

JACK'S CORNER

QUESTION: I never thought I would do this, but I find that I use the TV as a babysitter more often than I would like. I try to make certain the programs my kids watch are educational, but I still feel guilty. Should I?

ANSWER: New research (Greenspan 2000, not the economist) indicates that large amounts of TV **of any kind** determine the kinds of neuron connections that form in the brain. The more time a child spends sitting and watching (not actively creating, reading or imagining), the more his brain forms the kind of neuron connections that are dedicated to the entertainment mode of the brain. Dr. Greenspan recommends no more than one half hour of TV per day in children ages 2 to 5. He found no difference between "educational" TV and "regular" programming" as far as the effect on the kind of neuron connections produced in the brain. (Not good news to most of us.)

We don't need research to tell us that our children need personal time with their parents more than TV. It's a real challenge to find activities to throw out of our lives...We think we really must do all the things we have trapped ourselves into doing. Guilt is often a needed challenge from the Holy Spirit to help us take a good look at how we are stewards of the time God has giving to us. Contrary to some popular psychological thought, I don't believe all guilt is bad. Guilt can be wonderfully motivating. We should feel guilty when we commit sin. It is this guilt that often forms the first step in the repentance process. And, it's repentance that draws us to the Cross and the Savior. Should you feel guilty? Maybe, maybe not. Let God examine your motive, and you'll know.

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