

# The Battle for a Generation

Matthew 19:14 (GW)<sup>14</sup> Jesus said, "Don't stop children from coming to me! Children like these are part of God's kingdom."



SHEPHERD  
CHURCH

## Characteristics of This Generation

### 1. Loneliness runs deep.

A. Whoever loves them first will have them!

- We love them by valuing them.
- We love them by giving them a space.
- We love them by recognizing and meeting their needs.
- We love them by including them.

### 2. Worth is a struggle.

A. Many kids base their worth on their appearance, achievement, or acceptance rather than what God has already done for them.

*Ephesians 2:10 (NIV84)*<sup>10</sup> For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

### 3. Comparison is killing them.

A. While social media has its benefits, it also has some serious consequences for people today.

B. A primary challenge that social media presents is unrealistic comparisons.

- Social media almost always paints others at their best.
- Social media isn't always honest or realistic.
- Social media can create loneliness based on fomo.

C. Social media has made mental health, anxiety and depression serious issues among young people.

*According to a research study of American teens ages 12-15, those who used social media over three hours each day faced twice the risk of having negative mental health outcomes, including depression and anxiety symptoms.*

*--Yale Medicine, Jan 8, 2024*

### 4. Morality has been muddied.

A. The Bible is, and always has been the objective standard for right and wrong.

B. Our culture has abandoned an objective standard for a subjective standard of right and wrong.

C. Spiritual authority is sending mixed messages about morality.

D. Kids are being visually bombarded with images of activities/actions that contradict God's Word.

### 5. Their foundation is lacking.

*Psalms 11:3 (NIV84)*<sup>3</sup> When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

A. We live in a post-Christian culture; many people who do not have a Judeo-Christian upbringing.

## The Good News:

1. This is the soil for a great awakening.

2. The fields are white unto harvest.

*John 4:35 (KJV)*<sup>35</sup> Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

- A. The implication was the crop was beyond ready for harvest, and it was almost **too late!**
  - B. Three statistics that should make the next generation a priority for us:
    - **85%** of Christians became a Christian before the age of 18. (Barna) (1980's)
    - If you don't reach a kid by the age of **13**, you probably won't. (Barna) (2000's)
    - "What you believe at age 13 is pretty much what you're going to die believing," (Barna) Research compiled Barna Group shows that children between the ages of 5 and 13 have a **32** percent probability of accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior.
3. This generation will **change** the world.

## A STRATEGY FOR REACHING THIS GENERATION

**Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NIV84)** <sup>12</sup>Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

1. **Parents**/Family are the number one strategy for reaching children.

**Deuteronomy 6:4–9 (NIV84)** <sup>4</sup>Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup>Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup>These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. <sup>7</sup>Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup>Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup>Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

2. The **Church** has a mandate to make disciples of all people and generations.

**Matthew 28:19–20 (NIV84)** <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- A. Effective ministry to children and teenagers is a necessity!

- B. We must be **intentional** about the time we have to invest in students.

If a child or teenager has perfect attendance at church . . .

- 2 hours per week . . . Jesus spent 168
- 8 hours per month . . . Jesus spent 672
- 416 hours per year . . . Jesus spent 8,760

4. Our **Schools**

- A. A Christian school is an opportunity for a church to **extend** its disciple-making effort.

- B. Benefits of a Christian School:

- A Christian School has a more **concentrated** amount of time and thus influence in a student's life:
  - 7 hours/day . . . 35 hours/week . . . 140 hours/month . . . 1,260 hours/school year.
- A student has **multiple** disciple-makers who are investing in them academically and spiritually.

- C. A Christian school is not a replacement for the church, it is a **tool** of the church.

## MY NEXT STEPS:

- Pray for this generation and those that work with them.
- Get your kids and grandkids and neighbors involved in church!
- Give your time to serve in our kids/student ministry!
- Give financially to help provide a place to minister to the next generation.