

## WHAT HAS CORRUPTED TODAY'S YOUTH? IS IT MUSIC?

In the last HARVESTER, we began a series of articles that asks the question "What has corrupted today's youth?" We want to view factors that may be causing this corruption and then narrow them down to see if there is one single factor to blame. In the last article, we looked at video games and the Internet. In this installment we take a look the music industry.

The music industry is an ever-growing business. In 2005 digital music sales reached up to \$1.1 billion. That amazing figure is excluding CD sales, which amounted to over \$10 million. Obviously a huge portion of those sales come from teenagers. It is estimated that between 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, adolescents listen to 10,500 hours of music. That's well over a year's worth of listening to music.

What influences teens to listen to so much music? There are multiple reasons. The list includes plenty of free time, boredom, loneliness, their mood, for entertainment, to relieve stress, and finally they just like the rhythm or beat of it. Well is this so bad? It's harmless music, right?

Many types of music include increasing amounts of profanity. A lot of people wouldn't believe the kind of explicit lyrics in today's music. This alarming amount of profanity is nothing new. In 1985 the Parents Music Resource Center was founded to confront this problem. They put warning labels on albums that contained such profanity, and even censored certain songs from the radio.

It's not simply words that are explicit, it's the message being sent out that's disturbing. Many songs are centered entirely on sex, drugs, and a "gangster" lifestyle. Remember from the previous article, these musical artists are the ones being glorified and idolized by much of today's youth. Within these popular songs, women are treated as sex objects, men are depicted as sex-driven studs, drug use is openly glorified, and rejection of any type of authority is displayed. As stated in the previous article, teenagers are already feeling the need to rebel. Their idol promoting more disrespect for authority isn't going to help anything.

Aside from the lyrics and messages in some of today's music, the rhythm and beat is the biggest influence on the popularity of a song. In most of today's music, you cannot actually interpret most of the lyrics, but the beat is unmistakably recognized. The rhythm and beat makes or breaks a song in today's culture. How are rhythms and beats harmful? Many will lead to dancing. A teen's idea of dancing in today's culture could be described as young people imitating sexual acts with each other. At a recent academic club convention I attended with my school, a dance was held. After observing the dance, a companion of mine made a statement that summed up the entire problem of dancing. His statement paraphrased was, "This is just a bunch of girls rubbing themselves all over guys."

Look at Philippians 4:8 and compare it with what is found in today's music: *"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."*

Are songs glorifying rape and premarital sex pure? Are songs whose title is actually a street name for a particular form of marijuana lovely? Are musical artists who advocate and downright promote this lifestyle just? Is dancing of good report? We can answer all of these questions with a simple "No."

One of the most frightening statistics comes from a recent study. The study showed that teens who said they listened to lots of music with degrading sexual messages were almost twice as likely to have premarital sex within the following two years. Males are learning they should be in relentless pursuit of women, and females are learning to view themselves as sex objects. Music's not so harmless anymore, is it?

So is music the sole factor for the corruption of today's youth? Based on its role in a teenager's life, music is a huge factor. However it is not the single cause. Peer pressure, self-esteem, and home environment play a huge role as to whether music impacts a youth in such negative ways. There is a choice; not all music is such filth. Sadly, the most popular music among teens is the filth.

NEXT ARTICLE: WHAT HAS CORRUPTED TODAY'S YOUTH?-TELEVISION

BEN

## APOLOGIA

QUESTION: How should we as Christians handle conflicts that we have with other people?

ANSWER: It would be wonderful if all of us could stop our bad habits and decide to respond to conflict with others in a constructive way. But this is easier said than done!

Relationship problems are common to man in all walks of life. We see them in our marriages, at our work place, with our children, and even in our churches. Conflict is in keeping with what we are: sinners!

Man is a relational creature. First and foremost we were created to have a relationship with God. It was for His glory that we were created. In addition God also created us to have a relationship with others. In the book of Genesis we find that God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. In Genesis 2:18-20 we read, *"And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.' Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him."*

There is much that could be said about Adam naming the animals but the main idea is that God was proving to Adam that he did not have someone with whom he could relate. Once that point was proven, God responded by creating a helper for Adam. When God presented Adam with his companion note the love and appreciation he had for the one created to be his partner. *"And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man. "* (Gen. 2:23)

The Bible further speaks of the fact that both the man and the woman were naked and not ashamed. This is a figure of transparency. Their relationship was not yet marred by sin. They were completely open to one another and there was nothing to hide.

Genesis 3 provides a sad commentary about the beginning of man's relationship problem. After the couple sinned, the first problem was seen in the vain attempt to cover themselves. The beautiful transparency they had enjoyed had ended. We also note that sin

not only affected the relationship between the couple but also with their Creator. Adam and Eve tried to hide themselves from God! The breakdown between Adam and Eve and even God is summed up in Adam's words. *"Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate."* (Gen. 3:12)

Here Adam points a finger at God as if to say, "You are the one who gave her to me!" He then also blames Eve for his failure to obey God. It was Eve that gave him the fruit of the tree! The word Genesis has reference to the beginning and it certainly gives us the beginning of problems between people.

Sin is the root cause of all our relationship problems. It is the culprit that is the source of our conflict with others. We were created to have an "other" oriented life. Life is best lived when God is first and others second. But sin has made our life all about us. We are selfish and it is this desire to please self that gives rise to conflict.

Note what James says about the strife that exists between people. In James 4:1-3, we read, *"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."*

It is obvious from the reading of this passage that the root cause of conflict is selfishness. Due to sin we look at life as being all about us. Our desires and the satisfaction of those desires becomes the driving force behind the conflict. We begin to feel that we cannot be satisfied unless we have things our way. This leads to allowing the desire to become a demand. When others do not meet our demands or if someone fails to meet our desire we begin to condemn them in our heart. This leads us to quarrel and fight. Finally we end up seeking to punish those who do not give us what we want.

Understanding the root cause of conflict is the beginning of resolution. Unless we have our selfishness exposed and pointed out as the sin that it is we will continue to justify self in the conflict. Let's look at the points raised by James.

As James notes conflict always begins with some kind of desire. This is not to say that all desires are wrong. In fact many desires are not wrong in and of themselves. However, even good desires can lead to conflict we feel that they are not being

met. The deciding factor will be what we do when our desires are not met. Basically we can do one of two things. We can choose to trust God and find our fulfillment in Him. We can ask Him to help us grow and mature in our relationships with others. We can choose to practice love toward those with whom we have conflict. Or we can dwell on our disappointment and allow it to control our life. The latter will lead to bitterness and will destroy our efforts to glorify God.

If we do not deal with our unmet desires in a godly way they will begin to control our hearts. This is particularly true when we reach the point that we see our desire as a matter of our rights. When we begin to operate from the standpoint of "I deserve" or "I need" we are headed for trouble. We become deceived and begin to think that unless our desires are met we cannot be happy or fulfilled. This leads us to the practice of making demands. Our desire at this point has become an idol. Idols of the heart tend to control us. They begin to alter our behavior and we begin to get caught in a vicious cycle. The more we want something, the more we think we must have it which leads us to want it even more. The sin in this is that we should never depend upon something other than God to bring us happiness and fulfillment. As Christians we look to God for security, peace, and joy. This is why the Bible calls covetousness idolatry. Paul tells us in Colossians 3:5 that we are to *"...put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry."*

Keep in mind that these idols of the heart can come from good desires as well as sinful ones. It is not what we want that is always wrong but the fact that we want it too much!

Once the idol has taken control we begin to condemn those who do not meet our needs. We begin to criticize, nitpick, and attack those who fail to satisfy our desires or do as we wish. We become self-righteous and the wars, fights and quarrels that James mentions begin to be manifest. This is not to say that we are not to exercise righteous judgment. But we must beware and not allow our judgment to be sinful. Sinful judgment is always characterized by a feeling of superiority, indignation, condemnation, bitterness and resentment. It involves seeking to destroy another so that we might get our way. It is void of love and concern for others and is all about us.

After we have justified condemning those whom we are having conflicts with we begin to punish. As one put it, idols demand sacrifices and when it comes to conflict the sacrifice it

demands is the pain we can inflict upon others who fail us. Sometimes we pout, call names, and throw temper tantrums. Sometimes we wage a campaign against others and do all we can to discredit them and if possible turn others against them as well. All of this is behavior that needs to be put off by the child of God.

The solution to conflict is simple. If the problem comes from too much attention on self and what self desires then we must take the focus off of self and place it elsewhere. We need to focus on God. He is our God and is fully capable of providing what we need. In order to handle conflict in a godly manner we must acknowledge our sin, repent of it, and turn to Christ.

Conflict is not easy to deal with. God does not in one full swoop remove all of our problems. Rather He will assist us with dealing with them one by one. As we look at the conflicts we have in our life, we must examine self and see where in we have allowed idols of the heart to form and then one by one take them to the cross. In our dealing with others let us remember to deal with them, as we would have God deal with us. Those in glass houses should not throw stones! It can be truthfully said that none of us always meet the expectations of others so why do we expect others to always meet ours?

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## GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
Oct. 6 – 8	Dowell Hill Congregation Columbus, IN	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
Oct. 6 – 8	Lockport Congregation Lockport, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
Oct. 6 – 8	Goochtown Congregation Eubank, KY	Hunter Bulger (Greenville, AL)
Oct. 9 – 13	Oak Grove Congregation Eubank, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

Oct. 13 – 15	West Broad Street Congregation Wedowee, AL	Ron Scott (Bloomington, IN)
Oct. 12 – 15	Marrowbone Congregation Near Burkesville, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
Oct. 16 – 20	Freefield Congregation State Line, MS	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
Oct. 20 – 22	Napoleon Congregation Woodland, AL	Mark Carpenter & Allan Daniel (Woodland, AL)
Oct. 27 – 29	Verona Congregation Verona, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Oct. 27 – 30	South Shore Congregation South Shore, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who made Adam and Eve coats of skin?
2. What did Cain say to the Lord about his punishment after killing Abel?
3. What did Christ call Herod when the Pharisees told him that Herod would kill him?
4. Christ made us free. What are we not to be entangled with?
5. Which of the 10 commandments was not carried over to the New Testament?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. What did Potiphera (Joseph's father-in-law) do for a living? HE WAS A PRIEST OF AN EGYPTIAN DEITY (Gen 41:45)
2. What happened to Eli's daughter-in-law when she heard of the death of her husband and father-in-law? SHE HAD A BABY (1 Sam. 4:19)

3. The words of the Lord are like silver refined and purified how many times? SEVEN (Psalms 12:6)
4. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians to be followers of him? BECAUSE HE FOLLOWED CHRIST (1 Cor. 11:1)
5. According to Ecclesiastes, what has replaced justice and righteousness? WICKEDNESS (Eccl. 3:16)