

## **We Are Responsible**

*Special for parents or those who lead Children's Ministries*

### **Judges 2:1-15**

Verse 10 says *"After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel."* As I read that I wondered about how a generation could serve the Lord throughout their lifetime and the next generation all completely turn away from God. As parents and those who minister to children, this passage proves the awesome responsibility we have to our children. We can't assume just because we serve the Lord, they will figure it out.

We can't really tell from these few verses what went wrong in the Israelites lives that made it so difficult for their children to serve God. However, one can assume that they probably were so busy following the rules and "serving" that they forgot to teach their children the greatest commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul and all your strength."

And in our lives we have even a greater love to teach our children. Paul tells us in Ephesians that Jesus "abolished the law" in His flesh. He did away with all the regulations. Not that there aren't standards that followers of Christ should follow, but if we can teach our children to love Jesus first, whether they belong to us biologically or spiritually, the standards that He set with the way He lived his life will automatically follow.

As parents, we teach our children to love Christ with our actions even more than our words. Our priorities about worship, work and family will train those young ones much more quickly than even everything in their Sunday School teachers' lessons. It's up to us to make sure they see us earnestly worshipping and loving our heavenly Father so our children aren't part of that "next generation" that falls away from God.

And if you are a leader in a children's ministry, you have a similar responsibility. Next to a child's parent and perhaps their school teacher, you have the most influence in these young people's lives. Every lesson you prepare should be geared toward helping them love Christ. Similarly, the love we show them and the example we set when we see them outside the church will influence their future in the faith more than you can imagine.

As you prepare to work with or raise these precious young ones that God has put in our care, look closely at your relationship with Christ. Do you love Him with all your heart, soul and mind? Or are you serving Him by following the "regulations"? Is your life a reflection of one that the "next generation" will want to imitate? And if they do, will they also be imitating Christ?

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