

*"Every crisis has both its dangers and its opportunities. It can spell either salvation or doom. In a dark confused world the kingdom of God may yet reign in the hearts of men."*¹

As Martin Luther King, Jr. was going through this in his time, we are going through the exact same thing. We are getting better about living peacefully with each other, but we haven't moved on to living in a nonviolent world without waging wars on one another.

Take a simple walk through town. Chances are you're going to come across someone who is homeless, someone who has no one, someone who has nothing to live off of but the grace of other people, someone who is not able to retreat to shelter in the middle of a storm, and someone who has no bed to go home to at night... If every single person took the time to donate a few dollars out of their pay check or a few hours of their time, we would be able to make it possible to get back on their feet and find the warmth and comfort of a warm bed at night. Take a second to imagine... how would you feel if someone took away everything you had except the shirt on your back? Where would you turn to? Where would you go for help?

Take one step into any high school. Find any one student and ask the simple question... "Is there any violence in this school?" More than likely, that student will say, "Most defiantly, yes." We have turned into a society where we use our fists instead of our words. Even when we do use our words, they hurt. All of the time I hear a simple comment about someone's girlfriend and someone takes it the wrong way or their words get twisted into something else, and before I know it, someone's getting slammed into a locker. Another thing I hear all of the time is someone just talking about their weekend and they say, "Guess what I did yesterday," and the famous answer we all know is, "Your mom!" What if that person doesn't have a mom, or what if they take severe offense to that? As Martin Luther King, Jr. noted in his speech: "Violence is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in the destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding, it seeks to annihilate rather than convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends up defeating itself. It creates bitterness on the survivors and brutality in the destroyers."²

*"When the rich wage war, it's the poor who die."*³ This is true, but why even go that far? Why declare war on another country, on someone else? It's not going to solve anything. Why send a military in to violently destroy whatever they can. "A world war – God forbid! – will leave only smoldering ashes as a mute testimony of a human race whose folly led inexorably to ultimate death."⁴ If we let these wars that we are going through now go on and never come to terms with our problems, we will destroy ourselves... and it's not going to be pretty. Why can't we all get along? It's kind of like when we were all little kids, mom would always say, "Sweetie, you need to share your

¹ *The Quest for Peace and Justice* by Martin Luther King, Jr.

² *The Quest for Peace and Justice* by Martin Luther King, Jr.

³ *The Devil and the Good Lord* written by Jean-Paul Sartre

⁴ *The Quest for Peace and Justice* by Martin Luther King, Jr.

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toys and play fair.” We can simply apply this to the real deal and create peace in the world. It’s a very simple solution to a very complex problem. In the end it may not work, but has anyone remembered back to when their parents said this and applied to the problems in this world? Is there any harm in trying?

If everyone of us make it our mission to over a year donate time and/or money to help the poor, sand up against violence and refrain from waging wars upon each other we can make the statements that Martin Luther King, Jr. presented in his Nobel Peace Prize speech come true. If we take the necessary steps towards accepting people for who they are we can make the world a much better place. Can you imagine the world without wars, violence, and poverty?