

Power Rangers Movie: It's OK to Be That Way

Film can be a powerful medium to communicate ideas and values to others. Secular producers, directors, actors, and scriptwriters have long used their films to sway the culture for better or worse. I have seen advertisements on the television recently about a new movie coming out called *Power Rangers*, a remake of the popular children's show from the 1990s. Some of you may have heard of it! Anyhow, this film is also used to promote ideas of acceptance and inclusion.

World Autism Awareness Day is internationally recognised on the 2nd of April every year. One of the positive aspects of the *Power Ranger* film, is that, according to reports, one of the leading characters, Billy the Blue Ranger, is on the Autism Spectrum. The actor who plays Billy wants his character to highlight that those with autism are "just regular people... They feel the same way, they have the same emotions, they wanna [sic] be loved, [they] want people to love, they want relationships... connections."

The directors and actor are using this aspect of their film for good by showing that those with autism are just regular people and can do amazing things (like be a superhero and save the world alongside your friends).

Treating everyone, regardless of differences, with dignity and respect actually stems out of a biblical worldview. Because all human beings are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), everyone has inherent worth and value. We are all "fearfully and wonderfully made," (Psalm 139:14).

However, sadly, in keeping with the ongoing increasing trend of inserting LGBT characters into movies and shows, *Power Rangers* is also reported to feature an LGBT character. The Yellow Ranger, Trini, will supposedly be the first LGBT protagonist in a superhero movie franchise as she explores her sexuality. Apparently in one scene, a character "assumes she is having issues with her boyfriend, and then realises that she is, in fact, having girlfriend problems." The director of the film describes how this plays out: "For Trini, really she's questioning a lot about who she is... She hasn't fully figured it out yet. I think what's great about that scene and what that scene propels for the rest of the movie is, "That's OK." The movie is saying, "That's OK," and all of the kids have to own who they are and find their tribe."

Here they are using their film in a negative way - to promote sinful behaviour as acceptable, which undermines the entire movie. This is something films do all the time with a variety of ungodly behaviours (e.g., adultery, fornication, drunkenness, violence, rebellion, profanity, and so on), and it's not going to stop anytime soon. Homosexual behaviour is just the newest hot-button social issue that's popping up in film after film, including kids' movies, and already permeates so many TV series). No doubt, we will continue to see the normalisation of all kinds of sinful behaviours as our culture drifts further from the foundation of God's Word as the basis for morality.

So with both Billy (who has a real physiological problem) and Trini (who displays her sin as normal), the film is promoting “it’s OK” to be that way. Now, people may wonder, “So what’s the difference? Why is promoting inclusion and acceptance for those on the Autism Spectrum a positive element, but doing the same thing for those who identify as LGBT a negative element?”

Well, there’s a few things to consider here.

This is comparing apples to oranges. Being on the Autism Spectrum is not sinful. But homosexual behaviour is sinful (Romans 1:26–27) and so is approving of those who practice it (Romans 1:32).

We should never snub, bully, or look down on people - especially unbelievers - because of their sin or sinful tendencies. After all, we’re no better than they are since “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) - we’ve just been saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus. As 1 Corinthians 6:11 puts it, “...and such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

We shouldn’t expect unbelievers to live like believers because they are slaves to sin (Romans 6:20)! Too many Christians are disgusted with the sinful world, but Jesus, the holy, perfect Lamb of God who hates sin, wasn’t disgusted with sinners. He was broken-hearted over the lost condition of mankind (Matthew 9:36; 23:37). He often got in trouble with the religious leaders of His day because He regularly ate with sinners (Mark 2:13-17). He didn’t overlook, ignore, or avoid them - but He also didn’t overlook, ignore, or avoid speaking the truth about their sinful condition and their need of a Saviour (e.g., John 4:7-29). We need to treat unbelievers with love and gentleness while we boldly preach the only message that can free them from their sin - the gospel of Jesus Christ! In this day, though, when a Christian lovingly points out that homosexual behaviour is sin (as stated clearly in God’s Word), then that Christian is almost immediately falsely accused of being homophobic!

It’s important to note that the culture’s message of inclusion and acceptance is both incomplete at its best, and wrong at its worst. It’s wrong because it so often fails to recognise sin for what it is and instead encourages the sinner to continue on his path of sin, and it’s calling darkness for light and bitter for sweet (Isaiah 5:20). It’s incomplete because it fails to deliver the most inclusive message of all - that there’s grace and forgiveness for all at the Cross

.Through the sacrifice of Jesus, those from every tribe, nation, people, tongue, (Revelation 7:9) and every sinful background (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) are invited to become part of God’s family through the free forgiveness of Jesus Christ. It doesn’t get any more inclusive than that!