

Commentary: Poisoning our children: Need to monitor TV

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The biggest and most important job in the world is raising your own kids. This is something most Christian moms and dads can agree on. Why? Because when God gives you a child, you are given a person over whom you have enormous influence—beyond that of anyone else in the world. You are given the right and responsibility of instilling habits, beliefs and behaviors while they are young that will influence their choices for the rest of their lives.

Children at risk

Parenting is under fierce and constant attack in our society. Tragically, Christians often don't recognize where these attacks are occurring. Even worse, we often accept the perpetrators willingly into our homes. Their attacks are directed against our children—the most vulnerable among us—and the ones who have the least hope of fending off attacks.

The television is the major foot soldier in this battle. The TV is on in most Christian houses across America for at least some part of the day every day. In some houses, it is on essentially all day every day.

The media, cartoon networks, advertisements and shows generally are not based on any semblance of the word of God. They are designed to keep children interested and to turn a profit for the entertainment industry. They are willing to employ whatever means society accepts to do so.

Our society very quickly is degenerating and so is the material being produced for consumption. We see society worsen month after month as

new laws are passed and new moral lows are achieved.

We see how strongly things like same-sex relationships, sexual promiscuity and gender ambiguity are being promoted actively to younger and younger audiences at an astonishing rate. This month, PBS aired a same-sex marriage on the children's cartoon '[Arthur](#),' a show for 4-8 year-olds.

Children's brain development

Children are like sponges. They remember and retain an extraordinary amount of information. Studies repeatedly have shown how vital neural connections are made during childhood that will last throughout their lifetime.

A [study](#) published by the University of Maine counsels parents: "Limit the time children spend watching TV shows and videos as well as the type of shows they watch. For very young children, there is no research evidence suggesting TV helps children learn. For older children, make sure that they are watching programs that will teach them things you want them to learn."

TV is poison to children

TV, in general, is poisonous to children.

It isn't just because it's addictive and promotes laziness.

It isn't just because parents and caregivers are raising future adults and are laying the foundation for all their future habits.

It isn't just because all that time children sit in front of the TV is time not given to instructing them in their life and allowing them to form connections with parents, friends and others.

It isn't just because there is a lot of junk on TV that we are to guard our hearts and minds against.

TV is poisonous particularly because children absorb everything, even the seemingly inconsequential.

Children absorb even the smallest sinful behaviors being glamorized and reinforced on the screen. Not only are they seeing sin and becoming desensitized to the seriousness and repulsiveness of it, but because God designed our brains to learn from what we see, children actively are learning from what they see and hear on TV.

We have bought into thinking TV isn't that bad, and children don't really get it. But sin really is that bad, and kids really do get it.

They are seeing all this sin without correction.

Parents, not TV, are to shape children

God designed children to learn from their parents. Parents are here to walk children through real-life experiences—together—and to train them up in the way children should go (Proverbs 22:6). Parents do this by explaining and correcting sin when it occurs and by using countless opportunities every day to guide children in God's word.

Scripture takes a serious view of sin, and so should we. In fact, sin is so serious that God took on human form to suffer and die to save us from it. He didn't do this because sin isn't so bad. He did it because it is that bad.

Thanks be to God that he has won the battle for us and our kids, which doesn't save us the work of running this race but does mean we are saved by God's grace alone, through him who did the impossible for us.

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