

Character

“Hey, I’m depraved on account I’m deprived!”

– **West Side Story** – *Gee, Officer Krupke* (1961)

“Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.”

– **Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803-82, Harvard Divinity School 1824-28)

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

– **Martin Luther King, Jr.** (1963)

Questions

The young people who are dropping out of school or dealing drugs on the street or having babies as young single teens or going to jail – what kind of character have these people developed? Will they be good parents who will develop good character in the next generation?

In America in 2019 are racial profiling and disproportionately poor educational attainment and incarceration rates primarily caused by or the cause of poor character development?

What can be done to correct the situation?

How do we build character in young adults?

- Role of marriage and parenting
- Role of extended family
- Role of church in supporting family and individuals
- Role of schools and access to higher education
- Role of criminal justice system
- Role of medical establishment
- Role of poverty and economic opportunities
- Role of government

Will providing free and easy access to abortion and LGBTQ-affirming care help the situation?

Are there any good church/school models of character development out there?

How are the Nation of Islam people doing it?

Politics in 2019

On March 9 at the SXSW festival in Austin, Texas, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez spoke about the future of the country and her election to the U.S. House of Representatives.

“Part of what happened last year was a crack in the system,” she explained.

How often have you seen a Puerto Rican woman from the Bronx, who isn’t even 30-years-old, break down the wall and win big in politics? Not often, at all.

But there was one question that stood out amongst the political talk and it was aimed at her fellow women of color. Two young women from the Radical Monarchs of Austin asked Ocasio-Cortez what advice she had for breaking into politics. And her reply was succinct and apropos.

“Stop trying to navigate systems of power and start building your own power,” she said.

“There are so many subconscious forces that make us try to act like somebody else ... but when you’re a woman of color, there are so many things about you that is non-conforming,” she said.

Yesha Callahan, Essence Magazine, March 11, 2019

More Ocasio-Cortez Quotes from SXSW

On moderation: “Moderate is not a stance. It’s just an attitude towards life of, like, ‘meh’. We’ve become so cynical, that we view ‘meh,’ or ‘eh’—we view cynicism as an intellectually superior attitude, and we view ambition as youthful naiveté when we think about the greatest things we have ever accomplished as a society have been ambitious acts of visions. And the ‘meh’ is like worshipped now for what? Like, for what?”

“We’ve strayed so far away from what has really made us powerful, and just, and good, and equitable, and productive, and so I think all of these things sound radical compared to where we are, but where we are is not a good thing,” she said. “And this idea of, like, 10 percent better from... garbage, is, shouldn’t be what we settle for, it’s like this, like, it feels like, moderate is not a stance, it’s just an attitude toward life of, like, ‘hmmm.’”

On the working class: “A perfect example of how special interests and the powerful have pitted white working-class Americans against brown and black working-class Americans, in order to just screw over all working-class Americans, is Reaganism in the ’80s, when he started talking about welfare queens.”

Counterbalancing Quotes

“If you’re not a liberal when you’re twenty, you have no heart. And if you’re not a conservative when you’re forty, you have no brain.”

– **Georges Clemenceau**

“It isn’t so much that liberals are ignorant, it’s just that they know so many things that aren’t so.”

– **Ronald Reagan**

“As nightfall does not come all at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such twilight that we all must be most aware of change in the air—however slight—lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.”

– **Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas**

Revival

1. an act or instance of reviving or the state of being revived, such as
 - a. renewed attention to or interest in something
 - b. a new presentation or publication of something old
 - c. a period of renewed religious interest

Revolution

1. a sudden, radical, or complete change
2. a fundamental change in political organization, especially the overthrow or renunciation of one government or ruler and the substitution of another by the governed, either by generalized social or electoral rebellion or organized military action
3. activity or movement designed to effect fundamental changes in the socioeconomic situation
4. a fundamental change in the way of thinking about or visualizing something, a change of paradigm

Questions

Is Ocasio-Cortez guided by Kingdom thinking or Marxist/Humanist thinking? Is she, in her own way, asking us to try to make America great again? She may be onto a current political reality when she talks about not trying to navigate systems of worldly power but rather embarking boldly on your own voyage. If worldly people can advance their own social agendas with failed worldly philosophies, why can't the children of God advance His social agenda with a proven heavenly philosophy? It just needs courage and the ability to explain the proposed course of action in human terms, not religious ones.

Do any of the current political parties in the United States have a corner on godly morality? How many politically correct "rights" are really Biblically incorrect wrongs?

Inclusion

Jesus accepted and forgave everyone, as He did the woman caught in adultery. However, it is not possible to fully include someone who is not willing to receive acceptance by being open to godly conviction, coming to grips with what is right and wrong in their behavior, apologizing for what is wrong, and turning to what is right in genuine repentance. For those who are unwilling there are natural consequences, societal discipline in the form of warnings and social disapproval and, in many instances, involvement in the criminal justice system.



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