

## Did You Hear...?

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Several years ago I witnessed a shooting...on the six o'clock news. I stood in shock. It was not due to a lack of awareness of violence, but that it was televised. Not only was it televised, it was aired at an early evening hour.

Perhaps the airing of the shooting is more of a commentary on the impulses of man's nature. It is not enough to hear about crime, people want to see it. Our television shows and motion pictures no longer make reference to violence, sex, and other evils; they no longer simply suggest what happened; nothing is left to the imagination. For many that is still not enough. They want to participate and will not be satisfied otherwise.

As Christians we would never participate in acts of evil. However, are we participating through the literature we read and our entertainment choices?

I would not expect agreement on which shows, movies, or books should be avoided, but surely we are all cautious to not go overboard. We stay away from the really bad stuff.

So, where do we draw the line?

Consider the Apostle Paul's instruction for the Christians at Ephesus regarding evil:

**And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.**  
(Ephesians 5:11-12—NASB)

Do your conversations revolve around the violence around the world, the sexual immorality on TV or at the movies. Have we gotten so accustomed to the evil around us that we know the lingo? Are we educating ourselves in the *unfruitful deeds of darkness*?

There is no valid rationalization:

- "It's in the news."
- "Everybody's watching it."
- "I would never *do* anything like that."
- "I do think it is wrong; I don't encourage it."
- "My mind filters out the bad parts."
- "Well, I'm going to be exposed to it anyway."

Paul's words stand in contrast to these kinds of rationalizations: **"It is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret."**

He is saying that Christians have no business *chatting* about evil.

We must each make our own entertainment choices. However, the "kid test" may be a practical guide. For example: If kids are talking about inappropriate things, they will change their conversation when an adult enters the room. So, applying this simple test: If you would change your conversation because someone entered the room (parents, church friends, kids) is that a proper topic in the first place?

In the same letter Paul encouraged Christians to speak "to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs..." (v 19). That is in stark contrast to disgraceful conversations about evil!

We are well aware that evil exists in our world, even in our community. However, we do not need to be educated in evil, and we do not need to make evil the centerpiece of our conversations.

**Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.**  
(Ephesians 5:15—NASB)