

Adult Bible Studies

Current Events Supplement January 13, 2019

Submit to God's Love James 4:1-10

Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) is a “violence interrupter” group in New York City that enlists “former gang members to attack shootings like outbreaks of a disease that they must keep from spreading.” These groups work with local police to monitor neighborhoods and assist when needed, hanging out “in high-crime spots to watch out for trouble, and even personally [step] in to mediate fights.” These citizens view random killings “as a consequence of a sequence of events—such as an argument that starts on a basketball court or a fistfight that leads to a shooting. These small fights turn deadly when they go unchecked, so the violence interrupters step in.”¹

The Purpose Statement for today's lesson is “To repent of and change the attitudes and behaviors that keep us mired in conflicts and disputes so that we may live in friendship with God.”² This lesson challenges us to see how our own attitudes and behaviors add to the conflicts and disputes we experience and that threaten our relationship with God. It also challenges us to name and take responsibility for our own actions that pull us away from God.

Former gang members working with police to make the streets of New York City safer certainly demonstrate repentance and changes of attitudes and behaviors. So do community leaders and law enforcement members who recognize their own failures in mediating conflict and reaching out to an underused group that could effectively influence transformation. Together these individuals are working to create safer communities. May we follow their example to work with others and make our own contributions to help resolve the conflicts and disputes that damage too many relationships.

1. How does the S.O.S. program demonstrate repentance and changes of attitudes and behaviors from the different organizations involved?
2. When have your attitudes and behaviors contributed to a conflict or dispute? When have your attitudes and behaviors damaged relationships with others and/or with God?
3. How do you discern when your attitudes and behaviors need to change?

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¹From “NYC Enlists Former Gang Members as ‘Violence Interrupters,’” by Stephen R. Groves, AP News (apnews.com/66af4a419d1b45449f1cfc902da6c042).

²From *Adult Bible Studies*, Winter 2018-2019, by Stan Purdum (Cokesbury, 2018); page 47.

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