

Training Up a Child in this Day

Back when I was a kid we didn't have cable T.V. We had rabbit ears, and I was considered the remote control. With enough tin foil, we might be able to pick up all three channels. There were cartoons on Saturday, and Church broadcast on Sunday. At midnight the National Anthem was played and they shut her down.

I'm thinking maybe those were the good old days of television. Though I suppose it had its flaws back then too. Those "Hee Haw" girls were awful risqué, and Buck Owens would always be singing, "Gloom, despair, and agony on me." (Talking about a song you don't want stuck in your head!) Of course, then you had the soaps. They brought more than their share of unneeded drama into America's households. And let's not forget- Saturday morning wrestling. (Or "rastlin" as we called it in Mississippi) It was there I experienced the first ding in my armor of innocence.

I was just four years old, sitting there all alone in front of my grandmother's big console one day as the Saturday morning wrestling came on. I'd never seen such. My jaw slung open like a snagged toothed fly trap.

There was this good guy in a white hat, named Cowboy Bill. He took to fighting this dark seedy character whose name now escapes me. Cowboy was doing real good, until old seedy started cheating and dug down into his trunks for a chain. The referee must've been easily distracted, because he missed the whole thing. Seedy wrapped that chain around his fist and socked poor ole' Cowboy right in the kisser! A few minutes later, when Cowboy Bill got up off the canvas, he looked straight into the T.V. camera and made sure they got a close up of him spitting out a handful of bloody Chicklets.

My breath escaped me. A wave of fear pounced on my back. I ran into my Mimi's bedroom and hid under her bed. I realize now it was fake, but that day I laid there until I cried myself to sleep.

I was reminded of this the other day while I was at a kid's birthday party. Three older little boys were herding up together and whispering with such goggle-eyed passion I purposed to ease closer and get in on the big secret.

"I snuck up behind this guy and put the gun against his head and blew it clean off," the one was saying. "There was blood spurting everywhere!" They all laughed.

Now my eyes were goggled. I must be overhearing some sort of awful confession. Another kid responded with an equally gruesome tale. I wanted to run and hide under a bed somewhere! Then it dawned on my lightning fast mind, these young tuffs were just talking about their exploits on a video game.

You may call me old fashioned, but I say, "SHAME!" Shame on us as a society for producing such violent garbage for our children. Shame on us as parents for not nurturing and protecting them from it. Do we really need a cheap babysitter so bad that we would allow their little hearts to be conditioned to such brutality?

Paul exhorted us- (*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4:8 KJV*) Wouldn't that principle apply to our kids?

I've heard the tortured arguments about how we have to prepare our children for the "real" world. Well, I know the Creator of the real world, and He says- (*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6 KJV*)

Our kids should be spending their days learning how things should be, not how they shouldn't. Bank tellers don't study hundreds of different bogus bills in an attempt to keep up with what the counterfeiters are doing. They study our own U.S. currency and strive to learn every particular detail of the real deal. Then when someone tries to pass off a fake, they know immediately it's not to be accepted. It's the same way with our children. They *should* be offended by gratuitous violence, and all other manner of evil. Are we teaching them to embrace it?

But anyway- I don't feel bad about sheltering my kids. Not for one moment. I want them to feel safe under my protection. At least until I am confident they have full faith in God's. I don't believe searing a child's conscience prepares them to be a warrior for God. Yes, they may eventually face their share of dark seedy characters, but when that time comes, I want them to do just that; face them. I don't want them to be one of them!

-Guy Sheffield 7-14-06