

The Atmosphere of the Home

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Introduction

One's spiritual environment is extremely important

How important is one's atmosphere or environment? Over a century ago a man by the name of Charles Darwin began to promote the concept that environment has a great deal to do with how living things grow and develop. While his theory of evolution that came forth from this observation is seriously flawed, it has to be said that, at least in this one area, he had a worthy thought.

This concept was later picked up by many of the early psychologists who developed a whole system around the idea that people are shaped and molded to a great extent by their surroundings or their environment. The failure of psychology or psychiatry is not in the promotion of this concept, but rather in how they deal with the problems that are detected in people. People's behavior is affected by their environment. They will either be affected in a negative way or in a positive way.

1. The spiritual atmosphere or environment can make a good man bad (I Kings 11:1-6).

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites--2 from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David.

Solomon was a good man who had made many right choices in his life. He had opted for wisdom over so many other things. However, when he rejected his own wisdom and surrounded himself with ungodly women, his heart was turned against the Lord. The good man became an evil man.

2. The spiritual atmosphere or environment can make a bad man good (I Samuel 19:18-24).

So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. 19 Now it was told Saul, saying, "Take note, David is at Naioth in Ramah!" 20 Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. 21 And when Saul was told, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. Then Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. 22

Then he also went to Ramah, and came to the great well that is at Sechu. So he asked, and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And someone said, "Indeed they are at Naioth in Ramah." 23 So he went there to Naioth in Ramah. Then the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24 And he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Saul was a king who was not known for his heart toward God. In his life as the king of Israel he rarely sought the Lord for direction. However, when he and his servants got into the environment of worship and prophetic anointing, they all prophesied as one of the prophets. This spiritual atmosphere had a positive effect on a "not-so-spiritual" man.

The environment is important even in the natural realm

On the negative side

1. If the environment is filled with pollution things will be negatively affected.
 - Plant life will be sickly and spotted.
 - Buildings will be dingy in appearance.
 - Human performance will be diminished.

When the Olympic Games were held in Mexico City in 1968 and in Los Angeles 1984, the media reported that they did not expect many world records to be met or set because of the air pollution in those cities—some of the worst in the world.

2. If the environment is filled with disorder it will tend to disorder.
 - Rock Concerts. The environment can change people's behavior. Otherwise normal young people have been known to trample one another to death in the frenzied environment.
 - Taverns. Taverns and other drinking establishment can perpetuate negative behavior in those who frequent them.
 - Night Clubs. The night club environment can cause otherwise moral and conservative people to throw off restraint and become immoral in their behavior.
 - People who live in an atmosphere of fear have great fears.
 - An environment of disorder produces disorder. Sometimes you have to clean up the disorder if you are going to get anything done. Ill. My wife and the kitchen.

On the positive side

1. If the environment is guarded and controlled it can have a very positive effect.

The whole concept of a greenhouse is that of controlling the environmental factors that go to the production of plants. In the greenhouse these plants are not subject to chance. When the external factors are properly controlled, you get the best possible result.

- Greenhouse plants tend to grow more quickly.
- Greenhouse plants tend to be stronger and heartier.
- Greenhouse plants tend to bring forth more fruit.
- Greenhouse plants can bear fruit in all seasons.
- Greenhouse plants do extremely well when transplanted outside of the greenhouse.

2. If the environment is one of peace the result is peace.

In some work with plants they have shown that the kind of music that is played in a greenhouse can affect the way plants grow. Playing mellow music is to be preferred over loud, chaotic music. The same principle has been demonstrated in factories and shopping malls.

There are many things that can affect the environment of the home.

The same principle of environment that is seen in the natural realm is seen in the home. What is the atmosphere of your home? Is it one that is controlled? It is one that is producing kingdom fruit (righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost)? Or is it oppressive? Is it chaotic?

The fact is that your children up to the age of 18 will spend over 65% of their time in their home environment. The environment of the home will have more affect on them than any other factor in their growth and development. You see people learn what they live.

Learning from Living

If a child lives with criticism
He learns to condemn;
If a child learns with hostility
He learns to fight;
If a child lives with ridicule
He learns to be shy;
If a child lives with shame
He learns to feel guilty.

BUT...

If a child lives with tolerance
He learns to be patient;
If a child lives with encouragement
He learns confidence;
If a child lives with praise
He learns to appreciate;
If a child lives with security
He learns to have faith;
If a child lives with approval
He learns to like himself;

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship
He learns to find LOVE in the world!
- Dorothy Lawe Holt

Question: What is your child living with?

There are ten things that have a major affect on the atmosphere of your home.

1. Music

What kind of music is played in the home and from which quarters? Does each bedroom emit a different sound? Is it music that feeds your spirit or your flesh? Does it create a mood of peace? Invest in a good stereo and good music that can fill the atmosphere of your home. If you need money—sell your TV!

2. Pictures/posters/banners

What is idolized in your home? What posters hang on the wall in your children's rooms? Scantly clad women? Modern rock stars? Movie personalities? There are so many good pictures that glorify God and his creation. Banners can testify. The Bible talks about writing the word of God on our walls and doorposts (Deut. 6:9; 11:20).

3. Games

Many games teach ungodly principles that border on witchcraft and Satanism. I am not very versed in the games of today but there are many games like Dungeons and Dragons, Ouija Boards, Séance, Lie, Cheat, Steal, etc. that are not appropriate in the Christian home. Many games are neutral (chess, checkers, Uno, etc.). Some actually are designed to teach and exalt godliness. What do your children play in their play time? What kind of video games are they playing (See list)?

4. Toys

So many of the toys in the world today are connected with alien creatures and other demonic appearing monsters. Toys take us into a world of make believe. When children play with toys they create scenarios that are associated with the nature of the toy. Is that where you want your children to live?

5. Books

While books are not very popular in today's world of electronic media, books still can have a powerful impact on the hearts and minds of your children. Even the children's books that we read to our children need to be scrutinized to see what they are teaching. Do the books that they are reading support godliness, virtue and wholesome values? Are they filled with romance that is inappropriate for their age or for Christian moral values? Do they twist the truth and promote philosophies of life that are inconsistent with the truths of the Bible? With so many good books available, we should not need to resort to the wrong material.

6. Magazines

Magazines are another thing that speaks in the home. Invest in some good magazines so that your children are paging through material that will build positive things within them.

7. Order and cleanliness

A home that is clean and orderly is a home where virtue is more easily promoted.

8. Mealtime routine

“A meal is not simply food but also the spirit in which it is eaten. Mealtime should be occasions for the happiest kind of exchanges and learning—for cheerful, not solemn, communion. A bad meal can be redeemed by good conversation, but a good meal can be irretrievably ruined by bad conversation.” –House and Garden

9. Television

Television is a marvelous invention. It has the potential of reaching the world for Christ. It can bring happenings and voices from around the world right into your living room. It has the potential for great blessing, but uncontrolled becomes the source of great evil.

Television has the awesome potential of bringing murder into the Christian home. It can bring us rape, adultery, drunkenness, cursing, immorality of every kind, nudity, rebellion, witchcraft, and violence of every description.

Read from the following articles:

At Wit's End: Instinct to feel lost in TV violence, Erma Bombeck

This is an open letter to everyone who has produced or defended violence on television.

You don't remember me, do you? I'm the viewer who used to sit in front of a TV set and when a gun was fired, I nearly jumped out of my chair. When I saw someone being beaten, instinctively I flinched and felt the pain. Or when I saw blood, I turned my head away and my stomach felt funny.

I know. I don't seem like the same person you remembered. I'm not.

You have desensitized me. During a single evening, I once saw 12 people shot to death, two people tortured (one a child), one dumped in a swimming pool, two cars explode with people in them, a rape and a man who crawled three blocks with a knife in his stomach.

And you know something? I didn't feel shock or horror. I didn't feel excitement or repugnance. I didn't feel pity or sadness. I didn't even feel anger.

The truth is, I didn't feel. And I hate you for it. Through repeated assault with one violent act after another you have taken from me something that I valued, something that contributed to my compassion and caring, the instinct to feel.

You told me violence was necessary because it is “real”. Throwing up is “real”, but I don’t want to see it in color.

You told me the 6 o’clock news was just as violent. But you forgot to mention the 6 o’clock news has conscience. Whenever violence is reported it is declared wrong and shocking.

Please know that I will survive the violence that emanates from the tube because I know what I have lost and somehow I will find my way back to what I know I should be and feel.

But reflect if you will on the children of our times, those infants with a 21-inch screen as a night light who could adjust an aerial at age four, and who consider TV their babysitter, mother, father, first date, good friend, teacher and constant dinner companion.

They have never known shock. They have never felt pain for another human being. They have never cried for a victim. They have never felt anger for injustice. Do you dare take that away from them?

Children’s Aggression Linked to TV Violence

WASHINGTON (AP) – Television is “a violent form of entertainment” that clearly leads to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers, a new government study concluded Wednesday.

The National Institute of Mental Health said the evidence has mounted since a 1972 surgeon general’s report first implicated television as a cause of violence by children.

“The evidence accumulated in the 1970s seems overwhelming that televised violence and aggression are positively related in children,” the institute said. Despite periodic outcries from members of Congress and citizens groups, the study found no decrease in the level of violence on television.

“The percentage of programs containing violence has remained about the same since 1967, although the number of violent acts per program has increased,” it said. “Children’s shows are violent in a cyclical way, up one year and down the next.”

The 94-page report, “Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties,” was based on a two-year review of hundreds of research studies.

The report said: “Both prime time and weekend children’s television are dominated by action, power and danger. There is an average of five violent acts per hour on prime time and 18 acts per hour on children’s weekend programs.

“The consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs,” it continued. “This conclusion is based on laboratory experiments and on field studies. Not all children become aggressive, of course.”

Among the studies cited in the report was a 1978 CBS-funded study that found “teenage boys in London, according to their own accounts of their activities, were more likely to engage in ‘serious violence’ after exposed to television violence.” It also cited two studies on preschool children by J.L. and D.G. Singer, who compared 3- and 4-year-old children’s television viewing at home with their behavior “during free-play periods at day-care centers. In each study there were consistent associations between heavy television viewing of violent programs and unwarranted aggressive behavior in their free play.”

Less TV Improves Reading, Family Communication

The students were surprised to discover how dependent they were on television, Sullivan said.

The experiment was perhaps most fruitful among families who tackled it together, some even banishing the television set to the garage for the month. “I’d ask these kids, ‘What’d you do last night?’ and I’d hear things like, ‘We played Scrabble as a family – I can’t remember the last time we did that,’” Sullivan said.

“I think the three of us did more things together – including talking,” one parent noted.

The logs kept by the children of their activities during the contest showed increasing creativity as the month progressed. Typical entries in the first few days – such as “read a book,” “played outside,” – gave way to an occasional “went to Mom’s work with her,” “made dinner,” “helped Dad clean,” or “did Mom’s hair.”

But a consistent benefit throughout the month was an increase in reading, Sullivan said. The class keeps track of the amount of books read by students via a “rocket” that moves forward across the ceiling each time a new book is completed.

“It just started zooming across the room during the contest,” the teacher said.

Sullivan is so pleased with the results of the November experiment that he plans to repeat it again this spring, when daylight lasts longer and the weather is better.

“I think the main thing it did was increase our awareness of the advantages of not watching television,” he said. “The responses we got from the parents have indicated that maybe half of the class has continued to watch less television even after the contest ended.”

It is possible to live without TV. My children lived without it for 17 years.

10. The Internet

The internet like the TV was unthinkable a few years ago. How is it all possible? What an incredible resource. But did you know that over 65% of all of the material on the internet is pornographic in nature? Children can access sites that teach you how to build bombs, commit suicide, kill someone you do not like and worse things? The chat rooms are sites for sexual predators and other revolutionaries.

What would happen if Jesus came to your house?

God is interested in our homes. He knows what an influence they will have on our children and the future of the church. He told Zachaeus, "I am going to your house today!" What would happen if Jesus came to your house today? Right now? This very minute? Would Jesus feel comfortable in your house?

If Jesus Came to Your House

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two...
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored guest
And all the food you'd serve Him would be the very best,
And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there...
But... when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome to our heavenly visitor?
Or would you maybe change your clothes before you let Him in,
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard,
And wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud and hasty word?
Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder... if the Savior spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
Would you go right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace?
And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?
Would you sing the songs you always sing and read the book you always read?
And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go,
Or would you, maybe, change your plans for just a day or so?
Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends,
Or would you hope they'd stay away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on,
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do,
If Jesus came in person to spend some time with you.

- Author Unknown

If you build the right atmosphere in your home, even kids who normally misbehave will be good in your home.

Is it time to do some house cleaning in a spiritual sense?