

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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Violence

"Power exercised with violence has seldom been of long duration...." – Seneca

"I am obliged to renounce violence, and abstain from it altogether." – Leo Tolstoy

"Nothing good ever comes of violence." – Martin Luther

"Where violence reigns, reason is weak." – Nicolas Chamfort

"He who achieves power by violence does not truly become lord or master." – Thomas Aquinas

In America today there have been significant increases of homicides in the bigger cities. In fact, in every category of violent crime, except that of rape, there have been substantial increases.

According to USA TODAY, the murder rate in Chicago alone has risen 72%, with shootings up more than 88%. Chicago has had 500 murders in nine months.

According to Science News, "Men who gamble are more likely to act violently towards others, with the most addicted gamblers the most prone to serious violence...."

It is quite obvious that violence has a long history with man. From the days of Cain and Abel, we recall that Cain slew Abel in a terrible act of violence (Gen. 4:8). Raw emotions often fuel the desire to do harm to others.

We are often driven by terrible emotions, such as envy, jealousy, hatred, and anger. These emotions are powerful, and left unchecked, they can get the better of us.

From the time of our childhood, we learn that these emotions drive us to hit, push, kick, or shove our childhood playmates, or even family members. And if we are not careful, those emotions can make us far more violent as we age.

All of us would do well to study Ephesians 4:25-31, where Paul explains how we should act now that we are Christians.

Think of what Jesus taught. "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also" (Matt. 5:39). "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt. 26:52). And there is truth in this statement as many who have dished out violence have themselves become victims.

What a challenge it is for Christians to maintain self-control, even when pushed to the point that we struggle not to retaliate. Scripture refers to this as meekness. Perhaps we can look at it as, "strength under control."

Many years back, in the days of the Steeler dynasty in football, it used to be said that meekness was, "Mean Joe Greene in a three-point stance." Holding all of that energy back is not easy but necessary especially for Christians.