and shows it to you. You respond that you're not into that because you think it hurts people. He responds, "It's no big deal. Just a mind game. I don't have to act out what I read. Give me some good reasons why I shouldn't look at pornography." (Let them give as many reasons as they can.)

Today we continue our series called "Mission: Possible (Guarding Your Mind in a Sick World)." But let's move past pornography and deal with TV and Movies. I'll kick it off with an illustration with which, at first, you might not see a connection.

***ILLUSTRATION:** Recently, someone discovered that unscrupulous researchers were using unsuspecting nursing home residents as human guinea pigs to test new drugs. What an outrage! But what if you were to find that people have been manipulating your minds without your knowledge or permission? Today we'll find that this has been happening. Let's pray as we take a closer look at the impact of the media on our lives.*

PRAYER

BODY

II. LEARN TO DISCERN: TAKING CHARGE OF THE MEDIA

With porno, the Christian response is pretty clear: if you've got it, burn it. If you don't have it, avoid it like a plague. But TV and movies mix the good and the bad. The same theater may show the Jesus film, one of the most powerful tools for evangelism in our century; but the next week may show the blasphemous "Last Temptation of Christ." Most people just go to anything that's popular or looks entertaining. And if anyone objects that the movie is too trashy, they close the issue with profound thoughts like, "Well, all my friends saw it, and I don't see them becoming ax murderers. Huh, huh." (say it like a stereotypical nerd).

Most people don't think about their habits. They just blindly follow their friends, assuming that if "everybody's doing it," it can't be that bad. But I want us to start asking some hard questions about our viewing habits, questions that most people never ask. As Menclous once said,

"To act without clear understanding, to form habits without investigation, to follow a path all one's life without knowing where it really leads—such is the behavior of the multitude."

So let's be different. Let's do some investigation, and try to find where the path of the multitude is leading them.

A. TV and Movies

1. Our love affair with TV and movies

SURVEY RESULTS: Thanks to you guys who recorded your TV time last week. Let's compare your viewing with that of the general population. (Of course, most watch more in the summer than during the school year.) Some surveys found Americans watching TV over 24 hours per week. Concerning high school students, a Michigan State University study found girls watching an average of 5.6 hours of TV daily; boys, 5.2 hours.

Since TV is such an important part of people's lives, we need to ask what payback we're getting for that big an investment of time.

2. What they teach us (Prov. 15:14)

Movie critic Michael Medved, co-host of TV's "Sneak Previews," says that "No movie is morally neutral, no movie fails to send a message, no movie doesn't change you to some extent when you see it. Movies have a cumulative, potent and lasting impact." ("Hollywood's Poison Factory" *Imprimis*, Nov., 1992, p. 4.)

Discussion: Let's brainstorm in small groups. And I'll record the results on the blackboard (overhead) at the front. First, give me some good values that you feel are regular messages that TV and movies portray? (Let them respond. To add if they miss: 1) Accept diverse people. 2) Nerds have potential and aren't all bad. 3) Education is good. 4) Don't fall for peer pressure. 5) Criminals get caught.) Now, what are the most prominent unbiblical messages that commercials and programs push on us, both outright and subtly? In other words, if your parents were pretty much absent from your lives, and you developed your morals and values from television programs and commercials, what would you believe about **Religion?** (Let them respond to each of these in small groups. Mention some of these if they miss. 1 – Religion is not an important part of most people's lives. 2 – Most ministers are wimps, scandals, and ignorant. **Material Things?** Getting a new products will make me happy, popular, and pretty. **Sex?** Most single adults have sex on the first or second date. Most singles are having lots of fun with sex and have no consequences such as STD's. The most enjoyable sex is outside of marriage.

ILLUSTRATION: *How much negative content is the media giving us? Concerning sex,*

- *The average number of sexual innuendoes broadcast on television each hour during prime time: 9. (from Harper's Magazine). Now I don't know about you, but I don't need more motivation to think about sex. MTV was found to have six sexual references per video (not per hour). So if you watch an hour of MTV every day, add 1,500 more sex images per year.*
- *On TV, sex outside of marriage is portrayed five times as often as sex in marriage. One guy studied sixteen strong box office films, rated R for sexual content, which especially appealed to the young. Over half of the 9th and 10th graders had seen nine of them. Sex between married couples happened only one in thirty one instances!! What's the message that's going out here? Yet, studies show that the best sex goes on within the context of a strong marriage. Again, the media presents a picture that's out of touch with reality. By watching TV you would think that premarital sex among teens is totally acceptable practice. But in a recent survey of almost a quarter of a million US teens, the*

great majority said that when they find out that a girl has had sex, it hurts her reputation at school. (USA Today Weekend, Sept. 6-8, 1996)

3. Objections and Responses:

a. **“Sure, there’s lots of bad stuff on TV. But there’s lots of bad stuff in real life. TV just represents real life.”**

Response: “TV *inaccurately* represents life.”

People in other countries may mistakenly think that most Americans really live like TV presents American life. Actually, most Americans are deeply offended by much of our programming.

ILLUSTRATION: A large poll showed in 1990 that 80% of Americans object to the amount of foul language; 82% to the violence; 72% to the explicit sex. [Hollywood’s Poison Factory: Making It the Dream Factory Again” by Michael Medved, (Imprimis, Nov. 1992, Vol. 21, No. 11)] So, don’t say that American TV and Movies are just showing life as it is in America.

1. How TV misrepresents life.

ACTIVITY: Put two columns on a blackboard or overhead. Title one column “*TV Land*” and the other column “*Real Life.*” Ask the group to tell the differences between the two. List them in your columns.

Here are some ideas, in case they miss them:

A 1994 USA Today (4-1-94) survey found 88% of Americans saying that religion is important to their lives (59% surveyed called it “very important.” Most attend church and many youth spend their school breaks on church retreats and consider their church youth group an important part of their lives. But you’d never know it from watching TV. How often do you see your favorite sitcom characters worshipping at church, going on a summer church retreat, or getting advice from their youth minister?

Even among non-Christians, most real people don’t have sex on their early dates. In TV land, it seems quite normal. Real people get STD’s from having multiple sex partners. TV land characters seem strangely immune. In TV land, we view about 1400 sexual acts or references each year. I hope that doesn’t approximate real life for you!

In TV land, US child sees 8000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence by the time he or she leaves the 5th grade. Does 8000 murders accurately reflect real life?

By the time children reach school age, they have already sat through over 20,000 commercials. What do you think they have learned about the importance of material things? (They will bring you happiness, get you the image you want, make people like you.) Is TV Land always right here?

ACTIVITY: To show the power of commercials, I'm going to give you a part of some popular commercials, and see if you can complete them, or tell me the product they are selling. (From the past, "Things go better with Coke") (You could also record the music from certain commercials, or video the first part of some commercials.)

2) Why TV misrepresents life.

Why do you think it presents such a warped view of life? (1. Normal life isn't entertaining enough for many people. They want to see the bizarre. 2. Our appetite for violence grows as we are exposed to more of it. Thus, many programs keep pushing the boundaries to get more viewers. 3. A commercial photographer said, "My job is to make things look better than they are." So, whether a commercial presents cosmetics, food, or cars, they will make their product look like the answer to all your problems.) But there's another reason that TV seems so out of touch with normal life.

(Central and Eastern European readers: note the following carefully. Many youth need to be dispelled of the idea that media from the West accurately depicts life in the West.)

Illustration: A few years back, two researchers interviewed 104 key TV people – writers, producers, executives, directors, and creators. (Newsweek, 7/20/92 and Lichter, Lichter, and Rothman study in 1982) Here's what they found:

- 45% have no religious affiliation. Rest of society: 7.5%.(Chandler, p. 15)
- 93% said they never attend religious services, or seldom do. (Rest of America? 66% attend at least once a month. 40% to 50% go **every week**. Successful Hollywood writer/director/producer James Brooks said, "I guess there is nothing that Americans are doing more—and nothing that is represented less by Hollywood—than going to church.")
- Only 5% (20% Newsweek) strongly agree that homosexual acts are morally wrong. Rest of society: 76%
- Only 16% (49% according to Newsweek) strongly agree that adultery is wrong. Rest of society: 85%.
- They felt that religion should have little influence on society. [Rest of America? 64% think religion can answer all or most of today's problems. (USA Today, 4-1-94, p.1)]
- And this last one is scary. "...TV's creators seek to move their audience toward their own version of the good society."

Guys, there is a group of people who are trying to influence your minds. And they are leading you a direction that you don't want to go. So, another reason TV is out of touch with reality is that its producers are out of touch with reality.

b. "Okay, so TV isn't accurately reflecting real life. But I don't think that watching it makes people act like that"

1)

Some take it literally

ILLUSTRATION: You may find this hard to believe, but “every year TV doctors get thousands of letters from viewers asking for medical advice. When one actor gave a splendid performance as an alcoholic, his wife received dozens of letters of advice and sympathy from women who said they also were married to alcoholics.” One pastor reported that a lady in his church requested prayer for one of the couples on her favorite soap. “That’s like saying that Barney Rubble is a great actor.” (Little House on the Freeway, by Tim Kimel)

2) **Some imitate its violence.**

ILLUSTRATION: Fifteen-year-old Rod Matthews beat a classmate to death with a baseball bat. In another town, Nineteen-year-old Mark Branch repeatedly stabbed to death eighteen-year-old Sharon Gregory. Why did they do it? Jealousy? Revenge? No. It’s scarier than that. They each were curious to know what it felt like to kill someone. They both drew inspiration from videos that showed people dying. Mark’s friends said he was especially fascinated with Jason, the slasher in the Friday the 13th series. Authorities found a stack of the videos in his bedroom.. (Learn To Discern, p. 8) In other words, what started as an idea eventually translated into action.

3) **Most of us absorb it slowly**

Probably most of us don’t imitate murders or request prayer for Soap characters. But evidence suggests that most of us are affected to some extent. It may happen so slowly that you don’t even realize that it’s happening. So just what does exposure to negative media do to us over time? Here’s what studies have found.

- **It makes us want material things.** (I Tim. 6:7-10) Guess how much companies paid for a thirty second commercial spot during Super Bowl 1998 (football)? Try \$1.3 million! Plus they have to pay to produce the commercial to put in the slot. Why would marketers spend millions of dollars on commercials that didn’t produce much more in sales?
- **It changes our morals.** (Heb. 5:14) Studies have found people’s moral judgment changed when they view lots of television (p. 35). It’s like they say, garbage in, garbage out.
- **It makes us more aggressive.** (Mt. 5:5,39) The National Institute of Mental Health looked at 2500 studies and concluded that the scientific evidence is overwhelming that there is a “causal relationship between viewing televised violence and later aggressive behavior.” So person who says, “Oh come on, I don’t see that I’m affected at all.” is like the person who smokes 2 packs of cigarettes a day and laughs it off with, “I feel fine, and all my buddies smoke too. All those studies are hogwash.” He’s probably also a card-carrying member of the “Flat Earth Society” as well. You see, these thousands of studies take normal people, like you and me, expose different groups to different types of programming, and see how we are affected over time. The verdict is in. This stuff is dangerous.

And about those “Slasher Films”...

ILLUSTRATION: I read the promo for a film called “Filmgore,” which is a collection of scenes from R-rated Slasher films that are primarily watched by teens. Here’s what it said, “See Blood Thirsty, Butcher Killer Drillers, Crazy Cannibals, Zonked Zombies, Mutilating Maniacs, Hemoglobin Horrors, Plasmatic Perverts, And Sadistic Slayers Slash, Strangle, Mangle, and Mutilate Bare Breasted Beauties in Bondage.” Doesn’t look to me like a film that the apostle Peter would run across and say, “Hey Andrew, let’s check this out. I bet the other disciples will get a kick out of it.”

ILLUSTRATION: This type of film has been proven to make people callous, desensitized to violence and other suffering, and desirous of more violence. (p. 167). But God’s Word exhorts us to become just the opposite. Forensic Psychologist Park Elliott Dietz, MD said, “If a mad scientist wanted to find a way to raise a generation of sexual sadists in America, he could hardly do better, at our present state of knowledge, than to try to expose a generation of teen-age boys to films showing women mutilated in the midst of a sexy scene.”

Is it any wonder that America has become many times more violent during the years that TV and movies have become more violent?

Now lest you think I’m all negative, I love to pop popcorn and sit down in the den with my family all around and view a good family movie. We laugh out loud and have a great time. Which brings up a good point. Studies show that programs with positive content increase our concern for others. So the medium itself is not possessed. It’s just powerful, whether it be used for good or for evil. Don’t be like the multitude and let just anything come in to program your mind. Be choosy.

So how do we discern trashy from positive programming? Remember the FREE MINDS test from last week? Let’s use it to see how different programs stand up to the Word of God. Ask yourself,

Does it **Fuel** my lust? (Mt. 5:27,28)

Does it **Reveal** things that should not be discussed? (Eph. 5:12)

Does it lead people to do **Evil**? (Rom. 14:21)

Does it make me **Enjoy** what I should hate? (Rom. 12:9)

Does it keep my **Mind** on the right things? (Phil. 4:8, Ps. 1:1-3; 119:48)

Does it help me **Imitate** Jesus? (I Jn. 2:6 – “What Would Jesus Do?”)

Would my parents say “**No**”? (Eph. 6:1)

Is it morally **Dirty**? (Eph. 5:3,4)

Would I mind being **Seen** watching it? (Lk. 12:2,3)

c) “I watch loads of TV and movies, but I stay away from the trashy stuff.”

How would you respond to this statement?

First, it hurts our education. (Prov. 8:10). One Studies have found that the more you view, the worse you do in school, *even if you watch good programs*. (Tom Cottle, *Providence Journal*, Feb. 1981) Is it no wonder that after finishing school,

60% of adult Americans will never read a single book? (Larry Woiwode, “*The Cyclops That Eats Books*”, *Imprimis*, Hillsdale (MI) College.

Second, it eats up valuable time. (Eph. 5:16) Just think of all the things you could accomplish over the next 4 years in just thirty minutes per day. You could become a decent piano or guitar player. You could get in terrific physical shape. You could learn a new sport. You could easily read the entire Bible four times. Just think, all this benefit for just trading out thirty minutes of TV.

ACTIVITY: Want a shocker? Take the average amount of time that you watch TV per day, e.g., two hours (below national average). Now, let’s find out how much time you will devote to TV over a period of 60 years. [2 hours x 365 (days per year) x 60 (years) = Total number of lifetime hours. Divide by 16 (waking hours per day) to get the number of total days you spent all your waking hours watching TV. Divide by 365 to get total number of years.] I come up with 7.5 years of spending every waking moment watching TV!

***ILLUSTRATION:** I fear that when some people see their lives flash before their eyes, they will not only be embarrassed, but thoroughly bored. Can you see the accompanying angels yawning out of boredom as they watch you sitting in front of a TV for many of the best hours of your life? (One wisecracking angel to another: “Hey, if someone were to write this guys’ biography, I think I’ve got a good title for it: Clueless!”)*

CONCLUSION

Guys, I know that for many of you, slasher films and other extreme films are a part of your culture. It seems like everybody’s doing it. If you decide to abstain, you may be called wimps, momma’s boys, or worse. Sometimes you will feel like you are standing alone. It may be awkward at times to say no, or go to another room, or go home. But Jesus called us to be different. Sometimes, we may even have to stand alone. But I believe this stand is worth the cost.

So let’s wrap this lesson up with some possible action points. What is God saying to you? Here are some ideas:

- **Be wise to TV’s lies.** Practice looking at a commercial and saying, “Sunny Delight” juice isn’t *really* going to make girls like me!”
- **Limit *what* you watch.** TV and movies mold people. Choose programs that reinforce the image you want to be molded into.
- **Limit *how much* you watch.** If you’re a couch potato, get a life. Learn a skill. Talk to your family. Play games. Don’t just sit there, do something!

Individual Prayer

And by the way, if your parents have been limiting the time and type of programming you watch, even if you disagree with some of their decisions, you need to go home and thank them for caring enough to protect your mind while you are young.

Next week we will talk about music. By answering a few questions on a blank sheet of paper, you can help me find positive music to recommend in the styles you like. Don't put your name on it. First, write the styles you most enjoy (country, rap, rock, metal, classical, traditional folk, jazz, alternative, certain era, etc.) Next, what is your favorite radio station? And finally, which are your favorite groups?)

Homework: 1) During the week, write down or copy the words to some of the popular secular songs that you think would be interesting for us to evaluate. Some may be positive, some negative. 2) If some of you have Christian songs that you think the group would enjoy, bring a tape and the words so that we can play it for the group. (The teacher will need to organize this prior to the lesson, so that you won't get too many, too few, all the same styles, etc.)

MISSION: POSSIBLE

(Guarding Your Mind In A Sick World)

Week 3

Sharpening Your Ax

Using Christian Music Effectively

Church history shows us that when scriptural lyrics are put to the musical styles people enjoy, the songs become a powerful force for good. For example, an opponent of Martin Luther lamented, "Luther's hymns have destroyed more souls than his writings and speeches." His hymns "literally flew out of Luther's study, landing in homes in places of work, and were sung in the markets, in the streets, and on the field (Spanish Monk Thomas a Jesus). I believe that Christian music can have the same power today, if we can unleash it upon our youth. Here are some ideas:

1 – Pursue group worship through song with excellence. Whether you sing with one guitar, or a team of worship leaders, try to ensure that next year's worship will be better than this year's. Never think of your message as the main event, with the music as merely a warm-up. Remember, the longest book in the Bible is a song book (Psalms). King David wrote that praising God through song pleased Him more than the sacrifices (Ps. 69:30,31). In the Old Testament, 4000 Levites were appointed to praise God with instruments and 288 trained singers with their voices. Doesn't sound like an afterthought to me.

2 – Be a good missionary. The Apostle Paul became all things to all men to reach them (I Cor. 9:19-23). Do you adapt to the musical language of your youth, or expect them to adapt to your musical language? Never assume that what you think is great music will be heard by them as great music. Continually ask them (not just a few youth) which songs move them and what style of worship they respond to.

3 – Acquaint them with Christian music in styles they will listen to. The Barna Research Group found that while 85% of our church youth live on a daily diet of 3.5 hours of secular music, the great majority of them have never even heard of some of the most popular Christian groups. Yet, Barna found that the teens that are aware of Christian music tend to like it. (*Today's Teens*, The Barna Research Group, Glendale, CA, 1991, pp. 25ff.) What an opportunity! Some ideas on letting the secret out:

- Find Christian songs that will help reinforce your weekly messages. Play the songs for them with the words on an overhead, or handed out. Insist on their total attention, since this is a part of the teaching time (not social time). (See Col. 3:16)
- Promote Christian concerts.
- Start a Christian music lending library. To join, you either pay the cost of a new tape, or donate a used Christian tape. Have someone put together check out cards in a file box, much like libraries use. Ask a couple of responsible youth to head up the ministry and display the tapes each week. Bookstores often throw away their dated cardboard book displays. Put in the word at several stores that you are interested in one.

INTRODUCTION

I love music. It calms me when I'm frazzled, and motivate me to strain out that last repetition when I'm pumping iron. And I'm not alone in my love for music. One study found teens listening to 10,500 hours of rock music (more than twice the time they spend in high school) on their journey from the seventh to the twelfth grade (Elizabeth F. Brown and William R. Hendee, "Adolescents and Their Music," Journal of the American Medical Association 262:12 (22-29 Sept. 1989) 1659. A survey of 4000 teens found that five of their top 8 heroes were rock stars. (World Almanac and Book of Facts) If I went into some of your bedrooms, I'm sure I would find them decorated like a fan club for certain groups.

Hint: Times were when speakers announced a "rock music seminar" to expose the bad boys of rock. But today, don't label your message as referring to one style of music. Some rap, country, and alternative is worse than some of the rock. If you single out rock or rap, you may alienate one part of your group, while failing to make the country and alternative guys examine their listening habits.

Today, we want to look at how music affects us and discover how to fully harness it's power to change our lives. But before we dig in, I urge you to pray for an open mind, and resist becoming defensive. We get pretty attached to our favorite groups, making it hard to take an honest look at what we've been listening to. So let's pray for open hearts.

PRAY

A. Music

1. The Power For Evil

Like the Pied Piper, some artists are trying to use their music to lead you down a path of

destruction. Hard to believe? I'll let them speak for themselves.

a) Musicians With An Evil Mission

ILLUSTRATION: Jim Morrison of *The Doors* (your youth may have seen the movie about his life) once said this about his performances: "I'm god up there! I do what I want! I'm interested in anything about revolution, disorder, chaos, sex, and especially activity that has no meaning." (*Newsweek* (6 Nov. 1967), 101.

ILLUSTRATION: Jacques Morali of *The Village People* said, "I formed this group...to make gays more acceptable in our society."

ILLUSTRATION: A member of *Jefferson Starship* said, "Our music is intended to broaden the generation gap [and] to alienate children from their parents."

Some may think, “Okay, so there are a few bad apples in the bunch. But I think most guys are just out there producing fun music.” Well, let’s look over some of today’s hits to see what messages these guys are sending.

(Here, pull out some select lyrics you got from a current magazine, or collected from your youth. For greatest effect, put the lyrics on an overhead, replacing profanity with blanks. As I write, (May, 98), Marilyn Manson is a popular shock rocker, whose music and interviews would provide plenty of material to discuss.)

Old Example: From Venom’s album, “Welcome to Hell”

*“I am possessed by all that is evil
The death of your God I demand
I spit at the virgin you worship
And sit at Lord Satan’s right hand”*

Old Example: From Van Halen’s “Best of Both Worlds”

*“You don’t have to die and go to heaven
Or hang around to be born again
Just tune into what this world has to offer
Cause we may never be here again.”*

“But they are just expressing how a lot of people feel,” some would object. “In popular music you just get the full range of emotions, feelings, and beliefs that people have.” Oh yeah? It seems to me that certain ideas are continually expressed, and others are virtually *never* expressed.

Discussion: Name some ideas that you seldom, if ever, hear in popular music.

ILLUSTRATION: *For a Christian musician to get accepted on a mainstream label, he is routinely asked to delete explicit references to Jesus. He has to sing, “You (not “Jesus”) give life meaning,” so that the words could be taken as referring to a person as easily as to Jesus. It’s as if the industry that’s so insistent on freedom of expression wants to censor the “J” word from Christians’ music.*

ILLUSTRATION: *And how diverse is popular music’s view of saving sex for marriage? Speaker Bob DeMoss has challenged thousands of youth “to name just one song that they’ve heard on top-forty radio which says, in effect, that waiting to have sex until marriage is a good idea, a noble ideal, or even a possibility.” For 10 years, he’s offered a \$20.00 reward. But not one person has been able to cash in on the deal. [Robert G. DeMoss, Jr., Learn To Discern (Zondervan, 1992, p. 15)].*

Can you name any? Open your Bibles to Ephesians 4:29, and see if you can find a connection with DeMoss’ insight. (Lyrics should do better than avoiding evil. Speech should edify and profit us. Do the groups you listen to build you up and challenge you to be a better person?)

b) Mission Accomplished

Some people will argue, “Yeah, but it’s all just entertainment. Nobody takes those messages seriously.”

ILLUSTRATION: But John McCollum took Ozzy Osbourne’s song, “Suicide Solution” seriously. He took his own life while listening to the album.

And there’s strong evidence that music is affecting many more of us.

- The Journal of the American Medical Association found that those who are part of heavy metal subcultures (following groups like Metallica and Slayer) are more at risk for drug abuse and Satanic activity.
- Certain rock videos have been found to make men “calloused and antagonistic...toward women.” [Dena L. Peterson and Karen S. Pfost, “Influence of Rock Videos on Attitudes and Violence Against Women.” *Psychological Reports* 64 (1989), p. 321]. This makes sense when we realize that over 1/3 of all music videos show sexual violence against women. (Kane, *Misogyny in Rock Videos* (NY: Women Against Pornography, 1984).
- Another study found seventh and tenth-graders more likely to approve of premarital sex after watching selected music videos (L.E. Greeson and R.A. Williams, “Social Implications of Music Videos for Youth: An Analysis of the Contents and Affects of MTV,” *Youth And Society* 18, 1986 177-189).

So don’t fall for the lie that “I can listen to anything I like without it affecting me.”

2. The Power For Good

Idea: Are some of your youth already listening to a lot of Christian music? If so, encourage some of them to share how they feel this has helped them.

God’s no kill joy when it comes to music. He put together quite a praise band in the Old Testament, complete with 4,000 Levites playing instruments (I Chron. 23:5) and 288 trained singers (I Chron. 25:7. Sounds pretty loud and exciting to me. And as important as it was to offer sacrifices back then, King David wrote that God was even more pleased with praising Him with song (Ps. 69:30,31). And by the way, what’s the longest book in the Bible? That’s right. The Bible’s hymn book, the Psalms. So, if music’s pretty important to you, you’ve got something in common with God!

Have you ever said, “I can’t get this song out of my mind!” Have you ever noticed how some people who seem to struggle forever to memorize a class assignment can effortlessly rattle off all the words to their favorite songs? If so, you’re realizing the awesome power of music. We’ve seen how it can be used for evil. Let’s see how God can powerfully use it for good.

ILLUSTRATION: A 12th grader said, “My decision to listen to Christian music was one of the best decisions I ever made. Now Scripture, praise songs, and Scriptural themes are more likely to flood my mind than the latest love song. It’s so much easier to live the Christian life when I no longer have songs like “Born to be Wild” playing constantly in my mind.”

ACTIVITY: (Last week, you surveyed your students to find their stylistic preferences. Now, play them some Christian music in the styles that they respond to. Some youth could bring in Christian songs that are their favorites. Put the words on overheads, handouts, or chalkboards, and play the songs for them. Tell also where they can purchase these tapes, or what radio stations play Christian formats they might be interested in.) *Many Christians are not aware of the great variety of Christian music coming out today. Here are some groups that you may not know about.* (Note: This activity could profitably stretch out over two weeks.)

3. The Judgment of God’s Word

Now that we have some songs before us (the good and evil songs on the overhead), let’s put them through the FREE MINDS test. (Home in on one negative, and one positive song. The verses are listed for each point in the first lesson of this series.)

[You may want to comment on a couple of the letters of the acrostic which have special relevance to music. For example:

E - For one Christian, Mt. 22:37 clinched the point. “If someone wrote a song that cut down my girlfriend and everything she believed, I’d despise the song. I could never enjoy it or buy the tape, even if I would otherwise have enjoyed the tune. So, if I love God with all of my heart, how can I enjoy music that comes against Him and His teachings.”

HINT: As you cover the “FREE MINDS” test, reveal only the first letter of the bold word. See if they can remember the rest of the word. This makes it a good review.

M – Our favorite songs run through our minds over and over. If we are concerned about the meditations of our hearts, we need to look at what kind of meditations our music is fostering. (See Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:19) Idea: review the lyrics of the most popular country and pop songs, and see how many are about girl-guy relationships.

Sometimes, I find around 9 out of 10. Even if the songs are not immoral, do we really need more motivation to think of girl-guy relationships?]

Does it **Fuel** my lust? (Mt. 5:27,28)

Does it **Reveal** things that should not be discussed? (Eph. 5:12)

Does it lead people to do **Evil**? (Rom. 14:21)

Does it make me **Enjoy** what I should hate? (Rom. 12:9)

Does it keep my **Mind** on the right things? (Phil. 4:8, Ps. 1:1-3; 119:48)

Does it help me **Imitate** Jesus? (I Jn. 2:6 – “What Would Jesus Do?”)

Would my parents say “**No**”? (Eph 6:1)

Is it morally **Dirty**? (Eph. 5:3,4)

Would I mind being **Seen** watching it? (Lk. 12:2,3)

In this series, we could go on to evaluate the **books** and **magazines** we read, the **Web Sites** we visit, and the **video games** we play. But I hope we've learned to evaluate everything that enters our minds from God's perspective.

CONCLUSION

We can't leave such a practical message without giving you an opportunity to evaluate what God is telling you to do about your music. Here are some examples of ACTION POINTS that others have taken to heart:

- 1) One Christian named Steve decided that even if the secular music wasn't harming him, neither was it helping him. The great majority of the songs were about girl-guy relationships, and he felt that he didn't need any more motivation to think about girls. What he *did* need was more motivation to think about the things of God. So he decided to listen exclusively to Christian music when he had a choice. Now he considers this one of the best decisions he ever made.
- 2) Some Christians get incensed about the anti-Christian lyrics of some of their groups, and decide to give them the flame now that they would eventually have gotten at Jesus' second coming.
- 3) Some simply commit to start listening to more Christian music.

IDEA: Start a Christian tape club where students can join for the price of a tape, or for donating acceptable, used Christian tapes. Members can check out a tape for free each week by signing the check out slip that goes with the tape. You will need a couple of youth to run this ministry by setting up the checkout cards, finding a display (ask a local bookstore for a temporary cardboard display after they are finished with it) and maintain the card file. This gives students the opportunity to listen to music before purchasing their own. You can also lend books and teaching tapes.

So, what do you think God wants *you* to do? I'll let you spend a few minutes in individual prayer. Write your action point on your student sheet.

(Allow time for prayer.)

Note: Unless otherwise noted, all statistics and results of studies come from the book, *Don't Touch That Dial*, by Barbara Hattemer and Robert Showers (Huntington House Publishers, 1993). Other resources included *An Introduction To Biblical Ethics*, by Robertson McQuilkin, (Tyndale House Publishers, 1989) pp. 232-237. *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate*, by Steve Miller (OM Literature, 1997; translated also into Dutch, German, Spanish, and Romanian.) Al Menconi, *Today's Music: A Window to Your Child's Soul* (David C. Cook Pub. Co., Elgin, Illinois, 1990), *Learn to Discern*, by Robert G. DeMoss, Jr. (Zondervan Pub., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992).