

## Be Careful Little Eyes What You See

Contributed by Steven Cuffle  
 Sunday, 01 July 2007  
 Last Updated Thursday, 24 January 2008

I can't seem to get my mind off of "a-muse-ment". I think of all the films and television shows that I used to watch before I became a Christian and am disappointed in myself for not knowing better. I had good parents who taught me right from wrong; why, then, was I not able to turn off the television or refuse to watch certain movies? I guess I didn't think it was that big of a deal. I'm starting to learn, however, that this is one of "the important topics" concerning my spiritual self-preservation. There is no list in the New Testament, or the Old for that matter, about types of entertainment that are acceptable for the people of God. However, there are some very clearly articulated principles that speak to the matter. Before we get into those, I feel it necessary to state that not all forms of entertainment are bad. There's nothing better, with regard to television, than watching your two childhood favorites facing off in the Superbowl (you'll get next year, Rex) — except getting to watch the Cubs sweep both the Astros and the Braves on their home turf. Even something as innocent as baseball, however, can become a stumbling block if you watch too much, become entangled in "heated discussions" or keep your eyes open during the commercials. I am not suggesting that television sets and game systems get thrown out the window — but I am going to suggest that they get heavily filtered. It is frequently noted that if God were to give us a list of all the things that we were "not allowed to do" that the New Testament would be endless. In many instances, in His wisdom, we have been given principles which must be applied rather than sundry lists. I wanted to share one passage that has greatly affected my life — and needs to affect it more! Read 1 Peter 4.1-6. In this portion of his letter, Peter says something that convicts me: "the time has already passed for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles". Notice that the word "desire" is singular even though a multiplicity of things is listed afterward. While there are many actions that spring forth from Peter's point, there is only a single source: the desire of the Gentiles.

It is this desire, this lust, which poisons the heart. After the heart has been poisoned, from it springs forth all sorts of immoralities. If we only strive after stopping specific immoral behaviors, more will continually appear; the problem is not contained within the actions themselves but within the heart from where they are issued. If we store up evil treasure in our hearts, then we will speak evil, do evil and be evil (Matthew 12.34-37). This brings up a very poignant question: how do we store things in our heart? "Oh be careful little eyes what you see&hellip;oh be careful little ears what you hear&hellip;oh be careful little feet where you go&hellip;oh be careful little mouth what you say&hellip;&rdquo; The things that we do, see and hear are instrumental in the shaping and molding of our hearts — that is why we sing that children's song! If we sit down to watch television shows where improper relationships are exalted, if we watch movies with inappropriate themes and language, then, whether we realize it or not, we are being affected. These things matter! If you are like me, you tend to compartmentalize the things that Peter mentions. "Lasciviousness", I say, "that means something along the lines of sexually immoral. No fornication for me today, so I'm good." "Drunkness", I say, "well I haven't had any alcohol today, so I must be fine!" The thrust of Peter's list is not the specific activities, but again, the desire behind them. And upon closer inspection, we find that all of these specific activities have a common thread: entertainment. Entertainment is not a new problem for God's people. With Christians, in particular, it is something they have been struggling with since around 33 A.D. I wanted to share a couple of things that some early Christians have said, not because they are authoritative, but because they are enlightening with regard to the struggle that we face every day.

On some points, these quotes do not apply. We do not go to gladiatorial contests any longer where people are killing one another (This is mostly what Commodianus is referring to). But these people make some great points. Do we say that movies do not affect us just because we like them? Why do we enjoy and revel in things that are sinful and detestable in God's sight? Should we really allow ourselves to be entertained by sin? Lying, cheating, stealing, robbing, murdering, fornicating, hating, backbiting, gossiping, getting drunk, committing adultery, carousing, running into excess&hellip;the list goes on — these should not entertain us! These should have no part in our pleasure! These all have their root in the "pleasure of the Gentiles", in the lust of the flesh. My heart is pricked by the Galatian letter when Paul says that "the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you PLEASE" (Galatians 5.17-18). If I really am striving to be a spiritual person, then how can I take my pleasure in earthly things? "It's just entertainment," I have often told myself. "I don't really love those things or find pleasure in them," I say for comfort. If that is true, then why do I watch them? If I really don't like them, then there is no point in seeing them. The time has passed for such things; let me turn my focus and attention toward God. Let me look to the Lord rather than to Hollywood. Oh, be careful little eyes what you see&hellip; "Let spectacles, therefore, and plays that are full of indecent language and abundant gossip, be forbidden. For what base action is there that is not exhibited in the theatres?" — Clement of Alexandria, 195 AD "We renounce all your spectacles. Among us nothing is ever said, seen or heard that has anything in common with the madness of the circus [the hippodrome], the immodesty of the theater, the atrocities of the arena or the useless exercise of the wrestling ground. Why do you take offense at us because we differ from you in regard to your pleasures?" — Tertullian, 197

AD. &ldquo;You are going to vain shows with the crowd of the evil one, where Satan is at work in the [hippodrome] with din. You persuade yourself that everything that pleases you is lawful. You are the offspring of the highest; yet, you mingle with the sons of the devil! Love not the world, nor the things in it!&rdquo; &ndash; Commodianus, 240 AD.