

Another Generation Judges 2:6-10

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Many people question what has happened to our _____ and why have our morals and values changed. This isn't the first time people are _____ at change. The Bible reveals God's _____ of humanity. It reveals how God has perceived the events and changes through the _____. It's easier to understand the _____ when we see what happened in the _____ from God's perspective. It's clear that our present day has abandoned many of the morals and values that were held to be _____ in the past. Many have lost any sense of the sacred or holiness. The morals of our day seem _____ upside down, where good has become bad and bad has become good. Our young people are left very confused morally and spiritually with little sense of _____. A return to the teaching of God's Word is _____ more today than at any time that I can remember!

Perhaps you feel a little like Rip Van Winkle, Washington Irving's character that fell asleep for twenty years and then woke up to find that his world had _____. Things he took for _____ were no longer the way he remembered.

Many problems are actually _____ problems that affect our daily lives. When the _____ of people change, when people forget God, their moral lives change, too. God revealed through Isaiah, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are _____ in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!" (Isaiah 5:20-21). Many think they have outgrown God, or outgrown the Bible, or outgrown the church; but they're deceiving themselves. You can't reject God, follow your heart's desires, and expect to remain in God's favor.

Our scripture reading today comes from The Book of Judges 2:6-10.

One generation passes and another comes along that may not know what the first one knew. Many of our older preachers used to say that we are just _____ generation away from apostasy—that is, a falling away from the Living God! As long as selfish ambition and evil exist, Christians will face the _____ of pulling away from God to live life on their own terms. Adam and Eve wanted to know good and evil and be _____ God. In Noah's day, the Lord "saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only _____ continually" (Genesis 6:5). Then God brought a flood to _____ the world, because of the people's corruption and violence.

God told Noah and his descendants to multiply and populate the earth in Genesis 9:7. However, in Genesis 11 the people _____ against God's command to multiply and fill the earth and instead built the Tower of Babel. God confused their language and scattered them through the whole earth. Life changed rapidly when people could no longer communicate with each other. People set out on journeys to establish their own nations.

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Joshua and his contemporaries served the Lord _____, but another generation arose “who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. And the people of Israel did what was _____ in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. They abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. And they went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And this provoked the Lord to _____” (Judges 2:10-12). As you read The Book of Judges, you see how God _____ Israel for their idolatry by putting them into the hands of people who plundered them. Israel found itself abused and unable to _____ before their enemies. When they repented and called out to God, God then sent them a _____ to relieve them of their misery. Sadly, after the judge died, Israel would _____ back to idolatry and act more corruptly than their fathers did. When people refuse to listen and obey God, they find themselves in misery.

In my lifetime of 65 years, I’ve seen many _____ to the morals and values in society. Many of those changes have _____ Biblical morals for a secular way of life that leaves God out and brings human passions in. I would never have imagined some of these changes in the 1960s. I’ve seen the morals and the values of the _____ erode. More than 40 % of children are now born to parents who are not _____. Nearly 40 % of adults in America say marriage is now _____. Two-thirds of Americans now say that divorce is no longer _____, and divorce plagues more than a fourth of all adults. There have been nearly 60 million abortions since Roe v. Wade took place in 1973. This is a greater number than the population of many _____ of the world.

Television, movies, and the internet are _____ with nudity, violence, and gross profanity. Some are willing to embrace every _____ of corruption. One survey revealed that 13% of Americans say that the word “_____” is obsolete. People no longer regard many things that the Bible calls sin as even a moral issue. For instance, 58% say that cohabitation is moral; and 36% say getting _____ is okay; 37% would say profanity is not a sin; and half the people in America say _____ a sexually explicit movie is morally acceptable; and 43% say _____ pornographic magazines is okay. Because faithful Christians admit these things are sinful and oppose them, many of those who accept them have _____ to bash and persecute Christians. These moral changes have led people to _____ worshiping at church, because they don’t want to hear the will of God.

Over the last fifty years or so, we’ve seen four trends take place. First, we must become _____, according to some, and silence God’s voice. People don’t deny that God exists; they just don’t want Him to have any _____ in their lives. Second, they decide to do what’s right in their own eyes and make their own moral _____. Third, if everybody can do what is right in his own eyes, then we can all become pluralists who say _____ is right to do whatever he pleases. This religious pluralism and moral pluralism means there’s no longer any _____ of right and wrong, no longer a standard of morality. So, fourth, we end up with a confused _____ of relative morality and relative truth and relative spirituality. When we follow God, we have a firm and unchanging _____, and we have unchanging morals; but when we follow

these trends, we end up with confusion and chaos and misery.

Because many have gotten used to the moral _____ of our time, they've become desensitized to sin. They don't think sin is wrong or feel _____ or ashamed for the sins that they commit. The things that they used to _____, they no longer think are any big deal. They regard those who oppose sin as _____ wicked than those who commit it. Our postmodern society has portrayed Christians as hypocrites, mean-spirited, ignorant, and judgmental. It's unacceptable to _____ anyone except the Christian who wants to live a righteous life.

The best-known passage of Scripture in the New Testament is Matthew 7:1, "Do not judge so that you will not be judged." Jesus spoke this to a Jewish culture that was given to judging people by their own _____ standards rather than by Biblical law. Jesus also taught, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Realistically, everyone makes judgments in life. Even those who don't want anyone to judge them, find themselves judging others. False judging is indeed wrong, but some things _____ judgment. Victims of sin and crime _____ justice.

God warned Israel through Isaiah, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and clever in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine, And valiant men in mixing strong drink; Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!" (Isaiah 5:20-23).

So we ask, in a culture that doesn't always understand or appreciate us, "What can we do to _____ faith with God?"

First, we should become _____ Bible students. Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." God blesses those who _____ and _____ Him. Acts 17:11 says of the Bereans, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so." They were not afraid to _____ the Scriptures for themselves rather than depend on others to do it for them.

You can find the truth for yourself by _____ God's Word. Paul told the young preacher Timothy, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be _____, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Whether you're a preacher or not, be _____ to study God's Word, so that you can handle the Word of Truth accurately. When you know the Scriptures, you won't be deceived by _____ doctrines.

Christianity is NOT a blind _____ in the dark; it's a faith built on _____ evidence from the Word of God! If Jesus is the Son of God, He is _____. If Jesus is Lord, then His Word is inspired and _____. If the Words of Christ are inspired and true, then they have _____ in our lives. If the Words of Christ have authority in our lives, then we are accountable. Hebrews 4:12-13 says, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and

exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give _____.”

Second, we need to know who our real _____ is. Our enemy is Satan. First Peter 5:8-10 says, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring _____, seeking someone to devour.” The devil has never been your friend; he only wants to _____ your life. James 4:7-8 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” Whenever we allow Satan’s lies and schemes to _____ us in following after the world, we make a big mistake. Instead, let’s draw _____ to God and His teaching. The devil has always been a liar, and he confuses and deceives people to gain their _____. The Lord Jesus said to some rebellious Jews, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a _____, and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

For this reason, we must fight against the devil and his ways. **Read Ephesians 6:10-13.** So stand _____ in your faith and be strong in the Lord.

Third, change your heart and your life. **Read Ephesians 4:17-24.**

Last, _____ your faith. Don’t be _____ to speak the truth. Teach your neighbors, your friends, and your children. Tell the story of Jesus to anyone and everyone who will _____. Help them understand why we believe what we truly believe. Open the Bible and _____ about the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Read not only His commandments, study also His _____. I recommend also to everyone to study Christian evidences, so you may know the _____ for your faith. There are now hundreds of books available to help parents and teachers provide the information needed by seekers to _____ their faith in Jesus Christ, in the resurrection, in the Bible, in creation, and in the existence of God. The more you know about Jesus, the more you’ll _____ Him and the more you’ll want to _____ Him.

You can _____ to live a moral life; you can go to heaven; you can return to God in faith; and you can live for God. You don’t have to be _____ by the confusion that’s in our culture. All is not lost; God is giving us _____ each day to get right with Him. The changes in our culture should call us to a greater commitment to Christ, to the truth, and to godliness. Even if we live in a culture that doesn’t understand us, we can still draw near to God and love Him. God’s grace in Christ has appeared to give us an opportunity to change our lives and to serve the Lord.

Read Titus 2:11-14. The cross of Jesus is calling us all to forsake sin and to live godly lives.

So place your _____ in Jesus Christ and in His teaching. Because you love and believe in Him, turn from everything sinful to follow Jesus Christ. Repentance isn’t always _____, but following Christ is liberating. Loving the Lord ought to lead you to _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God and to be _____ into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Through baptism, God washes away our sins, adds us to the church, makes us His child, and gives us newness of life. If you’re tired of the chaos and confusion of our postmodern culture, come to the Lord Jesus in faith and obedience. You’ll never regret doing what is right!