

Theme: God is the God of generations and calls his people to pray and work to pass the faith from one generation to the next.

## I. Intro - The Joy of Generations

- A. There is great joy in multiple generations
- B. Our family - parents, kids, grandkids, source of joy
- C. Church - I have had the privilege of seeing kids born and now grown
- D. But we hear much of generational conflict, kids abandoning the faith - a perennial problem
- E. How do we pass the faith from one generation to the next?
- F. There are no guarantees - but there are key principles

## II. The First Stage: Watch Yourself!

- A. We are commanded to watch ourselves  
Only **be careful**, and **watch yourselves closely** so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live.  
Deuteronomy 4:9
  - 1. We are commanded twice to watch/keep/guard
  - 2. We must watch ourselves (be careful) and our souls (yourselves) (Hebrew)
  - 3. If we are going to be able to pass on the faith, we must first carefully (closely) watch ourselves and guard the state of our own soul.
  - 4. If we do not carefully guard our own heart, we will give in to the temptation to shift and alter the faith to line up with our new desires and perspectives.

- 5. What you see and what you hear depends a great deal on where you are standing. It also depends on what sort of person you are. (Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*)

### B. Watch so that you do not forget

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely **so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live.**

Deuteronomy 4:9

- 1. They had seen God's Word and work come true, but if they did not guard it they would forget it and let it slip away.
- 2. I am to guard my heart and soul so that I do not forget what I have experienced.
- 3. Scripture is full of examples of people who experience God's Word and work and then let it fade from their hearts and minds
  - a. The people delivered from Egypt forgot at the Red Sea and in the wilderness
  - b. The disciples forgot over and over!
- 4. This is why Scripture commands us to REMEMBER **Remember** the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, "Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children."  
Deuteronomy 4:10
  - a. The very next verse after our text - REMEMBER
  - b. They were to focus their mind to recall and rehearse what God had done and their experience of Him and His work.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Ex 20:8

- c. Remember means more than think about - it prompts concrete action in life.
- d. God commands us to remember - to focus, meditate, think about, and then act in light of - what God has spoken and done in the lives of His people and in our own life in the past.

5. This is what the NT refers to as “guarding” the deposit of faith.

Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. 2 Timothy 1:14

- a. This is a special call for leaders, but it applies to every single believer in Jesus Christ.
- b. They were to focus their mind to recall and rehearse what God had done and their experience of Him and His work.

6. What is not actively recalled, recounted, and rehearsed is in danger of slipping from my heart and mind. This is why we must meditate upon God’s Word and works consistently, and maintain a living, vital, growing relationship with God.

### III. The Second Stage: Pass It On!

A. The faith must be passed on through the generations

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. **Teach them to your children and to their children after them.**

Deuteronomy 4:9

- 1. For the faith to survive, it must be passed down through the generations.

2. This is the natural outgrowth of guarding ourselves, remembering and experiencing God in our own lives

3. This is consistently commanded in the Scripture  
For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” Genesis 18:19

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 6:6–7

- a. It is central in the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants
- b. It is central in the wisdom literature
- c. The failure to do this caused huge problems

After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.

<sup>11</sup>Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. Judges 2:10–11

- 1. The faith was not passed down to the next generation
- 2. They then lost personal knowledge and relationship with the LORD and forsook Him to follow other gods
- 3. This leads to captivity and trouble - and this cycle has been repeated down through the ages many times, and always with the same tragic results

B. Implications of this command

1. This responsibility falls on parents first

**Teach them to your children** and to their children after them. Deuteronomy 4:9

- a. This responsibility falls primarily on the parents
- b. This is also seen in the Shema (Deuteronomy 6) and is repeated often throughout Scripture
- c. There are many studies to back this up - the most important factor in the next generation following Jesus is not how cool the youth group is, but how consistently the parents personally display a walk with God and pass this on to their kids
- d. The church can and must help, but the single most important thing is the parents.

## 2. Grandparents

Teach them to your children **and to their children after them.** Deuteronomy 4:9

- a. We are now down to the 3rd generation
- b. Grandparents are to help pass the faith down to their grandchildren
- c. The call is to pass the faith through as many generations as we can. There must be a multi-generational effort to keep the faith alive in each succeeding generation.
- d. Our later years are not a return to 'playtime' but rather a call to use new freedoms we have to help our children pass the faith to yet another generation.

## 3. The broader church community

You then, my **son**, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> **And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.** 2 Timothy 2:1-2

- a. Son - Paul is applying the parental call to the Church family
- b. 4 generations - Paul, Timothy, reliable men, others

- c. The Church is a spiritual family and it must always work to ensure the faith is passionately embraced by the next generation. If a local church does not do this, it will eventually wither and die.
- d. Everyone in the church, whether or not they are married or have children, are called to help pass the faith on to the next generation.

## 4. What is being passed on is not just knowledge, but a living, vital relationship with Jesus

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget **the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live.** Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Deuteronomy 4:9

- a. This is not just a set of philosophical beliefs, but rather the personal, vital experience of God's Word and work in their lives.
- b. We are not just trying to get the next generation to give assent to propositions, though we are certainly doing that. Rather, we are called to pray and work so that they too experience a living, vital relationship with Jesus.

He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, <sup>6</sup> so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. <sup>7</sup> Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. Psa. 78:5-7

- 1. Note the presence of many generations
- 2. The goal is in verse 7 - an active trust in God that leads to personal obedience
- 3. We must never settle for anything less than a true response of faith and obedience in the next generations.

## IV. Applying the Word

### A. How am I helping pass the faith to the next generation?

1. God is the God of generations, always on mission to the next generation!
2. He calls every believer to engage in this multi-generational mission
3. Am I watching over my soul carefully, maintaining a vibrant, growing walk with Jesus?
  - a. It all starts here for everyone: we never outgrow this
  - b. What would my “state of the soul” address sound?
4. Am I passing the faith on to my children?
  - a. Do I pray for my children to know, trust, and love God supremely?
  - b. Do I do devotions with my children? **AfterHours**
  - c. Do I look for divine appointments in daily life to point them to Christ?
  - d. Are they “catching” a passion for Jesus and His mission from me?
5. Am I passing the faith to the next generation in BRCC?
  - a. Every single person is called to this task
  - b. Whether or not we have children in BRCC, we are called to pray and work to see the faith passed on to the next generation
  - c. Do I regularly pray for the next generation in BRCC?
  - d. How can I help BRCC in discipling the next generation?

### e. Answering objections

1. Working with kids is not my gift - this is not just by gifting, but by service; we can also use helpers
2. I would know what to teach - we have curriculum
3. I can't always make it to the meeting - neither can I but I still preach!

### f. A personal challenge - have you prayed and sought God about being involved in children's ministry?

### B. Closing prayer

## The God of Generations

Deuteronomy 4:9  
February 16, 2020  
Prayer

Psalm 115:14-15

Teaching keywords: Multi-generational perspective and ministry; marriage and family; discipleship

May the Lord make you increase, both you and your children.  
<sup>15</sup>May you be blessed by the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 115:14–15

THANK BRCC!!

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.  
Deuteronomy 4:9