**“One-Off Message” – Technology**

**March 7-8, 2020**

Welcome to Northview Students, everyone! To start off today, did you know that the average adult in America consumes a little over 12 hours of media a day? That includes TV, smartphone, radio. Kids ages 8-12 spend over 4.5 hours a day looking at a screen. If you think about it, that’s pretty crazy. I mean, if I set a timer and told you to sit still for 4.5 hours, you would probably lose your mind and time would crawl by. Yet, when we are consuming media for that much time in a day, it never feels like that much in the moment.

Here at Northview Students, we believe that every person can have a relationship with God. We believe that your relationship with God is the most important relationship you can have and that it should affect all areas of our life. If that’s true, that means that God needs to be involved in our lives when it comes to entertainment and what we do for fun (which involves media.) So, here’s my question to us today: if we are consuming that much content every single day, what kind of influence is it having on our lives? In my opinion, it’s having a BIG influence!

Here’s our THP for today to get us started!

**THP: Worship God with what you watch, listen to, and think about!**

The New Testament writer, Paul, gives us some great advice on how to make sure that we are worshiping God with what we watch/listen to/think about. It comes from Philippians 4:8-9 (this is a letter that was written to a church), which says, *“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*

This verse is really interesting because it tells us that we are to keep our minds on whatever is true/noble/lovely. Can we be honest? Some of the media we consume is like this, but the vast majority is not like that. However, Paul takes it a step further…he says that whatever we see that is from God, we need to put it into practice! I think the opposite is true because most of what we see in media should NOT be put into practice. Think about all the dumb things people do on YouTube alone?!

Guys, it is so easy to be influenced by what we listen to, watch, and think about. I’ll throw in another influence – the people we hang out with and what they listen to, watch, think about – all of that has enormous influence over how we live! Sometimes, we don’t even realize it’s happening to us. Let me give you an example of that from my life…

**(Leaders Note: Share a personal example where you were negatively influenced by your peers and you didn’t even realize it was happening until you later realized it or it was pointed out to you by your family or friends.)**

In another place in the New Testament, Paul writes a letter to a church in Rome and gives them some similar advice. He says in Romans 12:2: *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing, and perfect will.”*

Here’s an illustration…if you have a cell phone, go ahead and take it out. If you don’t have a cell phone, good! You don’t need one! Just kidding. Go to your Settings and find the “Sounds” option. Select the sound you hear when you get a text message or an app notification from like Instagram or something. On the count of three, hit that sound. 1, 2, 3! Ok, ok, that’s enough!

**(Leaders Note: After they finish, tell them to put their cell phones away. Leave yours out and hold it close to your microphone. Play sound during next part of the script.)**

Did you know that when you receive an alert on your phone there is a chemical released in your brain called dopamine? It’s released when you experience joy or approval. The more it’s released, the more your body thinks it needs it. Guess what? Similar chemicals are released when you listen to, watch, or think about something that you know you shouldn’t be doing. It’s that same rush and feeling of “this is fun and feels good, even though it’s wrong.” Your body starts craving that more and more and you can become addicted to it.

Cell phones, video games, TV, music…it’s affecting our entire body! Our mind, our heart, even different chemicals and hormones!! This is why it’s so important to be thoughtful and wise about what we’re putting into our brain…and how frequently! Just like the example I shared earlier, we could be negatively influenced by something and not even know it. We don’t think it’s a big deal sometimes until it’s too late…and then it BECOMES a big deal!

Let’s spend a minute silently reflecting on a few things: think about how you spend your free time. What do you do? Phone, video games online, Netflix, spending time with friends at their house – how often do you think about how you can worship God while doing those things? Some of you might come up with some answers, some of you think, “Well, that’s silly. I’m not even at church so why should I be worshiping God while doing those things?”

Guys, when you become a Christian, you’re committing to God that nothing in your life is off-limits to Him. God wants you to worship Him through EVERY area of your life, including how you have fun. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking that what you do for fun with media is separate from your Christian life. That’s actually a sin. You’re putting your free time and making that a god above God! We need to be careful not to do that and we need to have God’s help and the help from family and friends to make wise choices in this area.

**Let’s commit to our THP: to worship God in what we watch, listen to, and how we think. Let’s pray!**