

## What Can We Do?

We live in a society where conflict seems to be growing. Whether online, in the local paper, or on the daily news stations: thefts, assaults, and homicides are a common topic of interest.

As a result, there is a common sentiment: "What can be done to stop the violence?" The answer to this question is often "more gun control (even when the tool of destruction is not a gun): Oklahoma assaults using a knife, machete, crossbow, and a truck loaded with explosives. If one tool of destruction is eliminated, there are many ways to take a life or assault one's neighbor.

The young of our society are being desensitized to violence. Concerning a recent act of violence, a young lady, said to her grandmother, "we're use to it." Although these events are shocking to "the old folks," those whose lives are just being developed know no better. That's what they are growing up with. Several years ago, I made inquiry of a young man from Israel (Jerusalem), regarding the daily threat of attacks, car bombs, missiles (or whatever), and how he dealt with it. He said, "Just another way to die." When an individual is reared in a war zone, their attitude toward violence and death is faced by reality: it is here, and there is no magic pill to fix it.

Although I do not want "the schools" to be the religious mouth for my children, it's a two-edged sword. When the society allowed the removal of prayer from the schools, and ultimately the removal of God, what is to be expected? The Lord said to Israel, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house, and upon thy gates" (Deut. 6:6-9).

Solomon said, "The rod and reproof give wisdom; But a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother" (Prov. 29:15). If the parent fails to dispense a bit of "wisdom," the end result will be "shame to his mother;" "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15), and for the parent, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." (Prov. 13:24).

Jeremiah adds to the equation, saying, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lam. 3:27). One of the problems facing our society is that the youth are allowed to occupy themselves with computers, and/or cellphones. They have little, if any, instruction, or encouragement to bear the yoke in their youth.

Rustin, regarding national wars, said, "No youth who was earnestly busy with any peaceful subject of study, or set on any serviceable course of action, ever voluntarily became a soldier. Occupy him early, and wisely, in agriculture or business, in science or in literature, and he will never think of war otherwise than as a calamity. But leave him idle; and the more brave and active and capable he is by nature, the more he will thirst for some

appointed field for action; and find, in the passion and peril of battle, the only satisfying fulfilment of his unoccupied being” (Crown of Wild Olives, 1866).

There are numerous biblical references addressing the need of parents to instruct and correct their children, but none, in my opinion, more powerful than Solomon’s statements to his son, saying, “The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, And forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head, And chains about thy neck” (Prov. 1:8-9).

However, in some cases the child is just following in the footsteps of the parent. The child’s moral compass has not been developed. Why? because the moral compass of the parent was not developed: “Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals. Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God: I speak this to move you to shame” (1 Cor. 15:33-34).

When a society, “that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20), what should that society expect? Or as the Lord said, “men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov’d.” (Jn. 3:19-20), what should that society expect?

Think of the words of Isaiah, saying, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the donkey his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly! they have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward. Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil.” (Isa. 1:2-6). What can we do? Break the cycles in our own lives and give our children a chance.

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