

Lesson #21

Acceleration Through Generational Momentum

The Generation Gap

I grew up attending a Baptist Church in a small southeast Missouri town. It was there that I heard the message of salvation and gained a basic understanding of the Bible. After graduating from high school, I moved away from home, and avoided church altogether. However, by God's grace, I came into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and shortly thereafter began to preach about what God had done in my life - the ministry of the gospel became my vocation.

Though I rarely visited the Baptist Church where I grew up, my mother still attended there and when my father died, I shared in the funeral responsibilities. Through the funeral, I became acquainted with the pastor there, and being a former member, he asked me to preach at the homecoming service coming up in September. I agreed. On September 20, 1992 I arrived for homecoming Sunday and preached to a lot of familiar faces. After the morning service we had dinner in the fellowship hall, and then went to an afternoon service in the sanctuary where the history of the church was recounted.

I learned that a circuit rider evangelist established the church in 1904 after seeing a good deal of success in the area. By this time, I had been in ministry for about 13 years, but I was surprised, to learned that this circuit rider was W. H. Bess. I had grown up in that church without ever knowing who founded it, but eighty-eight years after its founding, I was preaching in the church founded by my great great grandfather!

Several good points could be made here regarding the workings of God in our heritage and how it connects to our destiny. We all have a heritage that affects where we are now, whether we know it or not. We are all part of a great relay race that spans the centuries. Learning those roots can help connect us with our destiny and purpose.

However, one big question came to mind through this event. How was I able to grow up in a church from the time I was a child and never know that it was founded by my great great grandfather? In part, it was because of a spiritual generation gap, which can be defined as a failure of one generation to pass spiritual truth to the next, a failure to apply the foundational principle of Laying on of Hands.

Spiritual Impartation

For the work of kingdom preparation to increase and build from generation to generation, spiritual purpose and responsibility must be transferred from one generational pillar to the next. The pillars of a generation are those men and women who have gained insight and wisdom from a lifetime of service. They have seen the purpose of God, have built on the work of those behind them, and are ready to mentor the next generation in front of them to build beyond where they are. If they do not impart their vision, zeal, and wisdom to the next generation, the work of preparation will almost certainly be hindered or stalled.

Disciples who truly receive an impartation of foundational vision, wisdom, and zeal from their spiritual mentors do not have to “reinvent the wheel.” They avoid much of the trial and error learning process and are able to pick up where their mentors left off - and go beyond - with generational momentum and synergy that will complete the work of kingdom preparation.

The Timothy Example

Though there is a certain impartation that comes from hearing, reading, or growing up in a Christian values, the laying on of hands transfers something of the person’s mantle or anointing, which is the catalyst to knowledge. This spiritual impartation is an added benefit to knowledge alone. In the passage below, we can see this catalyst adding to the generational knowledge that Timothy had received from his natural family.

“... I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”

-2 Timothy 1:5-6 (NKJV)

Timothy was a faithful disciple whom Paul could trust. As he sent Timothy to the Philippians, Paul wrote, “For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel” (Phil 2:20-22). Paul must have taken great joy in Timothy, but we also hear the heartache that Paul must have felt when he wrote to the Philippians. Apparently Paul had sought to transfer his mantle to other disciples, but all had left him except Timothy. How many young men have let the cares of this life, even the grandeur of “bigger and better” ministries, lure them away from the purpose of God and their impartation of their spiritual mentors?

Abraham’s Impartation to His Children

It was Abraham’s commitment to impart the ways of the Lord to his children that would allow the Lord to bring to pass the promises He had given Abraham and allow him to reach his destiny. God said of Abraham:

“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”

— Gen 18:19

God promised Abraham that he would inherit the world, but the promise was not to Abraham only, but to all his seed including those who are his seed by faith. Abraham walked in faith knowing that he would not realize the promise in his present life.

For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about

wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

– Romans 4:13-16 (NKJV)

Moses' Impartation to Joshua

When Moses laid his hands on Joshua and transferred the mantle of leadership to him, Joshua's destiny moved from principle to practice and he began walking in his destiny. Scripture says: "Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on Him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses" (Deut 34:9). But before receiving the impartation and mantle of leadership from Moses, Joshua proved himself worthy.

- When Moses was seeking God for 40 days, where was Joshua? While everyone else grew impatient and began to worship a false god, Joshua was on the mountain getting as close to Moses and God as he could. (see Exodus 24:13-18)
- When Moses went into the tabernacle and spoke face to face with God, Joshua was there. And when Moses returned to the camp, "...his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle"(Exodus 33:11).
- When 8 of the 10 spies who went to scout out the promised land came back full of fear and doubt and gave a negative report, Joshua was one of two who gave a good report full of courage and faith (see Numbers 14:36-38).

Joshua's faith was demonstrated by the fact that he stuck close to his mentor and sought to be in the presence of the Lord as he was being prepared to receive the mantle of leadership and the impartation of wisdom. So we see that, although Joshua had proven himself as a disciple, wisdom and leadership came to Joshua by spiritual impartation (the laying on of hands), not just by knowledge and training.

Restoration of the Father/Son Model

Malachi describes the day of the Lord (the kingdom reign of Jesus) as a time when the righteous will tread upon the wicked and they will be as ashes under our feet. But before that day comes, he says there must first be a restoration of "the hearts of the fathers to the children" (see Mal. 4:1-5).

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

-Malachi 4:5-6 (NKJV)

Before the birth of John the Baptist, the angel spoke to his father (Zacharias) and quoted this same passage, from Malachi, describing how John would prepare the way for the Lord. However, the angel's translation was a bit clearer:

He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

- Luke 1:17 (NKJV)

There are two main differences between the Malachi and Luke versions of this picture of the Father/Son model. First, the concept of the hearts of the children being restored to the fathers in Malachi is interpreted in Luke as “*disobedient to the wisdom of the just.*” This speaks to an age-old tendency for young men to think they do not need the wisdom of the older men.

Of course, simply being old does not qualify one as being mature or having wisdom worth passing along. It is the wisdom of the “*just*” that must be imparted. The word “*just*” is the same root word from which we get the word righteousness (*dikaïos*). It means more than simply forgiven or being found innocent of wrong doing. It includes being equitable in character and action (as pointed out in previous lessons). The root word from which it is derived (*dike*) includes the idea justice and is translated as *judgment, punish, and vengeance*. This is the “the ministry of righteous” discussed in Lesson #18: Seeing The Kingdom. So the older, to whom the younger should be restored, are those who partake of solid food, are capable of feeding others, and are moving in the ministry of righteousness.

The second difference is that Malachi’s phrase “*Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse*” is interpreted in Luke as “*to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*” The takeaway from this is that the curse attached to a disobedient young generation is a people who are not preparing the way of the Lord. The loss of generational momentum is a curse upon the earth because it hinders the appearing of the kingdom, and thus all the blessings that will come with it. On the other hand, it is a blessing when we see the kingdom vision being passed to the next generation and progress being made in the work of preparation.

The blessings attached to this family model is seen in the natural family as well:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." .

— Ephesians 6:1-2

Here we see a powerful and clear principle about preparing the way of the Lord. When the disobedient younger generation is turned to and receives the spiritual impartation from the just and wise, they are able to use the wisdom of the older generation as a foundation upon which to build the new revelation and instructions that God is giving. The result is generational momentum preparing the way for the appearing of the King and the Kingdom.

The Church must begin to think and act like God's family instead of a business. Many principles are timeless, but we must abandon the fatalistic cyclical philosophy which says, "History only repeats itself." Though history has repeated itself, it doesn't have to. We must embrace a linear view of history with kingdom purpose. The beauty of God’s spiritual family is that He can accelerate the process because spiritual generations are not bound to time as they are in the natural.

A Key to Receiving Impartation

There is an important key to generational transfer and acceleration seen in the example of Elijah and Elisha. Elijah was a loner of sorts, who felt like he was the only one left who was standing with God. But God informed him that there were 7000 others in Israel who had not bowed to false gods and told

him of a young man named Elisha, who would become his successor. So Elijah went immediately and found Elisha who was plowing with 12 yoke of oxen. After Elijah revealed the plan succession plan, Elisha immediately ceased his plowing and became Elijah's servant (see 1 Kings 19:16-21).

Now we jump forward to 2 Kings, Chapter 2. Several years had past and it was known that Elijah was about to be taken into heaven. The sons of the prophets sought to discourage Elisha saying, "Do you know the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" It was as if they were telling him that his years of service to Elijah had been for nothing. But Elisha did not listen to them. His response was essentially, "Shut up!"

Even Elijah, apparently testing Elisha, tried more than once to get Elisha to stay behind while he went on. But Elisha would not hear of it. He said, "As the Lord lives and as your soul lives, I will not leave you." As Elijah was about to be taken up, he asked Elisha if he had a request before he left. Elisha asked for a double portion of the Elijah's spirit to be upon him. Elijah said, "You have asked a hard thing, nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken up, it shall be done for you."

Elisha stuck close to Elijah and as they talked a chariot of fire appeared separating them and a whirlwind took Elijah into heaven. Elisha then took up the mantle that fell from Elijah and, as promised, received a double portion of the spirit that was on Elijah.

In this story we see a key to Elisha receiving the double portion from Elijah and accelerating into his destiny. There are many words that could be used to describe this trait: determination, commitment, faithfulness, diligence, singleness of heart, sticktoitiveness, etc. The bottom line is this: Elisha stuck by his spiritual mentor and simply would not quit!

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

- Galatians 6:9

Few things are more important than passing the vision of the coming kingdom to the next generation. The main point of this lesson is that we can take advantage of the experience and wisdom of those who have gone before us. If we do, we can avoid much of the trial and error learning process that they experienced, receive their anointing, and more! This is how we accelerate and build generational momentum.