

Why Are Christian Women Watching 'Fifty Shades Darker'?

The unavoidable truth is that many are becoming desensitized. When the Holy Spirit no longer fills hearts and minds with a passion for purity and holiness, there is a general lack of conviction.

Compromise in this area can be well-illustrated through a story I heard years ago.

Eskimos in the barren North often kill wolves by taking a razor-sharp knife and dipping it in blood. They allow the blood to freeze to the blade. Then they bury the handle of the knife in the snow with the blade exposed. As the wolf begins to lick the blade, his tongue becomes numb and desensitized due to the cold. As he continues, his tongue begins to bleed, and he licks even faster—unaware that he is consuming his own blood and slowly killing himself.

Within time, the Eskimos return and bring the dead animal home. In the same way, the enemy numbs us through compromise. Within time, we, like the wolves, don't realize that we are dying—dying spiritually. The enemy desensitizes us until we are numb to the things of God.

A famous quote resounds with clarity for us today: "All the water in the world, no matter how hard it tries, can never sink a ship unless it gets inside. All the evil influence of the world, no matter how hard it tries, can never sink a Christian's soul unless it gets inside."

The greatest battle we will ever fight is within. Our mind is where the battle is either won or lost: "As [a man] thinks in his heart so is he" (Prov. 23:7). Galatians 5:17 says that the

Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what our sinful nature desires, and that these two forces are constantly fighting against each other.

As a result, our choices are rarely free from this conflict. Don't be alarmed. The fact that there is a fight confirms the value of our commitment to Christ and His standard of holiness.

There is a troubling trend toward moral compromise in the evangelical church. I've witnessed soft-porn images on Christian websites, questionable movie clips during PowerPoint sermons, and youth pastors talk about their favorite sexually charged TV show or movie with the youth, all under the guise of "relating" to the culture.

Most walk away from Christ not because He fails them, or because the Word of God proves to be untrue, but because of the love of this world (gratifying the flesh). We cannot overlook the seriousness of this issue. Jesus said that the worries and desires of this world, along with the deceitfulness of wealth, come in and choke the Word of God, making it unfruitful (see Mark 4:19).

The passion we once had for the purity of God's Word can easily be exchanged for the pollutants of the world. For this reason, I take every opportunity to write about making wise entertainment choices. What we put into our mind affects our relationship with God at a very deep level.

1 John 2:15-17 says, "Do not love the world [the world's mindset] or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world and its desires are passing away, but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

What we watch and listen to affects the heart—it's impossible

to separate the two. If we would make it our goal to know Christ more personally, we would preach Christ more powerfully. For example, if a pastor (or Christian leader) fills his mind with the world all week and expects the Spirit of God to speak boldly through him from the pulpit, he will be gravely mistaken. E.M. Bounds said, "The sermon cannot rise in its life-giving forces above the man. Dead men give out dead sermons, and dead sermons kill. Everything depends on the spiritual character of the preacher."

Carnal Christians give God "His due" (a few hours on Sunday), but they forget His call to "Come out from among them [the world] and be separate" (2 Cor. 6:17a). Every day of the week is the world influencing you? What does your mental media diet consist of? Whom do you hang out with? What, and whom, do you listen to? Is your heart set toward the things of God or the world's influence? A quick peruse of our "likes" and posts on Facebook reveals what we truly value.

Compromise also deceives. James 1:22 reminds us that if we listen to God's Word without doing it that we are fooling ourselves, we are deceived. The power of God's Word lies in the application. In addition to non-Christians, it is Christians who are moving sexually explicit and violent movies to the Top 10 by not applying purity to their lives. It is Christians who are addicted to porn and supplying the revenue to fuel the industry.

We cannot love both Christ and this world. Carnality destroys our relationship with Christ and genuine fellowship with other believers. It destroys our prayer lives as well. A carnal Christian does not pray, really pray and seek the heart of God. A deep prayer life exposes facades and crushes hypocrisy. Carnality also destroys spiritual power and hinders the infilling of the Spirit. It also affects our home life. In short, everything that God calls us to be is compromised.

Being selective with what we watch and listen to has nothing

to do with legalism; it has everything to do with wisdom. We are to recognize what glorifies Christ and what clearly does not, then choose accordingly. Grace does not relieve us of responsibility. We actually live under a higher standard when grace, not rules, guides our decisions. It's not about following rules. Let your freedom in Christ and a relationship with Him guide you. We've all watched questionable material and have made wrong choices; don't live with ongoing regret. But don't justify wrong behavior by thinking God doesn't care about what you watch or listen to, He does. We serve and love God with our mind. (See Rom. 7:25.) {eoa}

Watch the sermon, Don't Reject the Voice of God.