

Up the Ladder of Holiness/Set Apartness

Part 3 of 4

Profanity in the Cinema

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"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me." Psalms 101:3 (KJV)

What do you set before your eyes?

What's in a word? A picture is worth a thousand of them. They can build up or tear down, bring joy or pain, heal or harm, they can be righteous or profane.

When I say profane, what comes to your mind? The New Webster's Dictionary defines profane as not sacred; irreverent; blasphemous; vulgar; to put to a wrong or unworthy use (as in using the Lords name in vain); bad language (swearing, cursing), lewd, sexually suggestive, coarse, vulgar, or offensive language or acts (this might also include some words that replace swear words).¹

When I searched the Bible to get an understanding of what YHVH (God) considered profane, I found that it referred to two basic categories of being holy and profane. It appears that any word, thing, or action that diminishes the holiness or sovereignty of YHVH is considered profane.

In *2 Corinthians 6:14* we are instructed not to be connected to unbelievers and asked, "*What partnership have righteousness and lawlessness or what fellowship has light with darkness?*" I understand this to mean that we are to be as different from unbelievers as light is from darkness or righteousness is from unrighteousness.

¹ New Webster's Dictionary and Roget's Thesaurus, 1992, Book Essentials, Inc., Ottenheimer Publishers Inc., USA, Page 299

When I began to scrutinize my movie collection, I came to understand that difference should include what movies I watch.

When I was a child, my mother directed whom I spent my time with and taught me not to swear or even to use replacement swear words. I remember her quoting *Matthew 15:11* "*It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man but what proceeds out of the mouth that defiles him.*" I knew this verse was referring to swearing but hadn't yet learned about profanities in many other forms.

At first I followed the rules Mom set, but by the time I hit my teens, swearing and coarse humor had become like a competitive sport amongst many of my peers, and I was not one for losing. At one point my grandmother said my language would have made a sailor blush.

Fortunately, YHVH recalled His words to my memory and I've taken a stand against profanity being spoken in my home, either in person, or by way of my TV. Through prayer I have come to understand that every movie or TV show I watch should reflect YHVH just as everything I do or say should reflect Him. I also recognized that I was incapable of accomplishing this task without some divine assistance, and even with that I still had my flesh to contend with.

When I first took a stand against profanity, I thought it would be easy. I was wrong. It's been one of the hardest steps up the ladder I've taken yet. It's strange how swearing, being one of the first things I stopped doing myself, became one of the last things I was offended by in others. Though I was convicted in my spirit, it took a while for my ears to become spiritually tuned and even longer for me to speak my mind to others.

By the time I made the choice to scrutinize my media choices for profanity, my ears had grown in spiritual discernment, but my early attempts were still fraught with difficulty. Initially I resisted the full leading of the spirit because the number of movies I had in the "out" pile overwhelmed me. I juggled several movies several times back and forth from the "in" to the "out" and back to the "in" again. I was having a hard time knowing where to draw the line of acceptability.

After wrestling with the overall message of a movie versus the level of profanity it contained, I realized the answer was not as black and white as I had once thought. Some movies contain profanity to help define a character and not just for the sake of profanity. If Charles Dickens character Fagin, from the book *Oliver Twist*, had been portrayed without profanity, would he have been understood to be the evil man he was? This isn't meant to be an excuse for tolerating bad language, just an example of how profanity can influence a story line.

After much thought, I concluded that these choices should be YHVH's, not mine, and I gave it over to Him in prayer. I can't say that everything went perfectly after that because my flesh still got in the way, but I was able to refocus on the task at hand.

I found that swearing was the easiest profanity to recognize but hard to eliminate completely because of its prevalence. Sexual suggestibility in action or word and vulgar or coarse language were easy to identify also, but it was irreverence or blasphemy toward YHVH that won an instant trip to the "out" pile. Once I'd identified the profanity in a movie, I just had to overcome any emotional attachment I might have to it. For instance, I used to love Mel Brookes, but he never made a movie that didn't contain all these profanities.

I used to love science fiction movies too, but one night when I was watching Star Gate, I recognized the names of pagan gods being spoken and remembered the words of *Exodus 23:13* "*and do not mention the names of other gods, nor let them be heard from your mouth.*" That was the last episode I ever watched. I know I wasn't the one speaking their names, but allowing this in my home was blasphemy.

I wish I could talk more about the movies I ousted but there are just too many to mention. Suffice it to say, I ended up with a lot more space for good movies. I know they are out there and I continue to search for them on a regular basis.

As I mentioned in my earlier articles, scrutinizing what you watch on your TV is not a one-time deal, it is a continual process. As I grow in spiritual maturity, I get better at separating the profane from the holy and the righteous from the unrighteous and I move up another rung of the ladder of set apartness. Join me next time for Part 4: Magic in the Cinema. If you want to know more about what it means to be Holy or Set Apart (Qadosh in Hebrew) you can go to <http://www.setapartmingb.org/artidex.html> and browse the index of articles for Kadosh.