

WHAT HAS CORRUPTED TODAY'S YOUTH?

Every one of us can take a look at today's society and easily observe that times have changed. The biggest change I have noticed is in the younger age generations, specifically an age range of twelve to sixteen. I am sure any older person can see this; but when younger people like me whose generation is just above this age group take notice, something isn't quite right. Over a series of articles, I would like to look into what may possibly be contributing factors to this corruption and see if we can pinpoint a single factor. This may sound out of the ordinary, considering I am fresh out of high school and practically belong to this young generation. My view might give an interesting perspective. I have spent not only academic time, but also extracurricular time around these youths. Consider this an "undercover" report on today's youth.

Let's examine our target age group first. The age range we're looking at is from around twelve to sixteen. This is considered the adolescent range when several changes occur physically, mentally, and emotionally. Two big occurrences happen during this time. One is the attempt of these young teens to develop their identity. They are trying to figure out where they fit in socially or what social group they are going to belong to. The second big occurrence is autonomy, a sense of independence from parents. Keep occurrences in mind, as these are consistent underlying reasons in problems we are going to examine. This is a rough age for both the teen and their parents; peer pressure is at a high point to go along with the rest of the problems. Ask any experienced teacher, this age group (grades 6-10) is very difficult to teach.

The Bible gives specific instructions to youths. *"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;"* (Ecc. 12:1). Ephesians 6:13 gives more specific instruction: *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."*

Timothy 2:22 distinguishes the fact that youths have special difficulties to overcome by labeling certain lusts as belonging to youth. *"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."*

Now let's look at the obvious problems currently plaguing youth. This age group feels the need to rebel. They rebel and display disrespect against parents, rules, authority, and etc. At this age they feel a strong need to attract the opposite sex. This lone problem can lead a young person to do some of the craziest things. The society surrounding young people today is just plain backwards. Just look at their language; in many instances the word "bad" is meant to express a positive. Example: "Oh man, have you heard that new song?" or "Man, that's a bad song." is often heard. "Bad" used in this context actually means "good." In movies, video games, and other things, the "bad guy" is the "good guy," the one for whom you are cheering.

Society has glorified the underdog, but not in a good way. The underdog in today's society is the young man who was born without a legitimate dad; who had to steal to get by; who dropped out of school and dealt drugs; and who became father to several illegitimate children all with different mothers but never marries. Why is this type of person glorified? It is because this person possessed enough music, athletic, or acting ability to become rich and famous. Now this person not only has the house, cars, and clothes everyone wants, but also shows them off thus creating tribute to their past. Young people want those cars and houses just like their idol, often feeling that if they live that glorified lifestyle, they too can achieve that status.

See what Galatians 5:19-21 says in regard to that lifestyle: *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."*

Philippians 4:8 tells us what we are to focus on: *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."* Simply put, *"Abstain from all appearance of evil"* (1 The. 5:22)

Keep Philippians 4:8 in mind as we take a look at possible factors contributing to the corruption of today's youth. Ask yourself, "are these things true, honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report?"

So what has corrupted today's youth? Is it video games, the internet, music, television, or parents?

VIDEO GAMES

The video game industry has grown tremendously over the years. In fact, the video game industry now brings in more money than movies do at the box office. It is estimated that outside of school, children spend the majority of their free time playing video games. Statistically, the average child spends two hours a day playing video games. Video games are being used as babysitters. It's not just children however. A study in 2003 showed that in that year, the average American spent 75 hours playing video games. That is a lot of time, but are video games that bad?

Well, video games are not what they used to be. No longer is your objective to use your dot on the screen to escape from another dot. Now you have the freedom to steal a vehicle of your choice, commit various crimes for fun, and even locate a prostitute. This is all in the same game, with stunning graphics to add realism. Not all video games are like this, but the fact that this is the fastest growing genre in video games is alarming. Just look at the titles of some of the most popular games: "Grand Theft Auto," "True Crime," and "Hitman".

Several video games are centered on strong violent themes, and sexual situations. In these games the player controls the "bad guy," the criminal, the villain. This is a good example of society glorifying the underdog. The popularity of these games can be frightening. Our youths are enjoying being a bad guy.

So are video games what is corrupting youths? Video games contribute to many problems, but these problems stem from something else. As was stated earlier, not all video games are centered on evil. Video games are not the sole factor in the corruption of today's youth.

THE INTERNET

The Internet is literally a world of information at your fingertips. The Internet connects people from across the world. It can be a great tool for information. In fact, all the statistics I have used in this series of articles came from the Internet. The internet is a valuable resource to students doing research. Now in recent times, the Internet has been used in the Lord's work. There are several websites that contain recorded sermons in audio files, pictures, meeting times and information

about several different congregations. There are even emailed updates that list those in need of prayer and report missionary work.

The Internet has information about nearly everything, without censors. Anything and everything goes. The saying "If you've got the money, we've got your disease" does not apply. You don't need the money; the internet is basically free. There are over 372 million pornographic websites on the Internet. That's over 372 million websites dedicated to the glorification of fornication. This alarming number is over an 1800% increase from a 1998 study. The problem of fornication used to be easily avoidable on the Internet; simply don't go there. Now it's making its way into advertisements on mainstream web pages. So at the same time I'm reading an email updating those in need of prayer, there's a bikini-clad woman on an ad saying "Meet Hot Singles in Your Area!" directly beside the email. We no longer have to go searching for trouble on the internet, it's coming to us.

Teens spend an average of 16.7 hours a week on the Internet. Most of it is likely engaged in instant messaging or online conversation. However the recent phenomenon of Myspace has probably begun to take over many of those hours. Myspace is a social network where users communicate through web-based journals on their personal web pages. It is also the most popular website in the United States. You can learn about a person through their page and all the people they know. You can visit several strangers' pages and view the things they like, good or bad.

So it has got to be the internet that is corrupting today's youths, right? You still have to go searching for serious trouble on the Internet. Offensive web sites can be blocked with the right software. The Internet can be used for good purposes and bad alike. The internet contributes to problems affecting today's youth, but it's not the sole factor.

Next Month: WHAT HAS CORRUPTED TODAY'S YOUTH? - MUSIC

BEN

APOLOGIA

QUESTION: In 1 Timothy 5:17 - 18 it is written, "*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially*

they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." Does this mean that elders who preach and teach should be paid for their services?

ANSWER: In no passage or example do the New Testament Scriptures authorize clergymen as are customarily found among the sectarian churches and many congregations among the churches of Christ. Leadership among Christians in the First Century focused upon elders and not preachers (Acts 11:30, Acts 20:17, Titus 1:5).

While an elder would normally be expected to spend much of his time among the flock whom he shepherds, he would not be improper in traveling to assist where his knowledge, wisdom, and experience could be of advantage. Peter was an apostle, but he was also an elder (2 Peter 5:1). In Acts 15 journeys were made by several "chosen men" and "chief men among the brethren" (v. 22) in looking into matters other than at their own congregation.

It can easily be envisioned that certain congregations might require such intense teaching, care, and ministering that the elders would need to devote their entire time to spiritual interests rather than at secular employment. In such a situation, 1 Timothy 5:17-18 would certainly apply and financial support would definitely be in order.

In a detailed explanation of this principal Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:4-14,

"Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live

of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Paul was referencing Deuteronomy 25:4, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn," as a supporting Old Testament passage.

It should be further noted that the elders were not authorized to hire someone else to do their own work, but that they themselves were to accomplish that for which they were qualified and appointed. Elders are not simply directors who oversee those who do the work.

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
Sept. 8 – 10	Dowell Hill Congregation Columbus, IN	Jeff Musgrave (tentative)
Sept. 8 – 10	Antioch Congregation Livingston, TN	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
Sept. 11 – 15	Junction City Congregation Junction City, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 15 – 17	Fayetteville Road Congregation Fairburn, GA	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
Sept. 17 – 20	Noble Congregation Lafayette, GA	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 17 - 22	Hopkinsville Congregation Hopkinsville, Ohio	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
Sept. 18 – 22	Estesburg Congregation Eubank, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What did Potiphera (Joseph's father-in-law) do for a living?

2. What happened to Eli's daughter-in-law when she heard of the death of her husband and father-in-law?
3. The words of the Lord are like silver refined and purified how many times?
4. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians to be followers of him?
5. According to Ecclesiastes, what has replaced justice and righteousness?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Moses was angry after the Israelites defeated the Midianites because too many of whom were allowed to live? MIDIANITE WOMEN (Num. 31:14,15)
2. What did Paul plead with Euodias and Syntyche? TO BE OF THE SAME MIND IN THE LORD (James 3:2)
3. What does God require from man's inner parts, according to Psalm 51? TRUTH (Psalms 51:6)
4. Which authority in Jerusalem initiated persecution to the church? KING HEROD (Acts 12:1)
5. According to Deut. 15, would Israel need to borrow from other nations? NO (Deut. 15:6)