



2019 February Sermon Series: Generation

Message #4 – Your Generation Affects Your Formation (Part 2)

Getting the Nod

Opening Video: [This Is the Church](#)



Opening Sermon Illustration: Inuit Hunters Losing Ability to Read

Surroundings: The small island of Igloolik, in northern Canada is a bewildering place in the winter. The average temperature hovers at about 20 degrees below zero, thick sheets of sea ice cover the surrounding waters, and the sun is rarely seen.

Despite the brutal conditions, Inuit hunters have for some 4,000 years ventured out from their homes on the island and traveled across miles of ice and tundra to search for game. The hunters' ability to navigate vast stretches of the barren Arctic terrain, where landmarks are few, snow formations are in constant flux, and trails disappear overnight, has amazed explorers and scientists for centuries. The Inuit's extraordinary way-finding skills are born not of technological prowess—they never used maps and compasses—but of a profound understanding of winds, snowdrift patterns, animal behavior, stars, and tides.

Inuit culture is changing now. The Igloolik hunters have begun to rely on computer-generated maps to get around, especially younger Inuit members. The ease and convenience of a GPS makes the traditional Inuit techniques seem archaic and cumbersome. **But as GPS devices have proliferated on Igloolik, reports of serious accidents during hunts have spread.** A hunter who hasn't developed way-finding skills can easily become lost, particularly if his GPS receiver fails. The routes plotted on satellite maps can also give hunters tunnel vision, leading them onto thin ice or into other hazards a skilled navigator would avoid. A local anthropologist, who has been studying Inuit hunters for more than 15 years, notes that while satellite navigation has some advantages, its use also leads to a deterioration in way-finding abilities and a weakened feel for the land. An Inuit on a GPS-equipped snowmobile is not so different from a suburban commuter in a GPS-equipped SUV: as they devote their attention to the instructions coming from the computer, they lose sight of their surroundings. **They travel "blindfolded." A unique talent that has distinguished a people for centuries may evaporate in a generation.**

So, what? You might ask. There are some things that should never be forgotten!!! Every generation has something that they have learned... and it cannot be forgotten. Just as...

- The importance of scripture and spiritual maturity
- The value of a church family
- The power of prayer
- The strength of the joy from the Lord
- The encouragement found in worship

NKJV | Proverbs 16:25 *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

Transition: Last week I left off with the strengths, weaknesses, and temptations that come with each of the last four generations... here are the bottom lines...

Connecting the Congregation

Slides for Media: These are not stereo-types... but generalizations!!

What are the Traditionalist's Temptations?

- **Bottomline Reality:** They lose their purpose in retirement and cling to the past and struggle to see a better future.

What are the temptations of the Boomers?

- **Bottomline Reality:** They believe that life is all about them and prefer human expert answers to biblical answers.

What are the temptations of the Gen Xer's?

- **Bottomline Reality:** Because of the failures of authority figures, they are building their own truth and pursuing tolerance.

What are the temptations of the Millennials?

- **Bottomline Reality:** They are comfortable with situational spirituality and misunderstand the value of grace and truth.

Let me now share some information about what our baby's generation will look like...

- Over one-half of babies today will live to 100 years of age. (Medical advances)
- They will be the most educated generation in history.
- This generation will be the most aware of terrorism than any before them and will live this fear out in real time because of technology.
- **The real question... will your babies discover what matters most in life?**

It is time for our generations to work together to leave a legacy at home, at church, at work, and in our world!

The Themes of this series have been...

Week #1 – Make faith your family business.

Week #2 – What can we do to bless and appreciate the other generations?

Week #3 – Understanding the Complexity of Leaving a Legacy Today!

This week #4 - We must FIGHT FOR OUR FAITH!!!

Illustration of Old Trees don't Get Taller, They Bulk Up like a Bodybuilder: Old trees may not grow taller every year, but they do keep bulking up—like a human bodybuilder. That's the summary of recent research into the life of trees. An article on NPR recently summarized this recent research into the life of trees: **Once trees reach a certain height, they do stop getting taller.** So many foresters figured that tree growth—and girth—also slowed with age. "What we found was the exact opposite," says Nate Stephenson, a forest ecologist. "Tree growth rate increases continuously as trees get bigger and bigger," Stephenson says. Stephenson got together with 37 scientists from 16 nations to answer the question on a global scale. They examined nearly 700,000 trees that have been the subject of long-term studies.

Here's their conclusion: While trees did stop getting taller, they continued to get wider—packing on more and more mass the older they got. Apparently, old trees are more like active, healthy bodybuilders. Their strength is contingent on the layers of rings. All the layers of rings are strengthened by attaching themselves to the others. Those that came before them... and those that came after them. (Richard Harris, "An Old Tree Doesn't Get Taller, But Bulks Up Like A Bodybuilder," NPR (1-16-14))

Transition: The question for this week: How can we anchor our souls to something that is powerful and never changes?

God's Take

Because each generation has temptations... Proverbs 16:25 needs to be learned...

NKJV | Proverbs 16:25 *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

How Does My Generation Affect My Formation?

1. **Each generation saw a flawed faith that lived by some before them.** (What do I do with hypocrisy and flaws?)
2. **Each generation has to fight a hijacked faith.**

Generational Distortions of Faith:

- Traditionalists were influenced by religion over relationship.
- Boomers preferred psychology over theology.
- Gen Xer's preferred relativism over absolute truth.
- Millennials spend more time promoting cheap grace over obedience.

2. **Each generation cannot rely upon a birth-right faith.**

- If we don't fight for our faith... our children won't know how to fight for themselves.

3. **Every generation must embrace their own genuine faith.**

- Make it your faith. I need to make it my faith!!! Own it!!

Transition: This message is an urgent cry for generational and unified Christianity! We need to revisit the verse in Hebrews 11:7...

Relevant Challenge

NKJV | Heb 11:7 *By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household... and also Paul's words in 2 Timothy 4...*

NLT | 2 Timothy 4:7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.*

How Should We Fight for Our Faith?

(There is no such thing as birthright Christianity!!! In addition to **THE BIG FOUR...greater church involvement, internalizing the Bible, praying and serving...**)

1. We need to spread the encouragement of difference making around.

- It's time we tell the grandparents the same thing. We work hard trying to encourage the younger generations... and rightly so... but the blessing of making a difference doesn't end at retirement age...
- **All Believers Can Be Achievers... for God's Kingdom! (Caleb was over 85 when he told the young warriors to join him in taking the mountain in Hebron. Let us all desire to take the mountain!!)**
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2. We need to purify our biblical interpretations and simplify our practical understanding.

- **Get familiar with the Bible.** Bible Hacking is the art of interpretation that twists scripture for the purpose selfish gain... and so, practical understanding can end up looking very world-like.
- **Hackers are just slackers who need to be packers. (Balaam kept twisting God's commands to give himself a financial blessing... but he never truly got serious.)**

3. We need to see every generation through the lens of the cross.

- Again... we need the traditionalists to teach us how to trust God in the hard times.
- We need the Baby Boomers to teach us how to work hard and accomplish things that God needs us to do.
- We need the Gen Xer's to show us how to go deeper in our knowledge of the Word of God... and how to overcome doubt and look past the hypocrisy and see only Him.
- We need the Millennials to teach us how to come together as a church family and how to pursue relevance and authenticity!
- NLT | Ps 78:6-7 ... so the next generation might know them— even the children not yet born— and they in turn will teach their own children. 7 So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.
- **We need unity presently to succeed in a future legacy.**

4. We need to worry less about Christianity dying and focus more on preserving it with actual conversations.

- Let's talk about our struggles. Let's be honest about our doubts. Let's look into God's answers. And let us share to daily God Moments that we can all benefit from.
- Let us trust the Holy Spirit who dwells in the true believers... the guide from God... who is God.
- NLT | Eph 1:17-18 asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. 18 I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.
- **Christianity isn't dying... God is still supplying!!**

Final Illustration: Marathoner Comes in Last—for a Purpose: There were over 26,000 runners in the 2016 Boston Marathon. I don't have the name of the winner... but I do have the name of the 72-year-old lady who finished last... Fran Drozdz. The roaring crowds had departed. Workers were still tearing down the stands and barricades when she crossed the finish line at 8:45 p.m. **But the real story is not her last place finish; it's about who she was running for.** Fran has run in more than 75 marathons throughout her life, and she ran the Boston Marathon this year for the cause of cancer. Her husband is currently battling cancer, and he met her with a medal at the finish line. He had called the police earlier in the day, thinking his wife might have gotten lost or hurt. As one media outlet reported, **"It turns out this race's 'loser' is quite the winner."** **She did it for him. No fanfare. No marketing. No accolades. She did it for him.**

Transition: To all the generations here today and watching via live stream... **Let's do it for Him!!!** If you want to pray this morning about God's place in your life... let's do it now.

This Sermon Series is partially adapted from the book "Generational IQ" by Haydn Shaw and a sermon by
Pastor Jeff Metzger