

- I. What is ‘bullying’?
  - a. According to the Ohio Revised Code (in the context of cyber bullying)
    - (2) "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means either of the following:
      - (a) Any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:
        - (i) Causes mental or physical harm to the other student;
        - (ii) Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.
      - (Comment: we’ve been told this must be ‘persistent’ and ‘severe’)
      - (Comment: there is no law against bullying in Ohio, but there is a definition.)
      - (Comment: these definitions are vague)
    - (b) Causes mental or physical harm to the other student;
    - (c) Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.
- b. A more biblical definition
  - i. Definition: Bullying is a **conscious, repeated, hostile, aggressive** behavior of an individual or a group abusing their position with the intention to **harm others or gain real or perceived power**.<sup>1</sup>
    1. Deuteronomy 24:14 - “You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns.
    2. 2 Timothy 2:24-25 - And the Lord's servant<sup>[a]</sup> must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,<sup>25</sup> correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,
    3. Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- c. Other characteristics of bullies:
  - i. They do not take rejection to heart or learn from it the way other kids do.
  - ii. They deny their maladjustment and often blame others for their problems.
  - iii. Boys are more prone to physically bully; girls tend to bully by attacking social status and ties—through damaging, manipulating, or controlling their relationships.
  - iv. Female bullies are more likely to become mothers prone toward maternal irritability, says psychiatrist Sue Bailey. They’re more likely to become teenage mothers, enter into violent relationships, and suffer infection and injuries.
  - v. A child who is a bully by age nine or ten—and possibly long before—is likely to remain a bully into adulthood.
  - vi. They have a strong desire to dominate.

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<sup>1</sup><http://rms.rrdsb.com/sites/rms.rrdsb.com/files/What%20is%20bullying%20What%20is%20not%20bullying.pdf>

- vii. They lack empathy, the ability to fully grasp the feelings of others, and therefore come to deny the suffering of others.
  - viii. They are untroubled by anxiety, which can be a source of restraint when experienced in the right quantity.
  - ix. Up to the sixth grade, they are of average popularity, which then sharply declines with each passing year. They tend to have two or three friends, usually other aggressive kids.
  - x. By high school they are marginalized and not well-liked, which they don't usually realize.
  - xi. They're expert for their age in getting short-term payoffs, but lousy at long-term thinking and planning.
  - xii. Their verbal intelligence is lower than their peers.
  - xiii. As they age they become increasingly selective with their targets.
  - xiv. They're less interested in the speed of surrender than in the pomp of pain and suffering.<sup>2</sup>
- d. More data
- i. "Bullies are often both abuser and abused. They frequently receive parenting that uses unhealthy force to get them to behave a certain way. School bullies are often bullied at home, where their will, wants, and desires are overridden and trampled. In turn, they override and trample others."<sup>3</sup>
  - ii. Some think that bullies have more testosterone. Studies show the opposite is true.
- e. Bullying is NOT...
- i. See attached sheet.<sup>4</sup>
- II. Biblical Examples
- a. Life-giving relationship – David & Jonathan
  - b. Life-destroying relationship – David & Saul
- III. Problems with bullying laws or rules
- a. What's the goal? Healthy relationships through obedience to God.
  - b. Will laws or rules help the goal?
  - c. What about the undetectable 'under-the-radar' stuff?
  - d. Crippling kids who need to learn to navigate society
  - e. What should rules or laws attempt to accomplish?
    - i. Protection from abuse
    - ii. Abuse definition – *Callous disregard for cruel behavior*<sup>5</sup>
  - f. Punishing the child might not help because proper follow through will not happen at home: "That helps explain the bewilderment, dismay, and anger some parents experience when they try to reason with a bully's parents. An appeal to a common good—respect for personal boundaries—isn't sufficiently respected by coercive

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/parenting/bullying-defined-11595601.html>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> <http://rms.rrdsb.com/sites/rms.rrdsb.com/files/What%20is%20bullying%20What%20is%20not%20bullying.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> James MacDonald

parents. They don't believe or acknowledge that trampling occurs. To them, coercion is normal and natural, possibly even right. And their children are following suit."<sup>6</sup>

#### IV. Strategies for equipping students for healthy relationships

##### a. Things to recognize:

- i. Appealing to the parents of the bullies probably won't work. They very well may be the bullies behind the bully.

##### b. Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7)

- i. Matt 5:7 - Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

1. Meek - to not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, *gentle, humble, considerate, meek*<sup>7</sup>

2. To be 'meek' is actually be strong.

3. See this article – "Fooled by False Leadership" - <https://www.hopeingod.org/print/50816>

- ii. Matt 5:38-42 - <sup>38</sup>"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' <sup>39</sup>But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. <sup>40</sup>And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. <sup>41</sup>And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. <sup>42</sup>Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

- iii. Matt 5:43-48 - <sup>43</sup>"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- iv. Matt 7:12-14 - <sup>12</sup>"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. <sup>13</sup>"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. <sup>14</sup>For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

##### c. 4 Laws of communication (Eph 4)

- i. **Be honest** - <sup>25</sup>Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.
- ii. **Keep current** - <sup>26</sup>Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and give no opportunity to the devil.
- iii. **Attack the problem, not the person** - <sup>29</sup>Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- iv. **Act, Don't React** - <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
- d. Train them to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)
  - i. Friend to friend
  - ii. Girl to guy – respectfully let him down easily
  - iii. Guy to girl – true manhood is honoring and protecting women (1 Peter 3:7)
- e. Build Resilience
  - i. Definition: able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions.
  - ii. Identity in Christ (retreat tie-in)
  - iii. Book: 'Who Am I? – Identity in Christ' by Jerry Bridges