

This week will have many emotions as school resumes. There are deep feelings among teachers, parents, and students. All that is going to kick off this week represents a passion and sense of responsibility to impart knowledge to the emerging generation. Today our topic is the importance of the next generation.

Proposition

Imagine with me that you are about to take a long journey and it is time to pack. What do you include? Certainly, some items will be optional. But the items that will end up in your travel luggage are the most **important things**. These items include everything from travel documents and to toothpaste. No doubt there have been some trips where you put something in your suitcase that was quite unnecessary.

When it comes to our spiritual journey, how do we decide on what are the **important things**? You might call this series “Sermons from a Suitcase” because it was on a recent journey that I had time to reflect on what are the most important things for someone who is a follower of Jesus.

Now, this is not an exhaustive list. What was the most important thing that I packed for my trip? Hankies! I need to mop my brow often. We need to cling to many important spiritual realities. This series is not exhaustive, but it entails some of the important things I pondered during this unique trip.

Today we are considering “**The importance of the next generation**”. Perhaps we feel that all the various titles of generations is overstated. Indeed, in some ways, we only have the “current generation” which encompasses all of us, to some extent.

But today we are going to focus on the transfer of spiritual truth from one generation to another. We turn to Psalm 78, which was written by Asaph. It is in the form of a “maskil” which is a teaching poem; the term derives from “to be prudent” and is used just over a dozen times in Scripture. There are a total of 72 verses but our text is **Psalm 78:1-8**.

[1] God’s wisdom has been revealed – vv. 1-3

First, we must recognize that anything that we have to pass along to those who follow us is not from ourselves. What we know from God is but a gracious gift – not self-discovered but divinely revealed. Yes, God’s revelation is often “hidden” in parables. This was true of the way that Jesus taught. Often His parables veiled God’s truth from the unresponsive (see **Matthew 13:35**). The author of Psalm 78 wrote a “parable” (v.2a) which reads much more like a history lesson.

Commentator Willem VanGemeren notes that “*The goal of the wisdom teacher is to open Israel’s history from God’s perspective.*” (**TEBC**, Vol 5, Zondervan, 1991, 506) This is great treasure of God’s progressive revelation throughout the Bible. The Gospel story is unveiled step by step, through prophets, and culminates in Christ, as taught by the apostles (see Hebrews 1:1-3). Because of this fact, the curriculum for Cornerstone Juniors this fall will be [The Story Formed Way](#)

1 - Creation and rebellion

2 - Sinful humanity

3 - A people of God

4 - Exodus and law

5 - The person of Jesus

6 - The works of Jesus

7 - Death and resurrection

8 - The mission and power

9 - Life in the Spirit

10 - Creation restored

[2] God's ways must be recounted – vv. 4-5

There is a serious mandate to recount the ways of God. Fundamentally, this is a responsibility placed upon parents in regard to their children. Consider what we read in **Deuteronomy 6:4-12**. And this mandate extends to the community of faith – the Church. We have the commission of Jesus to make disciples (**Matthew 28:19-20**). We also have instruction from Paul about disciple making (**II Timothy 2:1-2**). Think of a “**legacy plant**”. Consider an olive tree planted by one generation, and enjoyed by the next generations!

This summer Cornerstone partnered with the ministry of [Epic-Onside](#) to run a Summer Camp. First, please notice this picture of the team of young people who were trained up to make disciples through sport camps this summer! That is one aspect of recounting God's ways – to those who are learning to serve Jesus. Then there is the recounting of God's ways to the children who attended the camp – to those who are discovering following Jesus. Tiria was our camp coordinator and will now introduce a video.

[3] God's works must be remembered – vv. 6-8

Robert Coleman states, “*One must decide where he wants his ministry to count – in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men who will carry on his work after he has gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for.*” (***The Master Plan of Evangelism***, Fleming Revell, 1964, 37). What will the next generation know? At Cornerstone there are six key values that we want to impart to our youth. **We want to help youth...**

1. Become rooted in God's story – not just hear the Gospel but live by it.
2. Find their identity in Jesus Christ – in contrast to all the pseudo identities offered to them today.
3. Discover God's design for their contribution – if youth know Jesus, they have a spiritual gifting.
4. Be released from fear – In “Renegotiating Faith” (2018) we read “*emerging adulthood is an unprecedented time of opportunity for young adults it has also spawned a collection of new fears and anxieties.*”
5. Think accurately about God – A. W. Tozer said, “*What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.*”
6. Be connected to a mature mentor – Think of Paul and Timothy; and Timothy's upbringing (II Tim 1:3-14)

There is something chilling in Psalm 78. From verse 9 to 67 we find a sad pattern: God did...but they...” Consider some examples: “they forgot what he had done” (v.11); “continued to sin against him” (v.17); “did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance” (v.22); “in spite of his wonders, they did not believe” (v.32). Yes, when God punished, they returned (v.34-35) but then they became fickle and faithless (vv.36-37).

Conclusion – See Digging Deeper

In **Luke 24:19** Jesus asked the men on the road to Emmaus, “What things?” This was about what had happened in Jerusalem regarding His death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus explained to them that the Gospel is all about Himself! (v.27) Are we passing this truth on to the next generation? Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote in his 1838 poem “A Psalm of Life”: “*Lives of great men all remind us / We can make our lives sublime, / And, departing, leave behind us / Footprints on the sands of time.*” We must remember that no matter what we do, we will be leaving a legacy to the next generation. Because we will have an impact – for good or bad – and one day we will be gone. We are on the verge of greatest wealth transfer in human history. What kind of “spiritual transfer” are we going to make!

Let's invest in the next generation!

✓ **Ways To Give**

✓ **Ministry Partner Offering**