

JACK'S CORNER

QUESTION: What about those Harry Potter books?

ANSWER: This is a composite question based on a number of requests I have had regarding the Harry Potter series.

I have only read the first book of the series, so I have to talk in very general terms. I understand the following books become progressively darker. Frankly, I found the first book neither particularly good, nor particularly bad.

Two thousand years ago, the Corinthian congregation received some great advice from St. Paul. They thought that just about everything was permissible for them to do because of the “freedom” they had in Christ. Paul exhorted them: (You say...) “everything is permissible for me”—(I, Paul, say...)”but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me—but not everything is constructive.” (1 COR. 10:23) A Christian always must ask: “What is good about it, not just “What is wrong with it?” Does this activity draw me to Christ or suck me away?” Some thoughts to ponder:

1. If these books are used to teach lessons of life and morality to a Christian child, are there **clear** moral principles? Is good clearly good? Does God allow evil to happen for a reason?
2. Consider carefully the cognitive, moral and spiritual development of the persons reading these books. Will they be drawn to solidify their faith convictions, or be drawn to compromise?
3. In a recent interview on the *Today Show*, the author, J.K. Rowling said she didn't think a child under 9 should be reading her latest book. This comment speaks volumes. (Apparently the last book is much “darker” than the first three.)
4. If these books are used for entertainment, consider carefully the faith stability and impressionability of your child. **Read them yourself first, then read them with your child.** It **might** be a great opportunity to teach depending on your child.
5. If these books are a veiled attack on the beliefs and practice of Christianity, it pays to be “wise as a serpent, and innocent as a dove” (MT. 10:16). From commentaries I have read, there are many (not all) Christian leaders who believe this to be the case. (Check the Internet and speak with your pastor.) This **could** be an opportunity to help your **older** children be aware of the spiritual war.
6. Beware of simplistic arguments like: “If the books get kids excited about reading, how can they be bad?” For Christians, the end does not justify the means.

Parents must be **very careful** in exposing their children to books and movies in order to teach critical thinking skills and maintain a strong faith (See #2). They must know their child very well.

I thoroughly enjoy fantasy literature. I believe many people do because we have a God-given longing for the Supernatural and Transcendence. Try

reading *Tales of the Resistance and Tales of the Restoration* by David Mains.
(High readability for ages 8-12.) Watch carefully what you allow inside of your
children's souls; enough bad comes in already without our help and approval.

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