

Why I Don't Have a Television

by Mose Stoltzfus

Mose Stoltzfus discusses the dangers of television and encourages believers to seek discernment and spiritual integrity in their media consumption.

Duration: 1:28:42

Scripture: Isaiah 1:16, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:9, 1 Corinthians 10:14, Ephesians 5:11, 2 Timothy 2:19, James 1:27

Topics: "Time Management", "Christian Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the negative impact of television on society, particularly on children. The speaker expresses concern about the frequency of violence portrayed on television and how it desensitizes people to real-life violence. They emphasize the importance of redeeming time and making good use of it, contrasting the amount of time spent on television versus in church. The speaker also highlights the harmful effects of television on children, stating that it offends and leads them astray. They reference several scriptures, including Proverbs 4, Ephesians 5:14-16, and Mark 9:42, to support their arguments.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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This morning in the name of the Lord Jesus, it is just transforming to me to sit here on a Sunday morning and absorb the ministry of the Word in song or in the reading of the Word or comments that are made. I just find myself going through an uplifting and transforming experience time after time. And this morning was again another one of those.

Well, we are glad that each one of you have come. God bless you, visitors, for coming. It's a privilege to have you amongst us here this morning again.

A few of you, I guess, were here in leadership seminar and are back again and we appreciate that. Well, this morning I have for a long time pondered on preaching a message like this and I've tried to figure out how to do it and if it should be done. And I've finally come to the persuasion that it should be done.

It needs to be done and I would like to do it this morning if you will allow me to. I'd like to speak on the subject of why I don't have a television. I have thought about this, like I said, for numerous times and how to build that conviction in the hearts of our people.

One thing that alarms me so greatly is that we often say that we don't want to have the attitude that this church is the only church and that this church is the right church or that we're the only ones right. And God forbid that we should ever develop an attitude about that. But I have struggled over the years with seeing people leave a church like this or others similar to it in the county here.

And very shortly thereafter they have a television. And then I wonder what all the philosophy or thoughts are behind that. What makes people think that those things are okay and delve right into them? Young couples and sit in front of it and are glued by it even though we have had some teaching over the years against it.

And so that has developed into a conviction on my part to preach on the subject clear enough that I trust will help you make that decision whether you go to church here or anywhere else that you would be able to develop a conviction that no matter where you go to church you would be able to make and have sound discernment concerning it. I'm not speaking about the box in a literal way this morning even though that perhaps there is even a case to be made on that. But I would simply like to talk about the Word of God and what it speaks about that.

We have a lot of people who would consider a message like this to be legalism. And would cringe or would denounce it from the beginning that anyone should even speak on a subject like this. I lived in a church for years.

First of all, I was raised in a home that didn't have one. And then I lived in a church for years that had a clear standard that you cannot have them. And that, of course, was a benefit to me perhaps in my younger years, in my undiscerning years that I didn't have to make that choice as a child.

I'm very grateful that I did not have to make that choice as a child whether I would want to watch one or not. But as I grew older and became married and all that, there are choices that all of us have to make concerning these things when we start our own home. And I'm not here to say this morning that there is absolutely nothing good on it.

But I believe that by far 90 plus percent of the people are not able to control them. And so I'm going to speak from the realm that somehow we would sit in front of them and turn them on. We are bombarded with things that we did not choose to see or to watch in the beginning perhaps.

They just so happen and so numb our souls and our hearts and our lives and desensitize us gradually. You may think this morning, well, if you did not grow up with one, yet you may not know what you're talking about. But I do have to tell you that as a young boy, I will confess to you that we did not have a telephone.

And our telephone was a half a mile away at a neighbor's house. And we had a business going there and a farm and we needed to use the phone quite regularly. And so us young boys were sent to run up to the neighbors and make a phone call and call for the feed man or call for the gas man or call for this man or that man or the other man.

And we began to develop a habit that we would take the newspaper and watch at which time a certain show was on in the evening and then try to go to the neighbor at that specific time and watch our free right western show. I did that for a number of years, but at the age of 15, I became converted and all that drastically changed. But when I got married and went into the government service, I served in a hospital.

The first year and four months in a mental hospital. And I was thrown in the midst of an environment of television that was on almost constantly. For therapy, for the patients, they did not have television in the rooms.

They were all supposed to gather in a family-like atmosphere in the kind of a living room there with the television on and we were supposed to intermingle with them. And of course that brought me under the direct influence of the television about eight hours every day for two years. The last eight months, I worked on a floor where it was in all the rooms.

And of course, every time you would enter a room or most of the times to take care of patients, whether or not you wanted to watch it or look at it, you heard its commercials and its programs and caught glimpses of its shows continually likewise. And although then I left that and made a choice not to have one in my home and for many years had virtually no exposure to it whatsoever. In the latter years, as I did a lot more traveling, as you know it is being played a lot more in the airports and various places like that, it was indeed shocking to me as I had about a 20-year lapse or a 15-year lapse of hardly seeing such a thing.

And to see what had happened from my youth to this point here today when I occasionally have seen some scenes on it have been, needless to say, very shocking as I see the gradual degeneracy that has come about on this machine or this electronic marvel of our age. One of the reasons I'd like to speak to you about it is because I don't believe there has been any other given thing that has been so influential in world thought, not U.S., but world thought and behavior as the television has. And I also would like to ask you, does the scripture speak about it? And many people would say, there's nothing like that mentioned in the Word of God.

And therefore, you have the freedom in living by the Word of God to either have one or not have one. But I would like to show you that the scripture speaks directly on the subject. And if you do not think it does, I would like to help you to see that it does and that if a church makes a decision or speaks directly like I will speak directly on the subject, they can speak it clearly out of a direct Word of God application or not even, may I say, much of an application.

The Bible speaks directly concerning this subject. And I'm hoping that I'm not here this morning just to make another rule. And that's not my desire, but to build conviction because here has been some of the concerns.

I remember us little Amish boys, we were very curious young fellows. And when we first saw a few things on a machine like this, we were absolutely flabbergasted. We couldn't believe, you know, this exciting thing that we would see in our unconverted state of mind.

But as time went on, of course, a person gets drawn more and more into those kind of things and desires them. But one of the things I noticed, the reason I like to build conviction is, I noticed many boys that grew up as I did, if they have a chance at one, they can't get their eyes off. I remember that we used to go to Lancaster to buy hats.

There was a hat man who would make our Amish hats and form them and shape them and make them the way we wanted to, and our fathers would take us to Lancaster to buy hats. And of course, every Amish family, father and sons that would go in there, was of course entertained by television at the time he was waiting on the hats to be fixed and made. And it was very ironical.

We were a people who were plain and did not, and went in there to buy a plain hat, but were filled up with television while we bought it. Those are some of the exposures I had in early life. And then of course, and I have only bits and pieces, and a lot of the information or a little bit of the information I will give you, I have gotten from articles.

I had considered whether I would want to sit down for a couple of hours with a pencil and a tablet and simply mark all the breaking of pencils in a given show sometime. But I have never felt the freedom in my spirit to even do that because of all the, first of all, the example it would be, and simply not wanting to defile my own self for many hours to try to make that proper evaluation. So I'm going to take the evaluation that others have made, some there, and enough of what I have caught glimpses of, and put the two together to make a conclusion as to why I don't have a television.

Now, I do not want to say that everyone who has one is wrong, and make it sound like everyone who has one is lost. I'm not going to make any judgment like that. I only say there are few people in this world that are able to control these machines.

The average child spends about six years growing up on television, and about four months in church. It gives you the contrast of the input a normal child in America has into their soul, into their spirit, through the eye gate and the ear gate, the combination of which many people are able to retain large amounts of what they see and hear. If you only hear it, not so much.

But if you see and hear, we are able to retain. And many of us, I think, that sit here would have to confess that we are struggling to this day with some of the scenes that we may have come upon, especially those of you who grew up with one and were saturated with it in your childhood, your formative years. It is considered that the violent episodes on the televisions are at the rate of about 30 an hour.

And those six years that a child spends on television are actually equated out to be about 17,000 hours. One of the things I noticed and that grieved me much as a child when I first beheld this machine was the frequency of a gun being pulled and shot at another person and, of course, a simulation of death and pain or injury. And that was indeed shocking to an innocent child such as myself, being raised on a country farm, not having ever known or seen anybody get shot or get hurt like that.

Let us turn the Bibles now to Proverbs chapter 4. And I'd like to go through some scriptures, first of all, that I believe speak directly on this subject. Proverbs chapter 4. I was reading this the other day and I just went down over some of these scriptures and I just saw how directly they speak to our situation in our day. And I would like to say, even though I've chosen to speak on the television, there are many other instruments, there are many other electronic marvels that likewise have made their indelible mark upon our society, such as the movie, the internet, and many other things similar to it.

Proverbs 4 verse 14 says, Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. I think it is without the necessity of much proving to you that the television is absolutely filled with evil actors and actresses who have been married anywhere from one to five times or are just living in fornication or adultery most of their lives. They are alcoholics, many of them.

They smoke. They do all kinds of wicked things. They live wicked lives.

And without a question, the Bible speaks directly in the Proverbs here about a voice of the wise man Solomon through the Spirit of God that we as God's people are not to enter into the path of the wicked. And we believe and simply are saying that it's without margin, it's without close question, that those people are wicked people. And it says, go not into the way of evil men.

And without question or without close proximity even to being righteous, we must say they are wicked and evil men and women. The Bible says in verse 15, avoid it. Pass not by it.

Turn from it and pass away. Without question, Solomon is saying here, if you enter upon a situation like that, don't go by it. Don't go near it.

Turn away from it and go the other direction. The next verse says, for they sleep not, except that they have done mischief. And that is certainly true, as usually the intensity of sinfulness increases through the night on these things.

I was in an airplane, I think either going to or coming home from Africa with Brother Ross about, I think it was maybe ten years ago. It was my first trip to Africa. When I remember Brother Ross saying to me that time, I don't know if you remember that, Brother, when he mentioned to me, have you ever noticed the glorification of sin? They had a film playing on the airplane on our trip that time.

And something I never forgot. The glorification of sin. And the mockery of God in good and just things.

The glorification of sin, whenever that is done, is a statement directly against the laws of God. And I want to look at some of the clear glorification of sin as I would see it. One of the things I noticed is that there is a clear glorification of rebellion and the ridicule of parents.

You can even have a family show, a family situation, but the little boy is usually a smart aleck that is mocking his parents and thinks he is so much smarter than anybody else in the house. And the father is often made to look like a dummy or a fool. And so it glorifies rebellion and the ridicule of parents.

According to Mark chapter 13 verse 12, the Bible says, Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father, the son, and children shall rise up against their parents and shall cause them to be put to death. And I believe the seeds for that are taught by television in America. I wonder what Jesus meant when He said in Luke 22, 23, 28, Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

The specific fulfillment of that was spoken to the Jews perhaps in all the trouble they would come to in that next generation when Jerusalem would be destroyed. But I have to think how much it is applicable even in this way. Weep for yourselves and for your children in the bombardment of evil and sin and the glorification of it that has come upon our society in our day.

And even though we have chosen not or I have chosen not to have a television, even so it comes to us and knocks at our door in so many other forms in society which we know. In 1 Corinthians chapter 10

verse 21 is a verse that says, Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils.

I would like for you to think with me if anything could describe this situation any clearer than a cup of devils. I have looked at the sins that I believe are played and are promoted and glorified on television. And I believe that everyone mentioned in Romans 1 Galatians chapter 5 and perhaps every other place or chapter in the New Testament is clearly done, glorified, acted out, promoted on television.

And I believe this morning that it is the cup of devils. And it is not I who say that you cannot sit there and freely watch something like that and still be a Christian because the Bible says you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. You cannot reach out and be a partaker of the Lord's table and eat also at the table of devils and expect to grow in your Christian life and expect to develop spiritual truths and character and go the right way when you sit hours and hours and see sin promoted in front of your eyes and also ingested into your spirit in one way or another.

The next verse says, Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? Who do we think we are that we can sit down and watch all that barrage of evil against us and still expect that we are strong enough to ward it off and not be affected by it? Another thing in the recent years from what I hear, although I have seen very little evidence of it myself, is direct demonic influence. The acts of witchcraft are being displayed. The advertisements of poem readers are now on television.

I would have never, never, ever seen anything like that as a boy. Demon possession is glorified and is lifted up. And witches are somehow made out to be good witches and are not the bad and the horrible things that we perhaps have been taught from our society in the past.

The occult is glorified in every form. The playing of Ouija boards or the seances or things like that are clearly depicted in both movies and television, I believe. There is a glorification of the food god.

I have numerous times caught glimpses of an advertisement of just cheese being poured out upon a meat sauce or something like that. And the picture of it is so incredible that you can't imagine that any picture can even be made to look so good and so appetizing. And what this does is simply fuel the gluttony, the gluttonous spirit or the food god of this world where the Bible says that whose god is their belly.

Often the word irresistible is used concerning everything from a cookie to a french fry and everything in between that is considered so powerful of an appetite teaser or a desire that we call it irresistible, meaning that your resistance is broken down and you are made a slave to food and you have to succumb and go buy some and go get some at your earliest opportunity because it is simply irresistible. In 2 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 16 and 17 the Bible says, What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, says the Lord, and here is what I want. And touch not the unclean thing. I believe without question that television is basically unclean in most of its content and that God asks us that we are not to touch the unclean thing and it has a direct relationship to the matter of idolatry and I believe this is truly the American idol where all men, women and children basically in the nation bow down to the shrine and let it do its thing in their living room, in their hearts, in their minds and it is truly an idol because people are addicted to it.

People are captivated by it. We often hear the word they are glued to their television, meaning they are so held by it that they can't get loose. People go in to visit other people and they cannot lift their eyes long enough for a cheery greeting simply because they are glued to their favorite sports program or other program of some kind and they are held by that as a slave to it and therefore I believe according to the word of God that it fits the description of idolatry.

In Philippians 4 verse 8 where the scripture teaches us that we are to think on things lovely and of good report and if there be any virtue and there be any praise we are to think on these things and I believe that television pollutes the pure stream of righteous thought constantly pulling your thoughts in the direction of filth and of perversion and of violence and of sexuality and all these kind of things. Immorality, immodesty and all that. In Colossians 3 chapter 8 or verse 8 Colossians 3 verse 8 the scripture says but now ye also put off all these anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

I believe these things are simply, its programs are filled with filthy communications and also a display of anger and wrath and violent men and women who treat each other roughly and meanly and kill each other and all those things are depicted clearly on these programs. But in the last years news articles even in religious periodicals make mention of how filthy communication is ever worsening and ever increasing on television. In Romans chapter 13 verse 12 the scripture says The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light.

You answer to me the question in your heart this morning whether this electronic marvel that is in all of the American homes practically except a few radical people who will not have it is the works of darkness or the works of light. That's the question you need to answer. If it is a work of darkness then you must believe the scripture that we are to therefore cast it off.

In James chapter 4 verse 3 and 4 We have ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

By far 90 plus percent of all things that are shown on television is the pure and raw world. And a man who simply sits in front of it and ingests or takes in all of that programming will be drawn to be a friend of the world and be addicted by it and come to love it and come to not even think much about the things that are so offensive to him anymore. First John 2 verse 16 tells us that for all that is in the world the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world.

And it is on these three principles that this machine and its programs run on. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Even the commercials are made to attract the lust of a man's eye and the desire of his flesh.

The lust of his flesh, even in everything. The cars, you just have to have one. It is so much better than anything else and you are drawn into it and enticed by the world in much of its programs.

The media leaders, 90 percent of them favor abortion. 91 percent are known to favor homosexuality and only 14 percent of them attend any kind of a church. Television mocks Christianity.

What would happen, do you think, if someone would curse the Pope on television? If someone would curse Mohammed openly on television? But you can use our Lord Jesus Christ's name in vain in a profane and blasphemous way and hardly anyone blinks an eye. But if you would do it to the Pope, you would

probably be called into question or maybe even taken to judgment for it. Christians are made to look like fools on television.

It is made to seem like Christianity is totally absurd. It is outdated. It is something that old grandmas and old grandpas perhaps used to believe in.

That is how Christianity, I understand, is depicted on this machine. It promotes immorality and immodesty. Virtually everyone is married and remarried numerous times and many now are not married, still having love affairs with each other.

Most of the dress code is absolutely bizarre. It is immoral and immodest from the word go. And the display is made in order to attract the eyes of men and women to it.

Many are living together outside of marriage. Sinful lifestyles are promoted. And I have to think concerning Lot's house in the city of Sodom.

Once again, we are at the time in the recent years now, the recent five, ten years, that the Sodomites are on the porch trying to break down the door to get into your life, into your heart, into your family and seek approval for their activity. That is exactly what has happened in the last five years. Violence.

The Bible teaches in Before the Flood that the earth was filled with violence. And I believe that violence is again promoted and glorified so much so that years ago, when men were wrestling, they used to, they tell me, that they used to burst capsules of fake blood or red colored dye or whatever to show themselves hurt or bleeding. But today, wrestlers cut themselves and draw blood out of their own bodies to make the scene more gory.

Amos chapter 6, verse 3, Ye that have put away the evil day, and caused the seat of violence to come near, Television has caused the entire seat of violence to come near to every house, every person. And then they can't understand and are trying to search the realms of psychology and psychiatry and humanistic philosophers as to why all at once we have such an increase of violence in our schools and among our youth. But they are so ignorant and so blind to not see that they have filled a society with violence and then wonder why they are violent.

It shouldn't take more than a 10 year old to be able to understand such common sense. That if you feed a people with graphic violence like the television does and the movies, that they will become numb and desensitized to violence. It is a terrible waste of time.

In Ephesians chapter 5, verse 14 through 16, We are called upon to redeem the time because the days are evil. And that is to buy out the time and to make good use of the time. But not so with television.

Those who are bound and captivated by it are normally sit there for countless hours in a week and watch it rather than redeem the time in a good way. Mark chapter 9, verse 42, it offends little ones. Mark 9 and 42 says, That whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea.

And I know of no greater way in which little ones are offended, are caused to go the wrong way, than by sitting them in front of a television approximately five hours a day. It offends little ones. And how many fathers spend their weekend gorging on sports while neglecting their wives, their children, and God.

Anton LaVey, the popular Satanist, says this way. An article in a book, I think maybe this is an article by Ken Ham, who gives this critique of Anton LaVey's books. LaVey is the author of the Satanic Bible and a number of other books written from a perspective of a Satanist.

What he has to say is revealing, to put it mildly. He calls the television set the Satanic family altar. He sees television as a major mainstream infiltration of the new Satanic religion.

He likens the entertainers and newscasters as the TV clergy. He says that TV's infiltration was so gradual, no one noticed. He refers to the TV guide as a concordance.

He says we maintain the illusion of choice by flipping channels. Ken Ham says that there are different forms of Satanism, but for LaVey it boils down to the worship of man. Man is an animal and set the rules.

This philosophy is evident in most television programs. He points out that acceptance of evolution is basic to humanism and all other forms of Satanism. Other scriptures, Job 28, 28 says, And unto man He said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.

And to depart from evil is understanding. Psalms 37, 27 says, Depart from evil and do good and dwell forevermore. We are to go away from evil.

We are to depart. We are to go the other direction from evil. Is that evil? Proverbs 3, 7, Be not wise in thine own eyes.

Fear the Lord and depart from evil. Proverbs 8, 13, The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride and arrogancy. And the evil way in the froward mouth.

Interesting word, the word froward there, something we don't use in our English language, hardly. But the word froward there means perverted. And perverted is the word, or pervert is what we well understand today when we call and hear of men that are perverts, but is also our word perversion, which we understand where it comes from.

The froward mouth is the perverted mouth that speaks perversion. And the Bible here teaches us in Proverbs 8, that the fear of the Lord is not to be kind to evil and gentle and loving to it, but is to hate evil, to hate pride and arrogancy, and the evil way in the froward mouth do I hate. And all five of them are repeatedly, I believe, hundreds and thousands of times in a day on a given television.

Hate, or excuse me, pride, arrogancy, the evil way and the froward mouth. In Proverbs 13, 21, the Bible says, He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. And I believe, as I see the amount of people who take their own lives at an early age, who have been actors and actresses, I believe that it is truly the companion of fools.

Isaiah 1, 16 says, Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil. Brethren, what could speak more plainly on the subject? The Word of God is not silent.

Television is mentioned in the Bible, clear as crystal. We are to wash you, to make ourselves clean, and put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil.

Romans 12, 9, Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil. Detest it.

Throw it away from you. Cleave to that which is good, honest, true, lovely, and so forth. 2 Timothy 2, 19, Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal.

The Lord knoweth them that are His, and that every one that nameth the name of Christ... What is it? Depart from iniquity. You love the Lord this morning? Do you want to grow close to Him? Do you want to serve Him? Do you want to go to Heaven when you die? Depart from iniquity. 1 Peter 3, 10 and 11, For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.

Let him eschew evil and do good. Let him seek peace and ensue it. That eschew evil, that word eschew simply means to abhor it, to shun it.

I think shun is the word in the Strong's Concordance. And James 3, 10 talks about the fountain out of which good and evil cannot come. But we know that this is a fountain out of which proceed cursing and bitterness.

A father and mother and their children would sit in a circle and discuss in the evening, and share together and discuss many things. And that's how I knew that even though my home was not Christian, nevertheless there was a common sense blessing upon the family in the fact that instead of all sitting in a circle, all facing some other visitor in the room, and learning from it or him, we would dialogue. And I believe that because of the television in the last 50 years, most of America does not know each other in a given family.

That is the great problem in America today. The parents don't know the children, the children don't know the parents, and many times the parents do not know each other because of television. My second one is that it destroys quiet time.

Because a lot of people get into the addiction and are afraid they miss something, it is on in most waking hours. And as far as having quiet time, few of them have the discipline to turn it off, and it doesn't seem conducive anymore to have quiet time when you are constantly used to following its noise and its programs and its pictures. But it destroys quiet time.

And instead of a man thinking through life and considering the steps of his feet, he only lets his thoughts be filled with others. Family devotions, number three, usually disappear. It's just one goes with the other.

Few families that listen to television in any regular way have any worth of a family devotion in their home. Somehow the two don't fit. I walked into a home in Indiana one time.

It was a young family, a young married family that had left the church and was going the wrong way. And immediately I noticed a large television set sitting in the living room and a Bible on top. Before I left the home, I asked the man of the house, how do those two get along? And I forget how his answer was.

He kind of thought that, well, somehow maybe it could happen. But the fact of the matter was, and they have proven it with their life, this couple, because I think they separated some years later, that those two don't get along. It destroys proper mental and physical development.

Even psychologists have been concerned for years over that, have been concerned about that for years, that somehow if children just sit in front of a television, they are not developing like the child that is out playing with wagons and sticks and dolls and what have you, and becoming innovative and putting their

mind on different things and making things. But when they just sit there and everything is spoon-fed to them, it hinders development, mental and physical. America has become obese simply because they sit in front of these with no activity and usually take in a lot of extra calories in the form of junk food at the same time that they sit in front of it.

Another reason is, for myself, it's a one-way street. The Bible teaches you that you are to rebuke evil and sin. But you feel pretty foolish when a curse word is used or an obscene scene is put on or displayed to get up and rebuke it.

It wouldn't do any good, would it? It's a one-way street into your home and into your mind and into your heart and you can't get up and argue with it. My sixth point is, it's addictive. It's truly addictive just like alcohol or tobacco.

And my seventh one is, it gradually desensitizes us to evil. I was walking through an airport getting a little snack, oh, maybe it is a couple of years ago, and it appears like one of these talk shows was on. And the language was so explicit that the men and the women, everyone in the area stopped in absolute grip at what was being talked about on just a common talk show.

First, it's extremely shocking. We cannot believe our eyes and our ears. But then it's less and less and less and we say, well, that's the way it is these days.

I'd like to read a clipping that I have here called, The Stranger, Author Unknown. A few months before I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small town. From the beginning, dad was fascinated with the enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family.

The stranger was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later. As I grew up, I never questioned his place in our family. Mom taught me to love the word of God and dad taught me to obey it.

But the stranger was our storyteller. He could weave the most fascinating tales, adventures, mysteries, and comedies for daily conversations. He could hold our whole family spellbound for hours each evening and was a good friend to the whole family.

He took dad, Bill, and me to our first Major League Baseball game. He was always encouraging us to see the movies and he even made arrangements to introduce us to several movie stars. The stranger was an incessant talker.

Dad didn't seem to mind, but sometimes mom would quietly get up while the rest of us were enthralled with one of the stories of faraway places. Go to her room and read her Bible and pray. I wonder now if she ever prayed that the stranger would leave.

You see, my dad ruled our household and with certain moral convictions, but this stranger never felt an obligation to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our house. Not from us, from our friends, or adults.

Our longtime visitor, however, used occasional four-letter words that burned my ears and made dad squirm. To my knowledge, the stranger was never confronted. My dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in his home, not even for cooking.

But the stranger felt like we needed exposure and enlightened us to other ways of life. He offered us beer and other alcoholic beverages often. He made cigarettes look tasty, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished.

He talked freely, much too freely, about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I know now that my early concepts of the man-woman relationship were influenced by the stranger.

As I look back, I believe it was by the grace of God that the stranger did not influence us more. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked and never asked to leave. More than 40 years have passed since the stranger moved in with the young family on Morningside Drive.

But if I were to walk into my parents' den today, you would still see him sitting over in a corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures. His name, we always just called him TV. And now, I must say before I leave this subject, that we face one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced in history.

It was relatively easy for those of us who were taught concerning the evil of this to make that choice when we got married not to have it. I remember the amazing thing that happened to me while I got into some church difficulty and was excommunicated over 20 years later, and nothing mattered, so to speak. I was not under the influence or under the restriction or requirement of a church.

And all at once, I realized that I had to make choices I never had made before in the same way. And it was good for me to then finally make my choices concerning what I believed and not just what the church made me do, upon the conviction of God's Word and truth and common sense. But now we face a new challenge, and so do many Mennonite homes.

Wesleyan Methodist homes or various other groups that have had the television out of their homes in that they have now accepted a computer in their house for business, a very useful tool. And we find it difficult to run our businesses without, and we understand that. But now the next move is to integrate the television and the computer into one, and it is well on its way.

In a few short years from now, it is considered that it will probably be one machine all the same. You will be able to watch any program that you've watched on television. You can watch on the internet, but worse more, you have 100,000 sites of things even more wicked than the average local programming of a television.

Others have gotten satellite television with 500 stations that they can draw from. This is the bombardment, this is the growth, this is the promotion of wickedness and evil and idolatry and witchcraft and the occult and all of Satan's devices against the home in America. Our missionaries mentioned just a few weeks ago here in the weekend after the leadership seminar that there is a race on to get the gospel to the Cucumba people before the electric poles arrive.

Because when the electric poles arrive, this evil will come into the mud huts and will warp and destroy the minds of these heathen young people who need to hear the gospel first. Or perhaps they will be like many others. After they have been down this road, have been absorbed by much of this doctrine, they have little interest in the gospel.

This is simply too exciting, too enamoring and too addictive to let go of. But we have this subtlety that we face. In all my years, I never had to make much choices of what I watch and what I don't because it wasn't

there and I was not tempted.

And that was a blessing. But I sense that in many Christian homes, a temptation is surfacing that is not so easy anymore. And that is a deep concern that we have.

And we must warn and we must enlighten. I simply believe, and then may I say in a few years, the next two steps that are before us are interactive TV, when you can put yourself in as one of the characters and cause the characters to respond to you by the moving of your mouse. That is what I understand is on the agenda in a few years.

And the next one, virtual reality, where you put on a glove that sends electronic impulses to the tips of your fingers to give you feeling with everything you see. Likewise, just around the corner, already proven, already done in laboratories, only needs to be perfected for the public's use. We have a choice we all must make.

I sense that our choice mechanism is under test and under trial like it never was before. Because, like I said, I could make a choice when I got married once and the choice was over. But now we would have the choice before us daily to go into evil if we would want to do so.

And before us stands, yes, a great opportunity for falling, I would say, but also unless we make clear choices on all of these things, we are not going to make it. We are not going to make it. I don't believe we will.

I think this will get worse and worse until it will virtually destroy anyone who is not able to master it. And I don't think, on the average, that people are able to master it when it's so available, especially in privacy. Will we have a tormented memory? One of the things that keep me through the years is simply the choice that I have made that I do not want to be defiled in my heart, in my conscience, in my mind, in my memory.

I do not want to have to wade through that garbage and, therefore, I do not want to see what it's like. Because if I see what it's like, it may leave a graphic picture in my mind that would hold me for years with a haunted, tormented memory like many have today because they have not been able to do that. Or will we turn away from this great evil? Are we able to make a clear choice that we will not do it? Will we protect our children and our families from the accessibility of this evil? The religious crowd will cry legalism.

The religious crowd, many times, will say, oh, it's not in the Bible. And if it's not mentioned in the Bible, you can't say anything about it. Is it not mentioned in the Bible? I disagree.

It is verily mentioned in the Bible, and I could have probably quoted another hundred verses easily. I only got a small percentage of the verses that are clearly speaking on this subject. Well, they may cry legalism, they may cry bondage, because we preach and teach clear concerning this.

But for myself, that is a choice that I want to make for my life, for my future. I feel like we are walking a narrow place with many lions that are tied on ropes, clawing to get to us. And we have a narrow road to walk through this dark and evil world a few more years till the Lord will deliver us and keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

But I must say, it is not easy. It is difficult. And even though we have no television and have no internet, even just the promotion and the proliferation of evil is so great in the world, even on the street, and even as you are driving down the road, that choices have to be made hundreds of times just as we travel

through the world, especially in summertime.

I may ask the question in closing, why don't you have one? And I want you to answer that in your heart. Why don't you have one? Do you know why you don't have one? I wanted to tell you this morning why I don't have one. And now I want you to answer why you don't have one in your heart.

Have you ever gone through the Word of God and looked at it? When you see scriptures like this, do you equate that with those things? Or do you say, as the loose Christian says, that's not in the Bible. Nothing is said about it. Therefore, it's legalism to mention something like this.

May God give us wisdom, fathers and mothers, to awaken and to face this great flood of evil that is upon us like we never have before, just in an honest and open way, looking at the shipwrecks, even among the churches, among Christians on this subject. May God have mercy. And if there's ever a time when at the close I would say, even so, come, Lord Jesus.

I would say it on this subject. How much more can we take? Shall we kneel together in prayer? Father in Heaven, we are men and we have a nature, dear God, that is bent on sin by our first birth. And I thank you, dear God, that there is a second birth by the Spirit of God that gives us discernment and helps us to make choices, that we're able to put off the old man with his deeds and with his lusts and with his perversion and with his lying and killing and all the excitement that the world bows to.

And dear God, I pray you may give us the grace to put all of that off and put on the new man and set our affection and our love upon the things that are just and godly and peaceable and right and pure. Oh God, we're living in a flood when the flood of evil and wickedness Satan has thrown out upon our years, upon our society like never before in history perhaps. I pray, dear God, preserve us and keep us from evil.

Alert us, oh God. Give us sound conviction. Give us true application of the Word of God.

Help us to have common sense. Help us to face reality, face the truth and see these things for what they are, oh God. I just pray, dear God, that you would keep us from evil.

Keep us from this flood of wickedness and evil and debauchery and help us, God, to walk that path between those roaring lions seeking to devour us that are tied by the power of God and we are able to walk through to the end, enduring and being faithful unto the end. God, I pray if there's anyone here that is secretly bound to these things, conviction can settle upon their heart and they can be set free by the Spirit of God. Oh Father, how can we eat from the table of devils and the table of the Lords? Help us to see the impossibility of that that you give us in your Word.

And I do pray, as always, instruct us in ways of righteousness that we can keep ourselves from this wickedness. We pray in Jesus Christ's name, Amen. Well, that was never a hard choice for me to make.

I was raised in a home without a television and even in my years of rebellion, when I did do foolishly and rebelled against God and my parents, I never envied my friends that had television. I never envied them. And even in those years, I was always grateful that my mom and dad didn't have a television.

I loved the freedom of not having a television. I could be outside riding my bike. I could be chasing the cows.

I could be plowing the fields. And my friends were sitting in there watching their television. And I didn't envy them at all.

It was never hard for me, even as a rebel. But since God has given me a new heart, even more so, I had to think of the Psalmist David and why he would tell us not to have a television this morning. I believe Psalms 101 would be David's message on this subject.

He gives a clear picture of why he wouldn't have a television in his home. He says, I will sing of mercy and judgment unto thee, O Lord, will I sing. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.

O, when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. I hate the work of them that turn aside.

It shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me. I will not know a wicked person.

Whoso privately slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off. Him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me.

He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. Not those on the television, those wicked people. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house.

He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all the wicked doers from the city of the Lord. And just a point on the point that Noah's made on... He didn't put it in these words, but I would put it... It's the difference of musing and amusing.

The psalmist David again tells us that if you want to prosper in your walk with God, you need to learn to muse, not be amused. The television will amuse you, but you need to learn to muse. You need to learn to meditate upon the Word of God.

If you want to be free, if you want to be full of fulfillment, meditate upon the Word of God. Fill your mind with that and you won't have room for amusement. And I guess I would say that that's been the grief of my heart to see people, well, we will keep the law, so to speak, and not have a television in our house, but we'll get the videos in and watch videos and that can have the same bondage effect as the television.

And we can go after these things and amuse ourselves with these things. And I say, come on, let's muse ourselves in the Word of God. And we won't have time to be amused.

Thank you, brother. Does anyone have something to add, to share this morning? Brother Ross here. Brother Alex back there.

First, I'd like to thank Brother Mose for addressing this subject. As strong as my convictions are about this, I'm not sure that my children have that strong conviction. So it's good to hear this from somebody else besides just me.

I would have a lot to say about television. I grew up with it, or maybe I should say I grew down with it. Maybe I'll just make a couple of points.

I talk about TV at school every year in my health class, and so some of these numbers are fresh in my mind. Looking at some statistics concerning television, just on the subject of violence, there's been some real interesting studies on the effect of television on society's behavior. I know an awful lot of Christians

who are very sure that watching TV will not affect their behavior.

One study, I believe it was done in Canada, in a village where there was no television, somewhere in the 1970s, and they did some studies of children's behavior on the playgrounds at school, noting just how many incidences of violent behavior there was. This is before their village received television. So they kept all statistics of how many acts of violence they saw on the playground.

Two years after television was introduced, the amount of violence went up 160%. Just an awesome increase. So for those who think TV won't affect you, I think it's pretty plain.

There's been lots of studies like that done. Another interesting statistic by Josh McDowell. He's done a lot of work to do something about the problem of immorality in our country, and he's got quite a bit to say about TV's effect, too.

In one of his articles, he pointed out that the average American child who watches TV for the average amount of time receives 25 messages every single day concerning immorality, and it's put in a favorable light. So 25 times a day, our children, from their youth up, from the time they're little children, are encouraged to be involved in immorality. That's just on those couple of subjects.

I could go on and on. I'll give somebody else a chance. But thank you very much for addressing it.

That's perversion. Brother Ross. I praise God, too, for this message, for the clear stand it was taken.

It seems like a flood that has just been let loose on our nation, but on the whole world. I remember there in Africa, in Wawasi, where we lived, before electricity came through, people had their televisions, but they would have a 12-volt battery to run it, and they'd have to take it out maybe once a week or every other week to get it charged. But they had to watch their television, and it was really a status symbol.

And they soaked up the Western filth and the Western mentality, just the values, the wrong values of money and things meaning more than people, and it's destroying Ghanaian society as it has destroyed American society. And I look at all that, and a number of times I've cried out to the Lord, you know, what can we do? Because when we first went to Ghana, I remember, it wasn't hard to get a crowd of 300 people to come to an open-air crusade to hear the preaching. But now you go back to some of those same villages where there's been electricity brought in, and television is there, and video is there, and you go to the same spot and preach, and you might get 50 or 100, you know, you might.

It's just changing the attitude of the people toward the gospel and toward God. And as I cried out different times, the Lord brought this scripture to my mind, where He says in Isaiah 59, 19, When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And that has been my cry, and I feel that's the right prayer for us to pray.

As we see this happening, this flood of immorality just being let loose from the mouth of the enemy across our nation and across the world, to cry out to God that His Spirit would raise up a standard by His Holy Spirit, raise up a remnant that are filled with the Spirit of God, where the truth and joy and peace and the fruit of the Spirit is seen in such glory that those who love the truth will be drawn to it. I would be also happy if Brother Mose could give us some information on what can be done to monitor Internet. I agree that it's becoming a problem in our world, you know.

Many of us who wouldn't have television in our homes have a computer for business or email or whatever. And, you know, Internet is accessible right there. It used to be you could get Juno without Internet access, but not anymore.

And I'm wondering if you could give us any pointers on what can be done to limit that for parents and children's sake. Yeah, of course the easiest way is to have the good filtering system on which the local Internet company here in Ephrata, DE Telephone, has the DE Jazz Internet access. They have three grades of filtering accesses available on it, and it is the good, better, best or the weaker, the average and the strong.

And you can hook that up. That is supposed to take all profanity, all pornography, all explicit sites and make them unavailable. And that is the one way.

The other, probably better way, is to go on to an Internet access provider that simply has to approve every site in order for it to come to your house. Then there's no way to get around it or anything. But the thing that is, there are ways around it today that a lot of times the free hours on a disk that comes in the mail free is how many people originally fall in those things.

But I would say that would be my suggestion, especially wherever there's a family, wherever there are children, that you only use a provider that has the good filtering mechanism on it. Yeah, I greatly appreciated that message. I don't know that I ever heard a message before why I don't have television.

I grew up without television, and it was a great blessing. Just recently I was made aware of that as I heard confessions from brothers that were plagued with going to a motel and unplugging it and still plugging it in and looking at it. And I just had to thank God that I was spared that.

I could stay in a motel and I could pile stuff all over it and not even see it was there. And sometimes we take that for granted. I just thank God to be freed from that as I grew up.

I greatly appreciated that message. I also thought of that verse in Psalm 101 that you mentioned, Brother, verse 3, that says, I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. And the Creole translation of that verse says, I will put no wicked thing in my head.

And I always liked that translation. You know, I will put no wicked thing in my head. I mean, what better verse could we have for the television? And I just want to thank Brother Moe's for sharing that with us.

And also in Brother David's opening there on prayer, I appreciated that. And I had to think, you know, many times we pray to God and we expectantly wait for God to answer our prayer. And I know many of you have been praying this week about the voodoo ball in Haiti, you know, that God would somehow overrule there.

And last evening, I got a call from my wife. For those of you that didn't know it, my wife left on Wednesday with Leslie and Rhonda for Haiti. I got a call from her last evening at 10 o'clock.

And she said that Madam Moise's 18-year-old daughter, Natasha, got born again last night. And so we said, Amen. I mean, what better sign could we have to the devil that Madam Moise's daughter, who is directly involved with this voodoo ball and putting it on that her daughter would get born again.

Praise God. Glory to Jesus. Brother Steve? Yes, I wanted to share that I was involved with the television at a very young age.

I can't say we ever had the wonderful type of teaching as I was growing up about the wickedness of the television. I just want to warn each and every one of those that have not gotten involved in it or looked upon it, especially the young people, that it's far better to never gaze upon it, to never let those images get into your mind, because they've plagued me for years. And just recently, praise the Lord, I've been set free from some very, very deep bondages.

And much of it I can owe to the television. So I just want to warn the brothers about it. I also would say that there's times that we've got to be more concerned about our children than offending someone.

For many of us that would not have a TV in our own home, we're visiting relatives. We're trying to witness to them. And there's TVs in their home.

And we just must take a stand, even though sometimes we may offend our parents or what have you. We must take a stand that we cannot, when we visit, we just have to tell them that, you know, we're blessed to be here. We want to, you know, we want to be here and fellowship with you, but we just cannot.

You know, the TV is something we cannot engage in. And I mean, there's times there might be a football game on or whatever. I would just say we must take a stand and make sure that we protect our families.

Also, when you go into doctor's offices, there's been times where I've just turned the TV off. I think it's important. It's more important that what our children look upon than worrying about what someone else is going to think.

So I would recommend that we have to guard that wherever we go. And I would just say that for any of you that that have gotten into the bondage of wickedness and immorality, that the computer or the TV can get you involved in that as much as you may think that you can deal with it on your own or you can ask forgiveness to the Lord and yet not share it with anyone, it's not going to happen. You must be accountable.

You must confess it, get it open into the light, and then grace can come upon you and the chains can be broken. I just want to share that that I pray that if there's anyone that thinks that they can that they can overcome it. This is the type of sin that, as Jesus says, it can only be overcome with with prayer and fasting and also confessing our sins to one another.

Then you'll have total freedom. So I give the glory to Jesus. Thank you.

I'd like to just share my testimony. There are two verses of Scripture that I that freed me finally from the bondage of television. One of them is in, I believe it's in the book of Isaiah, but it says, Who can dwell with the continual burning? Speaking of God as being a fire, who can dwell with him a continual burning? And the two descriptions, it says, He that stoppeth his ears from hearing about bloodshed and closes his eyes from looking upon evil.

That was a verse that God used to really break that bondage in my own life. And the other one was the whole principle of prayer that God awakened in my life at that time. And God was commanding, pray without ceasing, have a life of prayer.

And as I sat in front of that television, I became very aware that I am not in a spirit of prayer. If I were to ask all these people, my family right now, let's have a word of prayer. I mean, it would be ludicrous.

It's out there. The spirit is gone. There's no spirit of prayer here.

And that finally, I just realized this is not for the Christian life. Okay, over here we have one. I thank God for his faithfulness that he brings me here today.

God knows the quiet of my heart for my family. I have two grown young men live with me. They're very good sons.

But most of the time, they just go on TV. And on the weekend, I want so much to just family get together and learn the way of God. But it's very difficult for me to make that happen.

Most of the time, they just drive quick, eat, and sit down in front of TV. And it's amazing. God knows my heart quite.

And last night, my son just go to New York, bring at home big screen TV. And when they turn the TV on, they ran a movie. And my older son say, Mom, you don't like to see this movie, all the violent and other things too.

So just go to your room. And I go to my room, and I just pray. But I remember that I thank God for the message that God bring me here today.

Because truly, when I start out to go to church this morning, I want to come to my church. But when I go to the red light, ever since, I remember that my friend here say come to visit her church. And I just turn the light off to go to my church, and I come here.

And I do believe God want me to hear this message today. And I thank you, pastor, very much. And I ask the whole church here, please pray for both of my sons, that they will break free from that.

Because I remember the Bible verse, Jesus say, If there is light in your eyes, and sunshine in your soul, but there is darkness, oh how deep the darkness is. And I do believe that TV bring all the darkness from hell into, go through to our eyes, into our soul. We not aware of that.

And I cry out for the younger generation, because many younger generation these days, they don't know about the darkness that what God say in the Bible. And I go to many, a family of Christian, don't have no understanding much about the darkness that Jesus say. Because you know, here in Ezekiel say that, they do not distinct between the holy and common.

They teach that no different between clean and unclean. They shut their eyes to the keeping of Sabbath, so that I am for fame among them. God create us to be in His amen.

And He is holy. And our eyes need to set on the things that are holy before God. So I thank you very much for the message today.

And I ask that we pray for my children and even for myself. Even sometimes something good on TV, like I only would like to, most of the time I like to watch Home and Garden. But even sometimes is good, but then they take the time away from spending the time with the Lord and to hear how God want to deal with the thing in your life.

And Holy Spirit already convict me about that. And I so thankful for God faithfulness. Even when I fail at, He faithful that He bring me here today to listen to this message.

So thank you very much. Amen. God bless you sister.

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