

The Bulletin of
The Golden Isles
CHURCH OF CHRIST

441 Touchstone Parkway ♦ Brunswick, Georgia 31525

Volume 1

April 15, 2001

Number 3

Profanity on TV

On page 5D of the Monday, December 13 issue of USA Today an article entitled Yes, that is a blue streak on your television screen, reported that "Profanity is used once every six minutes on prime-time network TV shows, every two minutes on premium cable and every three minutes in major motion pictures, according to a study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs."

Other telling quotes from the article state:

"Fox featured the most foul-mouthed shows among the broadcast networks, while HBO led cable networks..."

"Fox led all the networks with an average of 20 profanities per hour, almost twice the overall average of 11. Fox accounted for five of what the center termed 'the dirty dozen'—the most foul-mouthed shows, including That 70's Show and Family Guy. HBO had 39 uses of profanity per hour, with the critically acclaimed Oz and The Sopranos leading the 'dirty dozen' list for cable. Of the 50 top-grossing movies of 1998, Primary Colors and Lethal Weapon 4 were most profane. Overall, those 50 films had one scene containing profanity every four minutes."

Robert Lichter, director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs which made the study, stated, "The way that TV drops to the lowest common denominator is that premium cable uses profanity, then free TV gets angry that they can't do it, so they start pushing the envelope downward."

As examples, Lichter "cites salty language on ABC's NYPD Blue and the use of the s-word on CBS' Chicago Hope this season," according to the article. The article concludes with these statements from Lichter:

"If civility and courtesy are good things, then I'm troubled by language that expresses incivility, boorishness and mutual disrespect...There's a reason why we talk different in the locker room than the living room. If people start talking like they're in the locker room, maybe they start behaving like they're in the locker room."

Of course profanity is wrong whether in a locker or living room. But the point Mr. Lichter makes is well taken. Language reveals one's heart. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."(Matt. 12:34) Further, the things we dwell on in our hearts determine our actions. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life." And, "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he."(Prov. 4:23; 23:7) Therefore, language, our hearts, and our actions are all related to each other.

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Times of Services

Sundays - 2:00pm Bible class, 3:00pm Assembly

Wednesdays - 6:30pm Bible class

Profanity on TV (continued)

If we are fed "language that expresses incivility, boorishness and mutual disrespect," our heart will feed on these things, and our actions follow suit. The Bible teaches that our language should be characterized by the following principles:

"Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear..."

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."(Eph. 4:29,31,32)

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one."(Col. 4:6)

Further, the Bible teaches, "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the righthand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth." (Col.3:1-2)

The programs and movies mentioned are not innocent entertainment, but magnify and justify language and lifestyles that are completely opposed to everything the Bible teaches Christians ought to say, be, and do! There is nothing wrong with some wholesome entertainment. However, anytime it arrays itself against clear Bible teaching it should be avoided.

You might say, Well, Owens, what do you suggest, throw our TVs away? Some Christians I know have. You surely would not go wrong if you did. Remember that the television has only been possessed by the masses since the 1950's. It really isn't a necessity, is it? Can you not live without it? However, I believe there are other options to discarding it.

First, as parents and grandparents, don't allow any program to come into your home which you know has profanity in it. Remember the set has an "off" switch. There is nothing that you or your family just "have to watch."

Second, don't allow the television to become an unknown baby sitter. Parents tire, especially mothers with small children. The temptation is to let the television become a baby sitter while you "catch up" or take some needed rest. Only let them watch what you are confident is wholesome.

Third, tapes with true wholesome entertainment are available. They can be found with relative ease.

Fourth, don't become addicted to television. Some families leave their set on practically from the time they awaken until they retire in the evening. By its very nature, television attracts our attention. Even entertainment that is wholesome can rob Christians of time that could be more profitably used. The Bible teaches we are to redeem "the time, because the days are evil."(Eph. 5:16)

Fifth, recognize that television can dull one's spiritual senses. Tests have been conducted which even show its adverse effect on one's attention span. The Bible teaches our senses are to be "exercised to discern good and evil."(Heb. 5:14) This is not possible through a steady diet of network television. One becomes desensitized to the irreverent, mutual disrespect, incivility, and boorishness Mr. Lichter referred to earlier. Instead of "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them"(Eph. 5:11), we are entertained by them! We become lethargic spiritually and don't even know it. The television was not named the "boob tube" for nothing!

However you decide to deal with this issue, recognize that television is a far cry from what it was when it first became popular. By and large the major networks televise programs that are anti-God and anti-family (as God would have it). This has not always been the case. Christians should not continue to have the attitude toward television they developed in the 50's and 60's. Television has changed drastically for the bad. Our attitude toward it should correspond! --by Phillip Owens - *The Jackson Drive Admonisher - December 26, 1999*

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