

## Passing the Baton to the Next Generation

Psalm 78:1-7

God's Divine Plan for Reaching Successive Generations with the Gospel

- The Lord intended for the Faith to be passed down to the children within families.
- God wants our families so saturated with His presence and His grace that our children learn to love God with all their hearts.

### A Sobering Thought

**Your children are the only thing that you can take to Heaven with you!**

#### *Danger Signs Today*

- SBC's Council on Family Life reported in 2002 that 88% of children raised in evangelical homes leave the church at or about age 18.
- Another evangelical author predicted last week the collapse of evangelicalism in 10 years due . . . in part to failure to pass on the faith to our young people.

#### *Where Does That Leave Us?*

- There are lessons from the Israelites in antiquity to give us hope and to motivate us to focus on successfully passing the baton of the Faith to our children.

#### *The Scandalous Story*

- The Opportunities That Israel Had
  - Israel saw the miracles of the 10 plagues and the Exodus out of Egypt (vv. 11-13, 43-53)
  - Israel saw the Shekinah glory of Yahweh (v. 14)
- The Opportunities That Israel Had
  - Israel saw the miracle of the Red Sea Crossing (vv. 13, 53)
  - Israel saw supernatural provision of manna (vv.24-25) and quail (vv.27-29)
  - Israel saw the walls of Jericho fall and the Canaanites driven out (v. 55)

**What more proof would anyone need of God's presence, power,  
and compassion for His people?**

*The Outcome That Resulted*

- Israel walked away from it all! (v. 8-9)
- Ephraim is described as “stubborn,” “rebellious,” unwilling to have a “right heart” and “not steadfast” to their Creator, Deliverer and covenant God.

How can you turn to false gods when you have seen that your God is superior to the gods of Egypt and Canaan?

*The Obligation for Us*

A Commitment that is . . .

. . . **Life-Dominating:**

- “We will not hide God's Truth from our children. . .” (v. 4)
- It's so easy to Hide God's Truth from our children. . .
  - . . .by neglect
  - . . .by ignorance
  - . . .by procrastination
  - . . .by the busyness of life
  - . . .by failure to live out Truth in our own lives

*The Life-Dominating Commitment*

- Making Known the Praises of the Lord—His glory in what He has done in the provisions of life (v. 4)
- Making Known the Power of the Lord—answers to prayer and working in changing lives
- Fathers are commanded to prioritize, to “make known” the knowledge of the Living God to their children so that it sticks!
  - More than “telling” or “teaching”
  - “Make known” by living out Truth in our lives; practicing what we preach. (v. 5-6)
- So our children can grow up and pass the Faith on to our grandchildren (v. 6)
  - There are **THREE** generations in view here, and it keeps on going!
- The Result is . . .
  - that the children have their own personal relationship with God. (v. 7)
  - that the children have their own personal hope (confidence) in God that produces obedient, Godly lives.

**Success in parenting is not seen merely in how your kids turn out.  
Success is seen in watching your children raise your grandchildren for God!**

*The Scriptural Solution*

Ephesians 6:4

- The People Involved . . .  
    . . . **Godly Parents**
- Parents must be committed to discipline themselves to live Godly, Spirit-Controlled lives before their kids.

Godly Parents with a Life-Dominating Commitment

- Parents must set the right atmosphere in the family, not the children.
- A Christ-like atmosphere . . .
  - of love and acceptance
  - of open communication and understanding
  - of loving God and serving others

**The Christ-like atmosphere must be saturated with prayer and fasting, asking God to capture their hearts for His Kingdom!**

Ephesians 6:4

The Pattern Involved . . . **Nurture**  
(Training, Discipline)

*Training in this Life-Dominating Commitment*

- Training the WILL of the child early in life to obey authorities.
- Training for prompt obedience with . . .
  - no disrespect or pouting
  - no pleading or whining
- Training for obedience without delay.
- Biblical Training's Goal . . .
  - . . . To train children to do right as a habit of life as they walk in the Spirit
- The external control of the parents transitions into internal self-control as the teen matures in Christ likeness.

*The Scriptural Solution*

Ephesians 6:4

The Pattern Involved...

**Admonition**  
(Teaching, Instruction)

*Teaching in this Life-Dominating Commitment*

- Biblical Teaching's Goal . . .
  - . . . To teach children to know God so He reaches their hearts to love Him
- Teach consistently by word and example.

Christianity is *life-oriented*, not just *content-oriented*. It's helping our kids learn an *intimate walk* with God and living a *Spirit-controlled life*.

- Teach them to know God and His Word
  - to read and memorize Scripture
  - to know Christ personally in salvation
  - to know the basis of our Faith (Acts 1:3)
  - to know the character of God

**God loves you so much that He cannot take His eyes off you!**

- Teach them the qualities of the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
  - to love God and their family
  - to be thankful and joyful children
  - to learn self-control early on in life
- Teach them wise decision-making
  - to fear God and the consequences of sin
  - to prize moral purity
  - to live for a cause bigger than themselves
- Teach them to stand alone for Christ (friends issues)
- To distinguish between needs and wants (reject materialism)

***Life is for ministry!***

*A Word to Teens*

Take your responsibility seriously to *receive* the baton of the Faith from your parents. To whom much is given, much shall be required!

*Conclusion*

**Think of the reward of seeing your children walk in Truth, and then see them join you one day around God's Throne!**