

## Oh Be Careful Little Eyes and Ears

One of my favorite songs in Bible drill is “Oh Be Careful Little Eyes.” Unfortunately, we treat it like a kid’s song. It’s fun to sing. The kids love the motions. It’s so cute to watch them sing it in Bible drill. They get really excited. But then we move on to the next kid’s song.

I think it is regrettable that a song with such a profound message gets relegated to children’s status. It contains a message we need to remember even as adults. We need to be careful what we look at, listen to, say, do, and where we go—not because God is a boogey man waiting to zap us, but because in His love He doesn’t want us to stray away or become separate from Him because of what we do.

In this song, we teach our kids that what we look at and listen to matters. But what about in our actions? What about in the movies or television shows we watch? What about in the songs we sing along with? What about the magazines we subscribe to? With our actions do we teach the opposite of the song?

Now, I will be the first to say that I’ve seen and listened to many things I’m not proud of. I’ll be the first to admit that I’ve even taken my kids to a movie, on the way home telling them how bad it was and then wondering why I wasn’t strong enough to just walk out and really teach my kids a good lesson. I’ll be the first to admit that an 80s song will come on that I loved as a teenager and I’ll start singing along and hardly even realize what I’m saying, until Marita says, “Do you hear what you’re singing?” I’ll also be the first to admit that I’m not sure exactly where every line should be drawn or how to be completely consistent on any line that we personally draw. I’ll also be the first to admit that your lines do not have to be the same as mine. After all, some lines have to be drawn based on personal struggles, not on absolute rules. I’ll also be the first to admit that I draw my lines and then quietly let them start shifting until I realize, “Oh no, I’ve let it go too far.” Actually, usually it is Marita who makes that observation and helps pull me back.

However, I’m not convinced those caveats mean we should just throw caution to the wind, claim that we live in a sinful world, and decide what we see with our little eyes and listen to with our little ears doesn’t matter. There are some significant reasons they do. I’ll share two.

**Ephesians 5:7-12** says: “Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret” (ESV). If it is shameful to speak of them, do we remotely think it is less shameful to be entertained by them, to applaud them, to laugh at them, to cheer them, to sing along to them?

**Proverbs 4:23** says, “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life” (ESV). But what is in our heart? **Matthew 6:22-23** explains that the eye is the lamp of the body. What we allow into us through our eyes is going to change us. It changes our hearts and our whole bodies. **Philippians 4:8-9** says we need to think about things that are true, honorable, just pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise. What do we think about? The things we see and listen to. **Colossians 3:2** says we need to set our minds on things that are above, not things that are below.

What we watch and listen to matters not because God is in heaven waiting to zap someone for disobeying His heavenly watch list. It matters because what we watch and listen to indicates our relationship with Jesus. A lot of times what we watch and listen to indicates who our friends are. We watch and listen to what our friends watch and listen to. I know I want to claim Jesus is my friend, so I have to ask, would He watch and listen to what I’m watching and listening to?

I can’t give you lines. I struggle with them myself. I just know this. Being close to Jesus in the end is going to be more important to all of us than making sure we get to see the most popular movies or know the coolest songs (**Philippians 3:8-11**). Being close to Jesus in the end is going to be more important than being thought cool by my friends, whether they are friends at school, at work, in the neighborhood, or even in the congregation.

--Edwin L. Crozier