



For the Week of April 1, 2018

Beloved,

The focus of this family devotion is to rethink how Christians are living out their faith and what some of the consequences are. There is a great falling away across our nation, read II Thessalonians 2:1-3. You will find below a portion of a message preached by Dr. Stephen Davey in Cary, NC. This message was first preached in 2013, it was aired on BBN on March 29, 2018 and stands as a testament to the truth and relevance of this message in light of II Thessalonians 2:1-3. If you would like to read the entire message or listen to it you can go on line to www.oneplace.com Wisdom For The Heart. The message is entitled A Pit Stop Called Encouragement Part 2.

Please read over this information and consider how you may be experiencing this in your personal circle of family and friends. Following the below portion of the transcript I will have something for you to ponder that the Lord has been laying on my heart for some time now. Please read this second portion and then pray for the Lord to give you wisdom as to how He may have you respond regarding leading your family in a closer walk with Jesus.

The following can be found on page 5 of the transcript.

“Notice their strength was abiding in, dwelling in, being immersed in, and saturated by, the word of God.

So is it any wonder then that the enemy would seek to turn young adults against the reliability of scripture?

And is it any wonder that one of the church’s greatest challenges in the 21st century is reaching and discipling young adults who are abandoning the truth of God’s word as their source of spiritual compass.

In fact, the great exodus from the church across our nation is in the lives of 18-29 year olds.

Even secular journals newspapers and universities are picking up on the outgoing tide of young people.

One author reported that young adults who presently claim to believe in Jesus Christ, 2.6 million of them are leaving the faith at some point between their 18th and 29th birthday.

That’s 260,000 who leave the protestant, “evangelical” church every year. That’s 712 who will effectively quit the faith today, and another 712 tomorrow.

One of the reasons for this is the simple fact that the Bible had little to do with their shallow faith system to begin with.

One author said that the 18-29 year olds were reared by materialistic parents who effectively shoved God to the sidelines of their lives and thus developed their own view of God who now resembles a moralistic therapeutic Deist, rather than the living Master and Lord of life.

In other words, the God their parents barely acknowledged is a God they are finding easy to abandon. Their parent’s God was a God who could only seem to quote the Golden rule, who wanted everyone happy doing whatever they felt made them happy – even if it included abortion, divorce, greed or adultery.

To them the vision was lost. God was no longer the God of historic biblical revelation whose highest goal is His own holy glory being longed for and lived for and demonstrated through the lives of believers.

The adults they had grown up around – in the home, in the church – weren’t interested in running a race or fighting the good fight or staying the course or persevering in responsibilities and relationships . . . and they certainly didn’t sacrifice anything for the sake of Christ or His church or the mission . . . so why bother.

Josh McDowell reports in his 2006 findings that 69 percent of evangelical 18 year olds will leave the church after graduating from high school.

LifeWay Research has concluded that 70 percent of Christian church attendees born after the year 2000 will leave the church by the age of 23.

One more – Barna estimates in a 2010 release that of every five young evangelicals, four will disengage from the church by the age of 29.

In fact, the nationwide departure from the church of evangelicals 30 years of age and younger – has become so noticeable that they have even earned the nickname, de-churched.

You have the unchurched – those without any accountable relationship or partnership with a local assembly of believers. And now you have the de-churched – those who, John will actually write about a little later in this second chapter – those who went out from among us – who were really not of us; for had they been of us – that is genuine believers – they would not have left us. (1 John 2:19)

Now there are some in the church who are watching this exodus and concluding that we really aren't going the way of England and the Netherlands, because as this generation leaves the American church externally, they are retaining their faith internally. One author boldly said, "That just isn't so. They are quitting the faith, not because they aren't happy with it – they are quitting the faith because they no longer believe it."

And the problem is, the faith they once believed was shallow at best, corrupted at worst – the church was to them – and their parents – a social club you could take or leave; God was to them a Grandfatherly Genie who just wasn't paying off anymore. Isn't it interesting that Jesus faced the Devil in the wilderness when He was 30.

Barely beyond his 20's.

And He was tempted 3 different ways – and every one of the temptations basically said, "You need to look out for Yourself and you ought to get whatever you want . . . if your Father God is real, you shouldn't be hungry, you shouldn't get hurt and you should make it to the top of the ladder!"

And in every response, Jesus merely quoted scripture in return."

Beloved, as I have been working through the reality of the above statistics, I have grown even more concerned for our young people. Often in Christian homes, parents are raising their children just like those of the secular world in regard to holidays. For example, at Christmas time most kids are so excited about Santa Claus and what they are going to receive. The sad part is that Santa becomes the major and Jesus the minor, if Jesus is mentioned at all. Also there is the problem of raising kids to "believe" in Santa Claus. This is not necessary, you can celebrate Christmas and have the kids wake up to gifts and the whole nine yards, without lying to them about Santa Claus. It would be much healthier for them to know why gifts are given, to celebrate the greatest gift of all, Jesus for the redemption of mankind. They will be just fine growing up knowing that Mom and Dad gave the gifts as they learn the importance of the Christmas celebration.

Second, I recommend that you look at some of the reliable surveys out there to learn how many people there are in our nation that do not have a clue as to why Christians celebrate Easter. If you ask, the majority will say that Easter is all about the Easter Bunny, a mysterious creature/bunny that lays chocolate eggs. How much healthier, for their little spiritual souls would it be if Mom and Dad came clean and did not lie to their kids about the Easter Bunny and instead went to Scripture and taught them about the true meaning of Easter? Again, it's okay to have gifts and candy laid out for them on Easter Sunday morning, just not under the pretense of a lie. It is okay to have an Easter egg hunt, even at the church, just have Jesus as the focus, tell them the Easter story, share the gospel with them, do so praying for a harvest of little souls!

Third, there is Halloween. This is a pagan celebration these days that glorifies Satan and the dark side. May I ask you to prayerfully consider not participating with your kids in this? If you want to, have treats prepared for those who may come to your door, but also share a gospel tract with them. Ask your kids to come up with other creative ways to be a witness for our Lord Jesus Christ, they may just pleasantly surprise you! Sit down with your kids and tell them why you choose not to have them dress up as some kind of witch or goblin or other dark thing. Again, let them have candy! Just don't look and act like the rest of the world who has no clue that the powers of darkness are real.

Lastly, there are several other events in which believers may unintentionally mislead their kids, do you teach them that the Tooth Fairy is real? Do you celebrate St. Patrick's Day and join in the "luck" of the Irish without telling them of the vast difference in the doctrine that he spread as compared to the doctrine Evangelicals hold dear? No wonder kids are confused.

In conclusion, there is so much junk out there in the world vying for your kids hearts. Satan is real and his desire is to steal the hearts of your children. Please prayerfully consider addressing all of the above issues with your children, the precious gifts God has given you. As parents you should be constantly pointing them toward the truth of the Word of God and their need for a Savior. I cannot help but believe that in raising them in truth they will more likely be drawn to Jesus as they grow and make a genuine decision to accept Jesus as Savior. A falling away is inevitable, the Bible says it will happen. Please be sure to always speak truth to your kids, keep the gospel ever before them, pray for them to be genuinely born again. Carry them to church, make it a priority to live out your faith before them, hold family devotions with them, pray with them and for them.

With this in mind, please reread Romans 8:1-9, our text on Sunday March 25, 2018. Jeremiah 29:13 states, "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart." (NASB)

Blessings, Pastor Gary