

## ***Bringing Together the Generations***

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**Introduction:** We face a great challenge in bringing different groups together.

- A. It takes the wisdom of God to bring us together. (Jn 17:20-21)
  - 1. When we are crucified then we have placed others ahead of ourselves.
  - 2. Satan works to exploit these natural differences. (Gal 2:11-13; Acts 6:1)
  - 3. It takes little skill to tear down, but great wisdom to build.
- B. Every generation struggles with relationships with previous generations.
  - 1. When we work together we can use the wisdom and experience of one generation and combine it with the strength of another.
  - 2. John wrote to “fathers, young men and children.” (1 Jn 2:12-14)

### ***I. Characteristics of Generations***

- A. The age of a generation should bless it with wisdom based on faith and experience. (Prov 20:29)
  - 1. This is not always true! Consider the generation that came out of Egypt and the one that took the promised land. (Heb 3:16-19; Job 32:9)
  - 2. The next generation was led by Joshua and was greatly blessed.
- B. The experience of a generation can be a blessing or a curse.
  - 1. Consider the generation that followed Joshua. (Judges 2:7-10)
  - 2. Some generations have to fight for their faith and gladly paid a price.
  - 3. Consider the early church and then the church a few generations later. (Acts 8:3-4; 2 Tim 4:2-4)
- C. We naturally associate and listen to the generation we belong to.
  - 1. My sports illustrations often need updating for a younger generation!
  - 2. Consider the phases of life and the shared experiences of others. Ponder the differences between a college student and a couple with children?
  - 3. Look at the reaction of two generations to one event. (Ezra 3:11-13)

### ***II. How God's wisdom brings the generations together***

- A. There is unselfish communication with all. (Deut 32:1-7)
  - 1. A love for the truth will train one to have an open ear.
  - 2. Love for one another helps us to listen carefully. (Prov 18:13)
  - 3. I will never forget the patient listening of older men of experience.
- B. Respect is taught in the home and in our assemblies. (Lev 19:32; Prov 20:29)
  - 1. My Dad taught me to respect authority and those in position of authority.
  - 2. My generation had this drilled into our heads! This reflects the wisdom of God. (Rom 13:1-2, 7; 1 Peter 2:13-15)
  - 3. This respect extends to those who are older. (Lev 19:32)
  - 4. You will find a corresponding respect in those that first respect the completeness of scripture! (1 Cor 14:37)

### **III. How Satan sows discord between the generations**

- A. Absalom serves as an example of one who took advantage these differences
  - 1. He majored in criticism without ever having to take on responsibility.
  - 2. He could “preach it round or flat!” **(2 Sam 15:2-4)**
  - 3. He took advantage of the hurts of others and nourished them!
  - 4. This would appeal to a younger generation who fought no battles.
- B. Absalom showed no reverence for God and His word nor for his father David.
  - 1. He openly discarded the “traditional rules” of morality. **(2 Sam 16:22)**
  - 2. A generation that places “relevance over reverence” will follow such men.
  - 3. Absalom never appealed to God and His word!
- C. Absalom and his companions ate the fruit of their “non-traditional” wisdom.
  - 1. Without reverence he did not stand a chance!
  - 2. He should have learned from his dad! **(Prov 1:7; 19:20-21)**

### **IV. Each Generation Needs a Godly Leadership**

- A. Moses challenged the next generation to do what their parents failed to do.
- B. They had the advantage of being well prepared by Moses. **(Num 33:51-53)**
  - 1. He reminded them of who they are and why they should be humble. **(Deut 9:4-5)**
  - 2. They learned from the failures of their parents. **(Deut 9:6-8)**
  - 3. Moses did not appeal to their “self-esteem” in what some call “positive preaching.” He appealed to the nature, warnings and promises of God.
- C. They had the advantage of being ready to walk by faith. They will fight!
  - 1. Faith will always take you places you did not anticipate. **(Josh 3:3-4)**
  - 2. One cannot be a disciple of Jesus who wants ease! **(Lk 9:62)**
- D. They had the advantage of having a leadership that eliminated internal sources of discouragement. **(Num 32:6-7)**
  - 1. Leaders must lead. They must be proactive and not reactive.
  - 2. Leaders must not be afraid of some leaving. Letting some stay and infect the flock with fear and bitterness is much, much worse.

### **IV. How will the generations in the church come together?**

- A. There are great pressures to restructure the church towards a new generation.
  - 1. Which wisdom will we choose? It is easy to split off a younger generation.
  - 2. Generational changes based on the flesh pit us against one another.
- B. In every decade there are “non-traditional” movements that arise
  - 1. Discontentment is found with almost everything when anything new is praised and the old is ridiculed. (Ex. – “Did Jesus wear a tie?” Response – “Did Jesus wear blue jeans?” Ex - “I hate religion but love Jesus.”)
  - 2. “Wedge issues” are pushed and anger is nourished.
- C. God’s wisdom brings us together in a common faith and love. **(Jas 3:17-18)**

**Conclusion:** Let each of us humbly seek to serve one another for the glory of God.