

Pornography

Have you ever tried to define "pornography"? Supreme Court Justice William Potter once commented he had trouble defining pornography, but said, "I know it when I see it." "Pornography may be defined as the presentation of sexual behavior in books, pictures, or films solely to cause sexual excitement. The word pornography is derived from a Greek term meaning 'the writings of harlots,' or prostitutes. Closely related, and in legal terms virtually identical, is obscenity, which is behavior or material that is immoral and designed to produce lust." (Compton's Encyclopedia, Britannica Software, Inc., © 1991).

While the English word "pornography" is not found in the Bible, it is included in such words as lasciviousness, wantonness and licentiousness. In fact, the word "fornication" is from the Greek word porneia, from which we get our English word "pornography." Porneia includes sexual immorality of all kinds. The New King James version of the Bible usually translates this word as "sexual immorality" instead of "fornication."

The apostle Peter could have well been describing lovers of pornography when he spoke of those who had "eyes full of adultery" (2 Pet. 2:14). This phrase is a "vivid picture of a man who cannot see a woman without lascivious thoughts toward her" (A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures In The New Testament, Vol. VI, p. 167). Pornography destroys common decency and promotes evil desires of all kinds.

In Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus told His audience, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Jesus goes beyond the outward act, right down to the very thought that would bring on the act itself. Women who dress in such a way as to arouse evil desires in men are guilty of sin, as well as the men who lust after them.

Some who would never purchase pornography at an "adult" book store often have it piped into their house via Home Box Office or Cinemax (or is that Sin-A-Max?) or other television channels. Christians must exercise discretion in what they watch!

Instead of concentrating on things that break down the standard of morality in this nation, let us follow the words of Paul, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

- by David Padfield

How the Ads Should Read

If the places that sell whiskey would tell the truth in their advertising, the ads would read something like this: "Wanted -- 100 new customers as most of our old ones have dropped out.

10 committed suicide; 20 are in jail; 15 are in the poor house; 1 was executed for murder; 3 are in the mental hospital; and the rest are broke."

"We must have new customers -- young, fresh and strong for they will not live to stay with us long. Come to see us. We have brands that will cause you to disgrace your family, paralyze your mind, warp your body, and lose your friends.

- by L.O. Sanderson

Unjust Criticism

Abraham Lincoln said: "If I were to read, much less answer all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how, the very best I can, and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, then angels swearing I was right would make no difference. "

Others have suffered unjust criticism. Hannah moved her lips as she was praying silently and the watching priest accused her of drunkenness. Ahab said Elijah was a troubler of Israel. Jesus was said of his enemies to have no regard for real religion or for the king.

There are so many Bible characters that experienced unjust criticism. Have you? And what should you do when you've explained, yet the criticisms continue? Some of it may be vengeful "cheap shots" to keep you stirred up. What should you do?

"Honest Abe" may well be reminding us of the Bible answer - just keep going. There's too much good to do to look back. It may be like Nehemiah told his enemies seeking compromise. He knew it was a trick and said, "I am doing a good work and cannot come down."

Frankly, there are some things we are just going to have to let the Lord sort out at the end, and He'll do it right - don't worry. Our business is to get on and keep on with life, doing the best we can.

- by Bob Hines

One Preacher Advises Another

An older preacher was giving some advice and counsel to a younger one. His own preaching work had been marred by several incidents where folks had rejected his teaching, opposed him publicly and caused him a fair amount of grief and hardship. Still, though, he continued to proclaim the truth, and he encouraged his young friend to do the same.

He warned the young man that there would be times when his preaching would not be well received. People would not like to hear "hard" preaching. They would prefer to listen to things that were more pleasant and less demanding. Teachers that played to their whims and fancies would be more popular. More "positive" and less "negative" preaching would be their wish, and they would insist that it be so.

But despite all this, the older preacher urged the younger one to press on with his work. It wouldn't always be easy, but it was ultimately important.

Who were these two preachers? Where and when was this advice given from the older to the younger? It could have been almost anywhere and anytime, but we have reference to the encouragement penned by the apostle Paul to the evangelist Timothy. Some of the final words Paul ever wrote were these:

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (2 Timothy 4:2-5)

- by Greg Gwin