

“FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION”

PSALM 78:1-8

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SUMMARY

Psalm 78 calls for a transfer of the good news of God’s salvation from generation to generation. The Psalmist received the good news of God’s salvation from one generation – “our fathers have told us” – and he is determined to transfer that good news to “the coming generation.”

These verses should provoke us to realize we are a part of something far bigger than any one of us. We are a part of the transfer of the gospel from generation to generation. Every one of us has a part to play in this transfer and a call to display God’s heart for the coming generations. What does it mean for you to be faithful to the coming generation? How do we participate in the transfer of the gospel?

1. WE THINK BEYOND OUR OWN LIFETIME. (v. 5-6)

God has revealed himself to his people through his “testimony,” his “law,” and he has commanded parents to teach his revelation to their children. Why? “... That the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn.” God explicitly says that one of the primary reasons he has commanded me to train my children has to do with the generation of my great-grandchildren!

2. WE DAZZLE THE COMING GENERATION WITH GOD. (v. 4)

The fundamental thing that is being passed on is a message. It is something we “tell to the coming generation.” It is not first and foremost telling them to do certain things; it is telling them what God has done for us!

Our goal is not just to pass along personal values and preferences. No, our goal is to pass along the things that matter most to God. Verse 7 gives three things that are the goal of our instruction and training of the next generation: 1) Set their hope in God—not in the things of this world. Not money. Not possessions. Not building wealth. Set your hope in God; 2) do not forget the works of God (creation, the gospel, salvation); and 3) keep his commandments.

3. WE ARE MOTIVATED BY GOD’S RENOWN. (v. 7)

“God’s renown” means God’s reputation and fame. This is our motive for transferring the gospel from one generation to the next. Did you notice in this verse that God’s heart for the coming generation is completely and thoroughly God-centered? The ultimate reason that God established this testimony and appointed this law (v. 5) and calls one generation to teach the coming generation is “so that”(v. 7) they would 1) set their hope in God, 2) not forget the works of God, and 3) keep the commandments of God.

4. WE MAKE FAITHFULNESS OUR PURSUIT. (v. 8)

There is something about this vast generational picture of our lives that has a sobering way of bringing into focus what really matters in life and ministry. The indictment of an entire generation and the words written on their gravestone were “not steadfast” and

“not faithful.” Therefore, the generation after them was unable to look to them and learn from their example. The only thing to learn from them was to not be like them.

Questions to help you apply the message:

1. Read Psalm 78:1-8. How does this passage prove God is multi-generational and commands us to be as well?
2. Jared reminded us that every generation is prone toward “generational narcissism,” that is, “the tendency to be entirely consumed with our own lifetime and our own generation, rather than think beyond our own lifetime. “ Read 2 Kings 20:16-19. How does Hezekiah’s response to Isaiah’s prophecy of judgment reveal such narcissism? What will protect us as fathers, as parents, and as churches from this erroneous thinking?
3. Jared shared that “it’s not enough to faithfully discipline and dispense wisdom for your children. They need to see you looking in their eyes and hear you expressing your amazement at the grace of God to sinners like us. Have they seen your enthusiasm over the gospel? They’ve seen your enthusiasm over sports, right? Your kids need to hear you singing about the grace of God in your home and expressing gratitude over what Christ has done for us.” Ask your children what they believe you are passionate about. Does their response surprise, concern or encourage you?
4. Jared called parents to dazzle their children with the gospel in such a way that they 1) set their hope in God and not the things of this world, and 2) never forget the works of God, and 3) keep the commandments of God and develop a commitment to application. How can you, through your example, prayers and teaching make these God-centered priorities more of a reality in your home?
5. God has richly blessed Covenant Life with a generation of faithful members who built wisely on the grace of God. How are you currently learning from those who have gone before you? Read Psalm 78:4. Where can you invest in the next generation? How can you take specific steps to “dazzle them” with the wonders of Christ?