

Responsibility For Wrong-Doing

Fultondale High School Baccalaureate, May 24, 1992

Introduction:

- A. Class of '92—Welcome to the adult world—To a world bills and pills; To tuition payments, car payments, house payments—Isn't it great!
 - 1. Seriously, it is a world of fantastic opportunities and momentous problems.
 - 2. It is also a world of tremendous responsibility (1 Cor. 13:11)
- B. Your success and happiness depends on how responsibly you manage your personal opportunities and problems.
 - 1. The world may offer you great opportunities—but you must seize them.
 - 2. The world may contribute to your problems—but you must solve them.
- C. We human beings do not like to accept responsibility for problems caused by our mistakes and failures.
 - 1. We trip ourselves up and look around to see who pushed us.
 - 2. Our first ancestors, Adam and Eve, blames others.
 - 3. Israel's False Proverb. (Ezek. 18:1-3).
 - a. Caused Israel to blame “fathers” and even God for problems caused by their sin. (vv. 19,25,29).
 - b. Encouraged two obstacles to solving their problems: self-pity and self-justification.
 - c. The prophet told them that they must accept responsibility and quit blaming it on someone else.
 - 4. cf. Book: Responsibility Therapy.
 - 5. Our society has developed some buck-passing *approaches* to crime and anti-social behavior that is counter productive to solving our problems. Maybe your generation will be wise enough to abandon these *approaches*.

Discussion:

- I. The Decriminalization Approach.**
 - A. It reduces(?) crime by legalizing it.
 - B. It makes the law responsible rather than the law-breaker.
- II. The Distribution Approach.**
 - A. It is the old “Look what you (they) made me(him) do” approach.
 - B. It automatically assumes that one's guilt must be shared by others.
 - 1. A kid terrorizes school — teachers, peers, and school share blame.
 - 2. A man takes us with secretary — Wife and home must share blame.
 - 3. A crime is committed — Victim, police, and society must share blame.
 - C. It places all imperfections and mistakes on same level.
 - 1. Any procedural mistake of police, victim, or society removes right to prosecute.
 - 2. Any procedural mistake of parents or school removes their right to discipline.
 - D. It discourages *all* parties from facing their respective responsibilities.
 - 1. Offender feels little need for correction if others are responsible.
 - 2. Offended feel they have no right to demand correction since they are themselves subject to mistake.
 - 3. The results: society suffers from crime out of control.
- III. The Deprivation Approach.**
 - A. It assumes sin caused by being deprived — not depraved — not really wrong-doers fault.
 - 1. Murderers and rapist is not really bad—just unloved.
 - 2. Thief steals because deprived of prosperity of his neighbors.
 - B. It attempts to solve problem by showering guilty with what was allegedly deprived of.
 - 1. Keeps him from facing his real problem and correcting of it.

2. Gives him comfort rather than sorrowing unto repentance. (cf. 2 Cor. 7:10)

IV. The *Disease* Approach.

- A. No sinners, criminals, or wicked folks — just patients and people with problems.
- B. No needing for discipline and/or punishment, just sympathy and understanding.
- C. No need to blame a sick person, he is a victim.

Conclusion:

- A. As adults, accept responsibility for your actions and expect other to do the same.
- B. Don't be a buck passer.