

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; James 3:14-16)
 - 3. It takes little skill to tear down, but great wisdom to build.
- B. Every generation struggles with relationship with previous generations.
 - 1. Because we believe in God and His wisdom revealed in the scriptures, then we have a blueprint to deal with these differences.
 - 2. When we work together we can use the wisdom and experience of one generation and combine it with the strength of another.
 - 3. John wrote to “fathers, young men and children” and commended the stage of growth that each had reached. **(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)**
 - 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. What would be the differences between a college student and a couple with young children?
 - 3. Look at the reaction of two generations to the laying of the foundation of the new temple. **(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. There is also an open ear amongst brethren because we love each other.
(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.
 4. You will find a corresponding respect in those that first respect the completeness of scripture! **(1 Cor 14:37)**
- C. We fear God and learn to discern real wisdom. **(Psa 111:10; Prov 15:33)**
1. There are generations that have not been taught reverence for God.
 2. Without reverence then there can be no heart for unselfish learning.

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 the responsibility of leadership*. **(2 Sam 15:1-6)**
 2. He could “preach it round or flat!” No responsibility, just words. He was a politician of “hope and change.”
 3. He took advantage of the hurts of others and nourished them!
 4. This would appeal to a younger generation who fought no battles but could identify with the youth and “relevance” of one of their generation.
- B. Absalom showed no reverence for God and His word nor for his father David.
1. He openly discarded the “traditional rules” of morality in the most public way. **(2 Sam 16:22)**
 2. A generation that places “relevance over reverence” will follow such men.
 3. Absalom never appeals to God and His word but he still wins the heart of the people! These people are, untrustworthy and unstable.
- C. Absalom and his companions ate the fruit of their “non-traditional” wisdom.
1. Absalom was now in charge and in need of real wisdom.
 2. Without reverence he did not stand a chance! He could have learned from his dad rather than fighting him. **(Prov 1:7; 19:20-21)**
 3. He sought “wisdom” just like Solomon’s son did. **(1 Kings 12:6-8)**
 4. Absalom paid with his life for his short term relevance.

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?
 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 and anything new from the old is praised and encouraged.
 2. “Wedge issues” are pushed and anger is nourished.
- C. God’s wisdom places us together in having a common faith and in a common love. **(James 3:17-18)**

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

- A. Are you separated and out of touch with some in the local church?
- B. What can you and I do to make this church encouraging to all generations?