

Entertainment *OR* Eternity?



by Dr. Marsha Boyd-Mitchell

John Wesley said, "I look upon all the world as my parish...."

Walt Disney said, "If you can dream it, you can do it!"

Jesus Christ said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30, NIV).

As you walk through life, do you stop at times and evaluate your path? Who set your feet on the right direction? How kind is God when we can say we had steady, godly influences guiding us along the way. I happen to be writing this on a Sunday evening, and I have been thinking about Sunday nights long, long ago when I was a child and then a teenager. My family's Baptist church was part of a little field of two churches. Morning church was at my home church and the evening service was held at the church up the road.

After supper on Sunday evening, we always had the TV on to catch "The Wonderful World of Disney" programming that, in those days, was typically a heartwarming special you would never want to miss. Before the days of PVR and VCRs, if you missed it—you missed it. We would need to leave for evening church sometime around the middle of the program. Our family didn't go to church every Sunday night, but did many times, and I remember being disappointed about leaving that program behind.

My parents cultivated relationships with families in that church, families we wouldn't have known all that well if we hadn't attended those evening services. The church had an older lady who played the piano.

She could play by ear and could play almost anything in the hymnbook. I remember her saying, "Just sing a little bit of it," if she didn't know a song the congregation wanted to sing, and she'd pick up the tune and be able to carry it along. Those Sunday evenings stand out in my mind, my spirit, and my heart these days. I watched people walk the aisle for salvation, to confess sin, and when they were burdened for the salvation of family members.

This week, we said good-bye to one of the members of that congregation. At 58, she was far too young; only 11 years older than me, she died with complications from cancer. But she had a sweet relationship with Jesus. She had made her peace with him, no doubt at that little church. Her passing brought back a flood of memories of those Sunday nights filled



Unsplash Tim Foster

with series of sermons from our pastor, the singing, the laughing, and the sweet Christian fellowship we shared.

Times have changed and we don't have those Sunday night services anymore; however, I sure am glad now that my parents chose eternity over entertainment. The nights when we did stay home and finish those Walt Disney programs didn't have nearly the eternal impact of the relationships and spiritual training of those Sunday night services. As you consider your own family and your own church gatherings, how can you position yourself to choose eternity over entertainment? If that was hard in the early 1980s, it is extremely difficult in 2023. Entertainment without any real eternal value is on many walls and in corners of our homes, along with a device we carry around in our pockets. Entertainment has almost engulfed us.

I encourage you to find those spiritual places where the children and young people within your influence can build relationships: Christian camp, youth group, church services, fellowship times at church, Christian clubs, Christian school, Bible college, and so on. These relationships that help bind us together in the Spirit are invaluable. I'll see my childhood friend again someday because of a sweet salvation we have in common. Even though Walt Disney said, "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them," these dreams are temporal, rooted in the here and now. Jesus said, "I AM the Way—and the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6a, CJB). Choosing eternity over entertainment for today's kids and teens means their tomorrows have no end.

Dr. Marsha Boyd-Mitchell is the executive director of Christian Action Federation of NB Inc. and head of schools for Sussex Christian School Inc.

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