

## Are Growing *Another* Generation Of Spiritual Weaklings?

We love our children and desire the best for them. Indeed, they are “an heritage of the Lord” (Psa. 127:3). We want to see them succeed in life. Spiritually minded folks want their children to be vessels of honor that are useful to the Lord and his blessed cause (2 Tim. 2:19-22). While each individual can choose his path in life, there is a recipe for producing a knowledgeable, stalwart generation of Christian soldiers. It is no secret but rather is revealed in scripture.

On the other hand, there are also factors that help guarantee yet another generation in the church of spiritual air-heads that do not know, follow, or really care about God’s will. The current digression is self-propagating. It raises new generations that repeat the errors of its parents and add a few new ones for good measure. Their religion is a mile wide but only an inch deep. It is worn on T-shirts with catchy religious phrases but does not affect conduct and bring about sanctification. It paints houses to help, then heads for the Prom dance floor. It sports bracelets asking, “*What Would Jesus Do?*”, then ignores the principles found in God’s word that answer the question. These young people grow up without the ability to discern right from wrong, that which is authorized and that which is sinful. They do not know Paul and Noah yet they can tell you all about Harry Potter and Nintendo. Truth has become relative. There are no lines of fellowship to be drawn. They see no battles worth fighting—certainly not about doctrinal matters. Here is where the brotherhood train is headed in many places; in some, the train has already arrived at apostasy’s depot. If you want disaster, here is it is.

To create a spiritually weak generation, you can create “ministries” that emphasize everything but the Bible. Is bowling a ministry? Are we engaged in a Bible ministry as we ride the roller coaster at Six Flags? Could a watermelon seed-spitting contest be labeled as “Ministry of Compressed Air/Oral Propulsion?” Some hold that the primary purpose of a “youth ministry” is not to teach Bible doctrine, and further, that entertainment and social activities are on an equal plane with the proclamation of the Word. This is erroneous. Now brethren, there is authority for the church is act as the church in benevolence, edification, and evangelism (Acts 4:34-37; 6:1-7; Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:16; Acts 13:1ff). Where is the authority for the church to act in the area of entertainment? It is found in the same passage that authorizes mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship. First and foremost, the Lords church is a spiritual institution with a spiritual mission of teaching the gospel to save and edify souls. It is the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Softball games are fun but hardly to be compared with the true work of the church! **“For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things**, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). Biblically, there is no authority for a ministry that does not serve to further the teaching of Christ’s doctrine. Even the work of benevolence was not an end to itself but rather to further the teaching work of Christ (see John 6:26-27).

If you want a crisis in the church, let Daddy and Mother surrender their training and crucial roles to others. The church is the church—it is not the home.

The elders in the church shepherd souls but they do not head the individual homes that comprise the church. The husband/father is the head of his home (Eph. 5:24; 6:1ff). The wife/mother is to keep the home (Titus 2:5). As parents, my wife and I have the obligation to train our children in the Bible as well as in other disciplines. The church does likewise in regard to Bible training, and so both institutions are authorized to teach the word of God. But the work of these two institutions is not identical. Children need physical exercise but that is not the church's responsibility. Our children need to learn mathematics and history but again, that is not the sphere in which the church is charged to operate. They need to learn social skills and they require recreation but the Bible nowhere authorizes the church to operate in these areas. The church has a full-time job doing what it is authorized to do. Let the church get on with its crucial work and quit saddling the church with the home's duty.

Our youth need Bible doctrine. They need to hear truths all over again. They need to know the principle of Bible authority. They must learn the fundamentals of worship and conduct. They need to memorize scripture and be able to give Bible answers to Bible questions (1 Pet. 3:15). They must have a faith of their own that is rock-solid and grounded on evidence (1 Thess. 5:21). They must be filled with a zeal and fervor that takes Bible knowledge and turns it into unwavering defense of truth. "It is fatal to forget that every generation must have all the truth taught to it all over again, or departure and apostasy are the inevitable results" (Guy N. Woods, *Shall We Know One Another In Heaven*, p. 187).

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