

Introduction – In May, Atlantic Magazine contributor, Niall Ferguson, wrote about “The Coming Generation War.” In the article, he lays out the case for a political shift to the left, but also provides some interesting insight into the division that has been created between the different generations. His demarcation between the generations is the Silent Generation (74 and older), Baby Boomers (55 to 73), Gen Xer’s (39 to 54), Millennials (23 to 38), and Gen Z (22 and under). He is trying to make a political prediction that Gen Z and Millennials will soon be fully in control of the direction of our country and his observation is they will take things towards bigger government socialism to serve their own interests. **But the point he doesn’t make but is obvious is that we have accepted the idea that “gen wars” (identity politics) are part of our political experience and that the idea of familial exceptionalism is passé.**

“**Gen Wars**” are the battles that take place between different generations of people based upon the fear that each generation only wants to take care of itself. That a collective of people determined by their age coalesce into armies determined to defeat the best interests of other generations. That fear is then exploited for the purpose of political power by those who can gain the majority. **Familial Exceptionalism** on the other hand is the pursuit that we talked about last week derived from Paul’s promise to the Ephesians; “**Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.**” (Ephesians 3:20-21) God’s plan is that each generation experience the glory of His immeasurable blessings which grows greater for ever and ever! Every generation is blessed without it being at the expense of other generations. There is no “Gen War” in God’s design, just powerful/prayerful parenting.

This month we will be encouraged by God’s word toward “Powerful/Prayerful Parenting.” It is vital that we don’t participate in the “Gen Wars” which have now infected many of our families. Parents and children are at odds with each other, a battle which can become brutal when it is generationally politicized like what is happening in our society. We can’t allow Satan to overtake our families in a coup because we have stopped using the most important tool at our disposal to empower our families. Our most effective weapon in our battle against the forces of evil is prayer. In Ephesians 6 when Paul encourages us to put on the full armor of God in this battle he concludes; “**And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.**”

There might have been a time before when we leaned upon the “village” to help raise our children. There might have been a time when culture and society were compliments to the effort we make with our children to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. There might have been a time when our family heritage was a sufficient complement to our effort. But whether you are a parent or grandparent, the challenges you face are so dynamic that just leaning on familial morality or societal morality will no longer secure your children or grandchildren. Our unique secular times require a more powerful/prayerful approach to parenting. So I will do my best to Pray Power Into you so that you can powerfully/prayerfully parent.

We are going to use James 5:13-20 as our primary resource this month. Each Sunday in November we will use the blueprint of confession and prayer described there to address the pressing issues facing parents and grandparents... **Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins...**

The promise of God is that “the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective”. In other words, if we are praying for the right thing to happen, as Elijah did by praying it not rain, then rain to turn back his people to God, we are doing so because those we love are in trouble, not praising God appropriately, sick of heart, body, and mind. We are agents of confession and pray for those we love to turn them back no matter how far they have wandered in sin. This is powerful/prayerful parenting at its best as we are praying power into the lives of our children and parents.

If we are at war within our families, the only long-term solution is "Powerful/Prayerful Parenting" as described by James. It is the kind of righteous prayer that is honest in confession in which we agree and acknowledge with what God says about our trouble and success. It is the kind of prayer that is set on helping those we love escape the influence that sin expressed in the ideas, images, and ideologies of this world enslaves them. We will apply it to the dysphoria creating the generational wars between children and their parents, the dysfunction causing the gender wars between wives and husbands, the dysplasia conforming the genetic wars between family and their addicted loved ones, and the dystrophy conditioning the genealogical wars between adult children and their elderly parents.

The Greek prefix "dys" would change the meaning of an otherwise healthy and whole idea into something unhealthy. Many recognized physiological or psychological maladies use the Greek "dys" prefix to define them. Pain for instance can be referred to as dysmenorrhea – unfortunate menstruation, trouble as dyskinesia – trouble moving, and difficulty as dyspnea – difficult breathing. The "dys" prefix redefines a healthy function into a troubled, difficult, or painful one. This month we will consider how the trouble, difficulty and pain in our families is a result of a "dys." Next week we will talk about "dysfunction" as it relates to spouses. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, dysplasia as it involves addictions, and on the 24<sup>th</sup>, dystrophy as it describes dealing with those with aging issues. Today we use the word "dysphoria" to help us better understand the generational war going on between children, teens, and parents. Dysphoria is a state of unease or generalized dissatisfaction with life which causes depression, mania, and anxiety in young people. Literally it means "impatience under affliction," "pain hard to be borne, anguish," etymologically "hard to bear," from dys- "bad, hard" (see dys-) + pherein "to carry."

Young people are asked to carry very difficult and hard things these days which are creating anxiety in them which leads to depression (gloom and doom) and mania (extreme ups and downs). We have always had forms of this express itself in our young people since the beginning of time, but in our time the extreme ideas, images, and ideologies to which they are exposed at such a young age causes them to need clinical or drug treatment for their heavy loads. As an example, one report found that approximately half of the children surveyed, ages seven to 11, were anxious about climate change and often lost sleep over it. Another study showed that children ages 11 to 14 were more concerned about climate change than they were about their homework. I use this as an extreme example to illustrate the point that young people are asked to carry heavy or bad loads which manifest themselves negatively in their emotional and physical health. They are exposed to very adult things graphically that older folks didn't deal with until much later in life.

Halloween was Thursday. There is a growing trend to desensitize your children to scary things by exposing them to scary things at a younger age. The Walking Dead series has made it impossible for parents to protect their children from the idea and images of apocalyptic zombies, but even Disney with shows like Vampirina and Mosters Inc. introduce even toddlers to scary images intended to help them conquer their fear of scary things. There is even a haunted house down south that will pay you \$20,000 dollars if you can make it all the way through it, but no one has. But whether it is horror, graphic language, sexual content, adult themes, children are exposed to these ideas and images which express godless ideologies more so than ever and it is taking its toll on them resulting in generational wars. They are under stress and strain they can't understand or explain because they are being consumed by the dark forces in the heavenly realms using every medium in their lives to desensitize them to the Holy Spirit. Our children have lost their sense of powerful godly destiny because all they see is evil in various forms celebrated victoriously.

When our children are lost or compromised by a godless village creating such anxiety in them that they think their parents are at war with them (and if you have a teenager, it sometimes feels like war), we have only one powerful tool that can help us save them. Paul described that powerful/prayerful tool in Ephesians 1:11-21:

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. (Ephesians 1:11-21)

In Paul's prayer, we can overlay the blueprint of confession and prayer as offered by James. When our children are in trouble or if our parents are in trouble, we must use the powerful/prayerful tool of parenting to help save them. To his Ephesian friends, Paul, like a parent, helps them turn from their wandering ways. He encourages them to agree and acknowledge through confession their true design as he acknowledges their faith and love and agrees in thanksgiving for them through prayer. We can do the very same things in powerful/prayerful parenting for those we love.

**Confess** our destiny is in accordance with God's plan that we put our hope in Christ. We must **agree** with the idea and image that we are included in Christ when we believe the good news of salvation, and **acknowledge** we are protected by the Holy Spirit who keeps us secure as God's people. This technique has been helping families for 4000 years since the time of Moses described it...*Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. (Deuteronomy 11:18-21)* This generational promise is the only thing that can overcome the generational wars which put us at odds with our children so make it a habit to agree and acknowledge with God about this.

**Pray** that the eyes of our hearts will be enlightened that we may know through the Spirit of wisdom and revelation the incomparably great power for those who believe as we focus on our hope and heritage. We must **acknowledge** the faith and love in our children (no matter how basic) and **agree** to be thankful for each other. This technique is also proven to help families of thousands of years... *For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21)* This generational promise too will help us overcome the generational wars of our culture as we acknowledge and agree in these matters with our kids.

Now, I can hear the cries of objection. Preacher Mike, you just don't know how tough it is these days to raise kids. They are more worldly wise and arrogant than ever, and on top of that they think I'm an idiot because I don't agree and acknowledge with all the things going on in the world! But I do know, and that's why I am beseeching you to use the technique of powerful/prayerful parenting. If you ask me too, I will come to your house, meet with your teen, talk to your child, pray over you for the sake of your children. We must believe in this power that has served families for millennia.

The "Gen Wars" are in full force so don't expect them to just leave your family unaffected for some time. The tide must be turned to generational exceptionalism once again, and that will come only as the righteous pray for the turning of those lost in sin. As we empower our children through prayer, they will empower theirs through prayer too, and for generations to come God will bless us with immeasurably more. Or, we can surrender our progeny to the political powers exploiting them in the "Gen Wars" which will create even greater dysphoria in them. Can we join together to at least pray for our families with teens and children. If you are parent of a child or teen, could I have you come sit on the front row so we can pray for you today? Would those of us remaining come and sit, stand behind, come in front of these parents to pray for them? We must confess and pray today as those wanting right to be done for any trouble, ingratitude, or sickness they are dealing with as parents in their kids. Whisper prayers over them right now.

Father, we come before you because we agree and acknowledge that all we are is derived from you. We pray over these parents with children and teens that you give them the wisdom they need to exchange the generational wars for your generational exceptionalism. Create in them this day a new heart of faith and love that empowers them to help their children.