

Avoiding Raunchy Movies Doesn't Make You Legalistic

Recently my wife and I attended a decent movie when we had an encounter with a Christian woman in the lobby. Making conversation, I inquired what film she was seeing and had to conceal my cringe when she told me the title of the flick.

"Are you aware of the content?" I gently inquired, as I had previously read a review. Not wanting to come across as self-righteous or critical, I bantered with her a bit about what she was about to partake of. She giggled and then shrugged it off by saying, "Well, I already bought the ticket!" To which I smiled and said, "Nobody stands at entrances; there's a bunch of other decent flicks." "Well ... I like the actress who's one of the leads," she said.

I knew this was a losing cause.

What was it my sister in the Lord saw as she sat in that theater? An R-rated profane comedy starring "America's sweetheart" (from the godly film *The Blind Side*) featuring constant crude jokes about female and male genitals, 150 F-words, characters misusing God's name more than 60 times, adultery, violence (including people shot in the head and genitals with blood spurting), drunkenness, cocaine use, stealing and a nonstop barrage of human indecency.

"At least there weren't any major displays of nudity, homosexuality or gore!" you might say.

True, but are Christians really in touch with what's happening today to entertainment? How many in our ranks are sadly being seduced to compromise and just "go with the flow"? We don't want to be accused of legalism, you know.

Hollywood churns out shocking raunchfest movies—directed primarily at youth—intended to gross people out at a torrid

pace. Feces, vomiting, bodily functions, profanity, nudity, sexual perversions, self-pleasing and as many crass and crude jokes as possible is standard fare. Next up in the long line of films like this is *The To-Do List* about a young high school girl trying to prepare herself for college by systematically learning the ins and outs of every kind of imaginable kinky sexual activity—no holds barred. It ought to be hilarious!

The music industry is right in line, serving our young people video nudity on top of lyrics that likewise are downright shameful. Justin Timberlake's blockbuster "Tunnel Vision" features naked female dancers, which YouTube justifies as having "educational" and "artistic context." Robin Thicke has the No. 1 spot on *Billboard's* Top 100 with "Blurred Lines," the video of which features totally topless and bare-behind dancers. Right behind, at the No. 2 spot, is our dear former Disney princess Miley Cyrus with her defiant anthem "We Can't Stop!"—a totally disgraceful display of rebellion and sensuality. *Hannah Montana, come back, please. I'm prayin' for you!*

I'm not citing these examples to discourage the reader but rather to awaken us to how far our culture has crumbled, how desperately we need revival and how those of us who are parents must remain vigilant in our homes.

Navigating the Gray Areas

From television to music to the Internet and other entertainment choices, we daily confront situations that affect our walk with Jesus and our character. As Hebrews 12:14 teaches, without holiness, no man will see the Lord.

Religion can come up with lists of dos and don'ts, but those lists don't deal with our hearts. If we are determined to glorify God in every area of our life, may these 10 questions help us evaluate entertainment in order to walk in a manner pleasing of the Lord:

1. Is it beneficial—spiritually, mentally and physically—to me as a Christian? (1 Cor. 6:12)
2. Can I do it in fullness of faith? If I doubt, better do without! (Rom. 14:23)
3. Will it enslave me and bring me under its power? (1 Cor. 6:12)
4. Does it glorify God? (1 Cor. 10:31)
5. Is it good stewardship of time and/or money? (1 Cor. 4:2)
6. Will it dull my spirit and cause me to lose my edge in God? (Rom. 12:11)
7. Will it grieve (sadden) the Holy Spirit? (Eph. 4:30)
8. Will it edify others? Does it seek their good? (1 Cor. 10:33)
9. Is it worth imitating? (1 Cor. 11:1)
10. Could it cause others to stumble? (Rom. 14:21)

Sometimes evaluations are easy to make based on clear-cut Scripture teachings. Where it's not crystal clear, may these guidelines guide us.

I don't know about you, but I want everything God has for us as His people in these climactic hours of history. Entertainment is undoubtedly eroding, but the true church of Jesus Christ is arising! As Scripture promises, it will be a glorious church before His return. We have a chance to be a part of seeing that bride radiate in all her beauty. Will you join me?

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