

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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What Will Happen To The Next Generation? (Part 2)

Judges 2:8-15

We continue this month with the message “What Will Happen to the Next Generation?” We finished last month looking at Judges 2:10 and the clause, “*which knew not the LORD.*” A generation had arisen that did not know the God of their fathers. The word knew has several aspects of meaning. One of them carries the idea of instruction. Why did this generation not know God? Their parents did not teach them. It seems simple enough, but notice Who it was that the children did not know. The verse says that they did not know “the LORD.” The word LORD here is in all capital letters signifying the personal name of God. It is the name that was first revealed to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3. LORD is the same as I AM THAT I AM. This name reveals Him as the self-existent God Who keeps His word. It describes Him as the One Who can be trusted. This is not just some minor detail that the parents overlooked. This is the most important duty of the parents—and they failed to do it.

How terrible this is! The parents did not teach the children about the LORD. This was not an instance of total neglect. The parents did teach the children some things, just not the wonder of God, and Who He really is. Now remember that the generation who failed to teach their children was the generation who had followed Joshua into the promised land. Their parents were the ones who did not believe that God could give them the land, and God punished them by letting them die in the wilderness. Their children went into the promised land and conquered the enemies. It was this generation that conquered Canaan who failed to instruct their children. But they have no excuse. It was not that they did not know what to do. Deuteronomy 4:9-10 says, “*Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen,*

-2-

and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.” This generation, all younger than twenty when their parents did not believe, is now hearing the command of God. God told them to “teach their children” in both verses. They heard the command of God, but when it came down to putting it into practice, they failed to do it. Knowing what happened to their parents, it would seem that this generation would be obedient to the command of God, and that they would instruct their children. But as we see in Judges, they were not obedient and did not teach their children about the LORD.

They were given the command about teaching their children in another passage. Deuteronomy 6:4-7 says, “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”* How much plainer could the Lord have been? He told them again to teach their children. If the children do not learn about the Lord, it is because the parents have not taught them.

Notice also how much the Lord requires of each individual. He tells them to love Him with their entire being—heart, soul, and might. He also tells them to instruct their children in every place. He tells them to talk about the Lord at home, when they are traveling, when they are going to bed at night, and when they are getting up in the morning. We are to be totally saturated with God—every moment, every hour, every day. Perhaps this is where parents fail. They are not obedient to the command to love God with all that they are—heart, soul, and might. Because they, as individuals, are not completely

given over to God, they, as parents, fail to instruct their children in every way that God commands. The parents cannot talk about God in the house because they never spend any time with Him. They cannot talk about Him when traveling because their heart is not devoted to Him. They cannot talk about Him in the morning or at night because they have not learned anything about Him. It is time that we as parents become obedient to the Word of God so that we can pass on to our children the Wonder of God that He commands us to pass on.

I wonder how many parents are truly sold out to God. How many of us are only “Sunday Christians”? Some people never go to church and never desire the things of God, so normally their children follow the same path and care nothing for the things of God. Others only occasionally attend church, so if their children turn out wrong, it should not surprise us. Some go a step further, and faithfully attend church, but then are surprised when their children turn out wrong. But having them in church is not enough! We should be faithful in going to church and having our children in Sunday School, Sunday morning and evening services, mid-week services, and revival services. But there is more to do! For the children to be adequately trained in the things of God, it must be a daily, complete saturation in the Word of God. That is what God instructed Israel to do right before they went into Canaan, but complete saturation is what the Israelites failed to do as evidenced in this generation that knew not God. Just like those Israelites, we, in our Fundamental churches, are hurriedly bringing along a generation that does not know God. We are failing to teach our children about God because we are so entangled “*with the affairs of this life*” (II Timothy 2:4). We are so concerned with this world, that we are neglecting to teach our children to be wholly devoted to God, and they certainly cannot see the right pattern in our own lives.

Why did this generation in Israel not know God? Because the parents failed to teach them. Why does this generation of children in Fundamental churches not know God? Because the parents are not

teaching them about God. We must confess our sin of half-hearted Christianity, return to being sold out to God completely in every avenue of our life, and begin to teach by word and example the Wonder of God to our children.

There is a second area in which the Israelitish parents failed. Judges 2:10 informs us that they also failed To Pass On the Work of God. The last clause of Judges 2:10 says, “*Nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.*” That should astound us! This generation had seen God do some wonderful miracles, yet they failed to tell their children about them. Remember the word knew in verse 10 carries with it the idea of instruction. The children did not know about the work of God because the parents did not tell them. Why did they neglect to do this? We can only speculate, but doing so may spur us on to be more diligent in our passing on the work of God.

Perhaps they did not pass on the work of God because they did not think that it was important. They may have said, “Those miracles were amazing, but right now we need to get the crops planted.” This is not to minimize the importance of planting crops or doing work, but instruction in the work of God is more important than even planting crops. Learning about the work of God will not hinder our necessary toil. In fact, it will improve it. The parents did not instruct the children because they were disobedient to the command of God.

Maybe the parents thought that they needed to live in the present and not dwell on the past. Perhaps they said, “Those miracles were good, but that happened a long time ago and my children need something to help them make it through life right now.” We may not think that the past is important, but God does. Over and over again, he told Israel to remember what He had done for them. He instituted the Feast of Passover and told them to celebrate it every year, so they could think about what God had done in Egypt many years ago. It is good to remember the past and think about what God has done.

Remember what this generation had seen. God had parted the Jordan River, made the walls of Jericho fall down, defeated the city of Ai, made the sun to stand still, and defeated many other cities on the way to giving Canaan to the Israelites. Yet, for some reason, the next generation did not know what God “had done for Israel.” I speculated on a couple of reasons, but no one really knows for sure. What we do know is that the parents failed to pass on the Work of God.

The parents in Judges failed, but how about us? Are we passing on the work of God to our children? Do we even have anything to tell them? Have we told them how God saved us? Have we told them how God answered prayers that we had prayed? I remember my dad talking about the revival in Pelham, SC, that he saw as a little boy. I also remember my dad describing how God moved in wonderful ways in other services down through the years. My grandfather also told me stories of things that he had seen God do. These did not bore me, but made me stand in awe of God, and hunger for Him to let me see Him work. What about it, Have you passed on the Work of God to your children?