Responsibility For Wrong-Doing
Fultondale High School Baccalaureate, May 24, 1992

Introduction:

A. Class of ’92–Welcome to the adult world–To a world bills and pills; To tuition payments, car payments, house payments–Isn't it great!
   1. Seriously, it is a world of fantastic opportunities and momentous problems.
   2. It is also a world of tremendous responsibility (1 Cor. 13:11)
B. Your success and happiness depends on how responsibly you manage your personal opportunities and problems.
   1. The world may offer you great opportunities—but you must seize them.
   2. The world may contribute to your problems—but you must solve them.
C. We human beings do not like to accept responsibility for problems caused by our mistakes and failures.
   1. We trip ourselves up and look around to see who pushed us.
   2. Our first ancestors, Adam and Eve, blames others.
   3. Israel's False Proverb. (Ezek. 18:1-3).
      a. Caused Israel to blame “fathers” and even God for problems caused by their sin. (vv. 19,25,29).
      b. Encouraged two obstacles to solving their problems: self-pity and self-justification.
      c. The prophet told them that they must accept responsibility and quit blaming it on someone else.
   5. Our society has developed some buck-passing approaches to crime and anti-social behavior that is counter productive to solving our problems. Maybe your generation will be wise enough to abandon these approaches.

Discussion:

I. The Decriminalization Approach.
   A. It reduces(?) crime by legalizing it.
   B. It makes the law responsible rather than the law-breaker.

II. The Distribution Approach.
   A. It is the old “Look what you (they) made me(him) do” approach.
   B. It automatically assumes that one's guilt must be shared by others.
      1. A kid terrorizes school — teachers, peers, and school share blame.
      2. A man takes us with secretary — Wife and home must share blame.
      3. A crime is committed — Victim, police, and society must share blame.
   C. It places all imperfections and mistakes on same level.
      1. Any procedural mistake of police, victim, or society removes right to prosecute.
      2. Any procedural mistake of parents or school removes their right to discipline.
   D. It discourages all parties from facing their respective responsibilities.
      1. Offender feels little need for correction if others are responsible.
      2. Offended feel they have no right to demand correction since they are themselves subject to mistake.
      3. The results: society suffers from crime out of control.

III. The Deprivation Approach.
   A. It assumes sin caused by being deprived — not depraved — not really wrong-doers fault.
      1. Murderers and rapist is not really bad—just unloved.
      2. Thief steals because deprived of prosperity of his neighbors.
   B. It attempts to solve problem by showering guilty with what was allegedly deprived of.
      1. Keeps him from facing his real problem and correcting of it.
2. Gives him comfort rather than sorrowing unto repentance. (cf. 2 Cor. 7:10)

IV. **The Disease Approach.**
   A. No sinners, criminals, or wicked folks — just patients and people with problems.
   B. No needing for discipline and/or punishment, just sympathy and understanding.
   C. No need to blame a sick person, he is a victim.

Conclusion:
   A. As adults, accept responsibility for your actions and expect other to do the same.
   B. Don't be a buck passer.