

“I beseech ye therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice; holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:1,2

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

by Craig Marlatt

It has been noted recently by many writers and speakers, both secular and religious, that we are living in an information society. Television media and the Internet have plunged us into a well of information which we find ourselves compelled, almost desperately, to absorb on a daily basis. It seems as though there is hardly enough time to consider one major event before another rushes in upon us, demanding our attention and forcing us to focus upon the issues at hand, though they seem sometimes to represent a staged production into which all of us, somehow or other, are cast like players in a theater.

No doubt rapid communication and vast supplies of information have sophisticated our society from a technical sense, but the current degeneracy and moral decline that has gripped our nation, indeed the world at large, is a frightening testimony to the utter failure of the current generation to move mankind in the direction of peace and progress. Progress is only progress when it influences the entire spiritual, mental, and physical realms of man's nature. Peace is only real peace when there is an earnest desire on the part of every man to see his neighbor walking in the blessings and prosperity that he himself possesses or desires to possess.

Certainly we cannot reverse the current situations that exist in our ability to send and receive information (nor should we want to). Our problem really lies in the type of information that we are receiving. To use a popular cliché of the '60's "You are what you eat". We, in other words, will generally accept and imitate the things to which we allow ourselves continuous exposure. Hence we see sex, drugs, violence, and perversion through the media, and we will tend to act out these situations, if not actually at least mentally, in response to the input which we are receiving.

In recent years we have had many verifications to this conclusion. Violence, murder and sexual assaults have been directly linked to the media input of many who were convicted of such crimes. For instance in the "Night Stalker" killings on the west coast of America, the man convicted of those brutal killings was found to have been an avid follower of many of the famous musical groups that advocate violence, perversion, and satanic activity.

We must also note several teenage suicides that took place in 1984 (and many in more current instances) which were part of a cult group in several states. In each case they had received their instruction somehow mystically by listening to a popular rock group that advocates anti-human / anti-Christ activities, not to mention the Manson family who claimed special revelation via Beatle records, etc. In another incident a young boy violently murdered a younger companion because he ". . .saw it in a movie". The many instances that are available for proving this indictment are far too numerous to mention on these pages. It will suffice to say that what goes into the eyes and ears goes into the mind - What goes into the mind goes into the heart - What goes into the heart goes into the life, and - What goes into the life goes out to the world.

Are these indeed isolated incidents or are they a horrifying picture of the direction that we as a people are moving in? I believe that these things are indicative of a barbaric trend that is now appearing in every level of society. These trends are measurable by media pollution. Let's take the Movie Rating System as an example. The original purpose of this system was to police and secure, for the public, entertainment that would be 'fit' viewing for wholesome human consumption. Today it works just the opposite. It has become instead a guarantee that there will be enough violence, sex, blood, vulgar language, and perversity for popular sales.

A case in fact are the movies of Steven Spielberg. In several of his major productions (E.T. , Explorers, etc.) he opens up with young children using vulgar language and alluding to sexual activity as though representing normal 'good' boys and girls. Why does he do this? Is it because he wants to give a true life depiction of the average American family? I doubt it! Most likely the vulgarity is required to keep these movies from falling into the 'G' category which would supposedly hinder sales and income. It is a sad state of affairs when such a tremendous talent is marketed by such useless techniques. It may seem subtle and harmlessly humorous to the average viewer, yet the effect of such things on the young mind and personality is undoubtedly harmful. The precedents of indecency that are formed by such open acts of rebellion and hostility should not be taken lightly. And besides this they add nothing to the films themselves except negative connotations to an otherwise fine creative expression of Mr. Spielberg's God given talents.

Obviously the battle is raging, but what can be done? Where do we begin? Should we picket? Yes! Should we boycott? Probably! Get politically involved? Yes! Yes to all of these things and many more. But our first and foremost effort must be done in the home. We must at all costs fight the battle first in our families. Satan has worked tirelessly to destroy the fabric of our society and he is winning the battle! While the church has carried on its doctrinal bickering and playing of spiritual games, the enemy has made an all out effort to destroy the family way of life that was so representative of the American society at our most productive and impressive times. The family that serves Jesus Christ is by far the most powerful weapon against the kingdom of darkness. When you have a Christian family in agreement together "All things are possible".

I believe that the independent and rebellious spirit which has overtaken our society is a direct result of the destruction of the family mentality in this country. We must fight this battle in our own homes first, and then teach others to do the same. We must learn to govern ourselves. Since the media will not place responsible restrictions upon itself we must do so by personal discipline: hence, turn the channel or turn off the tube when offensive programs come on television. Then complain about it to your local broadcaster. You will be surprised how much effect you can have with just a letter.

Throw out magazines and other literature that offer provocative graphics or immoral correspondence, and quit spending money at places that make profits from such obvious wrongdoing.

Take the necessary time to educate yourselves and your children about the moral implications of current media trends in light of scripture. Be willing to make personal sacrifices in support of righteousness and opposition to corruption. Apathy is sin. We can no longer sit back on our defeated attitudes in astonishment and say, "Whatever will be will be." We must fight for the little that remains before all is lost. It's going to take

radical commitments on the part of adults if we are to assume the positions of godly role models. It will cost us all a little something if we are to reverse this fast moving tide of indecency:

Let's start complaining about the athletes who are advocating alcoholism on television commercials. They already make enough money from their sports careers so there is no excuse for such unconcern on their part. We must hold them responsible if they are going to be the heroes that our children admire. One of the saddest things that is happening right now in this country is the controversy over drugs in professional sports. It can no longer be said that America represents "Baseball, apple pie, and motherhood". The modern version, if re-written, would probably sound something like this: 'Cocaine, fast-foods, and divorce'.

How sad it is to watch our heroes stripped down to such low estates as this, while untold millions of young people who need someone worthy of their admiration cannot find the role models they so desperately need, even in these of such high athletic achievement. We must demand moral credibility from those whom we allow into the limelight of our children's dreams. We can no longer overlook these things like those who attended the gladiator events of the Roman Empire. There are lions loose in the arena and they are killing innocent lives for the sake of folly. Consider some of these observations with me and ask yourself what can be done:

1. Many parents are not able to make godly judgements about their children's lives because in order to do so they would have to give up some of their own folly. Do you have a right to say that your children cannot watch certain programs or movies if you yourself are doing the same thing. If it's bad for them, how can it be good for you?

2. Fathers who complain about their children drinking or getting involved with drugs must thoroughly clean their own closets. I know some parents who drink because they're worried about their children smoking pot. Can this be right?

3. Recent statistics say about 39% of all high school seniors in America have a drinking problem. Where did they learn this way of life? For many of them it began in the home. They are merely imitating the roles that their parents lived before them.

4. How many of the young people that are having sexual relations outside of marriage got their notions of sexual license when they happened to find one of daddy's hidden playboy magazines? "But honey! You know daddy just reads the articles! We're going to discuss this . . . after church!"

5. There are many things that we cannot undo. We have already allowed too much and must hang our heads in shame. But we can do something about the things that we permit from now on. Let's stop being religion oriented in our churches and start being people of action! God is certainly not as religious as we are. Let's get involved in our own sphere of influence and bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to where the enemy really is. Let's speak out against the unrighteousness around us and live lives that force the world to conform to our standards and not vice-versa.

It starts with ourselves. We must repent of everything in our lives that grieves the Holy Spirit. We must force ourselves to come into subjection to the gospel and not walk any longer in bondage to the petty beckonings of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (I Jn. 3:8). We who are saved are in Christ (Colossians 3:1), and dead to sin, with the power to walk above the lies and deceptions of the enemy (Romans 6:1,2). If we don't live the gospel we cannot give the gospel.

When we are willing to walk the fine line of obedience only then will our conscience give us room to obtain great faith from the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we can begin pushing back the forces of evil and the very gates of hell shall not prevail against us.