

# TWO OPPOSITE PATHS?

*Mrs. Hoeksema, Grade One*

Reprinted from *Adams Announcer*

In the last few years, one fact has been surfacing with increasing frequency in our first grade classroom, and each year that fact makes a stronger impact on me, the teacher. In this article I would like to share the impact with you, parents and friends. It is that many of our first graders (and not only first graders) are walking two paths, two opposite paths that do not lie close together and that are incompatible.

Let me explain by telling three stories. A couple of years ago, when our Bible stories were centering around the wonders of the plagues of Egypt, we talked much about the *wonder* of these great miracles; and I told the first graders always to remember that our holy God was *judging* wicked Egypt and *saving* His people Israel. In the questiontime afterward, one child volunteered, "You *should* see the Bionic woman on TV!" And several others chimed in, "And the six-million dollar man!" I was shocked. What was I to say when the power of the anti-christ was working through the TV fare to undermine the wonders of grace? I explained how the wicked today try to imitate God's wonders as the magicians did in Egypt, but the effect of the holy wonders was lost to the magic of TV programs.

Another time, when I was teaching first graders to tell time, I used a large clock to show the successive hours of the day. When I showed the after-school hours and asked, "What happens at four o'clock?" "At five o'clock?"...and on until, "At eight o'clock?" the children gave answers such as "Bozo is on," or "I get to watch my favorite program." And I learned that their free time is geared to the TV world.

Then there was the day when another wise enthusiastic first grader kept asking when it would be time to go home. Although he looked healthy, I finally asked, "Don't you feel well?" He said "Oh, I feel all right. I just can't wait for that new program on TV." My face must have mirrored my feelings, because he hurried to add, "But don't worry. This is a good one. The good guy always wins and the bad guy always loses." That was the day we had had the Bible story of Job. And I took the time right

then to remind the little boy and the class that Job's friends had said the same thing. They said that Job was the "bad guy" because he lost everything. But *God* said Job was righteous and was *blessing* Job when He took everything away; and the three friends who seemed to have everything were really the "bad guys." We reviewed what we had learned in the morning: that, even though we are young children, we should try to see what *God* is saying, for God speaks differently from wicked men. And then, with a sigh, we went back to work. On our way out for dismissal, the little boy whispered, "I guess I won't watch it after all."

But perhaps these three stories are isolated incidents and do not give a true picture. I think not. The TV world creeps into the covenant classroom every day, almost without fail. Not only does the classroom and teacher hear about its demanding materialism, its slap-stick humor, and its awful violence, but the classroom hears how it undermines the very foundations of our Biblical principles, the principles of our covenant education. The covenant teacher fights it daily, for without strict rules banning all TV talk, the ungodly characters, with their accompanying vulgar language and God-defying actions are rehashed in the classroom that holds to godly principle.

Consider that an electronic wonder wielded by the servants of Satan competes in the covenant classroom with the wonders of salvation wrought by the Almighty God. Our children *must not* lose their sense of the wonder.

Also consider that a covenant child's time is ruled by the entertainment the world has to offer. Even if our most severe criticism of it is that it is only a shallow, silly program, does a covenant child live for that? But our criticisms run much deeper than that. Some of our children's days are ruled by the lies and godless principles of the wicked world.

And when we consider that, very subtly, Satan substitutes His philosophy for God's wisdom, and when our children hear one thing in school and see the direct opposite on TV, he walks two paths. And these two paths have widened their gap in recent years. In fact, they run directly opposite to one another. Our children cannot walk on both.

Although not all of our children watch TV enough to become imbued with its evil effects, the effects have increased in the last ten, or more precisely, the last five years. No more is wrong always wrong, because "they do it on TV."

I am alarmed. Are you?