



The Kingdom Perspective

Amusing Ourselves to Death

Hello this is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective.

As modern people we are good at spotting external oppression. We can see a despot coming miles away. However, we often miss the more subtle oppression of our own desires manipulating us, and, unfortunately, in a techno-consumeristic society like our own, this is a far greater threat. As the late thinker Neil Postman put it: “Everything in our background has prepared us to know and resist a prison when the gates begin to close around us... But ...[w]ho is prepared to take arms against a sea of amusements?”

In his short but powerful book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Postman contrasts the competing dystopias of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell:

“Contrary to common belief even among the educated, Huxley [*Brave New World*] and Orwell [1984] did not prophesy the same thing. Orwell warns that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression. But in Huxley’s vision, no Big Brother is required.... As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think. ...Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance.... As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are 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 fear will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we desire will ruin us. ...Huxley, not Orwell, was right.”

~Neil Postman (1931-2003), in his classic *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

And that’s something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

~Ephesians 4:17-24 (ESV)

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