



## Protecting the Future :: February 22, 2009

<sup>1</sup> O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. <sup>2</sup> I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old- <sup>3</sup> what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. <sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. <sup>5</sup> He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, <sup>6</sup> so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. <sup>7</sup> Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. <sup>8</sup> They would not be like their forefathers— a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him. **Psalm 78: 1-8 (NIV)**

**Foundational Truth:** God's command to each generation is to pass on spiritual truths, in both teaching and modeled obedience, to the next generation.

- The purpose is for the next generation to come into relationship with God...
  - trusting fully in Him as their Lord.
  - avoiding the mistakes of the past.
  - passing on His glory to all who come after them.
- The primary vehicle for this command to unfold is the family.  
(**Genesis 18:18-19 through Ephesians 6:4**)
  - God's intention is that the home would be the classroom for the most important lessons of life for the next generation.
    - The family is God's original small group. (**2 Timothy 1:5**)
  - God's design is that the spiritual development of the family would be within – not separate from – the larger community of faith.  
(**Nehemiah 8**)

❖ Roadblocks we face...

- The older generation can ignore the responsibility
  - A lack of passion
  - A busy schedule

- A presence of fear
- The older generation can misunderstand the responsibility.
  - The church should support and reinforce the spiritual nurturing that is happening in the family.

The more of parental teaching the better; ministers, and Sabbath-school teachers were never meant to be substitutes for mother's tears and father's prayers...The first lesson for a child should be concerning his mother's God...Around the fire side fathers should repeat not only the bible records, but the deeds of the martyrs and reformers...Reader, if you have children, mind you do not fail in this duty...As far as our brief life allows us to arrange, we must industriously provide for the godly nurture of our youth. **(Charles Spurgeon)**

- The enemy can shatter the family.

**...they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations...  
(Isaiah 61)**

**A prayer for Agape:** God would you be pleased to mold us into a haven of hope for devastated families? Would you use us to renew the ruins? Would you be pleased to raise us up to be a place where weary parents are brought to new strength, wounded children are healed, and shattered relationships are restored? **If so, please stir us up to your call and let it be.**