

## **A Song of Compassion: “What’s Going On?”**

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Freedom songs were written to speak out against injustices and prejudice, and inspire hope, and unite people to do common good. They were written between 1955 through 1968 for the Civil Rights Movement. In Marvin Gaye’s song, “What’s Going On?” he writes that people have to find a better way to stop wars, fighting, brutality, and prejudice, and that the way is through love and understanding. Every song is written for a reason, and the reason for “What’s Going On?” was to stop prejudice and violence.

The song “What’s Going On?” by Marvin Gaye is about stopping violence, aggression, and discrimination. In the lines “We don’t need to escalate/You see, war is not the answer/For only love can conquer hate” means fighting doesn’t solve anything only love does. In the time when it was written, there were many protests occurring, drawing attention to these unfair social issues, sometimes further escalating the violence. Fighting and wars are major injustices in today’s society, just like brutality and prejudice.

The issues the song concern dying, wars, brutality, prejudice and the lack of understanding or concern for what is going on in the world. There were many hate crimes and discriminatory acts and still are in America today. Fighting can cause physical and emotional pain as can brutality and prejudice. Students everywhere can take the time to learn about issues and injustices that affect the world today.

Students need to not only learn about, but get involved with issues that affect them. The smallest deeds that people can do may help other people. There are many organizations such as Kids Kiwanis, 4-H, The Boys & Girl Scouts, and various school and religious clubs that kids can join to help make a difference. By learning and getting involved, students can make a difference by being more tolerant and understanding.

Nothing good can come from wars, fighting, brutality, and prejudice and there has to be a better way. Marvin Gaye’s song “What’s Going On?” tells that love and understanding solves problems better than hate. Pain isn’t only skin deep, violence and war can really take a toll on someone. Everyday students can make a difference by getting involved and involving others too. Violence is never the answer, under any circumstances.