COPING UP WITH BULLYING

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Bullying among school learners are rampant and certainly not a new phenomenon in Elementary, Junior High School and even in Senior High School. Although there are many strategies put in places to stop it, the problem still exists. The school should be the place where students should feel safe and secure but the opposite happened. Studies show that significant number of students are target of bullying. It is universal and worldwide problem today and even before. Bullying according to Merriam Dictionary is an abuse and mistreatment of someone vulnerable by someone stronger and more powerful. Bullying is putting harm or a repeatedly exercises of power over another with hostile or malicious intent. The word bully was first used in 1530’s. The word bully are expressed by a wide range of physical or verbal behaviors of an aggressive or anti-social nature. These include threatening, insulting, humiliating, teasing, mobbing, harassing, abusing verbally and physically. It may also assume a less direct form (sometimes known as “psychological bullying”) such as gossiping, spreading rumors, shunning or exclusion (O’Connell et.al, 1999). According to Olweus(1993) bullying is when a student is repeatedly exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. These negative actions are not necessarily provoked by a victim for such action to be regarded as bullying; an imbalance in real or perceived power must exist between the victim and the person who victimizes her or him. It is what drives a culture of violence, permitting the most powerful to dominate the less powerful.

The bullying victim were usually thin, fat, ugly, talk or sound differently, shy and those with low self-esteem while the bullies were cool and wanted to feel superior, powerful and usually have psychological and family-related problems. Bullying behavior
was a result of copying parents aggressive behavior, watching violent films, teachers ’ poor classroom management, retaliation for being bullied in the past and feeling older and stronger than others which may result to being fearful, lonely and depressed.

Reporting to family members, school Counselors, and authorities, being absent from schools and avoiding the bullies were the common strategies and intervention manifested by the bullied learners. There are many ways to prevent and stop bullying. Parents, school staffs Counselors and other caring adults have a role to play in preventing bullying. First, help kids understand bullying. Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Tell them that bullying is unacceptable behavior. Second, keep the lines of communication open. Check the kids often, listen to them, know their friends, ask their school and understand their concern. Third, help kids to do their hobbies, interest and help them build their self-confidence. Let us protect them from bullying behavior. Lastly, be a model. Teach them how to treat others with kindness and respect.

The bible does not talk directly about bullying but that does not mean that we cannot use biblical principles to address the issue. In Mark 12:31 the bible commands us to love your neighbor as ourselves and to treat others the way we would like to be treated (Luke 6:31). Belittling or abusing someone is no room in Christian faith. In Genesis 1:26-27 states that every person regardless of what he or she looks or act like, is created in the image of God; James 3:9-10 on the other hand, states that is worthy of the dignity that God gives to every person. Bullying therefore, is never okay. As Christians we are called to honor God with our words and our actions Every day, we should constantly examine our actions and motives to make sure that they are line up with God’s standard.
References:

1. Bible (Old and New Testament)
2. Merriam Dictionary