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# TRAINING FOR GUYS



## Is it ok to watch any film I want to?

You're only really asking this question because you have felt uncomfortable at some point watching something. Your spirit has given you some sort of alarm signal. That might be for any one of a number of reasons.

You're a man who wants to follow Jesus. That, as we have noted before, takes commitment. Which means time. So the first thing we need to be looking at is: *are you just wasting your time watching yet another film?* Jesus is passionate about you and wants you to spend time being intimate with Him. So if this is the 3rd film you've been watching today then maybe it's not the right thing to be doing. As we get closer to Jesus, probably the amount of time to be spent on passive leisure activities should decrease. But there are no *rules* about this. It's your relationship with Him. Are you giving Him enough time?

But possibly that's not the issue. Something about *this* film has given you a nudge that it might not be right. It might be something some other Christian has said. I've heard people say no Christians should watch violent films or programmes as we are called to be men of

peace, no Christians should watch sex scenes as we are called to demonstrate love and avoid lust, no Christians should watch *Harry Potter* because it is about the occult, no Christians should watch *Star Wars* because the Force is not Truth. How do we walk through that and discover what is right? Do we just cut films and tv out of our lives completely?

Let's start with Philippians 4:8: *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.*

I don't think there are hard and fast rules that apply to all of us about which films



are alright and which should be avoided.

But God gives us guiding principles and expects us to use our brains to make sure we keep to them. This verse contains some of those principles.

When we watch a film we often end up thinking about it. What are we thinking about afterwards? Is it noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable stuff? Does it hinder us from *setting our minds on things above, not on earthly things?* (Colossians 3:2), does it make it harder to come into Jesus' presence afterwards. Does it make us struggle to read His Word or pray as we usually do?

Some people will find films with violence in them a problem...so avoid them. For others this will not affect them, but a film peppered with swear words will. We shouldn't judge each other for going to see a film we would avoid ourselves (for those with leadership responsibilities, however, I would urge you to reflect on this in the light of 1 Corinthians chapter 8. Verse 13 shows that we need to be ruthless with ourselves on behalf of other Christians).

The key thing is how it affects your relationship with Jesus.

You will note I left the word *true* out from what I wrote about Phil 4:8. Taken most literally, that would ban us from all fiction, written or viewed. Is that what the verse means?

*Never take one verse on it's own outside of the context of the whole of scripture.* If fiction is wrong, Jesus sinned when He told parables. The stories He told were illustrations of truths, but not literal accounts of real events. We need to therefore consider whether the story is portraying truth, not whether the event actually happened.

For me, *Star Wars* is ok because, *although the Force is not a reality*, the message is

that to be a disciple of the 'Light Side' requires dedication, commitment, self-sacrifice and patient endurance whereas the disciples of the 'Dark Side' feed their avarices and desires and put themselves first. But others will disagree. In contrast, I found myself unable to read the books on which *2001: A Space Odyssey* were based because they are totally atheistic and anti-faith in their outlook. Again, that is a *personal thing*. I'm not preaching "don't read Arthur C Clarke or watch Kubrick films".

As we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 2:

*12 What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 14 The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. 15 The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, 16 for, 'Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ.*

Let His Spirit guide you in all things!



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