

August 28, 2016 - Deuteronomy 6:6-9 - “*Children, the future of our Churches*”

Introduction:

Pew Research Center said Wednesday that 49 percent of what they term "nones" left their church and religion because they "don't believe." Another 20 percent said they don't like organized religion. The survey is the latest from Pew that demonstrates a growing trend in America: more and more people are dumping religion and many are giving up on God. This includes many respondents who mention 'science' as the reason they do not believe in religious teachings, including one who said 'I'm a scientist now, and I don't believe in miracles.' Others reference, “I went to college and evolution changed all that.

We must beware of our society producing a wicked and thoughtless generation. People are asking, “Where are the young people and I am asking where are the leaders to train them up? Where are the godly parents to bring them to Church? The time came when God's children, Israel, cared so much for paganism that they quit caring for God. Is this not what we are witnessing with our young people today?

The default setting of our generation is "disinterested." Each new day their life automatically goes to a "disinterested in God" setting. In this regard, they are not unlike Israel of old (Deut. 31:18-20). The causes for young people’s disinterest in the things of God are many and increasing as Pew Research defines.

When the preacher is in the pulpit, their attitude is "I'm listening, but I'm not buying." We preachers are challenging them to eat what they have no appetite for, drink what they have no thirst for. Why?

I. Worldly Influences undermine the Church. – II Timothy 3:13-17

1. A Harvard University study found that 6 of every 10 juvenile delinquents had fathers who drank to excess; many had mothers who did the same; 3 out of 4 lacked parental interest or discipline; and 4 out of 5 had parents who took no interest in their friends or amusements. Many wayward children came from broken homes, and few had religious training of any kind. Some would say, "We will not influence our children in making choices and decisions in matters of religion!" But why not? The ads will! -The press will! The movies will! The neighbors will! The world has many devises to ruin the young of America...

2. We use our influence over our jobs etc. Shall we ignore our own children? Stand your ground as Christian parents & teach your children that God is the source of all. The world will seek to counter that but you have God’s promise. --- Proverbs 22:6 *Train...*

3. Discipline children with the goal of bringing them to Jesus, the only one who can truly change hearts. Let the Gospel of the cross be your proof to them that Jesus loves imperfect people.

Remember that you are not asking them for perfection, but teaching them about the grace of the One who is perfect.

II. Family Influence undermine the Church.

1. Parents' hypocrisy - Deut. 4:40:

"**Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee....**") When it does not go well with the children, often it is not going well with the parents either.

Ninety-nine percent of parents will say that they love their children but love is more than a feeling; love is an action. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16a). God showed that He loves us by His action of giving His Son for us. Put into action what the Christian life is all about and it will be a blessing to you and the church.

2. Parents' materialism; a genuine interest in worldly things over godly things and the children suffer because they spent so little time with their parents who should be their greatest influence.

3. Parents' disinterest in the Bible (Deut. 32:46: "**Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.**")

Is there no reason to believe that children in our churches find themselves with God's back turned against them, suffering the natural consequences which come with a life that is indifferent to God? They are indifferent by default.

Christian parents, if you are grounded in the Scriptures, you are equipped to teach your children. First, you can affirm your children by telling them that they are unique creations of God (Psalm 139:13-16).

--- for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made:

Second, they can teach their sons and daughters that sin, the great equalizer, is in every individual, and that they too need Christ's saving grace (Romans 3:23).

Parents who impart these perspectives are well on their way to fulfilling the apostle Paul's instruction for child rearing: "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". Kids need parents that are godly examples and church leaders that do the same.

Children are the future of our churches but that future starts in the home and the church amplifies and supplements Biblical truths and principles. We will never have the next generation take the reins of the church and keep our churches separate from the world when are homes are not...

The number one complaint of most kids is "My parents don't!" That's why parents need to apply in their home: Proverbs 24:3-4 **Through wisdom is a house builded; and by understanding it is established: by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.**

More than anything else, kids need to know, no matter what they do or how badly they mess up, Mom and Dad will always love and accept them unconditionally. This is why God gives us the command in **Romans 15:7** (Wherefore) receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Too many parents try to live out their own dreams in their children, and that often leads to disaster. Stop insisting that your children be you, God never intended for your kids be little replicas of you. God will never create another you. They and you are unique. **Ps. 139:13-24.**

3. Psalm 127:3-5 **Lo, children are an "heritage" from God.** This word "heritage" refers to a possession granted by Jehovah, as a gift from Him. It conveys the idea of a possession to which one has a legal claim. Don't miss this important truth: our children belong to God. Parents are the divinely appointed stewards of these precious souls. We will be held responsible for what we do with the children God has placed in our care. We need to protect our children and our homes from worldly influences...church!

*** Colossians 2:8 "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."**

4. Children are a blessing from God not a burden or an inconvenience. In our culture today some look upon having a child burden or an inconvenience. However, note what the Bible said in verse 5 they are a blessing...happy is the man. Now that not to say there are not times of trials, but they are a heritage of God. Our church is blessed to have them.

Second, they can teach their sons and daughters that sin, the great equalizer, is in every individual, and that they too need Christ's saving grace (Romans 3:23).

Parents who impart these perspectives are well on their way to fulfilling the Apostle Paul's instruction for child rearing: "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Children with this upbringing are more likely to grow up feeling special without being spoiled.

Lastly, we must teach children the value and purpose of the church. We must help them understand the need for corporate worship and that this is God's way for His children. If the family does not do it part we cannot expect our churches to continue by the next generation.

Conclusion:

As pastor I praise God for our youth ministries that help support the Christian home and help ungodly homes to have a dose of godliness brought home by their children. My plea with you this morning is -- will you commit to helping in this ministry? That is really tough pastor! Yes it is. It is a sacrifice and takes commitment, but the value is eternal and the future of our churches. It lies with the human resources of young people falling in love with the Lord and the church of Jesus Christ.