

WHY I DO NOT OWN A TELEVISION SET

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” –Ephesians 5:11



*"I will set no wicked thing
before mine eyes..."*

–Psalm 101:3

Television is an accepted part of modern American life. The poorest pauper often owns a TV. The dwelling may be a tent, a tar-paper shack, or a tenement house, but there is usually a television. Children may not have clothes, the baby may not have milk, the husband may not have a job, the mother may not have medical attention...but they have a television!

In a society where a television set has become a basic necessity instead of an expensive luxury, a man who says he does not have a television is regarded incredulously and sometimes with suspicion. What kind of person would not have a television? He is considered some sort of maladjusted freak who would admit such a nonconformity to the ideals of society. He is accused of being woefully ignorant of world events, culturally deprived, and guilty of cruelty to his children, who are missing one of life's choicest blessings.

At the risk of being misunderstood, ridiculed, pitied, criticized, and even persecuted, I am going to admit that I do not have a television. Furthermore, I intend to compound the consternation by trying to defend my status as a nonowner. At the risk of being thought mad, I am even going to suggest this as a more logical, holier, and happier state than that of the tube owner.

To establish my claim to sanity, let me acknowledge several points.

TELEVISION IS HERE TO STAY

I do not propose to rid the world of alcohol, movie theaters, gambling, or social dancing. While I personally deplore all these evils, I am sure that society is not

going to renounce them wholesale at any time in the near future. However, I have a responsibility as a citizen of God's country to "be not conformed to this world" (Rom 12:2), but to maintain my testimony before this wicked and adulterous generation, among whom we shine as lights in this world.

TELEVISION IS NOT NECESSARILY A MORAL SIN

I would not accuse every television watcher of being licentious. I am aware that some sincere people who love God have bought television sets without evil motives, and some of them have survived the ever-present temptation and have maintained a walk with God. However, it is still far better for a person not to project himself into a situation that has meant moral bankruptcy to so many.

NOT EVERY TELEVISION PROGRAM IS WICKED

Neither is every movie. One cigarette may not cause cancer. One flirtation may not lead to fornication. One drink may not make a drunkard. But the danger is there. The potential is there.

TELEVISION WATCHING IS NOT THE ONLY CONDITION THAT NEEDS ATTENTION

Nor, perhaps, is it the worst condition. But it is one condition that needs attention, and our attention to other matters would not excuse us for a neglect of this one. In fact, there are many spiritually debilitating conditions that are related to this one and that are involved in this one. To attack the enemy on one front often weakens his strength in other places. Some times we must invade the sanctuary of the enemy in order to stop his potential for destruction elsewhere.

With these admissions carefully noted, let us proceed to the reasons why I do not have a television. May they be expressed in such a way that you too will find them sufficient cause to forego the presence of TV in your home.

I. AS A PERSON, IT IS BEST THAT I DO NOT OWN A TELEVISION.

My personal happiness and well-being, my personal salvation and eternal destiny, my personal character and integrity are all jeopardized by a television set. Sure, I

can choose my programs if I will. But will I? I do not have to let it come between God and me. But will I?

Television is a thief of time

Job cried, "Remember how short my time is!" I have so little time to use and none to lose. I should redeem the time, for the days are evil (Eph 5:16). But television watching demands time, and I have none to spare. I need time for my devotions, my prayer and Bible reading. I need time for my work for God, for my witnessing and soul winning. When I have time available, I need it for my family, for conversation, and for fellowship. I need time for my friends.

Television is a thief of character

It erodes the moral fiber of people. Especially is it so when their basic character is in its formative years. Seated in the seclusion of his home, a person can have a private interview with the purveyors of sex and sin. Madison Avenue glamorizes ungodly situations until every sin in the catalogue is paraded before him. There is murder, an adultery, a fist fight, and a gambling scene to choose from. In between, the best brands of beer are extolled by highly paid hucksters. Movies that I would be ashamed to enter a movie house to see are presented in the living room.

Can I survive this insidious assault of the devil? Did I pray today, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil"? Then how can I open the door of my living room, my dining room, or my bedroom to these beautiful devils of deceit who come to offer me the kingdoms of this world? I must not invite my archenemy to enter my home and devour me there. I fight to escape him elsewhere. I flee from his presence. I must not put a weapon in his hand to tempt me and perhaps defeat me. My soul is a stake. I must be saved. I cannot take the risk of television becoming my stumbling stone.

Television is a thief of money

How well I know that other items of furniture cost as much or more - a bed to sleep on, a couch to sit on, a table to eat on. But this instrument is not a necessity; it is a luxury! Worse, it is a tolerated vice! No man buys a television for a whatnot stand or to display a family portrait on its cabinet. No one buys a television simply to

watch a thirty-minute news program! If so, what a waste of money for such little return. The cost of a television is money sadly spent.

II. AS A PARENT, IT IS BEST THAT I DO NOT OWN A TELEVISION.

My three little darlings are the joy of my life, and their well-being is more important to me than even my own life. I cannot expose my children to the dangers of television. There are psychological and spiritual dangers in my children's becoming television watchers. I have been instructed by the Bible to raise my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4). I must be careful of the environment I create for their tender spirits, for it would be better for me that I had not been born than to cause one of them to stumble (Matt 18:6).

The Psychological Danger

Television is a threat to children's inner stability. The violence to which this generation's youth is prone has been traced by reputable authorities to the fact of a generation raised on television. The sex saturation to which television and the movies have subjected them has made them lose the sanctity of marriage and the home. I do not want to raise children who are sensual or violence prone. I do not want to raise children whose minds have been conditioned by constant exposure to scenes of sex, sadism, and moral degeneracy. I am afraid of the dangers of television!

The Spiritual Danger

Law keepers in the Old Testament were instructed to remind their children of the principles of the law daily, constantly (Deut 6:8). In television situations the basic moral codes of our civilization are corrupted and ridiculed before the eyes of the beholders. An evening of adultery and divorce, mayhem and murder, drunkenness and dancing is certainly no inducement to righteousness. I would not want a river at the door of my home where my children teetered on the brink of disaster. And I do not want a river of filth and debauchery pouring into the sacred confines of my hearth and home. If saw a rabid dog advancing toward my children, I would imperil my own life to destroy the danger that threatened them. When I see a far greater

danger to their eternal well-being threatening their future, could I take this venomous beast to their bosoms? God forbid!

I know that television can be a baby sitter that will free the parent from close supervision. I know that it is easier to turn children over to the clutches of the television than it is to create a wholesome activity for them. I know that it is easier to yield to the pressures of: [1. The neighbors all have one, so why not me? [2]. my children will grow up to be backward and slow in their studies, and [3. they will resent me in the future because I have not provided them with a television. But I have found that none of these arguments are cogent. There are many things the neighbors do that I don't want my children to do. And I have found that a lack of television is no impediment to children's scholastic achievement or sociological development. Furthermore, children usually do not resent parents' not having a television if they feel that they are sincere. I cannot shirk my responsibility as a parent. I cannot afford to have a television.

III. WHAT AM I MISSING?

Lest some people would be concerned about what I am missing on television, let me candidly confess that perhaps others would be better off, especially spiritually, if they did not have access to these supposed blessings.

First, there is the news

Television is supposed to be noted for its news, and some who agree with Mr. Minow, former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, that television is "one vast wasteland" still take comfort in saying, "Well, at least the news is good." Those who see the news are sometimes misled, however. Violence is glorified, rebels are featured, social commentaries are inserted, and sometimes the presentation of news is distorted. The television is not always the best place to get information. Newspapers and news magazines offer more complete and accurate (sometimes) coverage of the news.

Second, there are historical events

Events that have had worldwide television coverage are trips to the moon and funerals of some great world leaders. Though we could not deny that these were great events in man's present history, in the light of eternal perspective, they have been but minor happenings.



the death of King Uzziah in only a passing way when he said, "I upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple" being disrespectful, it was just the death of another king to Isaiah, that was more important. He was on his way to see the living in for the dead. While I would not object to seeing the funeral of t men, I maintain that the mission of the one who said "Let the " (Lk 9:60) merits more attention than these historical occasions. d seeing them on television, we have not been deprived or g as we have seen the Lord of Hosts.

Third, there are religious programs

Some have defended their use of television by claiming that it is worthwhile to watch the religious programming. But, first of all, I could not afford to stay home from church and watch television, for the Scriptures warn me that we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and so much the more as we see the day approaching (Heb 10:25).

While there may be some credible religious programs on TV, the danger of being led into false impressions and false doctrines by a television personality is real. God's plan is for us to participate in a local church where we know those who minister to us (1 Thess 5:12). This is for our safety.

I am reminded of the scriptural admonitions: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord...and I will receive you" and "if there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house" (2 Cor 6:17; 2 Jn 1:10). If I have missed all that television has to offer in the way of religious programming, I am probably better off.

Conclusion

My conclusion is this: I am better off in every way not to have a television set. I have a better chance for personal happiness and for my soul to be saved. I have a better chance to have a happy home and for my family to grow up clean spiritually, straight morally, and psychologically sound and whole. I have a better chance to win my neighbors and friends to Christ and more time to do it in. I have a better chance to influence my brothers and sisters in the Lord and to lead them to a deeper walk with Christ.

In the meantime, I have not missed anything except slanted news, old movies that I wouldn't go to see when they were new, and new ones that are so lewd that I would be ashamed to watch them. And I have missed educational films that educate away from God, religious programs based on bad doctrine, beer commercials, and all the rest. Best of all, I may have saved myself from a tool of temptation that the devil would have used to destroy me.

For these and many other reasons, I am glad that I don't have a television!

—*WCP*

