

# Theology of Entertainment (part 3)

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[ 0 : 00 ] In his book, *Crazy Busy*, Kevin DeYoung writes, Because we understand our worth as image bearers and our identity as children of God, we will not look to the internet to prove that we are important, valuable, and loved.

And because we accept the presence of indwelling sin, we will not be blind to the potential idolatries and temptations we can succumb to online. And because we know ourselves to be fallen creatures, we will accept the limits of our human condition.

We cannot have meaningful relationships with thousands of people. We cannot really know what is going on in the world. We cannot be truly here and there at the same time.

The biggest deception of our digital age may be the lie that says we can be omni-competent, omni-informed, and omnipresent. We cannot be any of these things.

We must choose our absence, our inability, and our ignorance, and choose wisely. The sooner we embrace this finitude, the sooner we can be free.

[ 1 : 17 ] Last time, I gave you ten principles for guiding how we use technology, specifically for the purpose of entertainment.

They were, just to recap, one, recognize the heart's vulnerability to idolatry, two, embrace the goodness of true rest, three, discern between edifying and destructive content, four, guard your time, five, cultivate prayer and Bible reading as consistent daily habits, six, practice discernment in community, seven, respect marriage and family bonds, eight, overcome the fear of missing out, nine, use technology for kingdom purposes, and ten, reflect often on eternal realities.

Now, a few days ago, ironically enough, I attempted to summarize that lesson in one paragraph, and I posted it to Facebook. And here's what I said.

We live in a world consumed by entertainment and distraction. Our phones, TVs, and endless digital content shape our desires, often pulling us away from prayer, scripture, and true worship. Paul warns, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Yet many believers unknowingly prioritize screens over Christ.

[ 2 : 56 ] The issue is not just wasted time, but misplaced affections. Are we feeding the flesh or the spirit? True rest is found in Christ, not mindless distraction.

Evaluate your habits, guard your heart, and use technology for God's glory, not your own indulgence. A few minutes later, after I posted that, one gentleman replied, if you had not the opportunity to put this out, how would we realize it's there unless we look at our mobile phones? Think before you make such post. And I had to chuckle at the irony. I responded, notice that I said, use technology for God's glory.

I'm not against using technology. I'm encouraging wise use of it. And that brings us to the 11th principle concerning entertainment and technology.

Avoid either legalism or complacency. Legalism and complacency. These are the ditches on either side of the road.

[ 4 : 10 ] They can be very harmful extremes. So, legalism says, all entertainment is evil. We should reject it entirely.

Get rid of your phone. Yank the TV off the wall. If you really want to be godly, you might consider cutting off the electricity too. You don't necessarily have to move into a secluded monastery somewhere, but come as close as you possibly can.

Now, there may be seasons when it is advisable for someone to take extreme steps to avoid temptations. If someone, let's say, is struggling with an addiction to pornography, by all means, pull the plug on the computer.

Throw away the phone. As Jesus said, if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out. Throw it away, for it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. But, in ordinary circumstances, entertainment, or our desire to be entertained, is not inherently sinful. So, the answer is not to reject entertainment and to reject technology altogether.

[ 5 : 26 ] It's to use it wisely. Now, this hasn't stopped some people from teaching that we should be legalistic in this regard. You know, it's one thing to make a personal decision to avoid TV or phones.

It's quite another to judge others for watching TV or carrying a phone. In Mark 7, 8, Jesus warns against teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

I've yet to find the commandment from God that says, thou shalt not be entertained. In fact, we have many biblical examples of people engaging in activities for the purpose of enjoyment or amusement.

They didn't have TVs, of course, but they still had various forms of recreation. David played music for Saul. Israel celebrated with music and dancing.

Solomon had singers and musicians to entertain him. Jesus went to a celebratory wedding feast. We might even argue that Jesus' parables were meant to be a form of entertainment.

[ 6 : 38 ] Granted, those parables were primarily intended to teach divine truth, but Jesus communicated those truths in a very specific way through storytelling because that is an effective way to engage people.

As they say, people forget facts, but they remember stories. So, entertainment isn't inherently evil and we don't need to be extreme or legalistic about it.

On the other hand, there's complacency, which is probably our bigger problem. This is where we say, it's just entertainment.

It's harmless. It doesn't matter. But it certainly can matter. And it would be spiritually reckless to say it's inherently harmless. Always.

I'm convinced of this. The devil loves apathy. Loves apathy. He loves it when we cease to be vigilant, which is why Peter writes, be sober-minded.

[ 7 : 43 ] Be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Be clear-headed. Watch for the enemy.

Be vigilant. He's subtle. And he will sneak up on you when you least expect it. He doesn't need to drag us into blatant sin. All he has to do is keep us distracted.

If he can keep us distracted through entertainment, long enough or often enough, that's plenty because soon enough we'll be ineffective in our spiritual warfare.

I so often think about the introduction to Neil Postman's book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. That's where he compares the dystopian visions of George Orwell in *1984* and Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*.

And he concludes that Huxley had the more accurate vision. And I'm inclined to agree with him. Here's what Postman wrote. What Orwell feared were those who would ban books.

[ 8 : 54 ] What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information.

Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us.

Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy-porgy and the centrifugal bumble puppy.

As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who were ever on the alert to oppose tyranny failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions.

In *1984*, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us.

[ 10 : 08 ] Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us. Keep in mind that Postman wrote that in the mid-early 80s well before personal computers and the internet and smartphones came on the scene.

We may think that constant entertainment is harmless as long as we're not watching obvious filth or immorality, but I want to draw your attention to something the Apostle Paul said, which I believe serves as a wonderful guiding principle in this discussion.

In 1 Corinthians 6.12, he writes, All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything.

Or as J.B. Phillips paraphrases the text, as I have said before, everything is permissible for me, but not everything is necessarily good. Everything is permissible for me, but I must not be a slave of anything.

In other words, something may not be blatantly sinful, but it could still be unwise. It may not be blatantly sinful, but it may be addictively dangerous.

[ 11 : 29 ] Personally, I could probably live without TV. If nothing else, I'd be content to having nothing to watch but old reruns of the Andy Griffith show and Atlanta Braves baseball in the summer.

And I'll use baseball as an example. There's nothing inherently sinful about baseball. It's just a game. But it's also a game that takes about three hours to play or watch. and there is a game on six days a week. So imagine if I were to insist on watching every inning of every game.

From the beginning of April through the end of the regular season at the end of September, I could watch something like 480 hours of baseball. And what do you think the consequences of that would be?

What would I neglect in the process? My family? My job perhaps? Some of those games are on in the afternoon. My communion with Christ?

[ 12 : 34 ] Baseball may be lawful for the Christian to watch, but it's not always helpful. It may be lawful, but what if it dominates my life? What if I grow to have stronger affections for baseball than my wife or my children or my church?

What if I'm worshiping on Sunday with you, but all I can think about is getting home to watch that game? So we have to find the right balance between legalism and complacency.

Galatians 5.1, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. On the one hand, we don't need to yoke ourselves with extra biblical commands that say we can't enjoy entertainment at times.

There's no command that says such. On the other hand, freedom in Christ is not a license to indulge endlessly and without constraint in everything the world offers.

Freedom in Christ means we need to walk somewhere between those ditches according to biblical wisdom and discernment. So, what's the right approach?

[ 13 : 47 ] Well, enjoy God's gifts without being naive about the potential dangers of overindulgence. We guard our hearts without imposing extra biblical burdens and we walk in freedom without abusing that freedom.

Principle number 12. Take practical steps for a God-honoring approach. If we want our entertainment habits to honor the Lord, we need to be very practical about this.

We need real, actionable steps. We need a plan. And I have seven for your consideration. Some of these will actually recall things that I've said before. First, set limits on yourself.

Set limits on yourself. In other words, be very intentional about your screen time. Don't turn on the TV. just because you're home and it's there. Don't pull out your phone just because you seem to have nothing else to do in the moment.

Don't let entertainment dictate your schedule. You decide how much time is reasonable. Before you turn on the TV, determine how much time you'll give it.

[ 15 : 08 ] Set a plan to use your phone for specific things at specific times, perhaps. Remember, we want to create plenty of space, plenty of attention for things like prayer and Bible reading and reflection and real-life relationships.

In 2 Timothy 1.7, Paul says, God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control. So we should use it.

We need discipline. Second, evaluate your choices biblically. Philippians 4.8, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Does our entertainment align with Philippians 4.8? Or does it glorify sin? Does it promote immorality?

Even in subtle ways. If so, remove it. It's not worth it. No form of entertainment is worth dulling your conscience. Remember, if your right hand causes you to sin, be ruthless against those stumbling blocks.

[16:36] Remember Paul who said, I discipline my body and keep it under control lest after preaching to others, I myself should be disqualified. Third, don't just remove empty entertainment.

I talked about this last time. Replace it. Don't remove it, but replace it with edifying pursuits. Fill that time with something better. Something that will strengthen your faith.

Read the Bible. Read solid Christian books. Listen to sermons. Meet with a friend. Enjoy your family. Call someone. Write a letter. Pray.

Go outside and meditate as you enjoy God's creation. Fourth, seek accountability. So if you're struggling with media consumption, don't try to overcome it alone.

Pray, of course, but also speak to someone else about it. Iron sharpens iron, right? Accountability is a good thing because isolation fosters sin. Ecclesiastes 4, 9, and 10 say, two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil.

[17:51] For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up. This is why Christ has a body, the church.

So let's rely on one another. Fifth, set your mind on Christ. Instead of defaulting to TV in the evening, ask yourself, what can I do to draw closer to Christ?

Christ. Maybe you need to pray or read the Bible. Maybe you need to sing some hymns. Maybe you need to spend some time with your family. Maybe you just need to be still for a while.

Psalms 46, 10. Instead of pulling out your phone, ask yourself again, what can I do to draw closer to Christ? What can I do to serve his kingdom?

I'll tell you a quick story. This was probably 12 years ago now. I had this favorite coffee house in North Carolina which practically sat right in the middle of a college campus.

[19:00] So the place was always full of students. Well, I was waiting in line to order one day and I had pulled out my phone to send a text message and I sent the message, I put the phone back in my pocket and I looked around the room and I'm not exaggerating in the least when I say every single person in that place was on their phones.

There were probably 30 people in there and every last one of them was on their phone including the girl who was ordering her drink and the barista who was ringing her up.

Now, I'm sure I had seen that before. I had already knew that smartphones were, you know, their use had become very pervasive in our world but I guess that was the first time I really noticed the strangeness of it all.

Sometime later I wrote about this and I said, I don't know who slipped me the red pill but the sight was jarring. I began noticing this phenomenon everywhere from public spaces to family gatherings, countless human beings seemingly enslaved to a handheld plastic and glass box.

I, of course, already knew smartphones existed and that owners used them often but I have never observed the strangeness of it until that day. At least 30 people were in the same room at the same time yet everyone was paradoxically somewhere else.

[20:34] Science fiction meets reality. Well, the very next time I stopped by that coffee house I intentionally left my phone in the car and when I was waiting in line obviously not having my phone to distract me I see this guy sitting all alone sipping some espresso and maybe I read the situation all wrong but he looked genuinely lonely to me.

So, after I got my coffee I went over and I introduced myself. Long story short we had a great conversation for about 30 minutes and as it happened I was right.

He was a single guy working as a developer for some tech company in Raleigh so he spent nearly every day all alone which is why he would go to the coffee house.

He just wanted to be around people for a while even if he wasn't really interacting with them. I also learned this man was a Christian. So, here was my brother in Christ a man whom I will spend eternity with in need of companionship in need of a little encouragement and I probably would have never noticed him had I not made the intentional decision on that day to leave my phone in the car. And this is why the devil wants us constantly distracted. The more distracted we are the less effective we are. So, set your mind on Christ always everywhere.

[22:22] Sixth start small but keep going. Do I need to explain this one? Our habits didn't develop overnight and we will not replace those habits or improve those habits overnight.

Just take it one step at a time. If, let's say, you spend an hour on social media every day, cut it down to 45 minutes or 30 minutes. If your phone distracts you when you pray, put it in another room.

As they say, the only way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. In Zechariah chapter 4, we read about the rebuilding of the temple after its destruction.

So, some of God's people had returned to Jerusalem and they're quickly discouraged because the work is going very slow. And it seems like every step just is so insignificant.

And then the Lord says to Zechariah, the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall also complete it.

[ 23 : 27 ] Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you, for whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

So, the Lord says, their humble beginnings, as discouraging as they may be, will eventually lead to rejoicing. The temple will be completed one small step at a time.

And that's how we change our media habits. One small step at a time. So, embrace the small steps. Last but not least, lean on God's promises.

In Psalm 16:11, David says, says to the Lord, you make known to me the path of life. In your presence, there is fullness of joy.

At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Several months ago, I was speaking with a young woman who was very outspoken in her opposition to Christianity.

[ 24 : 36 ] And no matter how much I pressed her, I couldn't get her to tell me what exactly her objections were. She would just say, I just don't believe. I don't like Christianity.

Well, I've since learned that she has expressed interest in paganism. So, her objection to Christianity is not the reality of something supernatural.

That's not it. So, what is it? Well, here's what John 3, 19 and 20 say. The light has come into the world, that is Christ, and people love the darkness rather than light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. The reason so many people despise Christianity is because Christ exposes their sinfulness.

And furthermore, he calls them to repent. And for this reason, you find that many people think of God as some sort of cosmic killjoy.

[ 25 : 51 ] They think following Christ is all about sacrificing everything fun and enjoyable, but that's not what David says. He says, you make known to me, Lord, the path of life in your presence.

There is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. God doesn't want to destroy our joy.

He wants to give us fullness of joy. He wants to give us greater joy than we could ever imagine. Not only that, but the pleasures he gives, we're told, will last forever, which cannot be said.

For whatever we find on our TVs or our phones. So as we think about our various forms of entertainment, I suggest we evaluate them in light of God's promises.

Put them on a scale. For example, maybe I'll place my baseball games on one side of the scale, and I'll put Isaiah 35:10 on the other side, which says, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing, everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, and they shall obtain gladness and joy and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

[ 27 : 09 ] Well, there's no comparison between the two. While I might still enjoy an occasional baseball game, it's hard to make that a priority over more important things when God's promise of everlasting joy and gladness is top of mind for me.

baseball games pale in comparison. So when I'm evaluating how I'll spend my time and where I'll place my affections, it helps to constantly reflect on these promises of God.

Now with that, I want to consider two forms of entertainment that I haven't talked about yet. So far, I've focused on screens, TVs, phones, video games, but what about reading books?

And what about listening to music? How does the Bible direct us regarding books and music?

Obviously, many of the principles are going to be the same.

For example, books or music, they could become idols to us. We might consume evil, destructive content through books and music, but I've set them apart because there's something different about them.

[ 28 : 29 ] If nothing else, the Bible has more explicit things to say about reading and music. So let's begin with reading, and this is probably as far as we'll get today. We probably won't even get through all of what can be said about reading.

And we might call this a theology of words, okay? Let me ask you some questions. How did the universe come into existence? words?

I'll quote from Genesis. And God said words, right? God spoke words, and the universe came into existence.

How does God sustain the universe? Hebrews 1.3, Christ upholds the universe by the word of his power.

How does God save sinners? There's multiple ways to answer that. But James 1.18, of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth.

[ 29 : 35 ] 1 Peter 1.23, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

God. Romans 10.17, faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. How has God most clearly revealed himself to us?

Hebrews 1.3, again, Christ is the radiance of the glory of God in the exact imprint of his nature.

Now, going further, John 1.1 says, In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

Then, verse 14 of the same chapter says, And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Are you noticing a pattern? One more. How do we know God's will for us? Psalm 119, verse 130, The unfolding of your words gives light.

[ 30 : 52 ] It imparts understanding to the simple. Romans 15.4, For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.

Then, of course, 2 Timothy 3.16 and 17, All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable that the man of God may be approved, complete, equipped for every good work.

The Baptist Confession states, The light of nature and the works of creation and providence so clearly demonstrate the goodness, wisdom, and power of God that people are left without excuse. However, these demonstrations are not sufficient to give the knowledge of God and His will that is necessary for salvation. Therefore, the Lord was pleased at different times and in various ways to reveal Himself and to declare His will to His church.

To preserve and propagate the truth better and to establish and comfort the church with greater certainty against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and the world, the Lord put this revelation completely in writing.

[ 32 : 09 ] Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary because God's former ways of revealing His will to His people have now ceased. So clearly, words are important.

They're important to God and they're important to God's people. And God places a particular emphasis on the written word, at least in our day. There's something to be said about speaking and preaching, of course, but God has chosen to reveal Himself and His will to the church through a book, the Bible.

Now, I realize the Bible was written before film or TV, and I'll admit that this is pure speculation on my part, but I don't think God would have communicated to us any differently.

I think He would have still used the written word, and I'll explain why. First of all, there is precision and clarity that comes with writing that you can't get with speaking or video.

Speaking can be very effective, it can be very persuasive, videos can be very compelling, but you get clarity and precision with writing. That's why it's so hard to write if you've ever tried.

[ 33 : 35 ] You find yourself toiling over every word. Well, in 2 Peter 1.19, Peter says we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed.

confirmed. So, the prophecies of old are now more fully confirmed. They're clearer now. How so? Well, he continues, no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

Now, he's referring first and foremost to the fact that Christ came and Christ fulfilled all of those prophecies, right? But, if we take what Peter said and we pull back and we look at what God was doing at the time, namely inspiring Peter and the other apostles to complete the canon of scripture, we realize that Peter's words have a secondary application.

God has made the prophecies abundantly clear to us, more fully confirming them, if you will, by inspiring both the Old and New Testaments to be written.

I mean, just think about what it would be like if we still relied on oral tradition. We might still know the prophecies, we might still know that Jesus fulfilled them, but now we can read them over and over again.

[ 34 : 57 ] The information is recorded for us in black and white. So, that's the first reason I believe God inspired a book, precision and clarity. The second reason is meditation and retention.

the reason we gravitate to screens with their photos and their videos and those short bursts of text is because the alternative, namely reading a book, it requires more effort.

It takes concentration. It's not nearly as passive. But the advantage of reading is that we are more engaged in the content. So, the content is generally more refined, it's presented with greater depth and clarity in most cases, and our retention of it is better because we're much more involved in our consumption of it.

Joshua 1.8 says, The book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.

The Lord implores us not to merely read his word, but also meditate on it. And by meditating on it, we learn from it better and we retain it.

[ 36 : 18 ] And I believe reading lends itself to both meditation and retention. meditation. We're more involved in the consumption of it. It's a slower process, so we have time to digest as we go.

We can frequently pause to think about what we've read. I know there have been several studies on this, but I think we know this is true from personal experience.

You know, Amazon has this feature where you can buy a Kindle version of a book as well as the audio version of the same book. And I love this because what it allows me to do is listen to the audio version as I, let's say, driving home from work, and then when I get home, I can pull out my Kindle and pick up right where I left off with the audio book.

And I can continue reading physically. However, I have noticed that all too often when I have gone back to physically read what I listened to in the car, I missed a lot.

I don't know how. I guess I heard it, but I missed it. I didn't retain it. I believe God has given us a book because reading lends itself to meditation and retention.

[ 37 : 33 ] Third, words in a book are more universal and more accessible than other mediums. You don't need modern technology.

You don't need electricity. You can translate a text to simple paper and carry it to any place on the planet. And fourth, there's something theologically consistent with God revealing His will to us through words in a book since Christ is the Word, the ultimate revelation of God.

God's truth is inherently linguistic and that reflects something of Christ Himself. He intentionally recorded His teachings in words, not paintings, not performances, not cinematic art of some kind. God reveals Himself primarily through writing. And of course, by extension, the preaching and teaching of that writing. Now, I realize that the Bible doesn't have a lot to say, at least not explicitly, explicitly about reading in general, that is, reading outside of the Word of God, but it seems to me that God has set a precedent, if you will, illustrating the significance of books and reading.

Just thinking about this on a practical level, if the danger of our entertainment-driven culture is distractions and shallowness, then I would say one of the best antidotes is learning to slow down, learning to focus, and learning to read.

[ 39 : 18 ] And I mean things that are a bit more long-form. Again, reading requires attention, it requires engagement, it usually leads to deeper reflection, and these are all important things for a Christian.

These are all things we need for spiritual growth, frankly. and these are things we just don't get from most modern media. Of course, I'm not suggesting that we should read just anything.

Not all kinds of reading are profitable, but generally speaking, reading is a good thing, and more to the point, it's both a discipline and a form of leisure that we've increasingly neglected in our day.

Richard Baxter, the English Puritan, had a high regard for reading sound Christian books, and he once compared books with preaching.

So, assuming we have a choice between a doctrinally sound Christian book and a doctrinally sound Christian sermon, here's what he says.

[ 40 : 30 ] The writings of divines are nothing else but a preaching of the gospel to the eye as the voice preaches to the ear. Vocal preaching has the preeminence in moving the affections and being diversified according to the state of the congregation which attended.

In this way, the milk comes warmest from the breast, that is the preacher, but books have the advantage in many other respects. How so?

How do books have an advantage over live, in-person sermons? Well, he offers a list of seven advantages. Some of these are quite humorous, whether he intended them to be or not.

Number one, he says, you may read an able preacher when you have, no wait, you may read an able preacher when you have one, but, oh, I get it, sorry, this is old English, so I have to, you may read an able preacher when you have but an inferior one to hear.

Okay. Number two, every congregation cannot hear the most judicious or powerful preachers, but every single person may read the books of the most powerful and judicious.

[ 41 : 52 ] Three, preachers may be silenced or banished when books may be at hand. Remember the time frame. Number four, books may be kept at a smaller charge than preachers.

Five, we may choose books which treat that very subject which we desire to hear, but we cannot choose what subject the preacher shall treat. Six, books may be at hand every day and hour when we cannot have sermons but seldom and at set times.

Seven, if sermons are forgotten they are gone, but a book we may read over and over till we remember it and if we forget it, may again peruse it at our leisure or at our pleasure.

Now, to be clear, Baxter did not believe we should exchange preaching for books or anything like that and I realize that we now have on-demand preaching with podcasts and the internet but the point is that books can and probably should have a prominent place in our lives.

They can be a tremendous blessing to us but we'll come back to this next time and discuss it further as well as music. For now, let's pray. Heavenly Father, we praise you for your wisdom and your word and the freedom that we have in Christ.

[ 43 : 19 ] I pray that you would forgive us when we allow distractions to pull us away from what is most important. Help us to use our time and our resources wisely, honoring you in all that we do.

Give us discernment, Lord, to walk faithfully, always seeking first your kingdom. And it's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen.