

twilight 'BITES'

...a heart of concern from Pastor Bob

The hype surrounding the book series and movie Twilight is a troubling example of a decreasing number of adults courageous enough to take a stand for the Higher ground. I'm not surprised when the world reacts with such fervor to a secular movie, but when so many within our Faith are just as riveted, I have sincere concern. As a pastor (and a parent) I am fully aware my voice will be ignored by many, and found neither to be the popular opinion or accepted position. After all, the popularity is record breaking, and the story well crafted, about the love of a girl and a good vampire who is said to be different from the others. This is the newest spin on the age old lie of the prince of darkness disguising himself to seem lovingly attractive.

Knowing that someday I will stand before God and give an account for my life and the job I have done as a servant of Jesus Christ, I am compelled to speak out.

So what exactly is the problem? I assure you there are many. As if Harry Potter and the Golden Compass weren't enough, the interest in Twilight brings another round of witchcraft and demonic characters into the minds of our kids. Making matters worse, Twilight further blurs the lines between good and evil and there is a romantic tug on the hearts of young girls that evil portrayed in a well written way or depicted in a beautiful setting makes it somehow acceptable. Make no mistake; this is a well-written love story that pulls heavily on the heartstrings of its reader. Guys too are enticed by the mind games that Edward, the lead, plays on his prey. Certainly the movie is designed to further pull kids in and away, but the fact is, this romantic love story is dark to the core and centered in the eternal attraction of a VAMPIRE (and that Sucks)!

I was surprised by comments received from young teens and parents when they heard of my plans to publicly speak out against Twilight. Comments such as, "Pastor Bob, my kids are in love with the Twilight book series. It's so brilliantly written and would be unfair of me to not let them read it or see the movie. After all, there is scripture included!" Or this comment, "Well, I don't think it's worth getting upset over. Vampires aren't real anyway. It's fiction. Let's not treat it as anything else." Or this one, "I appreciate your concern, but I can trust my kids not to let this effect them." And this peculiar comment, "If my daughter learns how to love by reading about Bella's love for Edward, I think it's a beautiful thing." And likely the most upsetting outlook of all, "Pastor Bob, if you had actually read the series you'd know it portrays the actions of a good and moral vampire." If you think that, I'm afraid you are in the process of being ripped off, so let's take these interesting positions one at a time;

#1) That my kids are hooked on this well written book series (along with an enormous following of the actors and actresses in the motion picture). Parents please believe me; Satan senses the end is near. We should not be surprised by his attempts to pull out the best he has to bring! I hope you'd agree, Satan isn't about to set before our kids some baitless, barbless lure of little interest. Shouldn't the addicting spell this book series casts be your first concern? And to justify the series because there is scripture included? Hey, that just means Stephenie Meyer is employing the same trickery that Satan used when he borrows and twists scripture in his temptations of Jesus Christ.

#2) *That it's fiction and vampires aren't real, making it no big deal.* Let me remind you that in the days of the Old Testament the people of God were surrounded with an abundance of fictional and false gods such as Baal, Molech, and the goddess Ashtoreth. All of them were imaginary. Yet the people are warned to keep clear of such forms of demonic control. In the New Testament as the church began to grow, the surrounding culture was spiritually charged with imaginary greek and roman deities. Mythological forms of deity such as Zeus and Aphrodite were the center of pagan worship and it made no difference that none of them were real! In both Testaments, God's command is consistent. We are to stay clear of all forms of spiritual perversion whether literal or imaginary. To take the position that this is all okay because vampires don't really exist is naive, irresponsible and absurd.

#3) *That I can trust my kids in not letting this effect them negatively.* This is a dangerous place for Christians to walk. Fictitious or not, it is contrary to the teachings of the Bible. The minds of our children are a battleground. Imaginations and fantasies are meant to be a beautiful part of childhood. However, times are not as innocent as they once were. Regardless of how strong we think we are, how noble, or how smart, we allow the enemy a foothold in our lives when we expose ourselves to evil, whether fictional or not. Anyone believing they can continue to read books, see movies or play video games with these sorts of themes and have them not somehow, someday affect them, is either deceiving themselves or being deceived by the enemy. The Bible says, 'Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." (1 Corinthians 15:33). Since the Garden of Eden, Satan has attempted to deceive the human race into believing certain things are okay, culturally acceptable and entirely appropriate, regardless of whether it contradicts God's Word. If we choose to believe the enemies whispers we minimize (if not entirely dismiss) the lasting damage that's done by disobeying God's Word. Our kids need us to be strong in this battle that wages for control of their soul.

#4) *That if my child learns how to love from this it's a good thing ...* This is not a responsible example of true love by any stretch of the imagination. As Christians, we must remain sober to not being pulled down by the majority who are freely enjoying their march for rights on a wide road that leads to destruction. To call ourselves followers of Jesus and live for what has become politically correct is absurd, especially when it comes to the dangers that are intended to threaten and ultimately remove the very heart of faith we are instructed to instill in our children. How do you think the Lord would feel about a story of a teenage girl who instead of looking to Him for love and everlasting life, looks instead to a vampire to be granted eternal life? If that isn't a false message of true love and contradiction of the love God has shown, I don't know what is. I would much prefer our kids to be excited about a love story where the main character longs for eternal life in Jesus instead of eternal life as a vampire.

#5) *That this is actually a morally good vampire.* Parents, this is the largest lie in the world. There is only one who is good and that is God. Everything else, as good as it looks, as good as it sounds or as good as it feels, is intended to be a substitute for the good that can only be found in Christ. Joshua said, "choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." As Christians we must look to the Bible and apply the truths that are found there to our everyday lives. Jesus never intended us to live as Christians only in church, but to be examples of true faith in the world as representatives of the kingdom of His love, not as residents of the kingdom of darkness. Philippians 4:8 says; "Brethren, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think on these things."

Last and most critical is an issue that somehow is being glossed over or forgotten about by too many consenting parents and well meaning teens; the issue of the blood. The Bible is very clear on how the Lord feels about blood and blood sacrifice. I have included some important scripture verses that I believe are relevant for your consideration and hopeful discussions with your kids.

God bless you all as we covenant as families to walk in the light as He is in the light.

Sincerely in Christ, Pastor Bob Botsford

Leviticus 17:10-14 'Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood - I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life, because the life of every creature is its blood.'

Leviticus 19:26 "Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it or practice divination or sorcery."

Matthew 26:28 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Acts 15:29 "You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things."

Acts 21:25 "As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."

1 Corinthians 11:27 "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord."

Hebrews 10:29 "How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?"

Revelation 5:9 "And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."

Revelation 12:11 "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."



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