

Families and the Media

Entertainment is able to reach into the minds and hearts of our young people without our knowing it. Television, movies, and Internet are three electronic media used to deliver modern entertainment that is often not suitable for our children and for our adults, too. If left unscreened, these media assault our morals and the New Testament teaching in at least three ways: *permissive sex, mindless violence, and abusive acts and language.*

Permissive sex.

Christians are not to be sexually immoral. In fact, the “sexually immoral” have their part “in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Rev 21:8.” In Gal. 5:19-21, sexual immorality is described as an obvious act of a sinful nature: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, . . . of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” That those of us who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God makes a point that cannot be missed. Even TV’s prime time (a time thought of as for family viewing) presents sexually immoral situations as if they are OK, and the “in” thing to do. Sexually moral, single life and faithful, married life are not what is presented. Parents should guard their children against this corruption.

Mindless violence.

Christians are not to be violent. Jesus told us: “But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.” Mt 5:39-40. Yet TV and movies are filled with destructive violence. Beatings and killings of the worst kind are graphically portrayed. The heroes murder and maim for the general good. What are our children to think? How do we reconcile this mindless violence with Paul’s teaching on virtue in Phil 4:8:

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things.

Abusive acts and language.

Christians are not to abuse themselves or others with words or acts. Jesus taught us to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Mt 19:19. Love of others and love of ourselves leave no room in our lives for abuse. Ugly words and ugly acts are not acceptable to God. James describes the tongue and its

control in James 3:8: “But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned us not to be angry with our brother or call him names. To do so places us in danger of the judgment and in danger of the fire of hell (Mt 5:22).

Screening the use of modern media.

Parents must screen the use of modern media. Neither our children nor we can get entirely away from these evil influences of the present world. To do so, we would have to leave the present world (I Cor. 5:10). However, we can screen the use of these media and help our children find good and wholesome alternatives. The Internet which offers many evil temptations should be screened as carefully as TV and movies. Parents and church members should teach children to avoid the evil while providing wholesome alternatives. Keeping our children safe today will keep our homes and the church safe for tomorrow.

Remember.

Remember that the best defense against evil is a good offense. Paul was exactly right when he told us to occupy our minds with noble and virtuous thoughts. If we do, the god of peace will be with us (Phil 4:-9).

Study questions.

1. What are three modern media that assault our minds and the minds of our children with evil? _____
2. What are three ways with which we are assaulted? _____

3. What will be the fate of the sexually immoral? _____
4. How do those who will not inherit eternal life live? _____

5. What is our best offense against violence? _____
6. How does James describe the tongue? _____
7. If we become angry and call our brother names, what are we in danger of? _____
8. Why should we screen TV, movies , and Internet? _____
