

Do we have TV in our homes?

We probably do, or we are closer than we know. We don't have the box our forefathers banned, but we do have the content readily available at our finger tips with TV online. A strongly restricted web filter setting may block most of these websites, but a moderate setting, used by most adults probably won't, unless entertainment websites are explicitly blacklisted. Online TV includes movies; any movie, from this year, last year, and decades ago. We don't need a DVD player or VCR in our home anymore if we have a personal, work or school laptop or tablet. We should be concerned.

Aside from the fact that all this TV content is actually now available in our homes, the content in recent decades has become increasingly disturbing. This is a clear reason not to have a TV in our home, even more so than in the past. Yet, are we or our young adults and children finding shows to watch?

Some may say: "But the content we pick to watch is innocent in nature. We always attempt to find something not too immoral and maybe even somewhat educational!" Surely this is true, but if you watch with a moral, objective eye you will probably find a seeming agenda across all recent media, which almost always subtly steers morals away from the Word of God.

What is this agenda?

Liberal parenting, gay rights, pro-choice... Many actors, writers and film companies are glad, and even awarded, when their product is "*dealing with the social issues of our time*", and "*educating the youth*". What these really mean is "*justifying actions that they want to prove are moral*" and "*spreading new age values to our children*". TV will only serve to eventually convince all of us of these values which are based solely on satisfaction of self in this life.

Pick the wrong thing to watch and you might find yourself subjected to vile content without expecting it. With this you run the risk of becoming numb to it. "At least this isn't as bad as that one we had to turn off last week", or "We're this far I want to see what happens, we'll just ignore the bad parts". In a way we are endorsing anything we watch, through ratings or ad revenue.

What is some of this vile content?

Swearing, taking God's name in vain, sexual promiscuousness, glorifying those who sleep around (always outside even any intent of a marriage). There are an astounding number of stories that depict couples living together before marriage. And there is the telling of stories of teenagers becoming pregnant, then the "need" and justification for an abortion, and

finally the portraying of the effects an abortion has on a young mother. This is considered educational, a public service. All under the guise of entertainment.

Then there is the hate, murder, violence, the glorifying of thieves and criminals, and also the portraying of drugs and drug use. To show just how twisted TV has gotten there is even a story told in such a way that watchers develop a sympathetic relationship with a man who makes and sells drugs! All this serves to slowly degrade our, and our children's, moral beliefs and values. Could the effect of this content be part of the moral decline of our country and world?

"This has all been around for decades, is it really any worse now?"

Yes, the content is more "*cutting edge*". Or more correctly: "*cutting our consciences*". It would never have been allowed on TV when our parents were young. But an important difference now is that the amount of content is exponentially increasing, and with the internet, it is available instantly. This content, being so easily and quickly accessible, brings a large rise to some new phenomena. Concepts like "*binge watching*" or "*a show hole*".

When one episode is over, another is available, already loading to be watched. And while previous generations may have gone outside and been active after a show, the current generation can watch hour after hour, binging on TV. Often whole Saturday's are thrown away, whole weekends, through the nights into early hours of the mornings. New sleep habits often emerge, regularly sleeping later and later into the days. Then when the 30 or 50 episodes are watched in one or two weekends and the show is completely over there is a form depression, coined a "show hole". "What will they watch next?", they need to find something to fill the hole in their life, until they find another 50 episodes of something else to entertain them for another short while. Considering all this, and with terms like "binge watching" and "show hole", is this a new kind of **addiction** for our time?

With this we also mention DVDs. DVD movies, and sets of DVDs that are a complete TV series. These are really no better!

Entertainment is a word of concern when considered alongside our need for **Eternity**. Webster defines the words entertain and entertainment as:

- Distract from important
- Something diverting or engaging
- To keep, hold, or maintain in the mind
- To receive and take into consideration
- Amusement or diversion provided especially by performers

Does all this serve to take hold of our minds and distract us from our state for eternity? Distract us from **prayer and Godly books**? Waste so much God given time. Diverting us from considering who and what we are? ...and as if confirming this thought, the Amazon Fire TV stick was actually advertised as: *"it could entertain humanity for an eternity"*!

So, is there no good, or at least some not-inappropriate content? There may be. But if you choose to search out and consume that content please watch with a careful, conservative mind. If your conscience speaks listen to it. See how so much of it is littered, unexpectedly with pieces of inappropriateness. A curse word, God's name in vain, a gay couple portrayed (maybe quietly, outside the main plot line). Be careful, soon this can all be watched without much consideration of what it really is. Is any of it to God's Honor and Glory?

If our forefathers saw us would they think we are adhering to the rules they set out for us?

Technical Tips:

You can blacklist block sites like YouTube, Hulu, Netflix, Amazon Prime and Yahoo Video/TV, but there are many, many, many other video sharing sites. And then there are even more copyright violating, illegal video sharing sites. Vigilance is needed to watch your household's web history in your filter and accountability software.

Your filter and accountability software should let you block, or blacklist, any of the sites mentioned above, and also any sites you might find a need to block in your family. Qustodio, the filter and accountability software recommended by our Synod, has this blacklist function. It also can block the "entertainment" category of websites. A manual for using Qustodio on a PC is at www.tinyurl.com/mmcnj. Smart phone filters should also be able to block apps, and not just websites, ie: the Netflix and YouTube apps.

If you desire to allow some limited YouTube use it has controls at the bottom of the webpage for "restricted mode". But you must also lock restricted mode "on", or it could easily be turned off. You need to do this for every browser on your device, as well as for every device you have. To lock this setting login to YouTube with your own login (usually a Google account), lock restricted mode "on", and log back out. Now only your login can turn it back off. Note YouTube itself disclaims: "No filter is 100% accurate, but it should help you avoid most inappropriate content". So, you must be **present** to keep an eye on what is being viewed.

Entertainment? Or Dangerous Distraction?



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