

More on Movies

I thought I'd share a few more thoughts related to my last post. First of all, my copastor sent me the following link right after I sent out my last e-mail. It is a website that gives reviews on movies to help equip you as a parent to make informed decisions on what you want to allow your family to watch. It's <http://www.pluggedinonline.com>. I hope you find it to be helpful.

Developing standards for media, whether it be books, magazines, music, TV, or the movies is challenging for parents. (For the sake of simplicity, I'm just going to address movies in this e-mail, but the principles are the same with other forms of media.) It is easy to develop passionate views on both ends of the spectrum, and to defend those views biblically.

Some people hold to a very grace-based view that allows them to watch the same movies that all their friends watch. They place an emphasis on the grace of God and the freedoms that we enjoy in Christ. This position is very easy to defend biblically as demonstrated by the following verses.

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:15a To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure.

1 Corinthians 10:23 "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is constructive.

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Others hold to a position that places more emphasis on living differently as Christians. Under this view they may hold very strict standards against all worldly influence, including almost all movies. This argument is also easy to defend scripturally as demonstrated by the following passages.

Romans 6:19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

1 Peter 2:16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.

1 Peter 1:14-16 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Ephesians 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

So which is it? Which stance is biblically correct? You can decide the balance for your own life and family, but it seems to me that the case is strong enough on both sides that both must be true. God desires us to live in freedom, but also to pursue holiness. As a Christian, I have the freedom to do many things, but those things are not all good for me, and they are not all honoring to God. I want to choose to follow God's ways in every choice, not because I have to (since I am not under the law), but because He Himself is a loving Father and knows what is best for me.

Many Christians do not hold a high enough standard. Many other Christians are too legalistic and live by a list of do's and don'ts. I want to hold a high standard that is based in grace and freedom. It's a delicate balance!