

Bored Kids Kill Because We Forget God

Three young men were home on a summer day with nothing to do. So they decided to kill a man.

The headlines are shocking: “Australian College Baseball Player Shot and Killed by ‘Bored’ Oklahoma Teens.”

A horrific act—the taking of another person’s life—chalked up to boredom.

One day later, we learned of a second random killing—this time an 88-year-old World War II veteran who happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time when two 16-year-olds decided to rob and then beat him to death.

What has become of our culture that this happens? Is there something different about our culture now than there was before?

There aren’t easy answers. Our culture isn’t one where people like to hear hard truths, but shocking stories like this serve as a wake-up call for us, particularly for those of us who claim to follow Christ.

Analysts all over are trying to pinpoint the reason for such horror. They’re talking about the soul-deadening effects of violent video games, the inherent problems associated with poverty, the lack of good father figures in homes and even the self-centeredness of the current generation of young people.

Yes, the reason is all of this—but it’s more. These things are all true, and most (if not all) of these elements played a part in why these teenagers decided to snuff out someone else’s life.

But those are just the symptoms of a deeper sickness. What I’m

talking about is as pervasive in our culture as a deadly cancer. It's killing the heart of an entire generation, just as it's progressively weakened the hearts of the generations that have come before.

I'm talking about the sickness of forgetting God. It is the act of merely forgetting to acknowledge Him on a daily basis or the act of denouncing His existence altogether. In truth, I believe it's an outright act of defiance—saying either by actions or by words, “Whether there is a God or not, in my life I'm God.”

“I'm God” shows up when we decide staying in a difficult marriage is too hard. So we give up, and our kids reap the consequences. Or we decide marriage isn't our thing in the first place, and we have children without the covering of marriage.

Decades of this “I'm God” thinking has led to generations of broken homes and broken lives. The statistics on what divorce and single-parent homes do to a kid is heartbreaking. I'm not saying every kid who comes from a broken home turns into a killer. But it does sow the seeds of fear and doubt, and it cements the idea that life is all about looking out for No. 1.

“I'm God” shows up in our gated communities, where Mom and Dad roll their Mercedes out of the driveway at 7 a.m. to make it to their separate offices, where they'll work a 50-plus-hour week, come home late and see their children for just a few hours a day—if they're lucky. We've been living our lives devoted to making money so we can spend it on stuff—including the violent video games our kids love so much—but we are too busy to really check out and see what our kids are pouring into their brains for hours every day.

“I'm God” even shows up in our churches, where we've formed our comfortable routines of acknowledging God with our lips, yet our hearts are far from Him. We've been too afraid to live

a life of total surrender to the Lord. It might mean giving up a lifestyle we enjoy, giving up a habit we're not ready to break or confronting a situation we don't want to face. It might mean discomfort and sacrifice. In life, we've been pursuing the hot-tub lifestyle while God's calling us to cold-shower faith.

We don't trust God with our daily decisions. We've not been living lives of prayer. We're too afraid to let go of the myth of control, and as a result our lives are spinning out of control. And so we see a culture obsessed with feeding itself, gratifying itself, living for itself.

Do we have a culture of death? Do we have no value for life? Are teens so used to killing people in video games that they can't distinguish real life from fantasy?

Houston, we have a problem! We must be vigilant in what we expose our kids to (whether it's violent video games or narcissistic entertainment) and be prayerful as we seek God's direction in raising them to adulthood. Don't think your children will value life just because you do.

Do real-life things and build real relationships with your kids so they see the value of human beings and learn to love the Lord their God with all of their hearts, souls, minds and abilities.

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