

OW2P Study - Discernment (Part 7)

Goal

To help students in dealing with the powerful media messages about alcohol and tobacco products. Students need godly wisdom to navigate through the turbulent times of today.

Key Scriptures

1 Peter 5:8; 1 Chronicles 12:32; Proverbs 3:21

Warm Up

Divide into groups of four or five. Give each group a pen and a piece of paper and ask them to write down as many ad slogans as they can in 60 seconds. For example: "I'm lovin' it™" and "Just do it." Ask two or three groups to share their slogans with everyone. Point out how these messages get stuck in our brains.

Watch

Show the Week 7 video —"Discernment"

Workout

One of the most creative and bizarre basketball plays recently occurred between two high school rivals. On an out-of-bounds play under the basket, a player was getting ready to inbound the ball. At that moment, one of his teammates jumped down on his hands and knees and started barking wildly like a dog. All of the players turned to see what he was doing. All except one. This one sprinted toward the basket where he received a perfect pass from his teammate for an easy lay-up. The distraction worked perfectly.

Trick plays are difficult to anticipate because they look so much like the real thing. Before you are aware of what is happening, you have been fooled, and maybe beaten. Many young people who desire to live their lives without drugs, alcohol and tobacco become victims of the "trick play" as well.

These "plays" are designed by powerful advertising agencies that have millions of dollars at stake. The 60-second TV commercial and the full-sized outdoor billboard are powerful ways to spread a message. As Christians, we need to be aware of the influence that the media can have on the choices we make.

Understanding the three keys to the inner-workings of advertising can help you protect yourself from making bad choices through the power of advertising. The first key is understanding that every ad is based on persuasion. This strategy relies heavily upon images designed to appeal to our feelings. Seeing a strong, masculine cowboy smoking a cigarette can tempt one with a feeling of power.

A second key is that most people treat photographs and video images as reality. What we see, we believe to be real, accurate and truthful. We don't stop to think that the beautiful people in shorts who are playing football in the snow-covered Rocky Mountains while drinking beer would, in real life, be freezing to death.

The third key lies in the idea of "double think." Intellectually, guys know that drinking a certain brand of beer is not going to cause beautiful women to flock to their sides; however, at the same time, they would like to think that their chances might be increased if they drink that brand of beer. That's double think. It's all very tricky business.

Workout Questions

1. What is the one ad that has stuck in your brain more than any other? Why has it had such a strong influence on you?
2. Can you think of a commercial or ad that sells a lifestyle, not just a product?
3. Have you ever felt tricked by Satan? How? Read 1 Peter 5:8. How is Satan described? How can Satan devour you?
4. Read 1 Chronicles 12:32. David's soldiers understood the times and knew what to do. If you understand the times, how does that help you know what to do?
5. Read Proverbs 3:21. How do drugs make us lose our discretion? What should you focus on?

Wrap Up

Read aloud the five attributes of a Christian thinker below. Make copies and give a copy to everyone as they leave.

Five Attributes of a Christian Thinker

A Christian Thinker...

- ...has a strong desire to please God in all that he/she does.
- ...has a strong sense of right and wrong based on the Bible.
- ...recognizes that many people who create media may not have Christian values.
- ...understands that all media, commercials and ads are not harmless fun.
- ...has a habit of asking probing questions about media.

– Adapted from "Learn to Discern" by Robert De Moss



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