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AUTUMN 2008

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The Deadliest Lie

HOW TO DISCERN AND
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TRYING TIMES AND GREAT
OPPORTUNITIES

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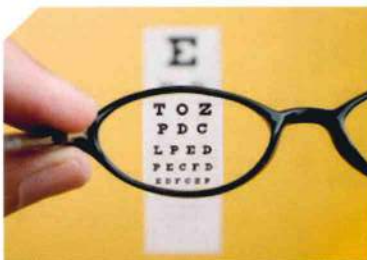


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IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

Young People Are Dying—Here's What We Can Do About It

By Stephen Simpson

WHEN YOUNG DAVID SAW THE VICIOUS GIANT Goliath taunting the army of Israel, and saw the Israelites cowering in terror, his heart was stirred with godly anger. He valiantly challenged the warriors to remember the Lord and His covenant. When he was rebuked by his own brother for speaking out, David asked, "Is there not a cause?" (See 1 Samuel 17.)

Today, other giants are taunting the people of God, threatening unimaginable terror, mayhem, and death across the earth. The people of God must be challenged once more to ask: "Is there not a cause?"

Disease, abandonment, poverty, homelessness, violence, and even slavery stalk children and youth in most major metropolitan areas worldwide, and also in the countryside. One doesn't need to be a prophet, or even a good analyst, to see the ramifications for the future of civilization as we know it are dire.

While we must certainly deal with initial needs or symptoms, it is vital that we deal with root causes so that people can be delivered from oppression and freed from bondage. The specific root causes of the various crises in different areas may

vary from place-to-place, but there are two specific issues that must be addressed everywhere, particularly here in North America:

AMONG THESE CHALLENGES ARE:

- Revealing the ever-increasing kingdom of God to a presently diminishing Church
- Breaking the curse of fatherlessness over this generation (see page 10).

Jesus chose us and anointed us with His Holy Spirit so that we would bear fruit—lasting, eternal fruit. This means that we not only manifest the fruit of the Spirit, but that we give birth to spiritual sons and daughters.

Isaiah tells us that there



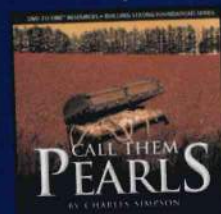
will be no end to the increase of Christ's government or of His peace, and that the zeal of the Lord would accomplish this (see Isaiah 9:6-7). Prophetically, we see an advancing kingdom of God. And yet, the Church in North America, as it is in Western Europe, is in precipitous decline in terms of membership, participation, faithfulness, and larger societal influence. The people of God must rediscover their prophetic call, rediscover the Word of the Lord, receive afresh His anointing, and be bold and undeterred in their outward focus to be salt and light in a society that is dying in darkness. We are called to break the chains of oppression; not to ignore them. We are called to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom of God—any other "gospel" is no gospel at all. 121

Stephen Simpson is the Editor of *One-to-One* and Senior Pastor of Covenant Church of Mobile. He is also available for ministry in your city. For more information, contact Betty Duke: bettydukecs@aol.com / (251) 633-7900.

DEAR PASTOR SIMPSON,

I am writing in regards to your sermon entitled "Call Them Pearls." How grateful I am for that message! I want to tell you about a lady we know here. She gave her testimony last week at the home group we host at our house. During her testimony, she said the major turning point in her coming back to Jesus was about six months ago when my husband, Chad, and I got involved in her life.

When we first moved here, she would occasionally ask me to go for walks with her or meet to talk. She had fallen away from the Lord and was living a self-serving life. She was stressed out, depressed, and lost.



After listening to your message, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "She is a pearl." I felt filled with God's love for her life.

Chad and I felt that we must do something, and we prayed about it and God showed us some options. At first, she seemed unwilling to receive any help from us. When we didn't hear from her for a few weeks, we wondered if we did the right thing. But soon, she started to call to meet us for church and started coming to our home group. She reads her Bible faithfully, attends church and Bible studies, tithes faithfully, and is now opening her own home to share the Gospel and love of Jesus with her friends who are just as she was. God has seen her through her challenges and she is now so in love with Jesus! It is pouring out of her everywhere, in her workplace, in her home, with her friendships, and family.

I've passed the message on to several friends who have been touched by it as well. Thank you for your faithfulness to the Gospel, as well as your love and care for my family.

—Liza H., Oregon

HOW TO **DISCERN & INVEST WISELY** DURING TRYING TIMES AND GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

The Deadliest Lie

BY
**CHARLES
SIMPSON**



THYSSEN-KRUPP IS A GERMAN FIRM INVESTING BILLIONS OF dollars to build a steel plant near Mobile, AL. They will employ 2700 people, and this will create hundreds of other jobs in the area. Needless to say, it has caused a lot of excitement and optimism.

Recently, a man posing as an agent for another large company falsely advertised that the company had taken over the hiring. He met applicants at a local motel and charged each one an advanced union fee of \$110 to get them a job. "I'll get back to you," he said. Of course he never did.



It is too bad that the applicants lost \$110 each. But believing a lie can cost much more: it can cost your life and even your eternal soul.

Many people who have “been had” do not recover, in that they feel that they can never trust anyone again.

The lies that we hear every day range from false cures and false investments to false religions. In Jesus’ day, there were false Messiahs. The problem with committing to a false promise is that often, you do not know the results until it is too late. Most of us have accepted some false claim at some time in our lives; in such situations, a person is fortunate if it didn’t take their life or result in unrecoverable loss.

But many people who have “been had” do not recover, in that they feel that they can never trust anyone again. That loss of trust is a great loss because trust is essential to life and salvation. And then there are those who only trust themselves—and there is no salvation in that.

TRUTH

Jesus did not spend much time trying to teach us about lies, though He did point out some lies and liars. But he did spend a lot of time pointing out the truth and the blessings of truth.

Those who knew Jesus best when He walked here on the earth said that He is the Truth, and that He is full of grace and truth. In John 14:6, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes to the Father except through me.” This statement means that truth is absolute, eternal, unchanging, and that Jesus is absolutely the truth. If we have received Jesus, we have received the truth—it is within us (see 1 John 1:6-8; 2:21-27; 3:19; and 5:6).

John 17:17 tells us that God’s Word is truth, and God’s truth sanctifies us—sets us apart. John 1 tells us that Jesus is the Word made flesh and dwelling among us. So, for a follower of Jesus, He is the revelation, foundation, and starting point of truth.

This reminds us that truth is not only absolute; it is eternal. It exists

above and beyond all earthly circumstance. You can trust the truth.

GULLIBILITY

So what has this to do with an “agent” making false claims and taking people’s money? It reminds us that we live in a gullible society. Humanity—all of us—are susceptible to lies. We are in need of a “plumb line”, a standard by which we can measure all claims.

Western society has become “post-modern”. Among other characteristics, postmodern thinking tells us that “truth” is whatever we want it to be. Ironically, it began in Germany through the teachings of Hegel and Nietzsche and gave and gave us men like Hitler and Marx. Postmodernism is not constructive, it is deconstructive. It takes

Our gullibility is that a lie offers us what we want; and that wanting often leads us to accept a lie.

apart trusted virtue and gives it want—personal “values”. And today in much of the world, we live in a “want-driven” society instead of a truth-driven society.

Our gullibility is that a lie offers us what we want; and that wanting often leads us to accept a lie. There are good “wants” such as wanting a job or wanting to do the right thing. However, if we are not armed with the truth, many of our “wants” can lead us to believe a lie. The consequences of being want-driven will be more costly than \$110. It can take us into much more dangerous places.

Optimism is generally good, but if we are positively optimistic about a lie, that will ultimately lead us to become cynics at best—or destroyed at worse. We might be happy for awhile, but only as we are failing to realize that we are not actually on the road to happiness. Ultimate happiness is in ultimate truth; then we might be less gullible.



SELF-DECEPTION

The deadliest lie is when we lie to ourselves because we want to believe something. "Want" overrides the inner warning. David wanted Bathsheba—his "want" overrode his inner knowledge that his "want" was not God's "want" for him. The cost was horrific!

In Psalm 51, David confessed his sin and said to the Lord, "You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part you will make me to know wisdom."

Jesus said, in John 18:37, "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate answered back, "What is truth?" The truth was standing right in front of him, but Pilate chose a lie. He released Barabbas who was a criminal and crucified Jesus who is the Truth. When Pilate washed his hands, he could not cleanse the stain and consequence of the lie; nor did it produce happiness. Obviously Pilate was not "of the truth." The "want to please the people" overrode even Pilate's better judgment.

The people of Noah's day did not want to believe that a flood could come. Lot's wife did not want to believe the warning not to look back. Pharaoh did not want to believe that he could lose his first-born. Israel did not want to believe the prophets, but history tells us that they should have. Wants, desires, and human appetites make us gullible and lie to ourselves when we are not armed with and committed to the truth. William Shakespeare famously said, "To thine own self be true." The loss of truth is the underlying cause of the loss of civility and morality.

BUY THE TRUTH

We read in Proverbs 23:23: "Buy the truth, and do not sell it." The

wisdom of this verse is much more profound than its brevity suggests. Truth is costly, but not as costly as ignoring it. Truth requires a pursuit, a quest. To really know Jesus, we must follow and hunger and thirst. Truth calls us onward to ignore the scoffers and mockers and deny ourselves. "Wants" must be crucified.

"Market-driven Christianity" tells us that we can have it all—without a cross. But to buy the truth we must pay the price—whatever it costs. That is apostolic faith. Truth is better than life.

"Market-driven Christianity" tells us that we can have it all—without a cross. But to buy the truth we must pay the price—whatever it costs.

John 8:31-32 tell us the price of truth: "Abide in My word, be My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Abiding in His Word is a clear reference to obedience, not mere knowledge. We learn truth as we obey and follow. He leads us to learn. Disciples are "learners" of truth and are made free from self and circumstance.

My parents were lovers of truth. In addition to leading me to Christ, they gave me a Bible with special markings in the book of Proverbs. And I found it very difficult to lie to them—though I often tried. By their instruction and example, I have found it even more difficult to lie to God or even to myself.

"Buy the truth and do not sell it." What will you take in exchange for the truth? A better résumé? A beautiful woman or a handsome man? A more convenient religion? Public opinion? Once we sell the truth, we have sold our future and our freedom.

BUILD ON TRUTH

I am a believer in Intelligent Design. That is, I believe that there are physical laws given by our Creator that produce order and allow us to construct lasting results. Every building, every technology, and every successful family and society depends on a consistency of principles that produces stability. Order and progress are built upon truth, and the belief that there is truth beyond one's own personal preferences. The loss of that concept has given us a low ranking among the nations of the world's nations in math and science, and a high ranking in crimes, divorce, and child abuse.

There is a powerful declaration in 1 Timothy 3:15: the Church is the pillar and the ground of truth. It holds up and is the foundation for truth. But what happens to "the Church" when it forsakes the truth, deconstructs the truth, and accommodates the culture? It loses its purpose, its impact, and place in the world. Now we have Protestant denominations which have embraced secular cultural "values" and forsaken eternal virtues. And the results? One example is that we now have more Muslims in America than Episcopalians.

ARM YOURSELF WITH TRUTH

We should be armed with the truth. No, I'm not suggesting that you buy a gun—although I own one. I'm saying that we should heed Ephesians 6:10-18, and take on the whole armor of God in order to stand against the schemes of the devil. The enemy will offer you a deadly lie. The armor of God, which is spiritual and not carnal, will defeat the enemy's purpose to destroy. Gird yourself with the truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and the sword

of the Spirit—the Word of God.

Simply getting together and singing a few choruses and verses from the overhead screen may help, but that is not sufficient. Nominal Christians get deceived about as often as other people. We need a recommitment to truth; a renewed commitment to study, live, and deliver the truth. Yes, we should speak it in love, but “love” without truth only enables deadly deception.

The truth may hurt, but it also heals. It may cost, but it also pays. It may offend, but in the end it reconciles. It may be unpopular, but it never was popular. I don’t want a doctor who is afraid to offend me or a dentist who refuses to cause momentary pain in order to prevent a more serious pain. It is time for our “spiritual doctors” to begin to tell the truth. We may lose a few patients, but I believe in the end truth will be vindicated.

One doctor said to his patient, “You have ergophobia.”

The patient replied, “What does it mean? Give it to me straight; I can take it.”

The doctor said, “Okay, there’s nothing wrong with you except that you are lazy.”

The patient asked, “Give me that long word again; I have to tell my wife!”

The truth is simple, straight-forward, withstands testing, and witnesses to those who desire it. Lies are confusing, appealing to basic instincts, and offer a detour away from facing facts. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12). Thank God, He has offered us the truth in Jesus Christ. Now it’s our turn to offer it to others. 121

Charles Simpson is Editor-In-Chief of One-to-One Magazine. He ministers extensively throughout the United States and among the nations.

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GOD OF OUR FATHERS

HOW TO RESPOND TO
THE GREATEST CRISIS
IN OUR GENERATION

by Stephen Simpson

*The defining
characteristic of the
emerging generation
here in America is
fatherlessness.*

WE LIVE IN A GENERATION WHO INCREASINGLY do not know their fathers, nor the God of their forefathers. The defining characteristic of the emerging generation here in America is fatherlessness. I've heard my own Dad teach on godly fatherhood, and heard him warn that "Father failure affects us all."

Recently, Dad was ministering to a group of men, and shared about how both Hitler and Stalin were shaped by the lack of a good father in their lives. Because of their policies—and the wars that resulted from them—it is estimated that 80 million people worldwide died. Dad studied the lives of 14 of the most notorious and destructive characters of the past 150 years, including Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche, and discov-

ered that none of them had a good relationship with their fathers.

Let me hasten to note here that if you did not have a good relationship with your father, that doesn't mean you are a bad person or that you are cursed to do bad things. It does mean that you have had to overcome significant hurdles in your own path to manhood or womanhood. And it's very difficult to discover how to be a good father or a good mother if you have not known what it means to be a son or daughter. Difficult... but, thank God, not impossible.

That is why spiritual fatherhood and godly mentoring for the next generation are so important in times like these. For anyone who has not known what it means to be fathered in your own

natural home, God has made provision through spiritual fathers. (I am focusing here on natural and spiritual fathers because there is a profound shortage of both in homes and in churches today.)

THE FATHER CALLS FATHERS

Fathers are called to initiate, nurture, encourage, train, discipline, protect ... to profoundly shape their children by demonstrating and speaking the truth in love. Fathers, naturally and spiritually, are called to give identity, security, direction, and focus to their children. Young men need fathers to show them how to be a good man, a good husband, a good father, a good brother. Young women need fathers to show them what a good man looks like, so that she might learn to discern the difference between a shepherd and a seducer.

Natural fathers ought to be the first of many models of godly manhood to their children.

Fathers—both natural and spiritual—can be a link between the wisdom of the past and the opportunities of the future.

We should also say that fathers are called to war against the militant anti-family forces that are running amok in society and even in some segments of what is called “Christianity.” This battle must be fought in the Spirit, with spiritual weapons; and,



with godly wisdom, knowledge, and action. The enemy of our families is relentless, ruthless, and cunning. This enemy will not be pacified and he cannot be ignored, but he can be defeated by the anointing of the Holy Spirit filling godly men who are willing to take personal responsibility to reach their own homes and fatherless children in our communities.

The enemy's toll in the past two generations has been heartbreakingly high. Teen pregnancy, abortion, suicide, drug addiction, gang warfare, sexually transmitted diseases,



previous schools. To the students who are unprepared or improperly grounded in faith, this undermining effort—coupled with the other pressures that college life offers with sex, alcohol, drugs, and other lifestyle issues—can have a devastating and lasting effect on their souls. According to some surveys, the percentage today of the American population that identifies itself as Evangelical Christian is 36%; but that plunges to 4% within a generation if trends do not change. The ramifications of that projection are startling.

My point would be this: it

**To reverse the tide,
it is urgent for every
father to take initiative
to reach out personally—it
starts in our own families.**

abuse, and abandonment have beset our children. Today, atheism, cynicism, depression, despair loom large in young lives. Among all too many teens, life seems cheap and pointless; heritage is devalued and disdained; senior citizens are disrespected and disregarded.

The faith of the Christian student in secular colleges lasts, on average, through the first semester. Many colleges and universities see it as part of their mission to challenge, undermine, or even attack the teaching that students have received from parents, churches, youth groups, and

need not be so! In order to reverse this tide, it is urgent for every godly father to renew their commitment to God that they are going to take personal initiative to reach out personally: it starts, of course, with our own families, but we must extend this concern to the friends of our children and their families, as well as to the youth of our churches and communities.

A LOST GENERATION

The inter-generational connection must be made strong and it must be made now. If

we fail in this hour, in this generation, then it may be said of us what was said of a lost generation in Israel:

“...another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and



served the Baals; and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers.... And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies” (Judges 2:10-12; 14).

When we read the history of ancient Israel, particularly in Judges and Chronicles, we see a repeated pattern of the people forgetting the ways of the Lord; God giving them over to their own destructive desires; wicked kings arising; wicked behavior and idolatry ensuing; failure and suffering coming as a result; desperation and sorrow leading to repentance; God mercifully restores them; that generation dies off and a new generation rises up that does not know the God of their fathers, nor do they walk in His ways. This pattern has continued too often throughout history since as well. If

continued on page 15

**BUILDING
AND KEEPING**

PERSPECTIVE

How to “get it right” like Daniel and Nehemiah by Jonathan Simpson

H

ISTORY REVEALS WHICH PERSPECTIVES were accurate—and which were not. Was it Neville Chamberlain or Winston Churchill? The flat-earth thinkers or Christopher Columbus? However, the ones who we remember—the ones who “got it right”—didn’t have the luxury of knowing the outcome when tough choices had to be made. They led with a perspective yet to be proven in the midst of high stakes.

Perspectives are like contact lenses we put on each morning before work. They are our angle of vision; our perception of reality and what to do about it. They shape our attitude, actions, and priorities. Our perspectives are critical in our decision-making process and are largely shaped by our beliefs and experience. All too often, we become so comfortable with them that we forget they are there.

Perspectives can get us fired or promoted. They can influence other perspectives, be influenced, or go it alone. Because life and death for individuals and businesses are often determined by their perspective, it is important to ask the questions “Am I seeing this correctly? Is there a bigger picture? Am I asking the right questions? What is the foundation for my perspective?”

CASE STUDIES

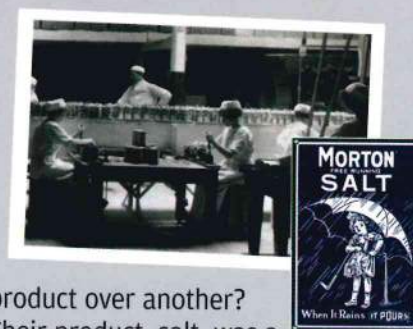
Remember the Coca-Cola “New Coke” crisis in the mid-1980s that literally had America rioting in the streets? New Coke was of course one of the most notable marketing blunders in all of history. It would be a mistake, however, to think that there



was not a lot of strategy and research that went into the Coca-Cola Company’s decision to introduce the

new formula. Coca-Cola had performed thousands of blind taste tests showing New Coke as the overwhelming favorite to the original. It wasn’t until after the roll out of New Coke and the subsequent public outcry that Coca-Cola realized an important perspective was neglected. They failed to ask consumers: “How would you feel if we changed Coke?” But, at least, New Coke is still a hit in Micronesia.

By 1911, Morton Salt Company was confronted with a serious challenge. With a growing number of competitors, why would consumers choose their



product over another? Their product, salt, was a commodity. Salt is salt. What could they do to compete? Competing by price lowering would be a race to the bottom.

Morton Salt broadened their perspective. They found a new angle for beating the competition with a salt that flowed freely, even in humid weather. By adding in an anti-caking agent, and repackaging the salt into the familiar cylindrical canister you know today with an easy pour spout, they were ready for their new logo

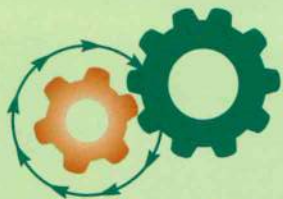


and tagline: “when it rains, it pours.” Their perspective for distinguishing themselves without lowering their price proved right. Today, nearly 100 years later, Morton Salt continues its market domination at a premium price.

PERSPECTIVE PARADIGMS

Daniel and Nehemiah are two heroes of the Old Testament who never met, but were allied like book-ends through the history of Jewish captivity by Babylon and subsequent freedom by Persia. These two men allowed themselves to be God’s instruments during historical turning points for the Jews. With God’s help, Nehemiah and Daniel were right when it counted most. The order of events in the lives of Daniel and Nehemiah almost seem reversed from one another. Daniel was forced out of his homeland, Israel, into captivity and into the service of the king. Nehemiah was allowed to leave his king’s service in order to go to Israel, his rightful homeland, and lead its rebuilding.

Each day, we are confronted with decisions in our work; some are, of course, more critical than others. Then, there comes the decisions and challenges that are turning points. Like Daniel and Nehemiah, we too can get it right by God’s grace and a proper perspective. Using Daniel and Nehemiah to coach us on perspective,



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here are some fundamental perspective-builders their stories offer:

1. A Settled Foundation of Absolutes

The Scripture says: "But Daniel **resolved** not to defile himself with the royal food and wine" (Daniel 1:8, emphasis added). After he was captured, Daniel did not abandon his beliefs and adopt those of Babylon. When we are settled and obedient to foundational issues for our lives, our perspectives are less subject to the constant change around us. Moreover, abiding in foundational absolutes helps us recognize and overrule emotion that would otherwise lead us to lower standards.

Nehemiah, being the cupbearer to the king, could have told his brother he would send someone else to help rebuild because he was too important to leave. Instead, Nehemiah left a comfortable job to do what he knew was right. He knew where his priorities lay. Seasons of change are never the time to abandon principles.

2) Our Perspective is Limited

When we begin to think that our perspective is all inclusive, we've lost perspective on God. Like us, Daniel and Nehemiah had a limited perspective. First Corinthians 13:9 says: "We only know in part." As their stories open, neither Daniel nor Nehemiah could have known what was waiting for them. When their turning points came, they did not jump to conclusions regarding their course of action. They sought the Lord, and consequently, their perspectives were enlarged. For Daniel, God gave him revelation to interpret the king's dream. For Nehemiah, God opened the door to go to Israel with resources.

3) Trust, Not Fear

Fear is unhealthy and paralyzing, and not from the Lord. (We are not talking here about the fear of the Lord, which is actually best understood to mean "awe" or "reverence.") Nehemiah and Daniel were not motivated out of fear. Had they

been, there would be two less books in the Bible. Daniel would not have influenced kings. God's power and presence would not have been demonstrated in the lion's den or the fiery furnace. Nehemiah would have never gotten the wall built had fear from the enemy invaded his perspective.

When we trust God's plan and keep the mission in front of us, we can leave our comfort zones and go forward. We can embrace change and challenges head on, recognizing that therein lies opportunity from God.

Daniel 6:23 says: "Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had **trusted** in his God" (emphasis added).

Proverbs 29:25 says: "**Fear** of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever **trusts** in the LORD is kept safe" (emphasis added).

4) It's Not About Me

When Nehemiah led in the rebuilding of the wall, he was able to take a group of men and women who had been there before he arrived—who seemingly could not get the job done—and he made them productive. He knew how to organize a team. He was helping others find their place. Again, when his people were exacting heavy interest rate loans against one another, Nehemiah intervened to cause them to remember their mission.

GOD'S GRACE

Keep this in mind: Nehemiah was not a superhero who could fly with a big "N" on his chest. Daniel is not a cute feel-good fairy tale. They were men who built and kept a proper perspective by God's grace. May the Lord bless you in your endeavors at work—your mission. **121**

Jonathan Simpson is Director of the Construction Services Team for Apex III, a construction firm based in Mobile, AL. He also coordinates Marketplace Exchange for CSM and provides management assistance for the Hidden Treasures Costa Rica ministry.

Continued From Page 11

something doesn't change in America in this generation, then the same will be said of us also.

Our founders and great leaders of earlier generations would not recognize the incoherent, self-centered, and shallow ethos of much of America today. What passes for wisdom in high places such as the Supreme Court or various Circuit Courts would rightly be decried as foolishness by heroes of the past. And many of the decisions being made by these courts will be cursed by future generations, if any generations survive.

SAVE THE MALES

Boys are falling further and further behind in school, young men are fleeing the Church, and husbands and fathers are fleeing their families and responsibilities. We will not discover what it truly means to be men from any other source apart from the One Who created and called us to be men.

Too many men have been shaped by Hugh Hefner's "Playboy Philosophy" and too few by the Sermon on the Mount. God told Job, "Gird up your loins and act like a man!" It's time for us to buck up and take responsibility. Wrong models of manhood will doom the next generation to destruction; we are not called to be feminized, spine-challenged wafflers;

self-centered and vain metrosexual himbos; macho sex-stalking lust slaves; violent hot-heads; willfully obtuse rednecks; flesh-focused Nimrods; apathetic and passive slumber mongers; hippy dippy purveyors of sloppy agape; grumpy old hope crushers; or anger-driven rebels without a cause or a clue.

The destiny of the man of God is so much higher and greater than the models we currently see paraded in the media, in education, in entertainment, or even in many churches and homes. And the fulfillment of this destiny is not for the glory of man; it is for the glory of God and the salvation of this generation.

Dads, your faith and your family are not the responsibility of the Church or the state. Now, don't get me wrong – it's important for you and your family to be a part of a spiritual family and, there's a place for you to function within the larger culture with its benefits and responsibilities. But, God gave your wife and your children to you.

Did you know that you are called to be the spiritual leader of your home? You may have a church pastor, but God has called you, Dad, to be the pastor in your home. You are to be, under God, a prophet, priest, and king in your house.

How is that working out? Do you ever pray with your family? Do you ever share the Word together? Do you talk about the Lord together? What kind of example do you set at home? How is your own walk with the Lord?

Maybe it's going great—if

so, maybe you can be an encouragement and strength to another brother. Or, maybe things



Malachi prophesied that the Messiah would "...turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to their fathers..."

have been a little tough around the house lately. Maybe the struggles you are having with your wife and kids are because you need to get right with God yourself. Maybe you're having a hard time getting them to be accountable to you because you are not being accountable to the Lord or to spiritual authority.

TURNING THE HEARTS

Wherever we are today as men, we can have hope for renewed strength, restoration, and purpose from the Lord. When the enemy comes against your family, you have

authority from the Lord Jesus Christ to stand in His power and rebuke the destroyer. You can receive the promise of God which says: "I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children" (Isaiah 49:25).

My friend Keith Currie, the founder and principal of Covenant Christian School, says that too many boys are trying to learn how to be men from other boys; and therefore, when they grow up to be men, they are still acting like boys. We need to encourage strong inter-generational connections for the sake of all generations.

Malachi prophesied that the Messiah would "...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 4:6). If Jesus had not come, then the last word in the Bible would have been "curse". But, joy to the world, the Lord has come! Who came to reveal the Heavenly Father and taught us to pray, "Our Father," has also anointed the hearts of fathers and children to bring restoration in relationship and revelation of purpose. 121

Stephen Simpson is the Editor of **One-to-One** and Senior Pastor of Covenant Church of Mobile.

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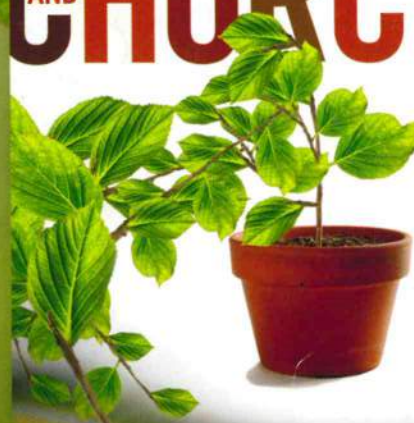
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