

## The Black Community Has a Decision to Make

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Many black people in this country, including numerous so-called black leaders, still feel and believe they are not free. When questioned concerning this “feeling and belief” the answer is more about emotions than physical bondage. As a Christian black man, it is a feeling I do not share, and often openly deny when asked. So, let’s try to unpack what we can about this feeling of being in bondage.

Pope John Paul II stated, “Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.” As black Americans we have the RIGHT to do whatever we want to do within the bounds of law. What we must learn as a people is to do what we OUGHT to do. We ought to teach our children not to steal. We ought to teach them not to kill and about the tremendous importance of respect for life. We ought to teach them to tell the truth. The Bible also instructs us to “Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee.” (Exodus 20:12 KJV)”. These basic building blocks were removed from our culture. We, as a people, must to put them back. In his article, “The Fifth Commandment,” John W. Ritenbaugh states, “The more respectful each family member is of other family members, especially of parents, the greater the degree of respect that will carry beyond the immediate family and into strengthening the community.”

Herein lies a major issue for the black community. Today the family seems driven by fear. The black family was systematically destroyed, marriage fell out of grace, the responsibility of a man as head of household was replaced by a single mom, easily controlled by our system of government. Today many black households live in fear of losing welfare, aid to dependent children, Medicaid, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs. We cannot continue to allow our people to be paralyzed by fear.

We, as a people, have a decision to make. We must stop believing that some other group of people has control over us. We must end this mindset where we THINK we are not free. If our mind is held captive, then our body is also enslaved and we will NEVER be truly free.

Is it possible that numerous black leaders are now attempting to keep us in bondage? Their constant bombardment of negativity keeps us distracted from our true potential. We are repeatedly told we WILL NOT SUCCEED by those we elect and those we look to for spiritual guidance, most of whom are black. In so doing they strip us and our children of our pride and dignity. We forget that just a short time ago, we were men of stature and taught to walk with heads held high. The words Frederick Douglass spoke to our ancestors still inspire me today, “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

It is time to move beyond the lies. So, what are we to do? The answer can be found in another quote by Pope John Paul II, “There can be no rule of law...unless citizens and especially leaders are convinced that there is no freedom without truth.”

In Black America it is time to stand for the truth. Because there have been no consequences, the lies have grown to be so blatant that those who make them up do not even try to defend them anymore. We must STOP this destructive path and mindset. The emotional trauma caused by this frame of mind has been and will continue to be passed on to future generations.

We must believe in the very depths of our being that we will overcome this obsession. If we are to succeed, we must be adequately prepared. Preparation builds confidence. Confidence inspires honor. Honor is a building block of truth. Truth is the foundation given to man by God. By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil (Proverbs 16:6 KJV). From the lesson of Rev. Berniece R. Hicks of Christ Gospel Church International, we learned that evil is not sin. Evil is misery, woe, and affliction. We must STOP this misery that is continually afflicted upon us.

Our military academies understand the importance of truth. It is embedded in all that is taught. Black America can take our example from these institutions. It is the reason these academies must survive and thrive. The Air Force Academy honor code was adopted 1955. “We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does.” In the black community many of our children and young adults are taught to lie, steal, and cheat to “get over” on someone. Then they are taught not to snitch and to tolerate those among us who commit

these atrocious acts. If these children are our future, then how can we survive as a people? I submit that we cannot.

The Honor Oath further states, "I resolve to do my duty and to live honorably, (so help me God)." The spirit of the code is "Do the right thing and live honorably." This is something diversity, equity and inclusion does not teach. The spirit of the code must be practiced. Moral development requires that you have personally practiced the code to achieve the experience. The code black youth are learning is the opposite. They are taught to be loyal to individuals who are immersed and engrossed in sin.

Our spiritual education should come from the church. However, the church has been neutered, and we have been taught by our education system that spirituality is irrelevant and antiquated. Before integration, black schools had a chapel in the school or a chapel building next to the schoolhouse. This chapel was the first to go. At that time, the strength of a black man was found in his spirituality. Once this emphasis on godliness was removed, his will was filled with worldliness. From there it was easy to destroy the family from within.

The black community has a critical and necessary decision to make. This destructive path, and the resulting behavior, must be abandoned, or we will forever be enslaved by our own minds, thus forever enslaving ourselves. An entire generation of black youth are watching and learning that unruly behavior can be rewarded. These young black men and women, many under age 18, using masks, hammers, and bats, have come to realize that crime is profitable. They are also learning that they will not be held accountable for their actions. What these children are not learning is "Thou shalt not steal." What they are not learning is Duty, Honor, and Respect. They are not learning personal responsibility.

I call on all black men of honor to save our black children. Start first by teaching them, in every community, the Ten Commandments. For reasons already discussed, I suggest you start with the fifth commandment. Now is the time. Not after they have a criminal record and become a plague on our communities. Not after they have no respect for life, or they have been encumbered by illegitimate children. This decision cannot wait. Will you stand with us today?