

Movie and DVD: *Superbad*

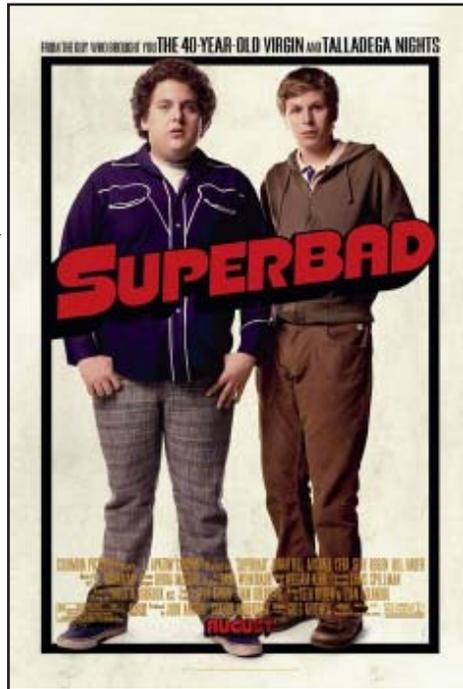
Background/summary: From the same producer of *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *Knocked Up*, this movie is rated R for pervasive crude and sexual content, strong language, drinking, drug use and a fantasy/comic violent image—all involving teens. The producer told *USA Today*: “I’m just trying to make movies about how people really are. This one wouldn’t work if kids weren’t trying to get drunk. Most of my life is R-rated. I’m just glad it’s working for people so I can keep making filthy little films.” This film grossed over \$100 million at the box office and the DVD will be very popular among teenagers.

Discover: What is the message/worldview?

- The movie features three main characters. Seth (Jonah Hill) and Evan (Michael Cera) are best friends about to head off to different colleges in the fall. Fogell (Christopher Mintz-Plasse) is the “nerd” who does anything to try to fit in and be cool.
- The entire movie takes place in one, 24-hour period. Their senior year is coming to a close; they have never been accepted by the popular kids; they are invited to a party under the assumption that they can get alcohol using Fogell’s fake ID; the characters see this as their last chance to get drunk and have sex before heading off to college, where “everyone has sex all the time.”
- “Porn is norm” in this movie. It opens with a phone conversation between Seth and Evan trying to decide which pornographic Web sites to subscribe to. Almost every scene features sexual language and innuendo.
- Throughout the movie women are treated as objects to fulfill men’s sexual desires. The plan is to get girls drunk and have sex with them. Seth is after Jules, and Evan is after Becca. Fogell gets a fake ID and is in charge of buying the alcohol for the party.
- The movie takes an ironic turn toward the end. Becca is drunk and desperately wants to have sex with Evan, but Evan refuses because she is too drunk. Seth finds out that Jules actually likes him, but doesn’t want to have sex with him because he is too drunk.
- There is a strong theme of friendship in this film culminating in an awkward scene where Seth and Evan say they love each other and will miss each other while in college.

Discern: How does it stand in light of the biblical message/worldview?

- We are created to live in community and experience true friendship and companionship. Created in the image of God, the main characters do experience friendship, but it’s not what the Bible describes. A true friend would say: Stop watching porn! Don’t break the law to buy alcohol! Women are not objects! There’s more to life than sex and drugs!



- According to the biblical story, sex is a gift to be enjoyed in marriage. Sexual desires are good, but have limits. When we diverge from biblical principles, there are painful consequences to be paid. A life based solely on sexual gratification is not worth living and can lead to relational brokenness.
- The movie does suggest that, perhaps, relationships should be built on more than sex, but it doesn’t define what that should be. What was missing was a description of true intimacy and love resembling something like what is found in 1 Corinthians 13.
- Christians are called to “submit to governing authorities” (Romans 13), which includes the legal drinking age. Buying alcohol with a fake ID is deceitful and illegal.

Decide: What do I do with it?

- This movie is not worth your time and money. Unfortunately, many teenagers have and will see it and think it is funny. It features memorable lines that teens will repeat in casual conversation. Because of its popularity, it is important that you know something about it. To get a general idea of the plot and vulgarity of the film, visit www.superbadmovie.com. You can explore the site after verifying that you are over 18 (notice how easy it is to lie about your age!), but be warned: The Web site is crude and vulgar.
- As Christians, we should not mindlessly consume or separate ourselves from popular culture. We are called to mindfully critique and engage culture as cross-cultural missionaries. However, we cannot use “engaging culture” as an excuse to gratify our own sinful desires.

At the risk of being perceived as fundamentalists and/or intolerant, we must be willing to take stands and say: “No! This is garbage!” My hope is that this film generates an important and urgent conversation about engaging culture: Where do we draw the line? Is it possible that a film can be so vulgar that it overshadows any “redeemable” qualities? How do we communicate to parents, youth workers and teenagers that some movies should be avoided at all costs without sounding legalistic?

- This film reminds us of adolescent and cultural attitudes concerning sex. We need to continually teach and remind students about a biblical understanding of sex and sexual desires. Biblical standards of morality will never be popular or easy to live out this side of the New Heaven and New Earth. Teenagers desperately need a biblical worldview that makes sense of all areas of life. Most importantly, they need good models and mentors who show them what it looks like to be faithful to Christ in their sexualized world, teaching them that *Superbad* is not the way it is supposed to be!

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