

Common Characteristics



God Knows No Generation Gap (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

Now when I was invited to speak here I was given my topic which was "Bridging the Generation Gap." You know what my response was? What gap? You see it from one perspective; I see it from another. I look back over more than eighty years, and for me there's hardly any gap between the generations. I picture it something like a vast auditorium with multitudes of people. They are gathered in different sectors of the auditorium. There's the children, the young people, the mature men, the older men and then people in my age bracket. The auditorium is dark, but there's a searchlight that moves across the people, and it just moves from one group to another, just a second or two in between. And that's the way time passes. It passes very quickly. And I don't believe that we should spend too much time emphasizing the gap between the generations. I'm more disposed to emphasize the things that are in common to all of us.

And so I want to speak to you about those things. In the book of Ecclesiastes, if you know where to find that and it you don't know all right, I'll quote it. In the 11th chapter and the 10th verse, right at the end of the verse it says:

> "...For childhood and youth are vanity."

Does anyone have the NIV here? What's the word they use for vanity there? Meaningless. That's all right. It doesn't completely represent it. Vanity has completely changed its meaning. For meaning like you it means being proud of your appearance. But in the time that the Bible was translated, it meant something that is empty, meaningless, insignificant. Well as far as I'm concerned, that is true. The distinctions between childhood and youth and maturity and old age are really very empty. They don't contain the real important truths of life. The really important things, especially in the Christian life, are equally real for children, young people, older people, and even people like me.

I just want to speak about four of those things which are part of the Christian life and which are just as real for people in the age group of some of you, as it is for my age group. The first thing I want to speak about is loyalty. Now that's not a very religious word. It's not often used. But it's a very Biblical concept. What we call faith, in some ways is better

understood as loyalty. In both the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New, the word for faith also means faithfulness. There's no distinction. So you cannot be a person of faith without being a faithful person. This is a false distinction. We have a picture of faith as believing a set of sentences. Now it's important what we believe, but that is not the full story of faith. Faith is believing in a person. Being loyal to a person. In the midst of every kind of pressure and temptation, faith is loyalty. It's loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you only have a "what" that you believe, in times of pressure that won't see you through. The Apostle Paul was in prison awaiting trial and probable execution, and he said, "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day." He didn't say I know what I've believed. He said I know Whom I have believed. There's a big difference. Any faith that's stops short of personal believing in Jesus is not biblical faith.

I find that young people, children, are just as capable of loyalty as older people. In fact, sometimes more. I find children, many of them not all of them, are very, very loyal to their brothers and sisters, to their parents, to their home. Some people are loyal to their school. They're loyal to some football team, or other group that they're committed to. So loyalty is a better way for you to understand at this time what faith is. And it's not a matter of age. Little children can be just as loyal as older people, and in fact sometimes I think more loyal. Their lives are less complicated. They just know who is their mother, their father, their friend, whatever it may be.

And then another thing that is vital in the Christian life is friendship. All people, I believe, have a desire for friendship—for a personal relationship with somebody. One of the tragedies of our contemporary society is that so much of that has been broken down. Maybe it is true in the lives of some of you. You really don't have those close personal relationships. You don't have somebody that you trust completely. Somebody to whom you're committed. Because of the breakdown of the family structure, many, many young people—and I've met many of them—are going through life like isolated islands. They're not connected to anything. They don't know what it is to have a friend, a real friend. That's part of Christianity, is friendship.

Then very closely related to that is commitment. You cannot be a real Christian without a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. And commitment is not easy for anybody. But I think actually, it's easier for young people than older people. Because the older you grow, the more you're entangled with the things of this life. You've got a job, you've got a home to live in, you're paying on a car, you've got a lot that holds on to you. To make a real commitment is a struggle. But people in the age bracket of some of you, you don't have too much to hold onto. You can make a commitment. You can say, "Here I am Lord Jesus. I'll serve You. I'll do what You call me to do. I'm committed to You, Lord Jesus."

Radio Program

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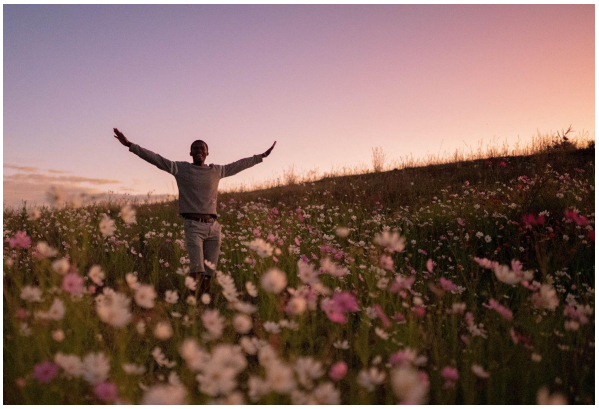

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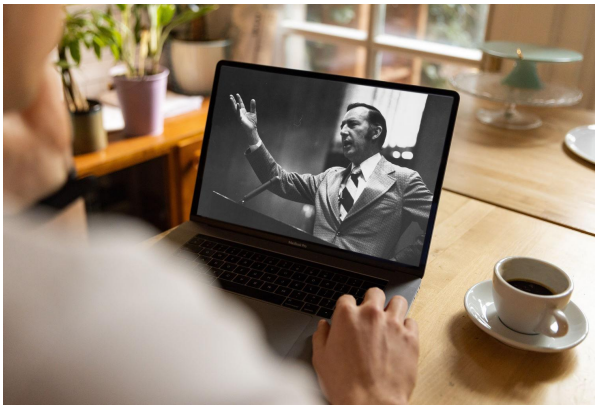

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