

THE GENERATION TO COME

By Nancy Campbell

Our power and influence as parents, not only affects the destiny of the nation, but future generations. God not only sees the present generation, but future generations. He also wants us to have this mindset. He wants us to live our lives in the context of future generations.

Hebrews 7:9,10 says "*Levi.... paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.*" Levi was Abraham's great-grandson. We would have thought that Levi wasn't even a twinkle in Abraham's eye. He was most probably not even thought of. But God already knew about him as though he was already alive. God sees future generations.

It's so easy to get bogged down with the grind of daily activities in the home, isn't it? There can be times when you feel you are stuck in the mire with no hope of accomplishing anything. Yes, the practical and physical labor of mothering can be wearying, but it is our attitude toward homemaking and mothering that imprisons or frees us. It is how we value our task as a mother that determines whether we will be depressed or joyful.

LONG TERM VISION

I believe it is important for us to get a long-term vision of our divine calling of parenthood. It is often hard to feel that you are accomplishing very much staying at home - changing 'nappies' or 'diapers', wiping noses, cooking meals and daily training little children. It is important to see beyond the frustrations of your every day tasks and look ahead. You are not only training children for today, but for the future. Your influence is powerful and far-reaching. As you diligently teach God's ways to your children, you are establishing principles and guidelines for future generations.

God's ultimate plan is for godly generations. He has commanded each generation to pass on His ways and His laws to the next generation. Psalm 145:4 says, "*One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.*"

God does not want us to think of parenting this generation only. He wants us to live our lives in the light of past and future generations. When God spoke to His people, the children of Israel, He reminded them of their roots and their past heritage. He said, "*I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*" But as He reminded them of their roots in revealing His name, He also gave them a vision of the future! He continually stated, "*It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.*"

God's words are for all generations. They are never out of date. Psalm 105:8 says, "*He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations.*"

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Let's read Psalm 78:1-8, "*Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth...showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments...*"

We must teach our children the ways of God so diligently that they will never forget them. We must imprint them so strongly in their hearts that they will faithfully pass them on to the following generations. One preacher said, "The test of a parent's Christianity is his children's children!" It is not enough that my children walk in the ways of the Lord. The true test is whether my grandchildren and great-grandchildren continue to walk in God's ways.

Now let's look at some Biblical examples. There are so many but we will list just a few:

ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah 1:1 says, "*The word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah,*

the son of Hezekiah..."

Now what is so amazing about this scripture? Let's think, about it. God doesn't waste words. Although it is our custom today to introduce someone by their name only, in God's Word people were introduced by their lineage. When Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh he put his name, his father's name, and his grandfather's name upon them! Isn't that powerful?

Genesis 48:16.

*"The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads;
and let my name be named on them,
and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."*

This would give a great sense of roots and security, wouldn't it? I would be happy to be introduced as "Nancy, wife of Colin Campbell and daughter of Ivan and Joyce Bowen, Ivan is the son of Walter Eugene Bowen." If we did this today it would help us to give respect and honor to our forefathers, wouldn't it?

The Bible reveals Zephaniah's parentage back to the fifth generation! Hezekiah was Zephaniah's great-great-grandfather! This king of Judah *"did that which was right in the sight of the Lord...he trusted in the Lord...he cleaved to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments..."* and now five generations later, his great-great-grandchild is a prophet to the nation! (2 Kings 18:1-6; 2 Chronicles 29:1,2; 31:20,21). This is such a challenge, isn't it? Will our great-great-grandchildren still be walking in the ways of the Lord? Will they remember us as godly mothers?

SAUL

When Saul is introduced to us in 1 Samuel 9:1,2, God takes us back six generations! *"There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish,
the son of Abiel,
the son of Zeror,
the son of Bechorath,
the son of Aphia, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.
And he had a son, whose name was Saul..."*

ACHAN

I am sure you remember the story of Achan who disobeyed Joshua and took for himself silver and gold, thus causing the defeat of the Israeli army in their battle against Ai. When God revealed Achan as the culprit, his whole family was implicated! He was exposed as:

*"Achan,
the son of Carmi,
the son of Zabdi,
the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah..."* (Joshua 7:17,18,24; 20:22-20).

Even his great-grandfather had to bear the shame of his disobedience! In v.24 Achan is called "the son of Zerah". The Bible uses the name of his great grandfather rather than his father! Not only did Achan's sin affect the name of past generations but his own sons and daughters were also judged because of his sin.

JAHAZIEL

*"Then upon Jahaziel
the son of Zechariah,
the son of Benaiah,
the son of Jeiel,
the son of Mattaniah,
a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation..."*
(2 Chronicles 20:14-30).

Once again six generations are mentioned! Are you getting the picture of the power of the generations? We are tied, not only to the present, but also to the past and future. In this story, Jahaziel is used mightily as a prophet of God to bring a word to King Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah that gave them a strategy to win the battle against the Ammonites and Moabites. This prophetic word through Jahaziel saved the nation! Not only was Jahaziel remembered and recorded in scripture because of this, but even his great-great-great-grandfather! Wow!

AMRAM AND JOCHEBED

Jochebed must have been a mighty mother to produce children such as Aaron, Moses and Miriam. This mother raised three children who affected a whole nation! Micah 6:4. As we follow the generations of Aaron (we'll take Aaron's line as that is the priesthood generation) we see the continuing godly generation. We do not read much about the priests after Phinehas, but if the meaning of their names has anything to do with their character we can presume that they continued walking after God.

1st generation	Amram 'exalted' and Jochebed 'Jehovah is honor'
2nd generation	Aaron 'enlightened'
3rd generation	Eleazar 'God is helper'
4th generation	Phinehas 'oracle of God'. Phinehas certainly was an oracle of God. He rose up for God against the man who took the Midianitish woman in adultery and thrust them both through with a javelin. Because he did this, God said, " <i>Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God and made an atonement for the children of Israel.</i> " Numbers 25:1-15.
5th generation	Abishua 'father of safety'
6th generation	Bukki 'mouth of Jehovah'
7th generation	Uzzi 'Yah is strong'
8th generation	Zerahiah 'God is appearing'
9th generation	Meraioth 'revelations'. Meraioth was a priest in the days of Solomon.

Actually, the line goes all the way to Ezra, 18 generations from Aaron. Ezra 7:1-5.

LOIS AND EUNICE

1 Timothy 1:5, "*I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*" I am sure that we would not have had the two books of Timothy in the cannon of scripture if it weren't for grandmother Lois and mother Eunice!

Now let's look at some more recent examples:

WILLIAM AND CATHERINE BOOTH

I am sure you have heard of William and Catherine Booth who were the founders of the Salvation Army. I have always been inspired by their work for God. Catherine Booth, although used of God to win thousands into the kingdom of God through her preaching, was first and foremost a mother. As a young person she stated, "I intend to make myself fit to be a mother and being that in every sense, I shall be ready for any destiny that God may put upon me." As she was dying, she cried these words, "Try to raise up mothers...mothers are the want of the world."

William and Catherine had eight children and they were faithful to train them for God. Every one of those eight children served God in a mighty way. We named one of our daughters, Evangeline Faith, after Evangeline Booth, one of their daughters, who was a great evangelist. Not only did they train their children, but also the intensity of their training continued into the following generations. They had 45 grandchildren and every one of them also served God with all their hearts, many on the mission field. Even their great-grandchildren continued as missionaries.

JONATHAN AND SARAH EDWARDS

Let's take a peek at the family of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards. You may remember Jonathan Edwards for his famous sermon, "*Sinners in the hands of an angry God.*" Jonathan and Sarah had 11 children and were ardent in training their children for God. In 1900 A. Winship tracked down 1400 descendants of this family. By 1900 this godly marriage had produced...

- 13 college presidents
- 65 professors
- 100 lawyers and a dean of an outstanding law school
- 30 judges
- 60 doctors and a dean of a medical school
- 80 holders of public office including
- 3 United States Senators
- 3 Mayors of large cities
- 3 State governors

Vice President of the United States, and
Controller of the United States Treasury.

Members of the family wrote 135 books and edited 18 journals and periodicals.

They entered the ministry in platoons, and sent 100 missionaries overseas as well as stocking many mission boards with lay trustees. They directed banks, insurance companies, owned coalmines, iron plants and vast oil interests. Winship states, "There is scarcely any great American industry that has not had one of this family among its chief promoters."

Because of the responsibilities of Jonathan Edwards' ministry, Winship goes on to say, "Much of the capacity and talent, intensity and character of the Edwards family is due to Mrs. Sarah Edwards." The influence of one godly mother has continued down through the generations to affect the destiny of a nation! Oh how far reaching is the power of a godly mother!

In contrast to the Edwards family, 1200 of the Jukes family were tracked down. They originated with one immigrant who settled in upstate New York in 1720 and produced a tribe of "idleness, ignorance and vulgarity." Only 20 of the 1200 Jukes ever had any gainful employment and all the others were criminals or lived on state aid.

HUDSON TAYLOR

You will remember Hudson Taylor who founded the China Inland Mission. But do you know his history? His godly line started with his great grandfather, James Taylor, who lived in the time of John Wesley. He heard him preach a message from Joshua 24:15, "*Choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*" He was convicted by the Holy Spirit through this message and on his wedding day he gave his heart to the Lord and determined that his household would serve the Lord. He was even late for his wedding because he was praying for God to bless his home. That's a pretty good excuse, isn't it? He led his new wife to the Lord two weeks later and began a godly dynasty.

All his sons became preachers. All his grandsons became preachers. One of his grandsons was Hudson Taylor's father. This man had a burden for China. Every day he prayed, "Oh, God, send missionaries to China." His son, Hudson, heard these constant prayers and when he was six years old, he got alone with the Lord and told the Lord that he would answer this prayer and go to China to serve God. He never deviated from this commitment and became a great missionary and founded the China Inland Mission.

But it didn't stop there. There are now nine generations of preachers in this Taylor family. There is one serving the Lord in Thailand right now.

THE CAMPBELLS

Perhaps we can get even more personal. My husband, Colin, is one of nine children. They all love the Lord and several are in full-time service for God. The family believes that their great-grandmother played a great part in touching their lives. This great-grandmother was a praying woman. In her later years, she went blind, but this did not hinder her ministry of prayer. She would pray out loud, oblivious to anyone around her. Many times those listening would be the subject of her prayers! But one of the greatest things about her prayer life was that she prayed for the coming generations. The power of her prayers are being fulfilled today! What a challenge for mothers and grandmothers. I know of one dear great grandmother who instead of taking life easier in her older age, gets up a quarter of an hour **earlier** every morning each time a new grandchild or great-grandchild is born. She has many, so her day starts very early!

Colin's father also came to Christ because of his grandmother's prayers. Coming home from the city in the early hours of the morning, he would hear his grandmother praying. One night he had a dream that he was going to be hung. He was allowed one request before the hanging and so he requested his grandmother to come and pray. As she prayed in the adjacent room, her prayers were so strong that every time they pulled the rope, he just floated down. In his dream he realized the power of prayer and it was influential in his decision to become a Christian and walk with God.

THE BOWENS

I am also blessed to come from a godly generation. It started with my grandfather. He was a brilliant man, but had a wild and stubborn streak. He had a godly Christian wife, but when they went to church on Sundays, he went off to the races with his horses. When he got mad, everyone knew it. He wouldn't just throw a plate at the wall - he would pick the table with plates and food and everything on it and throw the whole lot at the wall! However, through the faithful prayers of his praying wife, one day, he knelt down in his farm kitchen with his five sons around him and gave his heart to God. He became a wonderful man of God and he started a godly generation.

He brought up his sons in the ways of God. My father was one of them. He married a lovely Christian woman and they imparted God's Word into our lives, not just by the letter of the law, but also by godly example. The example of my father and mother's lives did more to direct me into God's will than anything else. They lived their Christianity wholeheartedly, faithfully and especially practically before our eyes. We really didn't need any words - we saw! My father was such an encourager and had such faith and trust in me, that as I grew older, I couldn't bear to do anything that would dispel his trust in me - and that kept me on the straight and narrow.

I was then blessed to marry a man whose heart was totally set for God and we had six children. We sought to teach them and train them in God's ways. They are now all grown and starting their own families. Of course they are also seeking to teach them to be godly children. And so, in my lifetime, we are up to the fifth generation - one generation passing on God's ways to the next generation.

"But" I hear you saying, "I haven't been blessed to come from a godly line. I am the first one in my family to walk in God's ways." Don't be disheartened. You have an exciting challenge ahead. You can be the one to start a godly generation. Just think of what can happen in years to come because of your godly influence.

Mothers, lift up your heads from the tediousness of your day-to-day tasks and look ahead to the years to come. Your influence will continue on in the lives of your children, your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren. What will be your influence upon the world? What mighty men and women will come forth from the godly training and atmosphere of your home? Don't take your great calling lightly.

Mothering is too important to be accomplished part-time. Mothering is more than feeding and clothing our children. We have the responsibility to imprint God's Word so indelibly on the hearts and minds of our children that they will automatically impart it to their children and their children's children.

Your mothering will not only affect your own children,
but it will touch lives that have not yet been born!

Rev. Edward Taylor Sullivan delivered a wonderful sermon at the turn of this century. He said, "When God wants an important thing done in this world, or a wrong righted, He goes about it in a very singular way. He doesn't release His thunderbolts nor stir up His earthquakes. He simply has a tiny, helpless baby born, perhaps in a very obscure home, perhaps of a very humble mother. And He puts the idea or purpose into a mother's heart. And she puts it in the baby's mind, and then - God waits!

"The great events of this world," says some one, "are not battles and earthquakes and hurricanes. The great events of this world are babies. They are earthquakes and hurricanes." Oh, the secrets that lie all about us hidden from our eyes! We glance at a tiny child, and we do not see, we do not know, what a thunderbolt of the Almighty is wrapped up in that little child.

"I walked down the furrow in the field," said a humble mother who lived on a New Hampshire farm; "I walked down the furrow with the Governor of New Hampshire in my arms, and the Governor of Massachusetts clinging to my skirts." She said that afterwards, long afterwards, in her old age. For she knew not then, and no one knew, that her two baby boys would be governors of two New England states.

The great events are babies. The great facts of life are a mother and child. **God, the Almighty Creator, lays the next generation in the laps of the mothers..."**

FURTHER STUDY:

God does not want us to forget the past generations:

Here's a sampling of many such scriptures:

Genesis 31:5,42; 48:16; Exodus 3:6,15; 4:5; 33:1; 32:13

Deuteronomy 1:8; 4:37; 6:3; 10:15; 26: 7; 27:3; 34:4

1 Kings 3:6,14; 1 Chronicles 29:18; Isaiah 51:2

Luke 1:55,73; Acts 3:13; 13:26; Romans 4:12.

God is concerned about the "generations to come."

Genesis 9:9,12; 12:1-7; 13:15; 17:7,9; 26:1-5; 28:13,14

Exodus 12:17,26,27,42; 13:8,14; 27:21; 29:42; 30:8,10,21; 31:13; 32:13

Leviticus 3:17; 6:18; 7:36; 10:9; 17:7; 23:14,21,31,41; 24:3
Numbers 15:15,23; 25:11-13; 35:29
Deuteronomy 7:9; 29:22; Joshua 4:6,7; 1 Chronicles 16:15; 28:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7
Ezra 9:12b; Psalm 22:31; 71:18; 78:1-8; 100:5; 102:18; 105:8; Proverbs 13:22.

God blesses the future generations of righteous parents:

Genesis 9:9; 22:15-18; 26:1-5; 35:11,12
Exodus 20:5,6; 33:1; 34:6,7; Numbers 14:24; 25:10-13
Deuteronomy 1:8; 4:37,40; 5:10,29; 6:2,3; 7:7-10; 10:15; 11:19-21; 12:23-25,28; 28:1-14; 29:29; 30:19
2 Samuel 22:51; 1 Kings 2:33; 2 Kings 10:30; 15:12; 1 Chronicles 28:8; Ezra 9:12
Psalm 14:5; 25:12,13; 37:25,26; 102:28; 103:17,18; 106:30,31; 112:1,2; 128:1-6; 132:11,12
Proverbs 20:7; Isaiah 44:1-3; 61:9; Jeremiah 32:29; 35:18,19
Luke 1:50; Acts 2:38,39; 3:25; 2 Timothy 1:5.

The sins of the fathers are passed on to the third and fourth generation to come:

Exodus 20:4-6 (Exodus 34:6,7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9; Jeremiah 32:18)
Numbers 14:33; Deuteronomy 28:15,18,41; 28:45,46; 28:58,59
1 Samuel 3:11-14; 1 Kings 2:33; 2 Kings 5:25-27; 17:41; Job 21:17-19; 27:13,14
Isaiah 14:20,21; Jeremiah 9:13,16; 16:10-13; 29:31,32; 32:18; 36:29-31; 39:6-8
Lamentations 1:5; Hosea 4:6; 9:9-17; Amos 2:4; Matthew 27:25.

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PO Box 681687,
Franklin TN 37068-1687
Email: aboverubiesusa@juno.com