

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

It’s been more than a month since the riots, looting, and protests broke out in Ferguson, Missouri in response to the announcement that no charges would be filed against the police officer who shot and killed Michael Brown. Signs of hope and healing are everywhere, but the wounds in this city are still raw and deep.

Walk the streets of Ferguson today, and the stark contrast of hope and devastation slap you right in the face. Brightly colored ribbons with phrases such as: “Be Kind,” “Hope and Love,” and “Change the World” flutter across the street from businesses that are riddled with graffiti, boarded up, or burned to the ground. “I Love Ferguson” stickers, quotes from Martin Luther King Jr., and song lyrics from The Beatles sprinkle the scenery . . . just up the street, rotting flowers and dirty stuffed animals are piled together as a makeshift memorial. But the residents of the St. Louis suburb are finding ways to move on in the aftermath of a series of events that shook their city—and a nation—to the core.

Says Ferguson resident Kenneth Wheat, “Here’s my little town, and now we’re the focus of the world almost. It’s almost like we’re set up as a model now, (of) how a community can get through something like this.”

Missouri governor Jay Nixon has appointed a 16-member commission to study the “underlying social and economic conditions” that led to the unrest, and to “help chart a new path toward healing and positive change.” But that’s obviously not enough to turn this ship around. The first step to recovery is acknowledging the problem. And not everyone is on the same page.

“No justice, no peace,” the protestors chant. But “justice” and “peace” mean different things to different people. “The only way change is going to happen,” says Ferguson resident Dan Wentz, “is for people to be involved.”

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:

Lots of people felt angry about what happened in Ferguson for lots of different reasons. How did people express that anger?

What are some healthy ways to show anger? What are some unhealthy ways to show anger?

Is it OK for Christians to get angry? Why or why not?

There are times when it’s good to express anger. In fact, healthy anger can bring about positive changes. Today let’s look at how God instructs us to cultivate healthy anger.