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# Today's Youth Problem

## Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

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*When this message first appeared, A U. S. Representative placed it in The Congressional Record.*

ONE LOOK AROUND us reveals the devastation of a dreadful moral deterioration. It is the consequence of taking the Word of God out of our homes, schools, and most churches. Man is no longer a noble soul with individual worth. Everything now revolves around society or the establishment. Our universities are reaping what they have sown over the past sixty years. They have sown materialistic humanism and are now reaping the automatic chaos. They have made man the center of reality, with the consequence being anarchy. They have replaced moral standards with moral relevancy, which has brought on the disintegration of moral standards. Thus the reason for the lack of absolutes of right and wrong.

### Youth in Trouble

*U.S. News and World Report* informs us that every month 5,000 teachers are being attacked in our American schools. Something is stolen from one out of every nine students and one out of every four school buildings is vandalized. More than one million American teenage girls become pregnant each year. A U.S. Senator reported that even though 88 percent of army personnel are high school graduates, 27 percent of enlistees cannot read their seventh-grade level training manuals.

The author of the famous *McGuffey's Reader* stated back in 1854: "If you can induce a community to doubt the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures; to question the reality and obligation of religion; to hesitate, undecided whether there be any such thing as virtue or vice, whether there be an eternal state of retribution beyond the grave, or whether exists any such being as God, you have broken down the barriers of moral virtue and hoisted the floodgate of immorality and crime."

What generates such action? "From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:1-4).

The Word of God not only gives us the solution to our current problem, but it also communicates a description of our present situation. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth' (II Timothy 3:1-7). In this last verse, we see a perfect picture of the pseudo intellectuals of our day.

### Permissiveness

If backed into a corner and pressed for one word of explanation for the moral deterioration of youth in America, I would use the word, *permissiveness*. It always starts with parents. Few youth, who swung clubs in campus riots, had parental switches applied at the proper time and place during their

childhood. It is absolutely shocking to see parents and educators who are actually afraid of teen-agers. This is a tragedy. Let me stop and remind you that no sloppily-dressed, unclean, long-haired, effeminate punk is going to tell me what's wrong with America. Unless he is doing all he can on a personal level to be the best cooperative citizen that he can be, he will have no message for me.

### A Backward Look

Rita Kramer did all of us a service in her articles in the *New York Times*. She took a backward look at permissiveness in the mid-forties and fifties as she reread magazines on child-rearing. In the forties, articles on children dealt mostly with emotional development. The psychiatrists and psychologists replaced pediatricians as authors. The 1954 *Women's Home Companion* advised: "When your child has a tantrum, lies down on the floor, bangs his head and screams, or may kick and bite, scratch and cry, it is a perfectly natural thing for him to do. In most cases, the reason for the tantrum lies not with the child but with the adult. He makes an issue over some insignificant situation and the child objects." [Solution:] "Divert the child by saying, let us go out and play or by starting a favorite game. If it does not work, my advice is to do nothing at all. No tantrum will go on indefinitely; and when it's all over, don't scold or punish your child. Try to make him happy. Do what he is interested in. Punishment will only harm his development."

The emphasis during those days of World War II was to be careful that we don't break the child's will. How different from the mother who produced John and Charles Wesley. Historians inform us that the entire history of Europe was turned completely around because of the spiritual impact John Wesley had upon that morally-depraved continent.

Mrs. Wesley said, "The first thing to be done is to conquer the children's will and bring them to an obedient temper. The subjection of their will is a thing which must be done at once. For by neglecting timely correction, they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which is hardly ever conquered; and never without using such severity as would be as painful to me as to the child. Whenever a child is corrected, it must be conquered; and this will be no hard matter to do, if he be not grown headstrong by too much indulgence. Self-will is the root of sin and misery. No indulgence of it can be trivial, no denial of it unprofitable."

Back to the child psychiatrists of World War II. Here is advice for a child breaking dishes: "What the child really needs is a lessening of demands. If a parent succeeds in getting strict, unquestioned obedience, he has a child better adapted to living in a Nazi society than in a democratic one."

Back in this period of time, the emphasis was on freedom. Children should never be criticized or corrected. We should either praise them or be quiet. In the *Ladies Home Journal* in 1951 in an article under the title, "My Children Won't Obey," the reader was admonished to be fearful of strict discipline, for such children will develop inferiority complexes.

What strange parents we have today. They use good sense with hygiene and sanitation. They demand cleanliness and good table manners. They even force their children to go to school for twelve years, whether they want to or not, but when it comes to a most important area of their lives, the moral and spiritual, they play the fools. We listen to the teaching of some naive, too often irreligious psychologist, or follow the advice of some impractical, skeptical instructor. We permit our children to grow up without moral and spiritual guidance during the most formative period of their lives. The mother is out of home working. The father is too busy earning money for his family. Neither of them have time to spend with the children. Then we wonder about juvenile delinquency.

### One School Teacher

Her name is Suzanne Britt Jordan. Listen to her comment about modern-day education: "I have been teaching for three years at the community college. I had for quite awhile overlooked ignorance, dismissed arrogance, championed fairness, emphasized rights, boosted egos and tolerated laziness. I was, in short, the classic modern educator. When I read about our declining SAT scores, the functional illiteracy of

our students, the mamby-pamby courses, the army of child psychologists, reading aides, starry-eyed administrators and bungling fools who people our school systems, my heart sinks. Consider for a moment what caused this mess. People began to demand their rights. Social consciousness was born. Now, enter the big wrong turn, the one that sent our schools into never-never land. We suddenly naively believed that by offering equal opportunities we could (1) make everybody happy, (2) make everybody well-adjusted, (3) forgive everybody who failed, and (4) expect gratitude to boot. So they made it easier on the poor, disadvantaged victims of broken homes, the misfits, the unloved. Well and good. But the catch to such lofty theories is evident. Poverty, ignorance and just plain orneriness will always abound. We look for every reason in the world for the declining test scores of our children except for stupidity~and laziness.

### **Go to the 'Prose'**

"Just today I talked to a big blonde bruiser of a football player who wants to learn the basics of grammar. I didn't tell him it was too late. You see, he was a very good football player, so good that he never failed a course in high school. He had just written on a weekly theme, 'I want to go to the prose and come fame.' He may become a pro, may even become famous, but he will probably never read a good book, write a coherent letter, or read a story to his children. I will, however, flunk him if he does not learn the material in my course. My job means too much to me to sacrifice my standards and turn soft."

### **Our Generation**

Why do we wonder what is happening to our youth when they are fed constantly rock music with its emphasis on drugs, perversion, suicide, violence, Satanism, and rebellion against everything that is decent? Our high school graduates are sent off to college to live in buildings filled with liquor, drugs, and "creative sex," supervised by adults whose personal morals are no higher than alley cats. After all, the children have been taught that their ancestors were monkeys or gorillas, and rock music proclaims that all they need are drugs and sex. TV offers them a diet of hedonism that would cause the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah to blush with shame.

There are a number of examples of the failure of parents that are recorded in the Bible. David was guilty of adultery and murder, but did you know that he was also a permissive parent? This is evident in his relationship with one of his sons, Adonijah. "And his father (David) had not displeased him at any time in saying, why hast thou done so?" (I Kings 1:6)

Look at the consequences in the life of David. His son Adonijah had a scheming ambition. His son Amnon was guilty of incest. Absalom's proud rebellion against the kingdom of his father was a disgrace and ended in murder.

Eliphaidearpriceforhis failureas a parent. "In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house; when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (I Samuel 3:12, 13).

The greatest responsibility for today's condition of our youth rests with parents. They have a responsibility entrusted to them by God. "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

Our moral, spiritual and social values are established in the home. This is the assigned responsibility of parents. Our educational system is not to establish our moral standards. Nor are the peers of the youth able to establish such. No, TV is not the established standard in the life of anybody. Did you know that the average child in America views 22,000 hours of TV before he reaches his teens? The average adult will spend nine years of his life looking at TV by the time he reaches 65. What a phony value of life TV presents.

## **Obedience and Discipline**

If children are to obey, they must see a demonstration of obedience by mother and father, for our training includes not only the way the children should go, but also the accompanying negatives as to the way they should *not* go.

"Correct thy son and he shall give thee rest: yea he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Proverbs 29:17). If we speak more than once to our children, it is evident that our authority is not absolute. If we ignore Bible principles, we do it only to our detriment.

### **Punishment Demanded**

Proverbs 19:18: "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

Proverbs 22:15: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."

Proverbs 23:13, 14: "Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."

Proverbs 29:15: "The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Always remember the prerequisite for our children bringing us shame is to simply ignore them. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24).

### **A Bible Pattern**

Chastening and discipline for wrong doing is a biblical pattern. "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction, for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Proverbs 3:11, 12).

As parents, we must be examples of our own standards that we establish for our young people. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9). There dare not be any separation between that which is taught and practiced.

There was a Bible character who spoke for his entire household. He declared to all the world that his wife, sons, and daughters would grow up to serve the Lord. This man's name was Joshua. Ever hear of him? "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your father served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Which are you? A David who lived the rest of his life as a failure, or Joshua who has the blessing of the Lord because his family was committed to one task, that of serving the Lord? Here is a father who was not obsessed with a financial empire or keeping up with community standards of possession. His one goal in life was firmly established. It included every member of the family. He and his were to serve the Lord. How different from Eli and David.

In case you have failed as a parent, cry out to God for forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Get your heart and mind focused upon God's Word. Find a group of people in a church who are determined to obey God.

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