

WHAT HAS CORRUPTED TODAY'S YOUTH? PARENTS

In this series of articles, we looked at possible factors that have contributed to the corruption of today's youth. In this article we will conclude the series and take a look at what is the most influential factor in a child's life: parents.

There is nothing more influential in a child's life than a parent, or lack thereof. The lifestyles of many famous people mentioned in the previous articles stem from a lack of loving parents. With an absence of parents, this individual was often led to trouble. Without the financial support of parents, this individual may have been led to stealing or drug dealing. This individual lacking strong parental guidance may have developed no respect for authority or elders. Somebody raised in an unstable household may have fathered or given birth to several illegitimate children. This lifestyle is the lifestyle often glorified by society and famous people. Today's youth often admires these people and their lifestyle and may even desire it.

When a parent is setting examples, it is not always the things they do; it is often the things they don't do. Parents cannot lead only by words and telling children how to live. Children remember the actions their parents do, and to a child, actions speak louder than words. Children are extremely attentive and will most certainly know when a parent says one thing yet does another. It may even be said that if a parent sets proper examples consistently for their children, when it is time for the children to leave home, the children will know how to live. The parent's examples should speak for themselves, and a child should know how they are expected to live. *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."* (Pro. 22:6)

Parents must teach children the Bible at home from their youth up. Ephesians 6:4 tells us this: *"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* Children must be raised in a Christian atmosphere and in the Church. Parents must make it a point to get their children to Church services. If a parent easily finds excuses or small "illnesses" to not attend Church services, you better believe their child is picking up on it and may develop that habit themselves.

One of the most troubling things commonly associated with many youths today is the blatant disregard for authority and elders. In school when a teacher would reprimand a student, I often heard the student reply to the teacher "Don't even start that with me." Or "Don't you talk to me like that." This troubled me and I would wonder where these youths developed the idea that they had the right to speak like that to an elder. It soon dawned on me that these youths believed they were special, and they likely received the idea from their parents. Parents cannot let their children think they are special. Today, many parents tell their children to not let anyone talk to them in certain ways or tell them what to do. The parents tell their children if the children are treated wrong, then the parents will take care of the ordeal. This has led to parents blindly supporting their children in confrontations. Anyone in education today will tell you that many parents no longer support the teacher; they support their child no matter the situation. *"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."* (Pro. 13:24).

Out of all the factors we have viewed, parents is the only one that has direct influence from the moment a child is born. The influence and availability of the other factors are often decided by the parents. Not everything is left up to the parents. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."* (Eph 6:1-3). However, a youth's attitude, decision making, and lifestyle is influenced by nurture. Parents have the most influence on a youth.

BEN

APOLOGIA

QUESTION: In Romans 1:18, Paul tells us that the wrath of God is *"revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men"*. The statement seems to indicate that God is presently revealing His wrath. Is this correct? If so, in what way is His wrath being revealed at the present time?

ANSWER: One of the great shortcomings of the present religious culture is the failure to acknowledge the wrath of God. We live in a day and age where many are content to simply speak of God's love and largely ignore the passages of scripture that warn of His wrath. This trend is not in keeping with the example of

apostolic preaching in which the wrath of God was given a great deal of attention.

While we know and are certainly appreciative of the truth concerning the love, mercy, and grace of God, we must never fall victim to Satan's deception that the traits of love, mercy, and grace, are in opposition to wrath. Since the beginning Satan has been telling the lie that no matter what we do we will not suffer the consequences.

This same message is being heralded from pulpits all across America . We are told that God desires our salvation (which He does), He will forgive us (which He will), and He will bestow upon us His mercy (which He has) through His Son Jesus Christ. However, what is not being heralded is that if we do not accept the salvation offered we will incur His wrath.

The failure to preach the love, grace, and mercy of God against the backdrop of God's wrath amounts to teaching the message that we have the license to sin without consequence. Go ahead sin, God loves you. Go ahead sin, God is merciful. Go ahead sin, God is full of grace. Or Satan put it, "Go ahead disobey, you will not surely die."

If one examines the sermons recorded in the book of Acts one will be confronted with the difference between the common message of our time and the true message of the gospel. In most cases the sermons began with the true condition of mankind as being sinful. This was followed with statements concerning the righteous judgment of God against sin and those who love it. This message in most instances was enough to elicit a response from those who heard it. Men cried out, "What shall we do?" or "What must I do to be saved?" It was at this point that the love, grace, and mercy of God were mentioned. Those who inquired were pointed to the cross and told that it was here that God chose to pour out His wrath for those who would accept the one on the cross and the salvation found in Him! They were also reminded that if they chose to reject this substitution they would suffer fully the wrath of God.

This brings us to the question at hand. Is the wrath of God only the punishment of our sins at the Day of Judgment or is His wrath somehow evident even now? As the inquiry points out, the passage in Romans is saying that His wrath is even now being revealed. Is God giving us a foretaste of His wrath in this life? If He is, then how is He expressing this righteous indignation to us in this present age? These questions are

answered in Romans 1:18-32. This passage is too large to include here so we encourage our readers to examine the passage in its entirety.

Romans 1:18 states, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them."*

From this passage of scripture we gain two important truths. First, it is the truth that God is presently revealing His wrath. This is so in every generation. We need to realize that the wrath of God is not something that is only to be discovered in the last day. The Bible does teach of a future day of wrath, which is commonly referred to as Judgment Day, but we need to understand that God gives a foretaste of His wrath that is ever present with us even before that Day.

The second truth is why God gives a foretaste of His wrath unto people. He does so because men stifle His truth. This is what the writer meant when he refers to suppressing the truth of God in unrighteousness. God desires that all men be saved by coming to the knowledge of the truth. However, due to the sin in our hearts, we are deceived. Rather than embracing His truth and coming to the Light of His way, we remain in a darkened state and not only reject His truth but also make every effort to suppress it.

We suppress and reject God's truth when we justify our unrighteous deeds and seek to follow our ungodly passions. We spurn God and His truth when we ignore those things of God that are manifest in us and the creation around us. God has revealed to us so many things concerning Himself that we are without excuse. Yet we still continue in our unbelief.

Another reason God manifests His wrath is that we are ungrateful and foolish. Note verse 21. *"...because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."*

In following Paul's thoughts in this passage we see that men are not grateful even though they know God. Failing to be thankful in all things is also a failure to glorify Him as God. The latter is man's entire reason for being. To fail here is to fail in our purpose for existing.

When we are foolish and unthankful we become people who are guided not by God's truth but by our own reason and intellect. How ironic. We who are blind, with darkened hearts and futile imaginations are trying to find solutions to our existence here on earth and to guide our own steps. Certainly we profess wisdom but are truly fools.

This is evident in our own society. All around us we have erected our idols to replace the one true God. We have adopted the doctrine of secular humanism (no higher power than man), we have become lovers of material possessions, and walk in such a way that we feed and fulfill every desire of the flesh.

No wonder God is angry! No wonder His wrath is kindled! When we cease to be thankful to God and when we began to esteem the created things over the Creator, His wrath is justified. This will all be manifest in the last day with the fiery end promised to this world.

But how is God's wrath evident now? In order to understand how the wrath of God is manifest in the present we turn the attention of the reader to the action that God takes in response to our suppression and rejection of Him and His truth. He simply gives us up to follow our own way. Three times Paul brings our attention to this action of God. Please note verse 24, 26, and 28.

"Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness..." V. 24

"For this reason God gave them up to vile passions..." V. 26

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind..." V. 28

The Greek word for "gave them up" is paradidomi. It means simply leaving man to follow his own way. There is no fire from heaven, no lightning bolts, no thunder, just letting man follow his own desires and vile passions. It is herein that we find the wrath of God currently revealed.

The result of being given up is to be filled with all unrighteousness. Note verses Romans 28 and 29 in their entirety.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting: being filled with all unrighteousness..."

The verse continues mentioning the manifestation of such unrighteousness like wickedness, envy, murder and the like. All of these are the result of man being allowed to follow the desires of His own heart, the passion of His own lusts. And yet we continue on, increasing in our own sinfulness.

The wrath of God is clearly seen in that as we follow the dictates of our own hearts, we reap what we sow. The promises of sin are lies. We buy in to the idea that sin is fun, that sin is going to give us what we need, but the truth is that it always takes us where we do not want to go, keeps us longer than we want to be kept, and does to us what we do not want to happen.

Herein is found the foretaste of God's wrath. Suffering the consequences of sin here in this life is painful. Just imagine what it will be like to suffer them for all eternity!

SAM DICK
Cave City, KY

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES

LOCATION

SPEAKER

Dec.
1 – 3

Mt. Carmel Road Congregation
Gay, GA

Kevin Mills
Newnan, GA

Dec.
4 – 8

Camellia City Congregation
Greenville, AL

Various speakers from
Owens Road
Congregation
Prattville, AL

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. According to Genesis, what was the first thing God said?
2. What was the name of Ruth's first husband?
3. Where were Joseph, Mary, and Jesus when king Herod died?
4. What associate of Paul's nearly died of an illness and then was sent to Philippi ?

5. In Revelation, which of the seven seals revealed the souls of the martyrs?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. How old was Moses when his mother put him in a basket and hid him among the reeds on the Nile ? THREE MONTHS (Exo. 2:2-3)

2. Psalm 10 asks God to do what to the wicked man? BREAK HIS ARM (Ps. 10:15)

3. What was Amos' occupation? HERDSMAN (Amos 1:1)

4. The Jews attempted to stone Jesus for saying that He preceded whom? ABRAHAM (John 8:58-59)

5. In Galatians, Paul said that not even Titus was compelled to what? BE CIRCUMCISED (Gal. 2:3)