

# What's Goin On?

In early 1971, a musical genius by the name of Marvin Gaye penned the ballad that serves as the title of this article. He asked this question of America during a time when the country struggled with racial injustice, poverty, and were at the tail-end of the Vietnam war. He touches on issues like political corruption, social injustice, war, indigence, drug addiction, and even pollution. He wrote this scalding musical narrative with the hope that shining a light on such afflictions would start a movement to turn our country around. Yet, almost five decades later we are facing the same dilemmas.

## What's Going On?

Prejudice, drug abuse, poverty, pollution and war still characterize this nation. How are African Americans fairing in these times? Have our situations improved? One would think that with time we, as a people, would be flourishing. After all, this nation elected an African American president for two subsequent terms.

The truth is, despite a number of major achievements in US race relations, including the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the Voting Rights Act of '65, the Fair Housing Act of '68, the running of two African American presidential candidates, as well as the election of President Barack Obama along with a host of black US representatives and senators, situational progress among African Americans has been rocky at best. To get a better glimpse, let's compare college graduation and financial statistics for African Americans from 1968 to the present. Below are percentages provided by the *Economic Policy Institute on African American Demographics* regarding college graduation, unemployment, poverty and incarceration for African Americans between the years of 1968 and 2018.

In 1968 African Americans made up 9.1% of college graduates. This increased to 22.8% in 2018. In 1968 6.7% of African Americans were unemployed. This increased to 7.5% in 2018. Poverty in African American communities was at 34.7%. In 2018, poverty decreased to 21.4%. African American incarceration was at .6% in 1968. This increased to 1.7% in 2018.

With these statistics we see that while the number of Black college graduates grew in 2018 and poverty figures among African Americans seems to have decreased, the rates for unemployment and incarceration have increased dramatically. With statistics like this, are things getting better or worse for Black Americans?

## What's going on?

I believe a deficiency of spiritually-based justice and judgment within our government is what's going on. We are lacking strong Christian leadership at the local, state and national level. The so-called 'moral majority,' and organizations like it, seem to have lost their way. Our policing mechanisms reek of corruption and malice. Our political systems are self-serving. Many Christians point to "sin" as the problem and this is correct. Jesus, in Matthew 24 noted wars, hatred, lawlessness and a lack of love as future omens. Verse 37 states, *"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the*

*coming of the Son of man be.” We are definitely there. But the act of simply casting blame for this world’s ills on those who kill, discriminate, rob, loot, destroy property, and abuse drugs is a **sin in itself**. We can do so much more.*

## **What are you doing to make the world better?**

Sure, you pray, you go to church, you pay your tithe, you donate your money, old clothing, and other items to charities. But are such acts really making a difference? Is your community better as a result of what you do?

God has a solution for positive change for African Americans and other vulnerable communities, and it shouldn’t surprise you.

In Genesis 18:19, Moses writes *“For I know him, that he will command his **children** and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do **justice and judgment**; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”*

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says, *“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your **children** and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”*

Paul encouraged fathers in Ephesians 6:4, admonishing them to *“provoke not your **children** to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”*

## **Children are the key to change.**

All three of these texts focus on children. In other words, by raising our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord teaching them the importance of doing justice we create a generation of leaders that are spiritually equipped to make change. Joel 2:28-31 states, *“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...your young men shall see visions; even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.”* We are living in a time when the Spirit of God is pouring out on our families. He is seeking to fill our children, our daughters, our elders, our families as a whole.

With the tragic death of George Floyd, there seem to be a number of opportunities for Black Americans to get involved. This is our time to jump into action with our entire families working together to uplift this plagued nation. The best way to do this is to saturate our children with true spiritual fortitude immediately. If we do this now, they won’t be afraid to serve in leadership positions later. They won’t fear speaking out for what is right and they will do so in a manner which reflects Christ.

## **How do we as parents create**

# fearless and Godly youth?

Spend time loving your children every day. Love them verbally and physically, providing ample opportunities for dotting conversation, hugs and kisses. Teach them about a merciful and loving God, a compassionate Jesus and of the role of the Holy Spirit. Discuss real-world occurrences with them in a non-frightening manner, at a level they can understand. Lead them to trust in God. Read the Bible and Bible stories to them daily or have them read the Word to you. Find or start a Zoom Bible Study for kids on Friday nights and maybe even get an interactive meeting on the weekends.

If and when the environment allows, encourage your children to participate in the Worship services regularly as a junior usher, junior deacon, deaconess, a presenter or have them even offer special music. Serve the community with them. Permit your children to walk with you as you peacefully protest, pass out tracts, run errands for the sick and elderly in your neighborhoods, or while you visit convalescent homes. Bring them with you as you feed the homeless. Let them hold the bag as you pick up litter or vice versa. Most of all, **model leadership qualities** in front of your children.

Proverbs 31:9 says, *“Speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.”* If you don't see characteristics of benevolence and true righteous indignation within yourself, pray for it. God will supply it. He promises to do so in Hebrews 13:20,21. And when your children see it exemplified in your life they learn how to demonstrate those qualities as well. It is in seeking God and serving humanity with your children that the love of God is seen in the Earth, and humanity is spurred on in excitement for His soon return.