

EDITED Caring for the Next Generation

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When my children were younger, I remember deciding to purchase them a new jacket and wearing my threadbare coat for yet another year. This proves true the quote: "A real parent is someone who puts their kids above their selfish wants and need." These words sound like they were taken straight from the pages of the Bible. Our Father God demonstrated the ultimate selfless act when He gave His only Son to redeem humanity. Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in behavior from our peers toward the next generation that doesn't mimic God's actions. We often fall in line with King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20.

The king proudly had opened his treasure house and exposed all the wealth of his kingdom to his enemies. God foreseeing the negative consequences that would come from that action, sent Prophet Isaiah to forewarn Hezekiah, but promised to delay judgment to the king's children's generation, in order to spare the king himself.

We would expect the king to fall on his face and petition God for His mercy so that the judgment would be averted for his posterity. Instead, Hezekiah says in a nonchalant attitude, "Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?"

What makes matters worse is that earlier in the same chapter King Hezekiah was told he was going to die. For this judgment, the king pleaded with God until the Almighty graciously added fifteen more years to his life. Hezekiah would have experienced God's mercy for his children also if he had asked.

But when told that judgment and the consequences to the king's actions will be transferred to his descendants, the king did not plea-bargain. He actually didn't care what happened after he was gone!

Hezekiah is not the only example of self-centered parenting. In 1 Samuel 3 the prophet Eli's children rebelled against the Lord. God warned Eli multiple times to call his sons to accountability. Finally, God confided in Eli's protégé, little Samuel, telling him all the evil He was going to unleash on the prophet and his rebellious children. Eli did not fall on his face and wail for God's grace and mercy. Instead, Eli sounds like Hezekiah, "It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him." Due to this uncaring attitude, the prophet and his children perished in one day.

How concerned are you about the wellbeing of your children? How are you putting that care into action? Do you look the other way, pretending is not happening? You've seen them in their rebellion, promiscuity, in their drug dealings, the gang activities, etc.

OUR RESPONSE

1. FAST AND PRAY FOR OUR YOUNG

When King David committed adultery with Uriah's wife Bathsheba, the woman became pregnant. To cover up the deed, the king killed Uriah and married his widow. God's anger with David came with a judgment: the sword will not depart from David's house and the child born as a result of the sin will not live. Hearing the severity of the judgment against the unborn child, David fell before the Lord fasting and praying for God to avert judgment. Though the baby died, God was pleased with David's humble repentant heart. It is no wonder that God said of the king, "I have found David a man after my own heart." He rewarded David and Bathsheba right after with another baby (Solomon), who became the wisest king ever to rule the nation of Israel. Prayer changes things, and it has the capacity to change the most hardened hearts. Let's make it a habit to nag less and pray more.

2. BECOME A ROLE MODEL

There are so many reasons why kids become wayward. One of the major reasons is lack of godly role models. Kids become what they experience around them. As a parent, God has placed you in their path to show them the way. Other adults are often called upon to make a difference as well. How willing are you to give of yourself in order to promote godly character in the life of some wayward child who might be heading to prison?

3. PRAY FOR UNDERSTANDING

One common complaint you often hear from young people is, "they don't understand me." The common reply is "yes we do, we were once your age," but that is not entirely true. The world of this generation is totally different than the one where we grew up. To reach the children, we must learn who they are, what they like, and what they face. In our quest to get educated, let's get knowledge about our kids.

I pray for grace to extend Father God's kind of selfless attitude towards my grown-up children. Join me and agree in prayer for the kids around you.

