

Question: As a Christian parent of two teenagers, I'm concerned about the sexually-provocative content they are witnessing on TV. What can I do about it?

Christians should not only be concerned that sex is shown, implied and discussed openly on TV but especially concerned about the immorality in these depictions. One is hard pressed to find on TV cases of married people involved sexually with one another. It seems that sex on TV is nearly always between two unmarried persons. Even the good, religious people on TV appear to think nothing of sexual involvement outside of marriage. Sexuality is clearly a major part of life; but we are more than sexual beings. The content of today's TV media seems to show life in an out-of-balance kind of way.

However, Christians should not be prudish about sexuality. The Old Testament Song of Solomon, the Proverbs and other biblical passages speak plainly of sexual matters. Apparently Song of Solomon is intended to portray the beauty and wholesomeness of sex within the marital relationship. Also, the New Testament says: "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Hebrews 13:4 NIV).

We cannot isolate our children from the world, but we can insulate them against unhealthy and harmful influences. Parents need to know what their children watch on TV by watching with them and by using this time to talk about moral values. A 2004 RAND study report indicated that parental monitoring along with clear expressions of disapproval and religious involvement greatly reduce the likelihood of teen sexual activity. Get your children involved in a meaningful dialogue that respects their ability to think for themselves. Inform them about the dangers of sexual immorality to the health of their bodies. Teach them about the impact sexual involvement has upon their emotional health and upon their ability to someday have a strong, loving and lasting marriage. Our children should not be led to think of sex as dirty and evil. Instead, their creator made them to be sexual beings. Therefore, God does approve of sexual intercourse between persons in a committed marriage relationship. However, outside of marriage God has condemned sexual intercourse as immorality.

In addition, help your children understand that we become what we feed our minds upon. If we

uncritically absorb all that TV presents, we might easily rationalize the same behaviors in our own lives. Jesus said: “You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28 NIV). Adultery begins in the heart. Thus, we avoid the sinful passions of sexual immorality by controlling what we look upon to the extent possible. We may not always be able to avoid seeing sexually-arousing sights, but we can turn away from them so as not to become lustful.

Parents who truly love their children will not wait until they are teens to begin talking about sexuality with them. When there has been a healthy relationship and trust developed in earlier years, the more difficult years and topics are easier to handle. Without getting too explicit about sex in the early years, we can begin to introduce healthy attitudes and behaviors toward the opposite sex at whatever level a child is prepared to receive. Above all, pray for God’s help in the highly sexually-charged world of today.

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