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HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH VIOLENCE IN OUR CULTURE?

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We live in an increasingly brutal and violent world. A world in which young men walk into movie theaters and schools and heartlessly gun down the precious souls in their paths. Whenever something like this occurs, cries of outrage can be heard across the land, saying, "Something has to be done to stop this!"

I agree! Something has to be done to stop this! But first, let's examine the culture in which we live today. We live in a culture which...

- **... glorifies gore and sensationalizes sin.** Our television shows, movies, and video games have created young people who don't blush or flinch. They have become so desensitized to sin that it does not bother them anymore. Why then, are we surprised when they involve themselves in horrific behavior?
- **... does not recognize the authority of God and His Word.** There is a whole generation of young people who do not believe there is absolute truth. They believe that all truth is relative; that they themselves are the only authority when it comes to deciding what is right and wrong "for them." Why then, are we surprised when they rationalize their horrific behavior?
- **... teaches children they are nothing more than apes, who are slightly more evolved.** Our schools teach children they are not created in the image of God, but are simply the product of billions of years of random chance. Why then, are we surprised when they act like the animals our schools teach them that they are?

The violence we see is appalling, horrific, and heart-breaking. However, it is sadly not surprising. A culture will always behave in horrible ways when God is not their King.

In Judges 19, there is a horrible story about a Levite man who was spending the night in Gibeah, a Benjaminite town. Like the Sodomites, the men of Gibeah were so wicked that they sought to rape the man. Instead, he allowed his wife to be thrown out to the vicious crowd to be violated and tortured. After a night of unbelievable brutality, the woman eventually died.

In order to have vengeance, the Levite incited the nation to war by cutting his wife's body into pieces and sending her body parts throughout Israel. The other tribes of Israel rose up against the Benjaminites and almost entirely annihilated the tribe. Thankfully, our nation hasn't yet sunk to this level of immorality.

This story perfectly illustrates the verse that concludes the book, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). When a nation does not recognize God as their King, when they do what is right in their own eyes, it is only a matter of time until they sink to all levels of immoral and brutal behavior. In other words, when the only moral standard they recognize is their own feelings, there is little hope of maintaining a peaceful society.

The answer to our current dilemma is to declare war against the false thinking that has led to our current moral depravity. Paul writes this, "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy

strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5) .

We must declare war against false thinking in *our* minds, in the minds of our children, in the minds of our neighbors, and in the minds of our friends. We must fight the enemy at the schools, where children are being indoctrinated with Darwin's lies. We must fight the enemy in the entertainment industry, where people are learning to laugh and be thrilled with immorality. We must put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20) and fight the enemy at every turn by teaching, preaching, and persuading everyone with the Truth!

(2at) When we respond to those asking about our choices in entertainment with "Well it is just violence!" we need to rethink our priorities. Glorified, graphic violence has no place in the life of a Christian.