

LISTEN TO THE MUSIC

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Twice in the last week my husband, Brian, and I have gone out to listen to friends' perform concerts. There is just something about music that gets into your soul and we just love it. Being a singer myself, I know how 'up close and personal' I can get to an audience through the message in a song.

Trisha Yearwood sang a cleverly crafted song called "The song remembers when." How often have you heard a song that immediately transports you back to a place and time? It happens to me every time I hear a Beatles song. It takes me back to my teen years in New Zealand.

Whenever I hear the song, "There is something about that name", written by Bill and Gloria Gaither, I am immediately filled with a very deep reverence for God. Certain songs make you smile, reveling in the moment, or perhaps you cry over a sad memory. However it is, music is a very powerful tool that influences our thinking and sometimes our behavior, often without us realizing it.

When I think about the songs I was raised on and the messages that are conveyed through music today, I realize our lyrics were tame. Lyrics today can be very explicit and sometimes fuel anger, frustration or the need for power. Society seems to have lost almost all of the values we held dear in the 'good old days'. "Anything that makes me feel good is OK, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else," seems to be the catch phrase now.

Do we know what our kids are loading their Ipods with? This is a serious question. How do we manage our kids' musical input? The first thing is to seriously evaluate the music we listen to as parents. If the lyrics lack integrity or if the music puts us in a negative frame of mind then it is not good for us, or for our families. It is so, so easy to just think, "Oh well! Music doesn't hurt anybody, so we will just go with the flow". No! We don't have to do that. We hold a weekly church connect group at our home and last week we were discussing expressions of Christian maturity. One sign is that we know what we believe and we don't get sucked down into mediocrity.

I have decided that from now on, if someone uses bad language or behaves offensively in front of me, I won't accept it any more. If it is not appropriate to say something in reply, then if possible, I will remove myself from it.

We need to teach our kids how to discriminate between what is acceptable and what is not, and what they can do about it when it comes to what they hear. We need to take an interest in what our kids like to listen to and discuss what the lyrics are actually saying when we are concerned about the content of the songs.

I am not talking about personal taste here. I am talking about whether the lyrics are compromising the values that are important to your family.

After I had recorded 3 albums full of songs that appealed to me, God clearly spoke before I recorded the 4th. He said, "I don't want you to record songs without hope any more. I want people to be encouraged and feel uplifted when they listen to your songs." Since that time I have had to turn down a number of musically fine songs because of that, but I know I have a responsibility to the audience and I am pleased to be 'a messenger of hope'. Next week I will tell you a true story about the positive power of the song.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.