



"Generation Snowflake"

Since Election Day, major cities in America have been subjected to large-scale protests by young adults. Many of these public protests involve vandalism, arson, and instances of violence. Presidential elections take place every four years. What has inspired rioting this time?

On many major U.S. college campuses, students have organized walk-outs and have demanded cry-zones and safe spaces be established for them to be comforted in their grief and sheltered from news of world events. Why?

Some suggest that this reaction to disappointment is linked to other social and cultural trends characterizing so-called "Millennials." The number of young adults married and living on their own has dropped by fifty percent since the 1960's! Young adults today are less tolerant of emotional upset and make far fewer large-scale commitments. Again, the question must be asked, why?

The answers are not simple. At the same time, they are not as complex as some suggest. Solomon observed three thousand years ago, "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Pro. 4:19). People recognize that there is a problem, but they cannot identify cause and cure.

We do need to be careful not to over-generalize. Just because a person is a part of a specific generation does not mean that they conform to certain characterizations. Today, many young people are pursuing higher education, finding and working jobs, moving out of their parent's homes, and paying their own way as they transition successfully into adulthood.

But some caricatures often have their basis in fact, and it is true that there are many today that cannot be properly called adult, even though they are old enough to vote. They remain at home, unemployed or under-employed, emotionally immature, and filled with grievance.

Some blame the economy. College and health insurance are more expensive than in past decades. Some argue that jobs are harder to come by, but during the Great Depression (when there was 25% unemployment, no unemployment insurance, no food stamps, no welfare, and no social security), young people went to work sooner, worked longer hours, practiced thrift, and learned to value education more, and they still managed to move out on their own and marry. Economic hardship encouraged responsibility rather than prolonged adolescence.

There is one discernible reason for this generation's prolonged youth - a breakdown in the traditional family. Judith S. Wallerstein, in her seminal book, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*, writes, "... compared to children from intact families, children of divorce follow a different trajectory for growing up. *It takes them longer.* (italics original) Their adolescence is protracted, and their entry into adulthood is delayed... Most are well into their late twenties or thirties before they graduate into adulthood." According to this study, growing up in a home with a married mother and father who are their children's parents equips and encourages responsible, self-sufficient adulthood.

The sad truth is that most of the young adults taking to the streets to protest election results did not vote, don't have jobs, and come from broken homes or homes where a father was never present. The majority of "Snowflakes" on college campuses who demand a living environment free from offense or any emotional upset do not come from stable homes. Most thirty-somethings still living in their mother's house are not living in their mother and father's house.

The point is plain. God intended marriage and the family as the bedrock for a civilized society. The purpose of parents is not just to provide financially for children; it is to guide them to the place where they become responsible, self-sufficient adults. Most of these protesters and Snowflakes did not have this. They are children in grown up bodies having temper tantrums. Baby birds are born in the nest, and then they eventually are thrown out of the nest by their caring parents.