



# The FFBC Spotlight

Looking at contemporary issues through the filter of God's Word.

## Hollywood Movies and the Christian

By Pastor Mark Franklin

Years ago many Bible preachers spoke of the horrors of Hollywood! It was even common for Christians to boycott going to the theatre to watch the latest movie. Things have surely changed! We now have Hollywood in our family room all the time through TV, cable TV, DVD, and videos. Many times, children are watching things that are not appropriate and parents are oblivious. In this generation it is true that the greater issue is the DVD in your home. While this article deals with Hollywood movies and the Christian, the general focus is not about "going to the movies" because the "movies" have come to us. We now have them in our family room on our own big screen.

God does have something to say about what we see and hear through various media outlets. Principles can be extracted from various Bible verses on this very issue of the movies.

### [1] What am I viewing?

*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me* (Psalm 101:3). Is what I am viewing wicked?

### [2] What am I hearing?

*It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.* (Ecclesiastes 7:5). Am I hearing the song or music of those who know not God?

## Principles That Ought to Guide Your Movie Watching

The intent of this article is to set forth a few principles that will help us to develop some type of standard in our homes for what we will watch on the TV, DVD, or video. We are in desperate need of a firm conviction regarding Hollywood Movies.



### • Is it pleasing to the Lord?

*And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are **pleasing in his sight*** (1 John 3:22). This principle ought to guide us in every area of our lives.

### , WWJD? Would the Lord Jesus watch that with you?

The reality of the matter is that the Spirit of God indwells the believer; He is there with you. Is He grieved by what He observes you watching (Ephesians 4:30)?

### f Is this condoning sin? How will it affect me?

Movies have a lasting effect on the mind and heart. We often think that we can handle watching a certain kind of movie or program. We believe that it will not affect me

because *I am mature.*

Pornography leaves an indelible image on the mind,

music greatly affects us, violence can cause a disturbance to the peace we could enjoy, and innuendos cause us to dwell on the impure. We who know Christ as Savior need to beware of *getting used to the dark*. As darkness prevails in our culture, we seem to get more and more accustomed to it all the time. Do you hate what God hates? As we think of the language, the innuendo, the immorality, and the violence that is put before our eyes every time we turn the TV on, we need to be concerned about the effects that this is having on those who know the Lord as Savior.

**We who know Christ as Savior need to beware of getting used to the dark!**

### " Will this cause another to stumble?

1 Corinthians 8:13 speaks about offending the weaker brother. The great Apostle Paul was willing to forgo eating meat if it would offend another. This meat had been offered to a pagan god and was now for sale in the market place. If this was offensive to the Gentile and would cause them to stumble, Paul gave up his right or privilege to eat such before them. When I plug in that DVD or enter that movie theater, what about the weaker brother? Am I willing to give up my rights for the cause of Christ?

## The Plug In Drug

Current statistics for TV watching are staggering. A USA Today Snapshot in April of '04 stated that Americans will spend ten weeks in front of the TV in 2004 [1,669 hours or about 70 days]. Staggering! Several studies have linked ADD [Attention Deficit Disorder] in children with the amount

of time they spend in front of the TV. The average high school graduate spends 18,000 hours in front of the TV compared to only 12,000 hours in the classroom. One other stat – the Nielsen Media Research Group has announced that “Television was viewed by someone in a household for a total, on average, of 7 hours and 44 minutes per day.”

**I do not have to tell you that TV contributes to truth decay!**

I do not have to tell you that TV contributes to truth decay! There is a definite agenda to the talk shows, the sitcoms, and the movies that we all watch on the television. It has had a radical

effect upon this generation and is moving us more away from a print culture to a video culture.

Profanity is now common on the TV and perversion is openly paraded across our screens. Parents, you need to set a standard in the home regarding your screens! Who controls the monitors in your home? Are we *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil* (Ephesians 5:16)?

Many can identify with the proverbial frog in boiling water. He does not realize that the heat is being turned up as the hours pass. We are getting used to what we see on our screens.

## What about Hollywood's Production of Christian films?

Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ* became the eighth highest grossing domestic film of all time with an income of 23 million dollars on the first day [Ash Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>]. The release of the DVD version of this film sold 4.1 million on the first day for a 117 million dollar profit. As a traditionalist Roman Catholic, Gibson set forth in very graphic images of gore and brutality the crucifixion of our Lord. This religious film, with an R rating, has generated much interest and support, even among some Bible-believing Christians.

### S COMMENT on the *Passion*

True Christians should beware of the subtlety of what was not portrayed, what was distorted, and what was distinctly Roman Catholic. We should further be reminded that God has chosen words, not images to be the means of proclaiming truth. This pastor has not seen the film because of a personal standard about watching any thing with an R rating.

Brian Dannelly's *Saved* is a teen comedy that takes place in a Christian Baptist high school. The *NY Daily News* states that this movie “mocks, spoofs, parodies, and chides America's Bible-thumping educators.” A young *Christian* girl falls in love with a boy in high school and then finds out that he is a homosexual. She is visited by the Lord and told to get pregnant by this boyfriend. The purpose of this is so that he will overcome his admitted homosexual urges.

### S COMMENT on *Saved*

This new film makes a mockery of genuine Christianity as is so often the agenda of Hollywood.

In regards to Hollywood's attempt to set forth what it is like to be “Saved” or what the Cross was like, I ask: Can sweet water come from this bitter fountain? Can blessing come from this mouth of cursing? James reminds us of this very truth in the New Testament [James 3:10-11]. Let us not be deceived into thinking that the agenda of the ungodly has suddenly changed. Hollywood movies are a part of the *devices of the Devil* (2 Corinthians 2:11) whereby he gains an advantage in the life of the Christian. Many young believers have stumbled into sin because of the absence of movie standards of older, mature believers. In these last days, we should always be suspect of Hollywood movies that attempt to tell the old, old Story!

## Keep The Standard High

The purpose of this article is to challenge you regarding a standard in your life and in your home as it pertains to going to the movies, watching TV, viewing DVD's and videos. Every family needs to have a standard in place to guard our minds and hearts. May we be challenged to sketch out a few principles that will guide our viewing.

Parents with children in the home need to limit the number of hours their children spend in front of the tube and the monitor. The local video store has made all sorts of movies and games available to our families. It is through this local outlet that much of the Hollywood trash enters our homes. Parents, we need to be in control and will be responsible to the Lord for what our families are viewing on the screen. Let's keep our TV/Cable/DVD/Video and movie viewing wholesome and let us ever remember that we bear the name of Christ in all that we do.

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