

The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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A Plug-In Habit That's Hard to Kick

By Rodney M. Miller

The PLUG-IN DRUG is a book by Marie Winn which hits hard at the place of the television in the average American home. Her thesis is that this electronic marvel is a drug that parents give their children, take themselves, and end up lulled into a passive state harmful to human health. It is easy to see the effects of being addicted to this electronic drug and withdrawal symptoms are frightening. While it affects adults the most harm is often done to the young. Why? Simply because they are the ones that are in the most formative years because of their process of moral and social development.

What then do we do? Pull the “Plug” and sell our TV’s at the next yard sale? Well, if someone can’t handle the problem and is offending his conscience by contact with it, then that is his only choice. But on the other hand, if we are aware of its dangers and if we have self-control that we ought to have as Christians, then given some reasonable advice, we should be able to remain the Master of the Box, rather than the box becoming the Master of us. What then should we do, and what ought to be our guidelines? Following the lead of those who have researched the subject, here are some suggestions that one might follow in his “Bout with the Box”.

I. Evaluate Own Television Viewing Patterns: To do this you should record the number of hours spent in the watching of television each day on the chart for an average week.

At the end of the week we ought to ask ourselves several questions in regard to this time: (1) How does it compare with the amount of time spent in the same week in prayer and Bible study? **We will never be closer to our Lord than the amount of time we spend in this type of meditation.** If the vast majority of our time is filled with the most course type of worldly filth, is it any wonder that the church suffers from ignorant and immature disciples? (2) What about the amount of time spent in personal work, visiting, teaching and attending services? We are stewards of the most valuable thing man can possess, and something that is a non-renewable resource - TIME. How we use it is the most important aspect of our lives here below. It makes no difference that our talents or abilities may be little or great, how we use our time is the most important factor.

II. Evaluate Own Television Viewing Programs: The next factor is the content of the programs we watch. Herein are two factors that we need to consider. Most of the preaching and teaching that has been personally experienced on this subject only involves one aspect of the two. That aspect most universally condemned, and rightly so, is the sensual and sexual content of the programs. Sex is treated as a smutty joke, even aside from the morality issue, which is, of course, a disaster. This type of presentation ridicules sex as some off-color innuendo, rather than a beautiful and completely sacred relationship between two people. As far as the morality goes, it belittles responsible relationships and presents the glamorous life as one of adultery and fornication. Homosexuality has received more time from television than from any one source since Sodom, giving it a foothold in our society. The role of woman has been made to be one of a sex object, totally evaluated by her ability to turn on the male counterpart. Is it any wonder that the women’s group of “libbers” has rebelled against this cheap parade of flesh on the hoof? Yet, all of this is not news to anyone because we have heard it enough. But on the other hand, consider the second of the two evils in program content:

Violence! Many cry against the second nature of programming and then become silent as a tomb concerning violence. Albert Bandura has demonstrated the negative impact of violent TV shows on children. He says, "If parents could buy packaged psychological influences to administer in regular doses to their children, I doubt that many would deliberately select Western gunslingers, hopped up psychopaths, deranged sadists, slapstick buffoons and the like, unless they entertained rather peculiar ambitions for their growing offspring".

Constant exposure to violence desensitizes people and numbs them to pain and suffering of others. The cartoons on Saturday morning do have an effect on our children and we need to realize it.

III. Evaluate Your Television Viewing Place: Often times the place of the television in our lives is represented by the actual placing of the television in our homes. Many families can't even eat a meal without the "Plug-In Drug". The priority we give it is shown when the family can't even sit down together and eat a meal without it carrying on the conversation for them. How can we communicate with each other, share our needs, share our joys, share our thoughts with each other, if the television is going to occupy the center of our life. Meal time ought to be a time when we can recount the day, or the plans for the day to come, if it is in the morning. Our time to pray together is often influenced by its presence at the dinner table. How then can we offer our "thanks" in a proper and respectful manner, if we have to holler over a commercial? Often the television is used as a "baby-sitter" for our children. If this is to be the case, then the set should be in a prominent place, as opposed to a back room. If young children are to be placed as an offering in front of it, then we ought to hear every program that they watch. If the set is in a back bedroom, then we don't know what is going into their minds. So this is one exception to placing the set in some back, out-of-the-way place in the home.

We must understand not only the power of the programs that bombard us, but the power of the commercials that are focused at us. The "Cross-hairs" of the weapon which the manufacturers bring within range of us has one thought in mind - make us do what they want. That makes us materialistic, with a materialistic set of values, which tells us that life is double-knit and plastic, that life is chrome and polyester, and that success is the achievement of this. More, more, more is the message, and the more we have, the more successful we have become. Alcohol and TV sells the most abused drug in the history of the human race. Earnest Noble, the executive director of the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism, said before a Senate Subcommittee, "We cannot afford the luxury of continuing current advertising practices until the full effects of alcoholic beverage advertising are known...My fear is that the appeals in beverage alcohol ads offer an instant solution to the complex social problems, and those who grasp at this solution certainly run a high risk of adopting attitudes that may result in problem drinking behavior". Particularly objectionable is the use of it.

What then shall we do? Some have responded by pushing it out the door; others have decided that they can master rather than being mastered. There are programs for children which are educational and moral. There are programs for adults which are entertaining and are not offensive. Brethren, the key is simply who rules the house. If a television can't be mastered and used for whatever good can come from it, then it must go, and most of us have enough common sense to know right from wrong, and enough self-control to use it. Therefore, let us realize the dangers and be ready to deal with the problem in a mature manner.

Program Name and Minutes Watched	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Total Hours For Week:							

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16