

**General Topics :: To My Sisters in Christ Jesus****To My Sisters in Christ Jesus - posted by MaryJane, on: 2007/8/8 16:59**

Greetings sisters

I was wondering what some of your thoughts are on reading romantic novels (I am not speaking of pornography, but rather books by Jane Austin, and some Christian authors, such as Lori Wick). Do you think that reading them might lead to some having expectations of their husbands that are impossible to meet? Do you think reading these kinds of stories can lead to the temptation to give in to fantasies? I am really hoping to hear from some of you sisters here at sermon index as I have read many of your posts on other threads and I am so thankful to find other women of God committed to living their life for Jesus.

God Bless you all
MaryJane

Re: To My Sisters in Christ Jesus - posted by BrokenOne (), on: 2007/8/8 17:15

Quote:
-----Do you think that reading them might lead to some having expectations of their husbands that are impossible to meet? Do you think reading these kinds of stories can lead to the temptation to give in to fantasies?

Oh, I absolutely think this is the case. I think romance novels can distort our view of what relationships should be like. I have read several books by Jane Austen (years ago) and I remember a profound sadness coming over me when I finished the books; a longing for what I had read about. Real life relationships don't always have a sweet, happy ending.

I have never read any Christian romance novels so I don't feel like I can comment specifically, but I would question why there is a need for such a thing. If we find that we long for a fantasy world, maybe we need to ask why we are not finding satisfaction in Christ. It's kinda like TV in my opinion -- do we really have time to waste on such things??

Good topic MaryJane. I look forward to reading more responses.

Danielle

Re: - posted by JennRich (), on: 2007/8/8 17:35

My favorite authors are Charlotte Bronte and Jane Austen, in fact I'm reading *Sense and Sensibility* for the umpteenth time right now. I think every young girl should read these books, because there is nothing wrong with lofty *ideals* of what romance should be -- that is absolutely how God designed it! What would be wrong with our young girls having *higher standards* for love and romance?

Of course, along with high standards, disappointment will be inevitable -- until you consider our holy romance with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. A girl should be taught to use disappointments to turn her eyes upon Christ; He will certainly never disappoint or forsake her.

I'm only referring to the above authors, not what the world would consider "romance novels" with trashy pictures on the cover. I believe those are poison for young girls.

Re: To My Sisters in Christ Jesus - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/8/8 18:07

Mary Jane,

You are asking a very interesting AND controversial question! Or perhaps it might only be controversial depending on who is hearing it...

Mary, I am only 60 years old..been around a while, OK?

When I was a younger woman I read a lot of fiction by Bernard Palmer, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Grace Livingston Hill, L.C. Douglas, Thomas B. Costain, Lew Wallace, Sterling North, Sallie Lee Bell, Elswyth Thane, Francena Arnold, Janice Holt Giles, et al. In the last ten years I read Brock and Bodie Thoeue writings, Harold Bell Wright, Frank Peretti, Judith Pella and others - leaning more towards historical fiction. In recent years I seldom read fiction. I have read some of Lori Wicks books but do not like them because I felt they were so touchy- feely: all the characters cared about where how 'do you feel' which in my opinion does not reflect reality because I have not met that many people in my life that were so overly concerned about 'how I felt' - maybe it is because I am surrounded more by males than females?

There you have a brief history about my exposure to 'modern fiction'. Looks quite conservative, or childish, does it not? Now about our children..

When our DD was a teen she liked fiction and in order to know what she is reading I read some of those books as I did what my boys were reading (like the Hardy Boys books- now they were fun to read). But the stuff our DD was bringing home was so shallow: it was printed by Zondervan, if I recall. The males were rough with their girlfriends who eventually married them...I told Regina a good male will not treat a lady like that and forbided her from reading that stuff. She obeyed.

Now, considering the times, I would guess it has gotten worse. And your question:

Quote:

-----Do you think that reading them might lead to some having expectations of their husbands that are impossible to meet?

I would have to answer "yes". Because all the males I know are just quite human who many times are more concerned about themselves, their work then what a woman wants! Well, now really...not quite THAT bad...But they are different: think differently, have different interests, just plain different. However, some writers do not reflect the reality of the difference between the genders....and if they would reflect reality, would it sell?

Actually, when you read my post here, I am quite ignorant of modern fiction writers, am I not? But you know what I enjoy reading now? True stories, written by: Tommy Hamill, Darlene Rose, Brother Andrew, Bilquis Sheikh, among others. These writers are not prolific writers. My favorite modern story books are the series by Joe Wheeler - some are true, others are fiction - I have most of his compilations in my collection.

It is like they say: "garbage in; garbage out." Didn't expect such a long post did you...reckon I am like a woman...get me started and I can't quit! :-P

Now what are your thoughts on this subject?

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/8/8 18:35

After I posted this, I kept on thinking and then recalled your original question was about *romance fiction*, not fiction in general which included romance...

To be more specific: Grace Livingston Hill wrote a LOT of romance novels in the early 1900s. She was a preacher's wife who was widowed and wrote for a living. Her books were well received and are still selling. If any romance novels are good, they come close, even if the plot is the same in all of the books. One lady told me she came to the LORD as a young woman by reading her books! And they do promote chasity, morality and how a female should behave herself. But the greatest danger in romance novels is to think that a male who marries will always be courting his wife with the same inte

nsity is misleading, IMHO. AND will the wife be as submissive as she was when he was courting her, is another concept one must consider.

Now do these books reflect God's purpose for females? Seems to me the fiction one reads should reflect these ideals: to build up and not destroy.

My thoughts...

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2007/8/8 19:16

Greetings dear sisters

thanks for your responses. I posted the question because I myself love Jane Austin, especially Pride and Prejudice. I do have a tendency to get caught up in the romance of it. I mean the way Mr. Darcy struggles with his love for Elizabeth it just really appeals to me. But lately I have been praying about this more and I think that it really appeals to my flesh more than anything else. I find myself on occasion wishing or longing for my own husband to be more romantic and attentive to me. But as I have been praying about it more and more I am seeing that I myself may have been putting expectations on my husband secretly longing for him to be just a bit more like Mr Darcy. In my own actions I without even realize found myself making more demands on my husband than were perhaps fair and when he was unable to meet them, I found myself turning to the books and thinking, "Oh if only." I am not trying to say that everyone who reads these books will struggle with this so please do not be offended. I just was thinking that maybe they could open up a door to areas in our heart that the enemy may try to use to cause harm or dissatisfaction. Does that make sense? What you posted GinnyRose was really my line of thought ".....But the greatest danger in romance novels is to think that a male who marries will always be courting his wife with the same intensity is misleading...." I am seeing that for me personally it is a real danger that I need to take to heart. It is so difficult because from the time I was young I can remember all these books, movies, and such the way they promote romance, love, and marriage is so far off what the Bible teaches that it is easy to get confused and have unrealistic expectations. I also wonder how much of my own flesh and vanity plays into this too???

Anyway thank you dear sisters for sharing with me.

God Bless you
MaryJane

Re: To My Sisters in Christ Jesus, on: 2007/8/8 21:44

Quote:

-----Do you think reading these kinds of stories can lead to the temptation to give in to fantasies?

MaryJane,

This is just me (Lisa) answering you but I don't believe it matters how you qualify a romantic novel, if it appeals to the flesh, then the answer is: yes, it will lead you straight into temptation.

The Lord doesn't lead us into temptation but the flesh sure does!! And those romance novels led me into temptation so I've had to give up reading all romantic fiction of any type. The Lord didn't force me but I came to a place where I knew I wasn't going to go any further with the Lord while reading them. It boiled down to them or Him. But that is just my walk with the Lord, I'm not trying to put my walk upon you.

Also, let me ask you this, in love ... if you had to ask the question in the first place, then could it be that you are being convicted of reading them? So, instead of asking others who are likely to enforce your reading of these romantic novels, ask the Lord what He thinks.

I'm not saying that there is anything inheritantly wrong with what your reading... maybe the Lord just wants to know that you are willing to sacrifice your enjoyment and love of them to Him like Abraham was willing to sacrifice what he loved. The Lord has a way of doing that to us!!!

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He has a way of asking us for the strangest things, doesn't He?!! :-o ;-)

God bless you in your walk with Him, MaryJane!!
Lisa

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/8/11 9:01

MaryJane,

Your post highlights a real problem caused by overstimulation by fantasy. Fantasy reflects wishful thinking. Yet....

Instead of wishing so hard that our husbands would be more romantic, how about us wives working to be more romantic? Hey, let's not kid ourselves: we have relaxed, too, just like the men. Somehow human nature, being what it is, just cannot or will not maintain the momentum that is inherent in courtship. "Now we got her/him" is the sense and NOW I can relax! Opps! And both find out the other is not always physically attractive or always smells good either. And we get physically, emotionally tired. This is the reality.

Since wives are one half of the equation, I suggest we remember how we acted ;-)) when we were being courted....How we praised *HIM*, looked at him, made him feel like he is king....Try it again! He may wonder what on earth you are up to? ?!! But never mind, have no agenda except to please him and see what happens! Perhaps, you might even find some of that romance creeping back into your relationship again. And if he no longer buys you gifts, don't sweat it! Go buy it your self and show him the wonderful gift you purchased - for yourself! :-)

MaryJane, some Bible teachers like to say the Song of Solomon is symbolic of Jesus and the church. Well, I beg to differ because I find that inference nowhere in the the scriptures. But read it and consider that as a marriage manual for couples, ordained by God for his people. In fact, you may enjoy reading it together! Try it and see what happens!!

Does this make sense?

ginnyrose

Re: To My Sisters in Christ Jesus - posted by Sistren_MML (), on: 2007/8/13 13:50

Mary Jane,

I can't say that I know a whole lot about romantic fiction since I have read hardly any of it, but I do know a little bit about it. I usually only read true books - those about missionaries or our brothers and sisters in chains - and I have found that these books are edifying, inspiring, and uplifting spiritually and emotionally. Having read a little bit of a fictional book that contained some romance, I noticed that I was lured into temptation more easily at that time. I never finished this book since I felt the Lord impressing on me that it did not lead me into the right areas emotionally and mentally. I also have noticed that when I have read some fictional books, my attitude has been worse towards my parents and my other family members.

I would also like to add that what we take into our lives through books, videos, magazines, etc., should draw us to God and to the things of God and not away from them. I believe that most if not all romance novels don't point our thoughts and hearts to these things.

I am glad that you brought up the topic!

Love in Christ,
Mikah