

## The Media Monster (Part One)

*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*  
Proverbs 4:23 NIV

What if I told that every day a legion of competitors was lining up to enter your home, your workplace, your car and even your phone to seduce you and your spouse?

They are. Each day assorted voices and images lure your spouse and you away from each other: television, cable, Internet, email, blogs, chat rooms, radio, magazines, newspapers, music, movies, books and video games. Media is competing with you for your spouse's attention and affection!

*Media takes time away from your relationship with your spouse.* Keep track sometime of how many hours you spend each week just watching television. Then think of what you could have done together during that same time.

*Media twists your sense of reality, creating unreasonable expectations for your spouse.* The media usually present a distorted picture of relationships. For example, how often in a movie or on a television program do you see a man and woman fall in love, get married and remain committed for a lifetime? More often, the norm is two people falling in love and into the sack without much thought about moral issues. If you constantly feed these images into your head, doesn't your spouse stand to lose in the long run? Competing with fantasy is difficult.

*Media facilitates emotional adultery through pornography and Internet liaisons.* Although the benefits of using the Internet are obvious, its costs and risks are not always so plain. Pornography is a click away on computers and now phones. It can be as damaging to the mental and emotional health of a marriage as a physically realized affair. And just as bad, people use Internet chat rooms to meet strangers and engage in intimate, sexually oriented conversations.

With all these temptations lining up outside our lives, isn't it time you took an inventory of your media consumption?

## The Media Monster (Part Two)

*Whatever is true, . . . whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, . . . dwell on these things.*  
Philippians 4:8 NASB

Yesterday I talked about the way the media monster can damage your marriage. Here are some thoughts about how to master the media instead of being manipulated by the messages:

*Know what you believe.* How will you be able to distinguish the truth from lies in media if you don't know the truth of the Scriptures on a variety of issues? Knowing what the Scriptures teach about guarding my heart has empowered me many times to turn off a television show or TV movie.

*Be aggressive--not passive--about the media.* A media monster will seep into our eyes, ears, minds, hearts and families if you allow it. Set some standards!

*Guard your mind and heart.* If you allow yourself to create fantasy lovers through media sources, you stand in the courtyard of the house of adultery. This includes advertising as much as programming.

*Don't depend on the movie rating system and on movie reviews.* Find out about movies from friends who

share your values. Consult reviewers with a similar Christian worldview.

*Control Internet access.* Subscribe to a provider that screens out offensive material. Place computers in very public places in your home, such as the kitchen or family room. Speak to your kids about Internet challenges and help them monitor both the type of usage and the amount of time they're online. If necessary, consider using software designed for parents that helps you monitor your children's traffic and use.

*Consider cutting back on or even fasting from media use.* Have you ever tried going a whole day or week without watching television? What might happen in your marriage if you did? You miss out on many enjoyable activities when you are lazy about unhooking your media umbilical cord.

Why not consider joining us for our "Turn Off the TV Fast" in the month of August? I promise that you'll benefit from this 31-day fast from television.

### Discuss

Talk about the changes you need to make personally or as a family in media use. Consider pulling your children into this one, listing ideas. Pick one.

### Discuss

What type of media is the biggest threat to your marriage? To your family?

### Pray

Pray for unity as a couple to know how to keep these competitors out of your marriage

### Pray

Ask God to begin making you more sensitive as a couple to how media impacts your marriage and family. Pray for courage to do what you need to do.