

Up the Ladder of Holiness/Set Apartness

Part 2 of 4

Sex in the Cinema

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“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.” Psalms 101:3 (KJV)

In my last article I talked about violence in movies and on TV. I shared a bit of my journey up the ladder of holiness/set apartness with you, and told you how I came to recognize a need to scrutinize what I was watching on my TV.

One of the first steps I had to take in scrutinizing my cinematic choices was to define the term “unacceptable.” But by what standard? In the past, leaning on my own understanding had left me short of the mark, as did making choices based on worldly opinions. The mark I’m referring to is the goal of being holy or set apart, and the instruction manual I use is the Bible. Hitting the mark isn’t an easy task, no matter what the subject. Today the subject is sex in the cinema.

When I was a child, naked tummies were considered indecent exposure on TV and married couples slept in separate beds. What was unacceptable then has today become commonplace, as a result of the gradual sexualization of all aspects of entertainment. It seems that the world has been lulled into a state of complacency and acceptance of indecency. And as long as “sex sells”, it will remain a tool of advertisers and movie-makers.

There is an abundance of evidence, from multiple sources on line, that site the negative affects of sex on TV to our children and our society in general. One result is the increase in the number of sexual crimes and diminished sensitivity to sexual crime victims¹.

¹ Edward Donnerstein, "What the Experts Say," a forum at the Industry-wide Leadership Conference on Violence in Television Programming, 2 August 1993, in *National Council for Families and Television Report*, 9.

The American Family Association reported in 1995 that the top four networks aired, on average, 45.58 incidents of sex, violence and profanity each hour during prime-time viewing. Broken down they show 8.5 incidents of violence each hour, 14.15 of sex and 22.93 of profanity. And 91 percent of all sex was depicted outside marriage. Projected over a period of one year the networks air 14,313 sex incidents, 8,333 violent incidents, and 23,556 profanity incidents during primetime². And according to the American Psychological Association the number of sexual scenes on television has doubled since 1998³. In 2007, a report by the Parents Television Council estimated there were 12.48 incidents of sex per hour of viewing, which reflected an increase of 22.1% since 2001.⁴ The Parents Resource Center cited in a 2005 report, that 2/3 of all television shows contain some sexual content.⁵

We can't change the way the world revolves around sex, but we can change our little corner of it and stand firm in our personal battle against it in our lives. But I recommend that you don't forget your armor.

In Ephesians 6:11 we are told to put on the full armor of God so that we can stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Verses 14-18 list the different parts of the armor: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit.

When I understood that the armor was representative of the written word (Holy Bible), the living Word (our Messiah), and the Holy Spirit, I also learned what it meant to put it on. What it boils down to is my relationship with them and how I walk that out in my life. I didn't learn how to do this overnight though. It has taken many years to get to this point and I know I am still a work in process. But He will complete the work He has begun in me because He is faithful even when I am not.

² Excerpt from page 6 of the April 1995 "Expression" <http://www.evangelicaloutreach.org/tv.htm>

³ <http://www.med.umich.edu/llibr/yourchild/tv.htm>

⁴ Parents Television Council, Alarming Family Hour-No place for Children, 2007
<http://www.parentstv.org/PTC/publications/reports/familyhour/exsummary.asp>

⁵ Parent Resource Center, 2005,
<http://www.cfoc.org/Facts/index.cfm?ID=2655&blnShowBack=True&idContentType=673>

In my word search of the Bible to define sexual sin, I found:

- ◆ sexual perversion
- ◆ bestiality
- ◆ promiscuity
- ◆ premarital sex
- ◆ prostitution
- ◆ adultery
- ◆ whoring
- ◆ lust
- ◆ fornication
- ◆ homosexuality and;
- ◆ indecency

all listed as sexual sin. Unfortunately, sex is often presented in a cute, fun, or romantic way that can take your focus off the presence of the underlying sinful nature of the message being sent.

Prostitution was made romantic in *Pretty Woman*, homosexuality, lust, sexual perversion, and adultery were made fun in *Will and Grace*, and premarital sex and whoring were made a sport in *Sex in the City*. I bring these particular shows up because I used to watch them. At the time, I found them very entertaining, today I am pretty disgusted with what they represent.

My relationship with *Will and Grace* ended when I understood that by watching this show, I was accepting and even promoting homosexuality. The movie *Pretty Woman* was tossed out shortly after *Will and Grace* were ousted, because I realized that even though Julia Roberts played a nice person, she was still a prostitute. By watching this movie, I had made prostitution acceptable in my home. *Sex in the City* was the next to go. I think its title says it all.

I found that in the Bible, sexual immorality is lumped together with idolaters, murderers, liars, drunkards, adulterers, slanderers, swindlers, prostitutes, homosexuals, greedy people, and those who practice magic arts. Revelation 21:8 says: “*their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.*” And Ephesians 5:5 says that “*none of these has any inheritance in the kingdom.*”

- ♦ **I don't know about you, but I want my inheritance, and a little so-called pleasure in this life is not worth the cost of losing my place seated by my Messiah.**

When I am in doubt about a movie or TV show, I pray for discernment and seek wise counsel from the elders of my spiritual community. I have also found that when I am weakened by illness, stress, loneliness, pain, or fatigue, it is harder to stand firm in my convictions. This is when it is very helpful to spend time with people of like mind, who will exhort and support me in my faith.

So friends, be encouraged and remain diligent in the quest for purity in your life and don't be seduced by worldly opinions of what is righteousness and what is sin. And remember, this is not a race that can be run in just one day, it is a life-long pursuit, full of challenges and complications, which when overcome, will bring you that much closer to the goal of being set apart.

Next time I will be dig a little deeper into the subtleties of profanity in the cinema. I encourage you to seek out what it means to be holy/set apart (Kadosh in Hebrew) by checking out the article titled Kadosh – Word Study @ <http://www.setapartmingb.org/artidex.html>.