



*1 John 4:19*

*"We love each other as a result of his loving us first."*

We live in a world which seems to be coming more and more violent. I do not mean that we are experiencing more wars between countries or terror groups, I mean the way people within a culture treat each other is becoming more violent. This seems to be especially true in the United States of America. Homicides and violent crimes are increasing dramatically in many areas. Gang violence is rampant in many large cities. Domestic violence seems to be an every day occurrence in the news. What is the reason for this very negative turn of events?

Sociologists study human behavior and they are studying this phenomenon. They have offered a number of possible suggestions that include such things as the increased violence found in movies, videos, television, and video games. They also feel the breakup of the traditional family has played a part in this increase in violence. More and more bad marriages turn ugly and physical violence is experienced by both spouses and children. Abuse leads to more abuse and is transferred from generation to generation. Broken families lead youth to join gangs for social acceptance. Increased drug use has also led to increased violence by both sellers and users.

While I do not disagree with the sociologists conclusions, I believe they are too focused on the symptoms instead of on the causes. I believe, the marginalization of the Christian

faith by our increasingly secular society is the root cause of this new wave of violence. The role a biblical faith plays in behavior modification is undeniable. When people believed more readily in the absolute truths of scripture they were far less likely to steal, commit adultery, and kill. There is irrefutable evidence that marriages by two non-co-habiting adults who are people of faith are far more likely to last. Sexual promiscuity leads to broken homes, broken families and violence. The relative values of our secular society are leading us into an ever faster death spiral because without God there is no real love.

The truth of life is that it is real love, unconditional God inspired love, that leads to peace, joy, patience, gentleness and humbleness. Our culture has substituted self love for a love for God. Self-love ultimately leads to greed, anger, impatience and violence. We want what we want and we will not tolerate others denying us. God's love leads to service, compassion and the unselfish desire to help others find happiness.

So what is your life like? For all too many today the answer is, "it's a train wreck." Why not make a fresh start by coming to God or coming back to God? Only when we love God and experience His love can we find real peace in our lives.