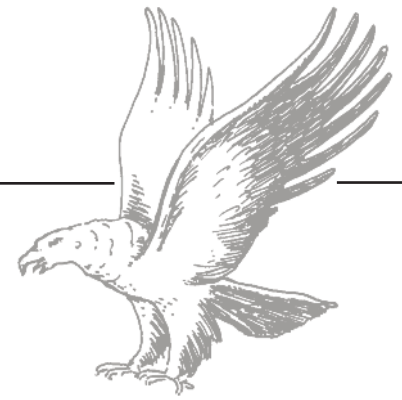


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



October 11, 2015

Shooters and Fathers

Our society's struggle with violent young men is not all that hard to understand, if we will only open our eyes to see it. Unfortunately, the fix is neither easy or quick.

“The father shall make known Your truth to the children” (Isa. 38:19).

“Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life will be many. I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths. . . . Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. . . . For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence” (Prov. 4:10-11, 14, 17).

In the aftermath of another mass shooting, Americans once again are plunged into a debate over how to put an end to these horrific episodes. More firearm regulations? More armed security? More mental health spending? Less feminist bashing of the patriarchy?

Whatever the merits of these solutions, the most obvious cause behind these violent outbursts is not hard to identify—even though the solution may be beyond any government's ability to implement quickly. The problem is *fatherless young men*.

In 2013, following another one of these shootings, W. Bradford Wilcox,

professor of sociology at the University of Virginia and director of UV's National Marriage Project, analyzed the shootings over the preceding year. He found that “nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's ‘list of U.S. school attacks’ involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place.” He concluded, “As the nation seeks to make sense of these senseless shootings, we must also face the uncomfortable truth that turmoil at home all too often accounts for the turmoil we end up seeing spill onto our streets and schools” (“Sons of Divorce, School Shooters,” *National Review Online*, Dec. 16, 2013). The mass shootings in the two years since this was written, including the most recent episode in Roseburg, Oregon, fit this same pattern. Young men who explode in violent killing sprees almost always come from fatherless homes.

Dads, are you listening? Your children, especially your sons, desperately need your guidance. As a man, you bring a dimension into parenting that no mother can match. Boys have the potential to

perform great acts of courage and honor in defense of the weak; but they also have the potential to burn down a town, terrorize their neighbors—or shoot up a school full of little kids. Which side of this fence between civilization and barbarism a young man falls toward will depend almost entirely on the influence of a strong, stable father—or some other father-figure—in his life.

Regulating guns, locking the boys up in institutions, or medicating them into zombies only masks the problem; it does not solve it. Long before any of these modern stratagems became popular, the Bible already addressed the issue head-on: “The father shall make known Your truth to the children.” It is the wise, committed father whose counsel—and example—will keep his son from “the path of the wicked . . . [who] drink the wine of violence.”

Dads, whatever sacrifices you have to make in your career, your marriage, or your recreation to be there for your kids, do it—the earlier, the better. Because if you fail in your role as a father, you may regret it with bitter tears later.

– David King