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43. Examining history makes us better people insofar as it helps us to understand our world. It would seem, therefore, that history would also provide useful clues for dealing with the same social ills that have plagued societies throughout history. On balance, however, the evidence suggests otherwise. Admittedly, history has helped us learn the appropriateness of addressing certain issues, particularly moral ones, on a societal level. Attempts to legislate morality invariably fail, as illustrated by Prohibition in the 1930s and, more recently, failed federal legislation to regulate access to adult material via the Internet. We are slowly learning this lesson, as the recent trend toward legalization of marijuana for medicinal purposes and the recognition of equal rights for same-sex partners both demonstrate. However, the overriding lesson from history about social ills is that they are here to stay. Crime and violence, for example, have troubled almost every society. All manner of reform, prevention, and punishment have been tried. Today, the trend appears to be away from reform toward a "tough-on-crime" approach. Is this because history makes clear that punishment is the most effective means of eliminating crime? No. rather, the trend merely reflects current mores, attitudes, and political climate. Also undermining the assertion that history helps us to solve social problems is the fact that, despite the civil-rights efforts of Martin Luther King and his progenies, the

cultural gap today between African-Americans and white Americans seems to be widening. It seems that racial prejudice is here to stay. A third example involves how we deal with the mentally ill segment of the population. History reveals that neither quarantine, nor treatment or accommodation solves the problem, only that each approach comes with its own tradeoffs. To sum up, while history can teach us lessons about our social problems, more often than not the lesson is that there are no solutions to many social problems only alternate ways of coping with them. 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 [www.100test.com](http://www.100test.com)