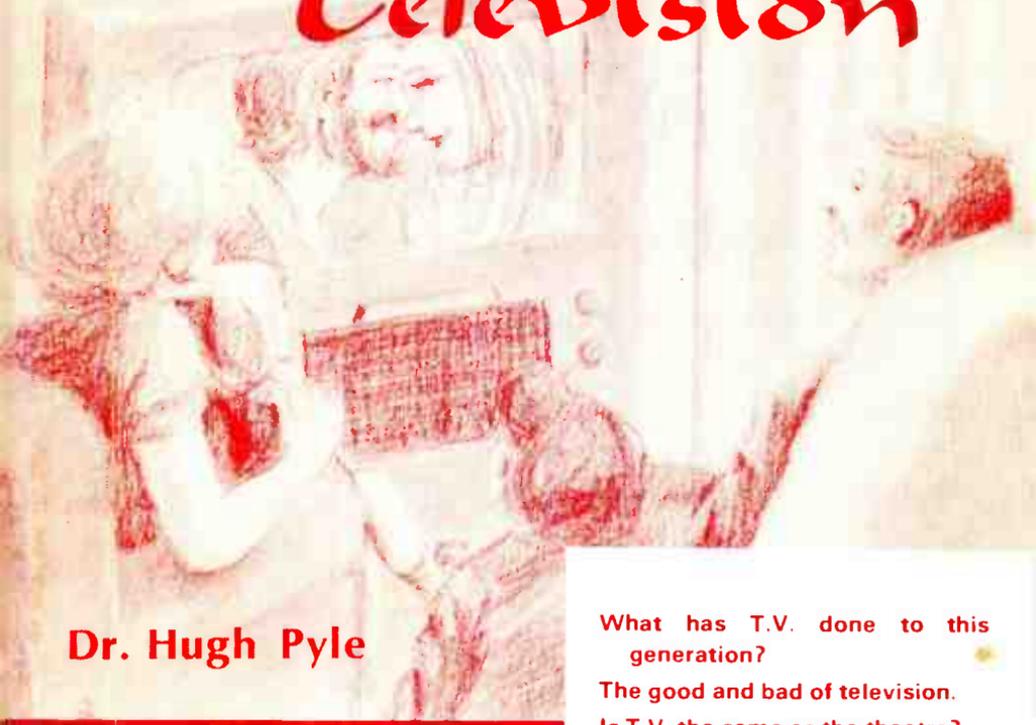


The Taming

of Television



Dr. Hugh Pyle

What has T.V. done to this generation?

The good and bad of television.

Is T.V. the same as the theatre?

Our children and television.

How to control the thing before it controls you!

***THE TAMING OF
TELEVISION***

By

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THE TAMING OF THE TELEVISION

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."—I Cor. 7:29-31.

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."—I Cor. 6:12.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."—I Cor. 6:19, 20.

“The family watching machine” has been called by some the idiot box, the boob tube and the Devil’s eyeball. One wit has well said, “If you’ve half a mind to watch TV, that’s enough!” From Leeds, England, the press reveals that there are more households in Britain that have televisions than bathtubs, and one wonders indeed if these are not “dirty viewers.”

Today’s teenagers are the first generation raised from babyhood on television. There is more crime, vice, sensuality, immodesty, immorality, illegitimacy, drunkenness, dope addiction, violence, assault, and murder among teenagers than any generation before!

While one senator has referred to television as the mass wasteland, *Time* magazine had an article on television entitled the “Mass Tasteland” describing the heartfelt disaster when suddenly there is a flash, the great white ball of light, and in the darkened room where the figures were huddled close together suddenly nothing. The television set has gone out. When this happens some people have been heard to say, “I feel like someone is dead.” “I nearly lost my mind.” “The days were so long.” One woman said, “It was terrible, we did nothing. My husband and I talked.”

Among Americans one fourth of them have their sets repaired within four hours. Almost no one can bear to be without TV for a week.

Most programs are designed to entertain, or to

amuse. The word amuse means "not to think." Does this explain why so many people spend so much time before the set?

In view of all of this, here are some questions for Christians to consider:

1. Why is TV one of the biggest problems in home life today?
2. Should Christians have one at all?
3. How are children affected by it?
4. Have the habits of adults been adversely affected?
5. Is the use of one advantageous?
6. Is there a solution to television in the home?

Now let us consider the taming of the TV set. First observe:

I. The Good of Television

1. It is surely a miracle invention. How amazing that pictures along with words can be caught out of the air and channeled into a box in one's own living room or den.

2. Television is not wrong in itself. It is a remarkable idea.

3. It could be used for the glory of God. At least one Bible teacher believes that television will be used in the coming kingdom of Christ on earth. I have known of a number of people being saved as they have seen and heard our gospel telecast in Panama City. Others have been saved watching a

Christian cartoonist draw illustrated Bible messages on television.

4. It can be educational. Speech, manners and culture can be taught by the means of television. In some instances the classics and great drama have been seen on the TV screen.

5. It can be relaxing when it is simply a diversion, used sparingly.

6. With television one can travel to the world's beauty spots and see many interesting and wonderful scenes, otherwise unreachable by the human eye.

7. Great events can be viewed such as championship sporting events, political conventions, astronauts landing on the moon, great tragedies, national crises, etc.

8. Television could actually help morals if dope, dancing, drinking and crime are shown with the reality of their sordid finish.

9. Public opinion could be molded for good if rightly used by public agencies.

10. World evangelism could become a reality if television could be so used to carry the Gospel to all nations.

II. The Bad of It

My devoted stepmother wrote this poem before she went to be with the Lord.

WHAT OF TELEVISION?

I wonder and wonder about TV
For it offers so much of good to see.
At our finger tips, with sight and sound,
The best of talent may be found.
Sermon and music and Christian play—
Voices from all the world today.

But I fear for children, who see the use
Of guns and knives, hate and abuse;
And TV ads which sow the seed,
Before their little hearts can read
The meaning of commercials, glamorous;
Of cigarettes and beer ads, amorous.

Children remember the catchy tunes—
With the false promise—all too soon!
So Christian parents, let's awake,
To fight this evil, for our child's sake.
Ask God for courage to be strong!
And then, in love, **TURN OFF** the wrong!

—*Helen Carey Pyle*

1. The National Commission on Violence in America recently accused the television industry of “pandering to a public preoccupation with violence that television itself has helped to create.” In other words, the Commission claims that television encourages crime in real life. On both sides of the associated press report in our paper there were stories from real life to illustrate the point. One headline read, “Bandits Kill Four Women in Cold

Blood," and the other read, "Violence Hits Construction Sites, and Schools."

2. American congressmen are concerned about sexy television movies being shown, while Governor Hughes of Iowa is disturbed by the public acceptance of half-clad dancers on television and other forms of lewd entertainment. It is true that many of the dances on television show shaking, writhing, twisting, gyrating humans who look much like mating animals or drunken savages.

3. Some of the most popular programs are dirty and suggestive.

4. Television often gives slanted political views and communism is using a socialistic, top-heavy racial program in our country.

5. Children are being trained by this parent-substitute so that "shoot thine enemy" may be drilled into their heads instead of "love thine enemy"!

6. Dancing, promiscuous sex, smoking and drinking are made to seem the normal and nice thing to do. One of the horrible things about television is that on a great majority of the programs it is "Have a drink," or "May I fix you a drink?" just as if this is the proper thing for people to do. (How hypocritical that society will accept this monster, strong drink, which kills more Americans in one year than the Vietnam war has killed since its beginning!)

7. The styles, customs and habits of today's

youth are being formed largely by television. If a teenage girl's favorite star appears in a miniskirt on television, then the miniskirt must be just the thing to wear!

8. Night life on television certainly does not inspire going to church, to prayer meeting, or to revivals.

9. Many sinners will never hear the Gospel because of television. There once was a time when most evangelistic pastors could expect to have some lost people to preach to in their congregations on Sunday night. Since the advent of television it is almost always a congregation of the more faithful Christians on Sunday night, while lost people, if they get there at all, will be there only on Sunday morning.

10. Many weak Christians are lulled to sleep and ruined by television which certainly has become the enemy of the church. It would seem that there is almost a conspiracy to put the more attractive programs on Sunday night and Wednesday night, as if in competition with anything spiritual.

III. Is TV a Kleptomaniac?

Don Hillis has written a very thought-provoking tract entitled "My Experiences With a Kleptomaniac." It is a very probing article showing the seriousness of people allowing television to steal their home life, valuable time, Bible reading and

even the conversation in the average home. Missionary Garland Cofield has said, "If you have one, play it safe; if you don't have one, you're safer."

David said, "I will SET no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Ps. 101:3). One might wonder if the Holy Spirit had a TV *set* in mind when he wrote this. At any rate, a Christian in Colossians 3:2 is enjoined to 'set his affections on things above, not on things on the earth.'

TELEVISION

Think how wonderful our nation
And how peaceful it could be,
If each prayed, and searched the Scriptures
Much as they tuned in TV.
It's amazing and appalling,
How the Lord is so denied;
Many have exchanged their Bibles,
For that so-called TV Guide.

Murder pictures—children watching,
Programs often base, obscene.
Many juvenile delinquents
Can be traced back to the screen.
Pastors many are bemoaning,
Small attendance Sunday nights,
Careless members, home and watching,
Special programs, or the fights.

Surely this must grieve the Master:
All this tendency to crime,

**As He notes "the wasted hours,"
How and what we do with time.
With this grip upon our nation,
Midnight hour, so very nigh,
Yet we lull to sleep our conscience,
Mid a "Rock-Roll" lullaby.**

**Spiritual suicide is certain
If continued in this way.
How we need to search the Scriptures!
More and more we ought to pray,
There would be tremendous difference,
(To this you may not agree)
But our GREATEST SPIRITUAL ROBBER
Is none other than TV.**

(From the Gospel Standard Author Unknown)

J. K. Duff, writing in the same *Gospel Standard*, has said, "There are many perils which threaten the spiritual well-being of the believer in these last closing days. Some of these dangers are apparent and can be easily discerned, while others are like sunken rocks which cannot be readily seen, but are, for that very cause, all the more dangerous. Such a menace to Christians is to be found in television which Satan exploits for the accomplishment of his own sinister ends; no one will deny that it is a most wonderful invention and some items in the programs are educational and instructive, but for the child of God the baneful effects on the soul will far outweigh the seeming advantages."

He goes on to speak of the time that is frittered away by many people in watching TV and that as one has said, "Mine eye affecteth my heart," therefore let us be very careful what we see as well as what we hear. The fact that an obedient Christian is not a slave to TV gives weight to the testimony, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things" (Ps. 103:5a).

Someone has written a satire which every Christian would do well to consider!

THE TWENTY-THIRD CHANNEL

The TV Set is my shepherd. My spiritual growth shall want.

It maketh me to sit down and do nothing for his name's sake, because it requireth all my spare time. It keepeth me from doing my duty because it presenteth so many good shows I must see.

It restoreth my knowledge of things of the world, and keepeth me from the study of God's Word. It leadeth me in the paths of failing to attend evening worship services, and doing nothing in the kingdom of God.

Yea, though I live to be a hundred, I shall keep on viewing my TV as long as it will work, for it is my closest companion. Its sound and its picture, they comfort me.

It presenteth entertainment before me, and keepeth me from doing important things with my family. It fills my head with ideas which differ from those set forth in the Word of God.

Surely, no good things will come of my life, because my

TV offereth me no good time to do the will of God; thus, I will dwell in the place of the Devil and his angels forever.

IV. Do Bible Verses on Worldliness Apply Here?

(In the Same Category With Movies?)

“Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen.”—Jer. 10:2.

“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.”—Exod. 23:2a.

(In other words, it is not necessary for a Christian to do what the crowd does!)

“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”—I Thess. 5:22.

Many times we have turned off the TV set when dancing, wild music or sensual embraces appeared on the screen before the eyes of our children.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging.”—Prov. 20:1.

“Keep thyself pure.”—I Tim. 5:22b.

“Be not conformed to this world.”—Rom. 12:2.

“All that is in the world, . . . the lust of the eyes, . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world.”—I John 2:16.

“Who mind earthly things” is a characteristic of carnal people who are in reality the enemies of the cross of Christ (see Philippians 3:18, 19).

David saw with his eyes the woman, Bathsheba, in a state of undress and it was what he beheld that

led him to the black sin of adultery and to the terrible calamities that followed. The eye, indeed, affects the heart. Dr. Walter L. Wilson, M. D., writing on this, once said, "The eye affects the heart. What we see has an effect on our entire system. The body quivers with excitement as we look at an accident, a fight or a fire. Our character is revealed by the things we look upon and enjoy."

The Lord uses this principle to express His thoughts about our spiritual welfare. We read in God's Word, "Every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life" (John 6:40). We look at Him, He affects our hearts, and we put our trust in Him. Galatians 5:19-21 lists the works of the flesh and much of this sounds like a commentary on many television programs. First Timothy 6:10 reveals that the love of money is the root of all evil, and who would doubt that many people are made dissatisfied and are led to covet the things that money can buy by what they see on television? We Christians need to remember that Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4).

V. There Are Those Who Say No One Should Have a TV Set

Dr. Harold Sightler, successful pastor from Greenville, South Carolina, and Evangelist Lester Roloff are numbered among them. These are godly,

spiritual men and ought to be greatly respected for their convictions about this thing. If God convicts you that you should not have a TV set in your home, then it would certainly be wrong to keep one. But while there are many evil things which appear on television, there also are many corrupt books, lewd magazines and trashy radio programs, not to mention the pictures and the stories of sordid sin and crime which appear in our newspapers. We would need to go "out of this world" entirely to be completely away from all evil.

VI. We Must Realize Satan's Control, and That He Is the "Prince of the Power of the Air"

Worldly men are out to make a fortune by use of television. They do not mind having choice programs on Sunday night or making competition with revival meetings or other efforts to win souls.

A salesman neighbor of mine said to me once when I visited in his home, "We had a good home and fine family life until *that* came into our home," and he pointed to a big color television set. Dr. J. R. Faulkner, Vice President of Tennessee Temple College, said that they took the TV set out of his home, not because he didn't like it but because he *did* like it and they felt that it was robbing them of valuable time and home life with the children. "The whole world lieth in the wicked one," and we need

to keep this in mind in the use of anything that we have in our homes or lives. "And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (I Cor. 7:31). Remember that God says, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14).

Brother John McCartt, the principal of our Christian school in Panama City, recently said, "Our TV has been on the blink and I have been too busy to fix it. We haven't missed it. We are getting in a lot more good reading."

VII. Is Television the Same As a Theater for a Christian?

Movie ads today are filthy and certainly speak of the new low to which the movie colony has sunk morally. Apparently Hollywood movie houses are making the pictures dirtier and dirtier to attract people away from their television sets.

I preached that Christians should not go to movies or to the theater long before television came on the scene. I did this on the basis of I John 2:15, "Love not the world," and such verses as James 4:3, 4 where we learn that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God," and that Christians are 'not to be conformed to this world' (Rom. 12:2). And that "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth" (I Cor. 8:13).

To be perfectly fair, it is not entirely the same: or it may not be!

1. In watching TV one does not pay to get in, thus he is not patronizing a dirty industry by buying tickets.

2. Television can be watched in the decent and supervised atmosphere of the home, instead of in a public theater.

3. It does not hurt the testimony like going to a movie house would.

4. One can shut it off at will. The eye does not have to be blasted by coming attractions, or a second feature that may be suggestive or sensual to go along with the so-called "good picture" one went to see. The set can be controlled better at home than off in the homes of neighbors and friends of the children.

I felt much better about my son sitting at home watching a football game on Saturday afternoon than off with a questionable crowd of boys racing around in hot-rods or on motorcycles, as so many boys his age were doing. When many other teenage boys were going the way of the world and getting into trouble, he was skin-diving, boating or fishing with Christian boys or with his married brothers-in-law, for the most part, and he was faithful to the Lord.

VIII. Danger Lights Are Flashing If:

1. YOU FIND YOURSELF NOT ENJOYING

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP MORE THAN TELEVISION. We recently had thrilling fellowship with missionaries, really hilarious fun with fellow Christians just rejoicing in the Lord, eating together and enjoying the things of God with fellow believers.

2. IF BIBLE STUDY IS LOSING ITS SAVOR. Watch out, if you're substituting TV for a devotion to the Word of God.

3. IF WE ARE PRAYING LESS BECAUSE OF TELEVISION.

4. IF WE ARE LEAVING OFF THE FAMILY ALTAR OR NEGLECTING TO GET THE FAMILY TOGETHER FOR PRAYER.

5. DANGER LIGHTS ARE BLINKING IF WE FIND OURSELVES DESIRING *THINGS* BEYOND OUR MEANS WHICH WE HAVE SEEN ADVERTISED ON TELEVISION.

6. IF MISSING THE NIGHT SERVICES OR PRAYER MEETING AT YOUR CHURCH.

7. IF YOU FIND YOURSELF EAGERLY LOOKING FORWARD TO A PROGRAM OR A SERIES ON TELEVISION.

8. IF YOUR CHILDREN ARE ADOPTING THE HABITS, OR STYLES OF WORLDLY TV STARS.

How sad these hollow, painted worldlings. If we have a TV set at home, we should make our children aware that it is just empty make-believe at the best.

IX. No TV Unless Parents Can First Control Themselves:

I am quite sure that it is not the Lord's will for any Christian family to have a TV set unless they have themselves first under control. Otherwise the thing may indeed become "the god with the glass face."

Have an understanding that it will never interfere with church attendance, and that it will never be a substitute for something that should have priority.

A Christian should not have a TV set unless it is strictly a *leisure* item and a Christian has very little leisure time if he is doing his best for the Lord. It is granted, however, that we do need times to completely relax.

PARENTS SHOULD AGREE ON DEFINITE RULES. I think a home should probably not have one if they have tiny children in the home. People had been buying television sets for several years before my wife and I finally agreed to try one in the home. Our oldest girl was a teenager, our youngest daughter was almost a teenager and our son was in kindergarten. The children agreed to a set of rules as follows:

1. TV not to interfere with lessons or music practice.
2. No whining or fussing when called away from TV to work, eat or study.

3. Always turn TV *off* if visitors come.
4. No fussing when younger ones must go to bed and older ones can stay up.
5. No arguing when told *no* about watching TV.
6. Chores must be done without being told.
7. No argument about which program to watch.
8. Turn off TV when parents want it quiet or when hard to hear on phone.
9. Turn off immediately when dancing, jazz, beer or cigarette ads, come on.
10. No fussing with each other or you will be penalized.

A TV set would be a terrible thing if not under control, just like fires, guns or water would be. Use a TV set like you would a shotgun. Think of Rizpah standing guard over her sons against the vultures in II Samuel 21. We should do the same for our children lest the buzzards of the world corrupt them.

No TV unless we can keep things in the right perspective.

No TV unless it can be used to the glory of God.

No purchase of a TV if one has to neglect important things to obtain one.

No television if the parents work and children are at home unattended.

X. Control It or It Will Control You

Evangelist Bill Rice once said that they

unplugged theirs at intervals when the children needed discipline or if homework or other duties needed attention. Sometimes it was left unplugged for days or weeks at a time. One evangelist states that their family is limited to one program a day. Others have found it advisable to watch TV no more than two nights a week. Most conscientious parents simply select programs that are wholesome and proper.

Paul wrote, "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (I Cor. 6:12b).

This Week magazine tells of a family who decided that they had lost the art of conversation and that they were neglecting good books and many other fine things because of television. They turned the set to the wall and left it off for one year, after explaining to the children exactly why it was going to be done. After a rough period the family discovered that indeed too much of any good thing can be harmful. Now they say they know how to live with television and use it to an advantage. The father writes, "I am convinced that TV is a good thing—despite what happened at our house. There is no doubt in my mind that it is a terrific force for education and relaxation. We missed a lot during our black-out period." Now he writes that the children must ask to watch specific programs. "Programs must have historical, scientific or some other real value. Mother and Dad make the

decisions. After all, it is only a machine—don't let it take charge!"

HERE ARE SOME DEFINITE CONVICTIONS OF MINE:—

1. A child should not have one of his own. It should be a *family* "watching" machine and should be *supervised!*

2. Agreements should be settled on as to specific programs.

3. No one should be left to watch just anything that comes on.

4. A set should not be left on continuously—just like the lights, etc.

5. The world should be thoroughly exposed to the children for what it is. In Los Angeles the TV fare for one week up to 9:00 p.m. logged 161 murders, 60 justifiable homicides, 192 attempted murders, 83 robberies, 15 kidnappings, 24 conspiracies to commit murder, 21 jail breaks, plus dynamitings, arson, brutal fights, threats to kill, sluggings and maulings. This is apart from the immoral shows depicting triangle illicit love, abortions and sordid sex. Surely anyone would agree that such programs should not be left on for family viewing.

6. Never let *anything* change the godly atmosphere of the home.

7. Teach diligently that this is make-believe. We are simply "looking-on" the heathen world as when

pagan missionary films are shown in the churches. Press upon the children that this is artificial. Our children learned at home to associate cigarettes with "cancer sticks" because if ever anyone lit up a cigarette on a TV program we referred to them as cancer sticks and showed our disgust so the children would pick it up. In other words, we let them learn that this is "what we do *not do* as Christians." Our children learned to turn up their nose if anyone drank beer or smoked, and they readily turned the set off if beer or cigarette advertisements appeared.

At the same time, we instructed our children by showing them the news story when actor Robert Taylor died with lung cancer after they had seen him smoking on TV programs. We made them aware of such quotations as this one by Dr. Charles Mayo, "You can get along with a wooden leg, but you can't get along with a wooden head. It is the brain that counts. But in order that your brain may be kept clean, you must keep your body fit and well. That cannot be done if one drinks liquor."

8. Have some family nights without TV having any part of it.

9. Don't let it be a stumbling block.

10. Write in and protest, and boycott programs that degenerate into something harmful.

11. Don't let certain programs become a habit! (Remember, "I will not be brought under the *power* of any.")

Some giant African snails were recently found to be overrunning the Miami area. A pair was brought to the area two years before. The giant snails grew up to a foot in length and became a great threat to crops. "How great a matter a little fire kindleth"! Thousands from a single pair. Let us be careful that a little toleration of evil in the home does not become a plague to the household.

In New Orleans after Hurricane Betsy had blasted the city with her destructive winds, residents found themselves in a city plunged into darkness. Many were seeking relief by sitting on the porches in the dark night since air-conditioning was off and it was almost unbearable inside. One family sat thinking how dark and quiet everything was. No warmth of lights from homes around. No street lights to brighten the way. Only an occasional automobile groping through the unaccustomed darkness. "We were aroused by our eight-year-old daughter's excited, 'Look! Now we can see the stars,' " they said. Sure enough, the family looked up into the sky and enjoyed the beauty of thousands of twinkling stars. How brightly they shined that night when all else was dark! There were no lights of the world around to dim their brilliance.

Yes, we Christians need to be sure that the lights, pictures and excitement of this world never dim the upward vision of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. May He always be to us the "bright and Morning Star"!