

## The Vital Concept of Personal Responsibility

There is a severe disconnect in our nation today. The obvious disconnect to which I refer is simply this: Our culture is having a difficult time connecting behavior to adult, individual responsibility.

Consider that in the minds of many...

- 18 year olds should be seen as victims of bad homes and therefore should not be held responsible for their illegal behaviors.
- Ghetto kids had it tough, so they should not be held responsible for their crimes.
- Poor people feel badly about their clothes, so they should not be held responsible for stealing nice clothes
- Rich kids were spoiled and didn't learn life's lessons, so they should not be held responsible for bad attitudes.  
(You get the idea.)

God addresses this situation in Ezekiel 18. There He helps us recognize a very basic fundamental truth: every person is responsible for his (or her) own behaviors. The text reminds us that:

The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.  
(Ezek. 18:20, NASB)

If and when any culture rejects God's truths and decides that individuals are not responsible for their own behaviors, that culture obviously rejects the truth of God, but it also sets itself up for failure based on the rejection of the realities that actually help that culture keep evil people at bay. When that happens, the principle of Ecclesiastes 8:11 comes to pass:

Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly,  
therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.

If and when a culture accepts God's truths on personal responsibility, it will sow the seeds of maturing and rebuilding its own peace and security.

-Ray Wallace