

DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

DISCIPLINE OF MIND-SOUL

THE DIVINE PROGRAM

The Christian community is putting the same input into its collective computer as is the rest of the world. According to **A. C. Nielsen**, the TV set in the average home is on seven hours and seven minutes a day, and the average viewer watches four and one half hours each day. The statistics for religious homes is just a half hour less.

A renowned media expert, **Professor Neil Postman of New York University**, says that between the ages of six and eighteen, the average child spends some 15,000 to 16,000 hours in front of the TV, whereas he spends only 13,000 hours in school. Postman says that during the first twenty years of an American child's life, he will see some one million commercials, at the rate of about 1,000 per week!

As to television's effects, the results are infamous:

- Shortened attention span.
- Diminution of linguistic powers.
- Reduced capacity for abstraction.
- Homogenization of adulthood and childhood.

To attract and hold its audience, the TV industry feels it has to parade the taboos of culture: adultery, promiscuity, homosexuality, incest, violence, and sadism. As a result the lowest of activities become commonplace, and even morally cachet.

There is a distinct connection between these things and the background of TV executives as compared with the viewing public. Only 7 percent attend church regularly, as compared to 55 percent of the viewing public; 44 percent have no religious affiliation, as compared to only 10 percent of the viewer's having no such affiliation. To deny there is a conscious assault on the Christian mind and its traditional values is like believing Saddam Hussein is building a "kinder, gentler world."

I am aware of the wise warnings against using words like "all," "every," and "always" in what I say. Absolutizing one's pronouncements is dangerous. But I'm going to do it anyway. Here it is: It is impossible for any Christian who spends the bulk of his evenings, month after month, week upon week, day in and day out watching the major TV networks or contemporary videos to have a Christian mind. This is *always* true of *all* Christians in *every* situation! A Biblical mental program cannot coexist with worldly programming.

Bible Study: Discipline for Godliness

Discipleship Series:

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

If we are to have Christian minds, there are things we must put out of our minds — and this extends beyond TV, to what we read, listen to, and laugh at.

My advice? Stop watching television. I mean that sincerely! Not watching TV will liberate so much time, it will become virtually impossible not to become a deeper person and a better Christian. Even if you play poker with your friends, you will be better off, because you will be *relating to human beings!*

I am not suggesting a new legalism which forbids TV and the cinema. (There are many worthwhile things to view; moreover, while Christianity is by nature countercultural, it is not anti-cultural.) But I am calling for believers to take control of their minds — what comes in and what goes out. If you cannot control what you watch and read, perhaps it needs to go. **“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away,”** says Jesus ([Matthew 5:29](#)).

The Psalmist gives sage advice for those living in the media age: **“I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing”** ([Psalm 101:2-3](#)). We need to allow Christ to be Lord of our prime time.

Some of you need to schedule a confidential conference with your spouse and prayerfully seek God’s will regarding this. And you single men who have so much trouble with your minds need to likewise seek God’s will — and someone to hold you accountable. Let us not settle for being like other Christians or for having a church that is like other evangelical churches. **May we be different because we have *Christian minds*.**