

THE BIBLE VIEW

In This Issue:

[To Really Stop Violence ...](#)

[Others](#) [Crime](#)

[You May Duplicate What You Saw](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

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To Really Stop Violence ...

Bill Brinkworth

With an alarming increase in violence, including murders, people are rightly concerned about stopping these assaults. Too many, the solution is to remove weapons, including guns, from society.

However, the solution is not censoring the possession of something that can hurt others. There will always be weapons available, be it a gun, knife, rope, or even a hammer.

The solution is changing the real cause that allows people to commit such violence to others. That source is the condition of a person's heart.

When the truths and laws from the Bible, the source of morality, were accepted, read, and lived, most people had some sense of right and wrong. When those principles were instilled in hearts, fewer crimes of today's nature occurred. Even those bent on committing crimes knew they were breaking the laws of man and God.

When obedience to God's commandments was ridiculed, not read, and not practiced or publically taught, man's moral compass was removed. Man now resorts to doing what he thinks is right in his own eyes, rather than God's. This philosophy has never and will never work, and it will destroy any society.

All the additional gun laws, politically correct language, or forcing the public to accept the standards of some politician or moral minority will only remove national freedoms. It will not decrease crime.

What will decrease crime and other immoral acts is for the "hearts" of man to change. If people will once again accept that to survive and get along with others, that God's commandments and guidelines must be followed, obeyed, and enforced, we will not have the state of criminality and cruelty we have today. Only then will many of these acts of violence be curtailed.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." II Chron. 7:14

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Jer. 17:9

The good news is that trusting in Jesus for salvation can change hearts!

Others

Bill Brinkworth

Paul emphasizes in Romans 15:1-7 how important it is to make others a priority in our lives. In a day when selfishness rules and reigns in the behavior of many, it is refreshing to be reminded that there is a better, more godly way of living. That way is to try to meet others' needs.

There was a time when a person did something, there would be a concern about how it would affect another. "If I play my music loudly, it will disturb others," "If I don't take care of my lawn, the neighbors will not like it," or even "If I park my shopping cart in the middle of the aisle, no one will be able to get past." Those thoughts are no longer at the forefront of most people's minds.

Somewhere the concern for others and their needs has been lost. Personally, I think it was forgotten when our nation publically expelled the teachings of the Bible from society, and after the public schools crammed "your self-esteem is more important" down students throats. However we got here, selfishness does not work.

Too many fear that if they do not concentrate on meeting their own needs, they will never be satisfied and happy. Meeting others' needs works in a way that is not logical to a self-centered mindset. Somehow, usually by God's unseen hand, when a person puts the needs of others as a priority, their own needs are met by others when they need help.

When my wife and I were first married, we came to an agreement. The agreement was that I would not worry about my needs, and would concentrate on meeting hers. Likewise, she trusted me to meet her needs and would concentrate on meeting my needs. This arrangement has worked well. With God's help, all our needs have been met!

Meeting the needs of others is the key to feeling important, needed, and complete. Selfishness usually does not meet personal needs. I have noticed that some of the most miserable and unhappy people I have met were selfish. Selfishness makes a person feel emptier, anxious, and looking for someone or something to satisfy the emptiness they have. Many never find anything to fulfill their needs. Self-centeredness rarely brings real joy.

Helping and trying to meet the needs of others does, however. I have often asked the senior citizens I preach to in the nursing home when it was that they felt the best about themselves, needed, and complete. Usually, the consensus was when they were concentrating on meeting the needs of their children or spouse.

Christ lived to meet our needs (Romans 15:3). The Word of God was preserved to help others (Rom. 15:4). Prophets, disciples, and early Christians gave of themselves, so we may have what is important. It is time that we also got our minds off ourselves and back on the needs of others.

"Real joy is spelled: Jesus Others You."

Crime

Christianity Today, August 16, 1993, p. 30.

In the 1950s, a psychologist, Stanton Samenow, and a psychiatrist, Samuel Yochelson, sharing the conventional wisdom that crime is caused by the environment, set out to prove their point. They began a 17-year study involving thousands of hours of clinical testing of 250 inmates in the District of Columbia.

To their astonishment, they discovered that the cause of crime cannot be traced to environment, poverty, or oppression. Instead, crime is the result of individuals making, as they put it, wrong moral choices. In their 1977 work, "The Criminal Personality," they concluded that the answer to crime is a "conversion of the wrong-doer to a more responsible lifestyle." In 1987, Harvard professors James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein came to similar conclusions in their book Crime and Human Nature. They determined that the cause of crime is a lack of proper moral training among young people during the morally formative years, particularly ages one to six.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Prov. 22:6

You May Duplicate What You Saw

Michael Medved, Hollywood vs. America¹

Television may be responsible for doubling our crime rate in the United States, suggests Brandon Centerwall, a psychiatrist at the University of Washington, in a study reported in the June 1992 Journal of the American Medical Association. Centerwall analyzed crime statistics both before and after TV was introduced in several communities. Those comparisons caused him to conclude that prolonged exposure to violence on TV has increased the number of murders in the U.S. by 10,000 each year. He sees TV as a "causal factor" in about 70,000 rapes and 700,000 injurious assaults annually.

¹ Hollywood vs. America by Michael Medved (Harper Collins/Zondervan, 1992), quoted in Leadership, Summer 1993, p. 76.

"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret!" Eph 5:10

Television certainly speaks about and shows things that should not be talked about and seen. Watching the wrong things on TV plants the seed of temptation into minds!