

# TELEVISION HAS BECOME TAKEAVISION FROM YOUTH

J.J. Turner, Ph.D.

In recent years a new crime wave has blown across the USA. It has become almost a regular news feature on most evening news programs. It is *home invasions*. A typical family is at home enjoying the comfort and safety of their four walls, when the doorbell rings. When a family goes to the door and opens it, a criminal or maybe a gang pushes their way into the house. The robbers' wave guns or knives, shout threats and curse words at family members. Some only want money and other valuables; some molest and rape; some hold hostages, and some even kill.

There is a new wave of home protection devices on the market. Police departments are providing guidelines for protecting your home from invasion. Alarms, guard dogs, and firearms are being acquired for protection. Home invasion is a major concern in the USA today.

Want to hear something that's ironic? Approximately 75 years ago a very subtle home invasion started to occur. At first it was a big box with a small screen called *television*. Few homes could afford it. The first programs were old cowboy movies, puppet shows, wrestling, variety shows, Super Circus, and news reporting. Programming ended, if not before, at midnight.

Moving forward to today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is not just one television in a home but two, three, four, and more; depending on how many bedrooms in the house. There is even one in the den, living room, kitchen, laundry room, and garage of many homes. Some screens are now as big as the old theater screens.

As television programming started to expand in the 50s and 60s with three major networks: ABC, CBS, and NBC, the choices became greater. There wasn't any vulgar language. Programs like *Father Knows Best*, *Leave it to Beaver*, and *The Honeymooners* started to plant seeds of how others were living. The downward spiral has continued until now we are trying to *Keep up with the Kardashians*, as the father has "transgendered into a female."

You can buy a TV now for about the price of a good pair of sneakers. You can with the advent of cable watch anything from A to Z. You no longer have to go to the back alley or to the shady

part of town to visit a porno movie. They are now watchable at home. In the middle of what was billed as a suitable movie for the family, curse words occur and sexual scenes are visible. When Junior or Susie are sent to their rooms, a punishment called isolation from the family, they have their TV to watch. And computer, iPhone, etc. What terrible punishment.

As a whole, television has not moral interest in your home and family. Even many of the so-called religious programs are after your money. Making money is the goal. The carnal and sinful content continues to escalate. It impacts and brain washes us. Listen to our remarks: *"We must stay at home and finish the game; church can wait."* *"I am so interested in this movie; it'll be over in several minutes. I'll do my homework later."* Television makes our choices for us.

Here is a wakeup call. By the time the average person in the USA is sixty-five years old, he or she will have spent 8 years watching TV—or one-eighth of their life. Just imagine what new skills they could have developed, or project they could have completed, or other expertise and knowledge they could have acquired during those wasted years mindlessly watching television in a fog.

### **Breaking the Addiction**

In my opinion, based on observations and study, television is a major contributor to what I call ***Takeavision***. As young people spend hours indulging in mindless television watching, wishing they could be pop singers, reality stars, sports stars, and other popular figures in the media, their ability to deal with real issues in life in the here-and-now is not developed. Television, and social media, has taken their vision for a future that is earned by educations, sacrifice and hard work is missed. They want first class seats without having to buy a ticket. They want a diploma without having to study. They want to start with corner office.

Television is not all bad. There are some very great educational and wholesome family programs on TV. You may have to search for them but they are there. To say parents should take control of how many hours and what kind of programs their children should watch on TV, is difficult because most parents are addicted to watching TV. Because it is an addiction it will be difficult to go through the withdrawal symptoms but with self-discipline and God's help it is possible.

Have a family meeting in which you objectively discuss television watching and what you will do to analyze your status. Here are some suggestions for helping your child, and yourself, break the addiction to watching too much television:

1. Keep a log for a week in which you document the time you or your child spends in watching television. Also compare it with the time you spend in reading and studying your bible or other subjects. How balanced are you?
2. In your log write down how watching TV has helped you be a better parent, employee or employer, husband, wife, parent, child, etc.
3. Vow to not watch TV for one whole day; then write down how you felt about missing that day. Were you anxious? Did you feel lost? Too much time on your hands? What?
4. In a family meeting spend time looking at the week's TV schedule and choosing the programs you will watch together. Keep your commitment.
5. Find creative ways to do other things during the times you used to spend watching TV, e.g. playing games, reading, listening to music, sharing family history.
6. Openly discuss the problems too much television watching can become **takeavision** away from your child, and even yourself. Life needs vision, goals, and excitement to be fulfilling.
7. Don't become discouraged in the early days of breaking the TV addiction habit. You will feel emotional withdrawal symptoms, much like an alcoholic. Take it one day at a time.

Too much TV watching will not only make an addict out of your child, it will steal his or her potential. It will sideline him or her from relationships. It will rob them of positive visions and dreams for the future.

In a future lesson we will look at the impact and hyper-addiction of social media through the constant use of digital devices. Television addiction is small compared to the hyper-connectivity that creates constant partial attention, causing a failure to connect with the person in front of you face-to-face. This addiction is creating "social media zombies." Oh yes, there are the digital games!

How will you intentionally use this lesson to discipline yourself and your kids relative to TV watching?