

“Man of the Next Generation”

Summary

This powerful message invites us to consider what it truly means to be intentional with the next generation, just as Jesus was with His disciples. The disciples themselves were young, impulsive, and still learning, yet Jesus invested His life in them, modeling an intentionality that transformed the world. We see this same heart in Matthew 19, where Jesus rebukes the disciples for turning children away, declaring that the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. The call here is clear: we are meant to bridge the generational gap in the body of Christ, breaking down the compartmentalization that often separates youth from the wider church family. Through personal stories of mentorship and transformation, we're challenged to step into the awkwardness, to show up, and to invest in young lives. The testimonies shared reveal how powerful it is when older believers pour wisdom, love, and presence into younger hearts. This isn't just about adding another commitment to our schedules—it's about recognizing that fresh faith and grounded wisdom need each other. When we intentionally connect across generations, we create a sustainable, vibrant church that reflects the heart of Jesus Himself.

Small Group Study Guide – Man of the Next Generation

Based on: What Manner of Man Is This? Series - Mark 4:35-41

Focus Scripture: Matthew 19:13-15; Psalm 78:1-8

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question:

Share about someone from an older or younger generation who made a significant impact on your life. What made that relationship meaningful?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Jesus was intentional about investing in the next generation** - He spent His life pouring into young disciples
 2. **Generational connection keeps the church fresh and grounded** - Young people bring energy; older generations bring wisdom
 3. **We're called to pass down faith, not just information** - Telling the next generation about God's faithfulness (Psalm 78)
 4. **Overcoming awkwardness is worth it** - Building relationships across generations requires pushing through discomfort
 5. **Young people need what we have, and we need what they have** - It's a mutual blessing, not one-directional
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message (15 minutes)

1. Pastor Eric shared that the disciples were likely younger than 20 years old. How does knowing Jesus invested His life in young people change your perspective on youth ministry?
2. In Psalm 78:4-7, what reasons are given for passing faith to the next generation? Which of these reasons resonates most with you?

Personal Reflection (15 minutes)

3. Pastor Eric mentioned that "awkwardness" often keeps generations separated. What fears or concerns do you have about connecting with a different generation?
4. Think about Mr. Tilka's example - he was "a man of few words" but was intentional with his time. What does intentionality look like in your current season of life?
5. The sermon mentioned that young people "keep the church fresh" while older generations provide "wisdom and sensibility." How have you experienced this balance (or lack of it) in your church experience?

Going Deeper (15 minutes)

7. Read Matthew 19:13-15 together. The disciples tried to keep children away from Jesus, but He rebuked them. What "hindrances" might we be putting up (even unintentionally) that keep generations apart?
8. Pastor Eric said, "They need what you've got... and you need what they've got." What do you think you have to offer to someone from a different generation? What might you receive in return?
9. How does investing in the next generation reflect the character of Jesus? What other biblical examples can you think of where this happened?

Practical Application

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following action steps:

Option 1: Show Up

- Attend your youth group on Wednesday night (6:00-6:30 PM) to simply be present and build relationships
- Come with a fist-bump ready and an open heart!

Option 2: Pray Intentionally

- Commit to praying for the youth ministry and specific young people by name this week
- Ask the Holy Spirit how He wants you involved with the next generation

Option 3: Share Your Story

- Identify one young person in your sphere of influence
- Share a testimony of God's faithfulness from your life with them this week

Option 4: Invite & Include

- Invite a young person (or family with youth) to sit with you on Sunday morning
- Or invite someone from an older generation to coffee to learn from their wisdom

Group Commitment:

As a small group, consider:

- Adopting specific youth to pray for regularly
- Attending a youth event together as a group
- Hosting a combined small group meeting with youth once a quarter

Reflection & Accountability

Personal Reflection Questions:

- What is the Holy Spirit specifically asking me to do in response to this message?
- What obstacle (time, fear, busyness) do I need God's help to overcome?
- Who is one person from a different generation I can intentionally connect with?

Accountability: Share your chosen action step with at least one person in the group and plan to report back next week.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Pray together for:

- The youth of Living Waters and FCA
 - Courage to overcome awkwardness and build cross-generational relationships
 - The Holy Spirit to orchestrate divine connections
 - Wisdom for youth leaders and volunteers
 - A culture of intentionality in passing down faith
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"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generations the glorious deeds of the Lord and his might and the wonders that he has done." - Psalm 78:4

Main Points – Man of the Next Generation

Sermon Summary:

This sermon explores Jesus' intentional focus on the next generation as a character trait believers should emulate. Drawing from the ongoing series "What Manner of Man Is This?" the message emphasizes how Jesus invested deeply in young disciples and children, demonstrating that the body of Christ should bridge generational gaps. The sermon challenges the congregation to move beyond compartmentalization between youth and adult ministries, encouraging intentional relationships that transfer wisdom, faith, and the glory of God to younger believers. Through personal testimonies and practical examples from youth ministry, the message illustrates how cross-generational investment creates sustainable spiritual life and transformation in the church.

Key Points:

- Jesus was intentional about pouring into the next generation, spending his ministry with young disciples
- The disciples were likely under 20 years old, as evidenced by temple tax requirements and their youthful behavior
- Psalm 78 commands each generation to tell the next about God's deeds so they won't repeat past mistakes
- Young people keep the church fresh while older generations provide grounding, wisdom, and sensibility
- Compartmentalization between youth and adult church, while sometimes necessary, shouldn't become permanent separation
- Building relationships across generations requires overcoming awkwardness and fear of the unknown
- Youth at Living Waters are experiencing genuine transformation, healing, prophetic gifts, and spiritual leadership
- Sustainable church life requires transferring the glory, joy, and faithfulness of God between generations

Scripture Reference:

- Mark 4:35-41 (the series foundation - Jesus calming the storm)
- Matthew 19:13-15 (Jesus welcoming children and rebuking disciples who turned them away)
- Matthew 17 (temple tax reference indicating disciples' ages)
- Psalm 78:1-8 (commanding generational transfer of God's testimony and works)

Discussion Questions – Man of the Next Generation

How does Jesus' intentionality toward children and young disciples challenge our current approach to mentoring the next generation in our church communities?

In what ways might compartmentalizing youth ministry from the broader church body limit the spiritual growth of both young people and older believers?

What fears or uncertainties prevent you from investing in relationships with people from different generations, and how might God be calling you to overcome those barriers?

How can the testimony of someone like Mr. Tilka inspire us to be intentional with our time and presence, even when words are few?

What does Psalm 78:1-8 reveal about our responsibility to pass down both the victories and failures of previous generations to those coming after us?

What practical steps can we take to create environments where young people feel seen, heard, and valued in the body of Christ?

How does the story of Matthew's healing and salvation demonstrate the power of persistent prayer and authentic Christian community among peers?

In what ways does honoring both parents and the Lord require wisdom and discernment, especially when family backgrounds may not be spiritually supportive?

How can we move beyond awkwardness and discomfort to build genuine relationships that transfer the glory, joy, and wisdom of the Lord across generations?

Scriptures – Man of the Next Generation

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned:

1. **Mark 4:35-41** - The story of Jesus calming the storm (referenced as the basis for the sermon series "What Manner of Man Is This?")
2. **Matthew 19:13-15** - Jesus blessing the children and saying "Let the children come to me"
3. **Matthew 17** - Reference to the temple tax (Jesus and Peter paying, indicating age requirements)
4. **Psalms 78:1-8** - Read in full, discussing passing faith to the next generation

Alluded To/Thematically Referenced:

5. **Ephesians 6:1-3** - Honoring parents (mentioned in context of Zoe honoring her parents while following the Lord)
6. **1 Corinthians 12:12-27** - Body of Christ imagery (referenced at beginning: "We're a body of believers")
7. **Luke 9:54** - Sons of Thunder wanting to call down fire (referenced when discussing young disciples wanting to "bring down fire and brimstone")
8. **Matthew 18:1-4** - Disciples arguing about who is greatest (mentioned as evidence of their youth)

Devotional – Man of the Next Generation

Day 1: Jesus, The Intentional Teacher

Reading: Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16

Devotional: Jesus demonstrated radical intentionality with children when His own disciples tried to turn them away. In a culture where children held little social value, Jesus stopped everything to bless them, declaring "to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." This wasn't mere sentiment—it was kingdom priority. Jesus invested His limited earthly time in those the world overlooked.

Consider how you view the younger generation. Are they an interruption or an investment? Jesus saw eternal value in every child. His hands-on blessing wasn't just about that moment; it shaped how the early church would value and disciple young believers. Today, ask God to give you His heart for the next generation. Who might need your intentional presence, wisdom, or encouragement? Remember: awkwardness is temporary, but kingdom impact is eternal.

Day 2: The Testimony of Generations

Reading: Psalm 78:1-8

Devotional: The psalmist presents a sacred responsibility: each generation must tell the next about God's faithfulness. Notice the urgency—"we will not hide them from their children." This isn't optional; it's commanded. Why? So the next generation would "set their hope in God" and avoid repeating past failures.

Our testimonies aren't just personal history—they're spiritual inheritance. When we share how God has moved in our lives, we're building hope in others. The passage warns against becoming "a stubborn and rebellious generation" disconnected from God's works. Spiritual amnesia happens when stories stop being told.

Who needs to hear your story? Perhaps a younger believer needs to know how God brought you through difficulty, healed your marriage, or rescued you from addiction. Your past victories become their future faith. Make time this week to intentionally share one testimony with someone younger in the faith.

Day 3: Crossing Generational Divides

Reading: 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:1-8

Devotional: Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus reveal God's design for intergenerational community. Young Timothy was told not to let anyone despise his youth, while Titus was

instructed to have older men and women teach the younger. Both perspectives matter—youth brings fresh passion; age brings tested wisdom.

The church thrives when generations stop compartmentalizing and start collaborating. Young people keep the body "fresh," while older believers provide grounding and discernment. Neither is complete without the other. This requires intentionality that pushes through awkwardness.

Think about your church community. Are you isolated within your age group? God designed the body to function with all parts working together. If you're older, consider how you might mentor someone younger. If you're younger, seek out the wisdom of those who've walked with God longer. Kingdom community transcends generational preferences.

Day 4: The Power of Presence

Reading: 2 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:1-2

Devotional: Paul's relationship with Timothy models transformative spiritual mentorship. Paul remembered Timothy's "sincere faith" that first lived in his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice—a multi-generational testimony. But Paul's personal investment activated Timothy's gifts: "fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

Presence matters. Timothy didn't just hear Paul's sermons; he received Paul's prayers, encouragement, and physical blessing. The "laying on of hands" represented intimate, intentional investment. Paul then charged Timothy to pass it on: "what you have heard from me...entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

Who has invested presence in your life? Thank God for them today. Now ask: whose life am I investing in? Spiritual multiplication happens through relationship, not just programs. Presence requires sacrifice—your time, vulnerability, and consistency. But the kingdom impact ripples into eternity.

Day 5: Leaving a Legacy of Faith

Reading: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:14-15

Devotional: Moses commanded Israel to saturate daily life with God's truth—talking about it at home, on the road, at bedtime, and upon waking. This wasn't religious ritual; it was lifestyle discipleship. Then Joshua declared, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"—a generational commitment.

Legacy isn't what you leave behind; it's what you live out now. Your faithfulness today becomes tomorrow's testimony. The next generation watches how you respond to trials, whether you prioritize worship, and if your faith is authentic or performative.