

## Is TV Really So Bad?

We are living in a sin-sick, morally degenerated, and pleasure-mad world. Our society continually demands entertainment, amusements, and pastimes at an ever-increasing level.

What is the goal of this “continual-entertainment” spirit? To keep modern man “*happily*” busy.

In a certain sense, entertainment does succeed in its goal. It keeps thousands and millions busy.

The very words themselves reveal this fact. The word “*amusement*” comes originally from the French and literally means “to stare at fixed so as to prevent musing or thinking.” The word “*pastimes*” speaks for itself. It means to kill or use up time as a thing of little value; to pass time away. The root of the word “*entertainment*” means divert. Thus it implies something, which takes us away or diverts us from the normal, real world of everyday life.

In other words, entertainment, amusements, pastimes are things which keep us busy—*busy avoiding the realities of life and truth as they are set down in God’s Holy Word*. They keep us busy avoiding thinking about eternity, hell, heaven, sin, God, Christ, salvation, our own selves, and especially our necessity for a new heart.

But if entertainment succeeds in its first goal of making man busy it fails miserably in its second: *happily busy*. Never as in our day has there been so much restlessness, dissatisfaction, and yes, unhappiness—in spite of the millions who immerse themselves in the slavery of modern-day entertainment forms. With all our gadget-saving devices, our freedom from poverty, temporally, our multiplication of opportunities in nearly every walk and aspect of life, plus our continual drinking in of entertainment—in spite of all these things, no age has been so unhappy as modern man.

Entertainment can never give enough—it always leaves an empty feeling behind. The more it is practiced and relied on, the emptier it becomes. It has turned our society into an object of pity, for we are a victim of its own system. Society goes full cycle from being pleasure-hungry to pleasure-mania to pleasure-boredom. But do you know what is even worse? Not only the world, but also the *church* has begun sliding down the devilish slope of entertainment, which can only end in nothingness, sin, and disastrous judgments.

Satan does not stop with liberal churches only. He also comes among us—who knew so well that the Word of God says, “Abstain from ALL appearance of evil”—who have it read to us from Sunday to Sunday, “Thou shalt have no other gods

before me”—are also beginning to fall victim to the idolatrous god of entertainment.

Step-by-step some are beginning to look for new things--(in the church and outside of the church) to entertain and keep ourselves busy with. Step-by-step the old-fashioned, plain gospel message with its emphases on the necessity of conversion is being increasingly placed to one side. Less and less time is spent praying together as a family, reading religious books together with children, talking together in family circles about religious matters, catechism classes, and sermons that are preached or read.

Are we not all guilty? Do we not all fall short in experiencing the reality of the seriousness of life, death, the judgment day, and eternity? Today we have a carefree, laughing society, but you never read in the Bible that Jesus laughed. Rather, especially referring to our day, He said: “Watch, and pray, and again I say unto you watch!”

But by nature we don't watch. By nature our question is “how far can I go and still not sin” instead of “how far can I flee from sin and avoid the very appearance of evil?”

At the very heart and center of our modern entertainment spirit stands TELEVISION. This is an obvious fact. 97% of Americans today have television sets in their homes and 91% *of all television time is dedicated solely for the purpose of entertainment*. Entertainment-addiction and television-addiction cannot be separated from each other.

Our society has been TELE-HOLIC. On a night when wives do not leave home 95 out of 100 will spend it watching TV. 85% of their husbands will do likewise. 80% of teenagers will follow their parents' example, and 75% of children will also spend their evenings drinking in sin.

There are people, however, who actually do not believe that television becomes an object of slavery in the home, and for that reason we have to consider the power of it in the homes where it is allowed. I shall seek to show you from plain facts that a television owner usually becomes addicted to TV with respect to (A) TIME, (B) SIN, (C) CONTROL.

(A) TIME. The average TV viewer spends 5 ½ hours daily watching TV. By the time an average American youth becomes 65 years old, he will have spent 14 years of his life watching TV (compared to 1 year in church, Sunday School, and catechism if he comes faithfully to all). In the U.S.A children 3 to 5 years old spent 54 hours every week watching TV, which is 64% of their time awake. When the average graduate from high school receives his diploma at 17 years of age, he will spent 11,000 hours of his life in school, but 22,000 hours watching TV. Every time an adult sits down to watch TV, he/she averages 3 ½ hours of

watching time before turning the TV off. Children are glued to TV for an average time of 2 ½ hours per sitting. (Yet, is not 1 ½ hours in the house of God often too long?) Outside of sleeping, the average American will spend more time in his life watching TV than anything else—yes, even more than working. Do we not have a tele-holic society with respect to our precious, God-given time?

(B) SIN. TV is a flood of sin. It addicts its watchers against all 10 commandments.

*First Commandment:* Anything we put above God becomes an idol. Modern man has become addicted at putting TV before God.

*Second Commandment:* If not in reality, in practice TV has become a graven image in the hearts of nearly all of its watchers.

*Third Commandment:* TV causes it's hearing to become addicted to hearing the name of the Lord used in vain. Profanity is used so often that it becomes an inoffensive thing. Few TV watchers realize that every time they willingly watch and hear such things, all those sins are scribed to them on account of their willing participation.

*Fourth Commandment:* Even the Sabbath day is not holy enough for its watchers to keep it turned off, or, if a small percentage may still do so for conscience's sake, yet the desire and craving for their idol remains even on the Lord's Day.

*Fifth Commandment:* TV does anything but honor father and mother, continually degrading fatherhood and motherhood, and even frequently glorifying the disobedience of children. Family life, respect for authority, and obedience to government is repeatedly violated on program after program.

*Sixth Commandment:* Instead of "Thou shalt not kill," one study reached the conclusion that by the time a child is 14 at least 18,000 violent assaults and murders take place in his own living room before his eyes. Another study confirmed that the average child between 5 and 13 years of age soaks in 1,300 murders each year, so that violence, assaults, and murders no longer speak the message of sin or its consequences even to a child. Murders, hatred, violent actions and words assume the role of normal behavior. The average child's program contains 38 acts of violence per hour (adult program: 20), A New York judge who spent his life in courts judging juvenile delinquents and teenage criminals has plainly said that those who have investigated the situation know that TV is a prime cause of crime. Another judge said: "Parents, one hour of TV can teach your children more crime, rebellion, smartaleck freshness, and sex than you can counteract in months if you work at it."

*The trouble with violence on TV is that it does not show the real consequences of violence.* The guilt that is left behind in the soul of the murderer, the bereaved family, the orphaned children, the filled hospitals, and the solemn graveyards are not shown. Especially in children's programs violence is often totally unreal. Their heroes are often crushed or blown into pieces and moments later reappear unscratched. TV is artificial violence in all of its ugly and terrible long-term consequences. Is it a wonder then that there have been thousands of examples of tragedies nation-wide when children have "played TV together?"

*Seventh Commandment:* How can the TV viewer remain unaddicted with respect to the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment when 7 out of 8 references to sexual acts on TV take place between those who are not united in the bonds of sacred matrimony? How can he remain unaddicted when the TV viewer sees on an average of 3 times every hour intimate sexual behavior between unmarried adults? How can he remain unaddicted when countless circumstances, conversations, immodest dress, actions, and behavior all point to the excitement, glory and acceptability of sinning against the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment in a totally false, unrealistic, and animalistic way?

*Eighth Commandment:* Can an hour be found that goes by where the TV- world does not unashamedly steal before its audiences? It is no wonder that thousands of thefts in real life have been patterned after TV plots and heroes.

*Ninth Commandment:* False witnessing against a neighbor becomes a very normal, acceptable, and even expected form of behavior on television shows.

*Tenth Commandment:* Covet is a desirable word for TV viewers. Constantly they are reminded through advertisements of a stream of unending luxuries, which they are told they shall never be happy without. There is always something they must have which they don't have. The program themselves are not an exception. For one man to covet another man's wife (or vice versa) is daily the main theme of entire shows.

From beginning to end TV *glorifies sin*. On TV the only thing that is sin is morality. TV applauds sin, approves sin, and forces its watchers to minimize sin through tens of thousands of countless repetitions. Over and over again the traditional family life is despised as old-fashioned: fatherhood is replaced with heroism via pathways of sin, motherhood is rejected as being below dignity, obedience from children is laughed upon as being too boring to be entertaining.

TV has become a book and catalog of sin, and all studies reveal it is getting worse. It has become the devil's classroom for it comes from the bottom of hell. Yes, the devil is smart enough to throw in a little religion too, and occasionally even a little morality, just to pacify consciences enough not to throw it out. Does not TV make a tele-holic society with respect to sin when it feeds lust, perverts, morals, present impurity as love, pictures and murder as thrilling, exalts gross nakedness and indecency as beauty, and seeks to legitimize all kinds of sin against every commandments.

(C) CONTROL. Here the addiction becomes even more serious. Thousands of family fights take place regularly because no agreement can be reached on which sin to indulge in. 35% of mealtimes in American homes are spent in front of the TV set. Nightly thousands of parents realize the programs that will come on are demoralizing and harmful for their children but yet are so hungry themselves to drink in that sin that they contain that they often let the children watch it too, having no power to control it.

People who say they can control TV are speaking idealistically, not realistically:

(1) In the first place, who ever met such a person? *Our natural hearts love sin, our ears listen for sin, our eyes look for sin.* That is just the problem with TV. One of our former ministers once wrote: "If you took sin out of TV you could not sell it to the stones on the street." It is not the box itself that is the problem, but it is our hearts. It shows what the heart of man wants to see. We have enough TV's already in our hearts without buying one for our home. It is our TV hearts that are inclined to TV sets. We do not stand above a TV owner. Just the opposite. We desire to come so low that we confess we would now trust our own hearts with such an instrument.

(2) In the second place, who is able to keep sin from flashing before them on the screen at any moment, whether it be through the program being watched or through advertisement?

(3) Is a person, who owned a TV set for some time, and consequently became hardened to many sins, really qualified to know what is necessary to "control".

Man does not control TV. The sin-box controls him. Only one study of many will prove this point. Approximately 4 years ago in St. Catherines, Ontario, the newspaper headlines read one day: *\$500 Paid for Disposing of TV.*" The article went on to say that a study was done in Detroit in which the goal was to find out what degree people are controlled by TV. 250 families were scientifically selected from various races and classes to be offered \$500 if they would live without their TV set for one month. After 30 days they could take it back in, and receive \$500 free. Out of 250, only 50 families agreed to do it. How many families "made it" through this trial of 30 days? Eight! The other 42 forfeited their \$500 sometime during the month—one family took their TV back on the 29<sup>th</sup> day. The 8 who made it through were interviewed extensively. All eight said it brought their family closer together without TV. Six fathers said they first learned to know their children. One father said: "The first day that I disposed of our TV was the first day in 25 years that no one was killed in our living room, no sirens screamed, no shots rang out, no artificial merriment told us when to laugh, and no one slashed anyone else." And what was now the final result of these families of whom 7 said their family life was considerably more rewarding without TV? The last line of the article tells us: "All eight families took TV back in."

Tele-holism. Knowing it does more harm than good, and still keeping it. That is slavery. Yes, television is really bad. I trust the facts are sufficient for all of us. I hope that no one of us dares to have it in our home. If there should be one who reads this article who owns a TV set I argue you to dispose of it today on the following grounds:

(1) It is plainly *against the Word of God.* In Psalm 119 the Lord commands us to turn our eyes from vanity. "THUS SAITH THE LORD" against television because of its unending list of evils.

(2) The sinfulness of television *destroys your own soul.* Every secular and/or religious study has revealed TV's over-all evil effects. Since you know that we are all fallen children of Adam and Eve, corrupt, totally depraved, and dead in

trespasses and sin, why do you unnecessarily feed your own corrupt nature with still more corruption through this instrument of sin?

(3) Every study on television reveals that TV also hinders the God-given treasure of *family life and communion*. This alone should be reason enough to dispose of TV immediately.

(4) By keeping television you are stepping on and fighting against your *own conscience*. You know it is not right to possess such an instrument, or else you have no impression of the truth, which is taught in our denomination.

(5) You are *wasting precious God-given time* for which you will have to give an account one day.

*Do yourself a favour: for the Word of God's sake, the church's sake, your own soul's sake, your family's sake, your conscience's sake, dispose of your television TODAY.* Do it permanently before you become its life-long slave.

Finally, that it may become the prayer of all of us with David: "I will set no evil thing before my eyes. Turn Thou my eyes from beholding vanity."

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