

Bartimaeus and the Blinded Generation

by Winkie Pratney

The sermon emphasizes the need for spiritual sight in the church and the world, and how it can be restored through a deeper understanding of God's presence and power.

Duration: 57:32

Scripture: Matthew 7:3-5, Matthew 12:37, Matthew 18:3, Acts 2:17-18, Acts 2:21

Topics: "Cultural Influence", "Child Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the impact of television on children and their ability to adapt quickly to change. He explains that television has taught children to shift between different scenes and emotions without feeling overwhelmed. The speaker also mentions how television has influenced young people's desire for in-depth experiences and their ability to quickly adapt to new situations. He concludes by sharing a humorous anecdote about a train ride and emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural influences on children in order to effectively communicate the message of the Bible.

Transcript

The following message by Winky Pradney is entitled Bartimaeus and the Blinded Generation. A lot depends on the way you look at things. Here's a man, Bartimaeus, who has been blind from birth.

I'm thinking of something I heard about some time back. Four characters were sitting on a train together, a train winding through a lot of dark tunnels and things. One was a general, one was a private, one was an old grandmother, and another one was a very pretty girl.

They were looking at each other, sitting in one of these compartments that traces each other, going through this train tunnel. And as they went into the tunnel, suddenly everything went black. There weren't any lights on in the train.

And in the pitch blackness, there was a loud kissing sound, and then a solid smack, and then an ouch. And then at the other end of the tunnel, when they came out, the general had a black eye which he was rubbing. The pretty girl looked very embarrassed.

The old lady was touching her handbag and looking very angry. And the private had a beatific smile on his face. Now it all depends on the way you look at things.

The general looked at the pretty girl and he thought, I wonder what's happening to girls in this country that she thought it was me that kissed her and she stopped me instead of the private. The old lady thought, it's a pretty rotten thing happening to this country when a young girl like that can't even ride on a train without being attacked by a man who tries to romance her. And the pretty girl thought, I wonder what's happening to this country when the general kisses the old lady and not me.

And the private thought, it's a wonderful country this, when you can kiss your hand and sock a general in the eye and get away with it. Now a lot depends on the way you look at things. But for this man Bartimaeus, the world around him has never been clear.

Can you imagine what it would be like to be blind? Some of you may have relatives that are blind. For this man, people are voices, sound of many footsteps on streets filled with danger. His life has become nothing but a well-worn path to his daily place.

The tap of his stick as he feels for the unexpected in his way, and the occasional coin that clinks into his cup as he tries to live by begging. It must be a terrible thing to be blind. Now we live in the 20th century now.

We don't have much problem with people who have physical blindness now. We still have blind people, but it's easier to live. Because we have affluence, technology, institute, social aid, welfare programs, braille, records, cassettes and other things like this.

And the man who has lost his vision today physically can very well get along without it. But there are different ways to be blind. There are different ways to be blind.

And I believe that we are faced today in the church of Jesus Christ with possibly the most tragic form of blindness possible. That loss of vision, that loss of spiritual vision, and that loss of understanding which Jesus said through the mouth of his prophet so long ago, without a vision, where there is no vision, the people perish. This blindness that has come has cut a whole generation of kids off from their parents.

A darkness that seems to block out communication between adults and the young people, the straight person and the hip person, the man of yesterday and the child of tomorrow. And possibly the greatest tragedy we have is this blindness has cut the church off from seeing what is happening to the world around us. And I believe it's time we had a restoration of sight to the Bartimaeuses of the church world.

It's time we heard the voice of Jesus as he walks along the crowd, with the crowd, along the pathways of the sinner's world, calling us back to vision. Believe it's time we learned what it means to regain our spiritual sight again. We need to say, we need to say ourselves, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

And I believe there are people sitting here in this building this morning who have that kind of cry in your hearts and in your lives. There are parents here who wonder what is happening to the world in which their kids are growing up. Sir Winston Churchill said it, it was near the beginning of the atomic age.

Russia just exploded its first A-bomb. He said, as I think of this tremendous new power, I wonder what will happen to our kids, our children. And all around the world it seems young people are rising up in protest, in arms, in revolution, sometimes violently.

It seems like we've lost contact with the kids. Now I work with young people, I work with them in the streets, I work with them in camps, I work with them in churches. I've tried to keep a balance between

working on the streets and working in the church so that I can find out what's happening in both cultures and hopefully to try and bridge the gap for parents and for kids.

It's a scary thing to live in the 20th century. How many of you believe that? Let me see your hands. Charles writes in his book, *The Greening of America*, says there's a revolution coming.

It will not be like revolutions of the past. It will originate with the individual and with culture and will change the political structure only as its final act. It will not require violence to succeed and it cannot be successfully resisted by violence.

This is the revolution of the new generation. And for better or worse, that revolution is here. And I think it's time we had some people who profess to belong to Jesus to be aware of it.

Now in the scriptures, in the book of Joel, the prophet Joel spoke. He said, It shall come to pass in the last days that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams.

Your young men shall see visions. You know, I'm amazed at the Spirit of God because as he looked down through history, saw the trends, saw what was going to happen, the Spirit of God saw there would be three groups of people that would not be taken care of adequately. One were his servants and his handmaids.

The church has always been unpopular in the secular world. Another group were the old people, the old men especially. Most people feel some sympathy for old women and they'll take care of them, but the old men often, I've seen many of them on the streets, lonely, alone, walking with that emptiness.

And then the kids. God saw that the young people were losing touch with things and so God did a beautiful thing. He said, In the last days, I'm going to adopt all three.

I'm going to pour out my Spirit upon the sons and upon the daughters, upon the servants and upon the handmaids, upon the old men who are going to dream dreams. And God is beautiful. He poured out his Spirit.

He began to adopt this whole generation. And I thank God that there is no real generation gap in the Spirit of Jesus. Now that day, I believe, has arrived.

Joel told us the signs of those days. He said, I will show signs, wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire. And then the Hebrew uses a very unusual word.

It uses the word palm trees of smoke. That's only used twice in the whole Old Testament, palm trees. Now the King James translators came to this word palm trees and they said you can't have a palm tree of smoke because smoke either goes up like a pillar or like a plug.

But a palm tree looks like both. So they said you can't have a palm tree of smoke. And that's why your Old Testament is usually translated pillars.

But not so many years ago, a white silk parachute blossomed out over a little city called Hiroshima. The anti-aircraft crew only saw one plane about 18,000 feet from the ground. A little white silk parachute blossomed out.

And I suppose if they saw it at all, those two things were the last two things that ground crew ever saw again. Then hell was literally reborn in the sky. Their bodies were cooked by streamers of radiation.

Their brain cells seared and their eyeballs melted and ran down their cheeks. And the age of terror had begun for the planet earth. For the first time, our generation saw the effects, the devastation of a palm tree of smoke.

On the ruins of that city, Mr. Ripley of the Ripley's Believe It or Not series stood with a tape recorder and he said these words, I am standing at the spot where the end of the world began. And this is our generation. This is your generation.

This is my generation. And this is the generation to which Jesus said he would return. So we're living in very critical times.

Strange things are happening. We can expect this generation to be different from any other generation in history, and it is. Now, this morning we want to look at what makes this generation different.

Why is it that many parents seem to have lost contact with their kids? What makes a kid from a little farm community drop out within a year of leaving home and wind up a couple of months later in a hippie commune? What is it that has changed the heads and even the hearts of this generation of young people to make them different from any others in history? Bob Dylan was a young man who introduced some of the very first protest songs, and here's the way he said it in his song, The Times Are Changing. He said, come mothers and fathers throughout the land, and don't criticize what you can't understand. Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command.

Your old road is rapidly aging. Please get out on a new one if you can't lend your hand. But the times, they are changing.

I want you to look with me, please, first at an important change, what I call a change in awareness. This is one of our key first changes. A change in awareness.

Young people today have a different kind of, I could call it, sense life, often than their parents do. And I suppose one of the most powerful contributing factors to this has been television. Now we're not talking here about what is said on television, but the fact of television itself.

For instance, this is the first generation in history that has grown up with what you could call an electronic babysitter. You know, you put that boob tube there and the kid stares through the bars in his cage, and he looks out at Sesame Street or something else, and that's the way, you know, you don't even have to look at him. You can come back and he's still glued, watching Dark Shadows or something.

Now, the average kid today has watched about 15,000 hours of television before he even graduates from high school. During that time, this is just the average kid, now some of your kids are on average, during that same time he has only attended some 11,000 hours of lectures at school. You can see the power of the media.

This, of course, is disregarding the fact that he may take a lot of time off from school. And the important thing about television is not just the message that it gets through, but rather the media, what it actually is. Now, television is something that can put people together instantly, especially kids.

Now, who can forget the commercials? Can any of you forget the commercials? Do you remember, Mamma Mia, that's the spice, you need the ball, do you remember that one? And who can, who doesn't know that you've got a lot to live, and Pepsi's got a lot to give, or that coke is the real thing? Do you want some Absolut? Now, it was a little different when you only had a radio or Granddad had a crystal set. You could listen to the words or to the music as background noise. You could listen to them out here.

You didn't really have to concentrate too much. You could work and music could play. You didn't really have to be too deeply involved.

You could shut out what you heard. But television has changed all that. To make any sense at all of that little flickering two-dimensional screen, you have to be deeply absorbed in it.

Marshall McLuhan, who was king of the communications theorists, has given it two names. He's called hot and cool communication. Hot was the radio generation.

Cool is today's television generation. Hot means lots of facts. Cool means basically direct experience.

Just feel it. Experience it. Hot means statistical, straight-line thinking.

Fact one, fact two, fact three, statistics, this kind of thing. Cool means often mystical, intensely personal communication. Now, you can tell this by a change in the commercials.

When somebody used to sell a product over the radio, they used to give a lot of facts on it. Say they had a miracle hairy scorer, and some of the gentlemen here may be interested in this commercial. They used to say something like this, Men, do you get embarrassed when you go bowling and people stick two fingers in your ears? Then you need Fuzzo, our patented miracle hairy scorer.

Fuzzo is made from a secret list of special ingredients that are guaranteed to restore your hair and your dignity. Here's what one of our satisfied customers has to say about Fuzzo. This is Mrs. Margaret Floyd Flugelhorn from Liverpool, Antarctica.

And she says something like this, I've been rubbing Fuzzo into my scalp for nigh on forty years now, and man, I got the hairiest hands you ever did see. Now, this commercial would be followed by benefits of Fuzzo, plenty of facts, a lot of statistics about people who used it. Now, consider the late television commercials, especially the late cigarette commercials.

One we will call an advertisement for Slam cigarettes. Here is the scene, a beautiful girl dressed in a long flowing granny dress, big bonnet. Action, girl speaks, her accent is very southern and intimate, she says, hello, you know, this kind of thing.

Then the camera pans out to a big country scene, backs up, the girl unfastens the bonnet, the music changes, she shakes her hair out, and then there's a flare of jazz trumpet, and then she sings, her voice changed totally radical, now throaty, while she says, you can't take Slam out of the garbage, but... And then a little ding on the end, see, a ding. You fill in the rest of the words, but you can't take the garbage out of Slam, see, that's what you fill in. Now, the point is here, no facts are used, no statistics, what you are sold is an experience.

And that seems weird to me, having sat in planes and nearly been killed by people who... and fill a whole plane full of smoke, seems weird to me that they could sell a country freshness of a Slam cigarette. I don't

know about you, but I think I'm going to take on all my plane flights a can of aerosol deodorant, and every time somebody goes behind me, I'm going to go back. Television has done three major things to kids of this culture.

Firstly, it's taught kids to love in-depth experience. Notice one thing about young people, is they like to be deeply involved with things. Give you an idea.

When a lemon-lime commercial was running at Zenith, a company took a survey, remember the lemon-lime commercial? It involved a man coming up to a grocer, and he asked him for a dozen lemon-limes. The man replied, Mister, we got lemons, and we got limes, but we ain't got no such thing as lemon-limes. And whereupon this guy took out a can of lemon-lime shave cream, let's say, and he put a bunch of dollops on the guy's hand.

Bloop, bloop, bloop, bloop, bloop. Now, the survey took an equal number of parents and kids. It said, to both of them, how many blobs of shaving cream did they put on the man's hand? The adult said, oh, it looked like, well, about a dozen.

That's what he asked, it was probably about ten or eleven. The kid said, no, wasn't anything like that, it was only about seven or eight, or less. And guess who was right? Kids were.

They took another screen, and they shot on it about twenty different scenes happening simultaneously, like this. Then they shot this for sixty seconds. They asked the parents, how many scenes could you remember? The parents got about four or five.

The kids got nearly seventy-five percent of the scenes on that screen. And that's a taste for in-depth experience. Secondly, television has taught them to adapt quickly to change.

One of the big gripes that young people make is that parents never want to change things. It may help you to understand that kids have been brought up on fast-flowing changes. For instance, if you watch any serial on television for any length of time, you'll soon see how TV sequence tricks have altered the new consciousness of young people.

Often, they'll take the soundtrack of the scene before it and play it right over into the next frame, a totally different scene. So you're still hearing the soundtrack from the last scene when the next one is playing. How many of you have ever seen that kind of thing? All right, that'll give you an idea.

Watch a man, he's opening up a drawer inside a room, and then suddenly the light switches on, the camera backs up, and the guy looks up in shock, and then it comes right into his face, and then it backs off again, and he's no longer in that room. He's in the detective's office being questioned. And there's no explanation.

It's just suddenly bang, bang. And you're supposed to shift and think, oh, in between he got caught, he got arrested, taken to the detective's office, and now he's being questioned. Now, no explanation.

Do you see that? That has done something to kids' feelings. They can change very fast between this and that without feeling terribly ripped up about it. The kid just simply shifts gears and takes it all in his stride.

And then, thirdly, and very important, television has caused kids to be able to recognize the phony. There's one thing about the TV camera, and that is it exposes sincerity or phoniness. Young people have

been used today to seeing the best actors in the world play out dramatic scenes so embarrassingly real you'd swear you were peeking through somebody's keyhole.

They're just so real and so direct. And these kids have had a decade or so, about 20 years of old pictures and old movies, to compare acting talents with. So you can see that they're learning to spot what really good acting looks like.

And now it is no longer possible in a great number of homes to fool a generation of young people brought up on acting with some kind of phony experience of Jesus Christ. There must be a real, in-depth knowledge of God because these kids in the new generation will pick it. Maybe that will explain to you why The top hit song of 1969 was a song called Mrs. Robinson.

Mrs. Robinson was a slightly nutty church-attending woman who was trying to seduce her daughter's boyfriend in the film *The Graduate*, which she succeeds in doing. It was one of the two songs on the list out of the five nominated for the Grammy Awards of that year. The other one, which was also an adult hypocrisy, was called Harper Valley PTA.

Do you see that young people today are learning to spot unreality? And whether it's in the home, the family, the church or the government, they'll come out strongly against it. We must move on rapidly here. I want to move also to one other thing before we leave.

Rock music. Three brief things about rock music. First of all, it is the universal media of the young.

All kids across the world can hear pretty much exactly the same songs and the same themes. Timothy Leary was asked at the beginning of the revolutionary movement, what did he believe were the two most powerful and profound influences contributing to what you could call the youth revolution. Leary said two things.

One, he said, I believe the minister of the sacraments. By that, Timothy Leary meant the guy who deals drugs. LSD, the hallucinogenics.

Because to Leary, LSD was a sacrament that would bring you in direct, mystical, intense personal communion with God. So he called the man who deals the mind drugs a minister and the drug itself a sacrament. And secondly, he said the rock preacher.

And when he used the word preacher, he used a significant term because the vast majority of young people get their sermons from rock music. I went to Israel with my wife and over there I heard hit songs that had only just come out now in the United States were being played at the same time in Israel. It is a worldwide communication link among young people all across the world.

It is probably the greatest single link among the young. When I had my rock band in New Zealand, before I got saved, we would monitor constantly shortwave broadcasts from overseas and bring out new songs, repolish them or do our own. It's a universal link with young people all across the world.

Secondly, rock is an automatic generation screen, I guess you could call it. How many of your parents have ever turned on a car radio and hit the buttons in between your Christian stations and it moved? And it hit a rock station and you heard this weird wah-wah-wah, and somebody mumbling. How many of you have ever heard that? How many of you stopped and listened for more than 1.5 of a second? And that's amazing that we even had one or two.

Because rock becomes an automatic generation screen, the new forms of music, and often groups will deliberately do their music louder than their words. Now you can say, many parents have said to me, how in the world do they understand the words? I can't even tell what they are. How many of you have had that problem? Let me see your hands, all right? Now, this, sometimes the kids don't understand the words either.

But you see, they listen a hundred times and you only listen 1.5 of a second. So they'll get it eventually, even if you don't. And often, they'll put the music deliberately louder than the words to get across a message that they don't want, particularly, adults to hear.

Thirdly, rock, young people today, use rock to communicate the new philosophies which come out in the thinking world. In other words, today's young person does not simply listen to some guy sitting on a leather chair in a university, telling about his particular philosophy. All it takes is one of these often genius young people, and understand they may be musically geniuses as well as very highly informed young people.

I can't always call them wise, because I don't believe there's any wisdom out of Jesus. But informed kids, young people today are not listening to people sitting in leather chairs, because the kids who are pushing philosophy today are doing it behind recording mics in rock studios. Now, if you can see that a great deal of the philosophies of today are communicated directly to young people through the rock media, then you'll understand why it is that a kid can have his whole head set.

He goes to college, he suddenly runs into a philosophy, and he says, I've always believed this. I've grown up thinking about that, ever since I was nine years old, which is the time he first started to listen. He may not understand the message.

What he will understand, however, what he will understand is just the ideas of it stuck down in the bottom of his head. When he gets old enough to understand, he'll think it's his idea. All right? I must move on rapidly, because we just got started here.

Second, profound revolution has taken place in philosophy, in the way people think. I'm going to sum this up very simply for you, by dividing young people into two extremes of kinds of kids. The first one I call the all-thinkers.

The all-thinkers. Now, these are a group of young people who like to use their minds. I was a young person like that, because my background's organic research chemistry.

I love to use my mind to think. I like this philosophy, thinking, of understanding. All my life, I guess, I've wanted to be a scientist.

I never wanted to be a fire engine driver, or a policeman, or something like that. I wanted to be a scientist ever since I was little. When I was eight years old, I was trying to find a cure for cancer.

My mother gave me a microscope, and I was looking at a piece of that hairy, blue-veined cheese. Have you seen it, where the fur coming out of it, and all the blue things that run through it? Well, I figured if Alexander Fleming found penicillin in cheese, if I started young enough, I could find a cure for cancer in the same stuff. I put this cheese under this microscope, focused it up, and I saw that cheese walk right off the slide, and I've never eaten cheese.

My plans to color the local swimming pool an iridescent crimson. And then, when we had our gang fights, we didn't fight like ordinary kids. We didn't fight.

You know, I'm skinny. I've always been this way, I have no excuse. But we didn't come up with brass knuckles and all this kind of brutality.

I designed a little pill that looked a bit like a contact coal capsule. And there's a guy I didn't like, he just licked it into his back pocket. And when he sat down, it broke a cap, and five minutes later, the back of his trousers burned out.

I wanted to know how things worked, and to make them work for me. But I believe just making sense of things is not enough to make you act right. If education could solve all our problems, then we would have solved them in the last century.

I think most kids find out as time goes by, it's possible to be a real thinker and be a dirty stinker at the same time. And the trouble with a lot of young people today, if you wanted a fancy name for this philosophy, you could call it rationalism. They've run right into a real problem, and the problem is this.

If there is no God, and we're talking about secular young people, if there is no God, then who or what is man, and how did the universe get here? You've only got one answer, and the answer is this. Time plus chance plus blind matter equals everything. Now, is time a person or not? No, it's impersonal.

Is chance personal or impersonal? Impersonal, it's not a person. Is blind matter, just bits of stuff floating around, is that a person or not? No, it isn't. And the great problem of today's young people has been this.

If time plus chance plus matter equals everything, how can three impersonals add up and equal a person? And what has happened to the thinking young people of today is they've put man into the machine. And today's kids feel that many of them are rationalists, are trying to treat people as if they are machines. This has spawned a whole way of thinking in our generation.

You would call it communism or Marxism. If man is really a machine, then it should be possible to alter him chemically or physically to make him a better person. Now, my parents had a rotten old car that used to break down every Sunday, and us kids had to push it to church.

We had a big hill running down the side of our place, and I don't know why my parents had to go to a Pentecostal church. There were perfectly good other churches within walking distance of our home, but our parents wanted to go to this wild Pentecostal church, which was 20 miles into town. So every morning my dad would get up, sit in front of his car, nothing.

So us kids would get out on our Sunday best, mother would get in the car, dad would get out grunting and puffing, and we'd push this car down this hill with all the people walking past saying, there goes those snotty patneys again. We pushed it down the bottom of the hill, halfway down the thing would stop. And then we'd all chug off to church.

In church there was a big long hill, which was easy enough to just park the thing on, so we didn't have to worry about coming back. One day we pushed it down the hill, it didn't stop, we pushed it up the hill and then backwards. We pushed it everywhere and it didn't stop.

So my dad pushed it into a ditch and we caught a bus. What do you do if a machine breaks down and no longer becomes worthwhile? You simply salvage it for its spare parts and throw the rest away. Today's young people, some of them thinking man is nothing more than a machine and for about a hundred and something years they've been told there is no God, there's no heaven, there's no hell, man is just a machine.

So they've gone right into what we could call a violence revolution. Tear the whole system down, rip it down and start again. And later on I'll be talking about the violence revolution.

Another group of kids reacted against this and said well, maybe, maybe the problem is that we're thinking. If thinking has turned us into machines then there must be something wrong with thinking. Like the guy who read an ad that cigarette smoking causes cancer.

So he gave up reading. And a group of young people all across this nation, much earlier in Europe, suddenly begin to reject thinking. They just dropped right out of thinking and they made what you could call a leap, a blind leap trying to search for some kind of meaning in their lives.

This was the beginning of what you could call a drug, hippie or subculture. Young people today who use drugs do not, and I'm talking about the street people now, do not usually take drugs for kicks, for escape or for a number of the other reasons we most of the times have assigned to them. The kids who I've met on the street, the serious kids, and we have plastic hippies today, the little junior high school and she sees her rock idol as a hippie so she puts on, you know, she grows her hair long and then she buys some marijuana and smokes it so she can be in.

I'm not talking about that young person. I'm talking about the kid who was a real hippie, the one who intelligently dropped out, deliberately dropped out. Most kids I know take drugs not in order to escape or for kicks, but as part of a serious search for meaning, personal meaning in their lives.

And Satan has used this today to lead a whole generation into deception. Kids today then have sort of hung up this whole thinking world and have made a jump into feeling, to directly experience something that will give them back their humanity because they're not men down here. Do you see how God has made our world? If we throw him out then everything falls apart.

We lose ourselves, we lose our understanding of the universe. Kids today then have said, I can't find meaning by thinking, it must be by experience. And there's different ways you can use it.

Some have used music, some have used sex, some have used drugs, some have turned instead to the east and tried techniques like transcendental meditation, self-realization and some of these other funny things. But it's important for you to see this. If it's true that a young person can only find meaning by throwing his mind away, then true meaning must lie in rejecting all reason, which is madness.

And that's the way society is going. A very frightening thing. This has led us to what you could call the occult revolution.

And there are the two revolutions that are facing young people today. Very deeply powerful revolutions. You'll hear about it all over the place and that's the philosophies behind them.

To sum these up, H.G. Wells had a thing he called the time machine. In the time machine a traveler goes forward into the future. He comes upon the human race and it's very frightening because it's been divided

into two people.

One are called the Eloi and they live on top. They are beautiful people, they look beautiful, they sing, they dance, they do all this, but they're almost mindless. They don't think, they're like little children.

The other group of people he finds out live underground. And they are the thinkers. But unfortunately they're also monsters.

They're ugly and what they do is they live on the Eloi. They eat Eloi. What a scary choice for our generation to be an Eloi or a Moloch.

To be part of a machine or into the madness. And I thank God there is an answer in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus gives us a way to feel and think together without throwing out our humanity or throwing out our universe.

And that's why I'm excited about the gospel. That's why on a university campus the gospel comes in like a bombshell to the modern intellectual. It blows his fingers.

Now quickly, brethren, there has also been a change of values. I want to talk about briefly three people. One I'll call the pioneer people.

This is the adult generations now. And I'm just going to sort of sum them up for you. The pioneer people were the hardworking people of this nation.

You could call them the farmers, small businessmen. They are people who believed in virtues like honesty, plainness, hard work. It was the kind of people who first carved out the United States of America.

Now you can often recognize the pioneer people by the things they say when kids step out of line. One of them is this. Don't know what your kids are coming to nowadays.

Another one is this. When I was your age I used to have to walk through the snow to go to school. And another one is if you want to get ahead in life you're going to have to work for it.

And another one is I never was one to trust these newfangled schemes. So that, if you belong there then you're a pioneer people. Mark it down and smile, that's who you are.

For the pioneer people there are some tremendous strengths. And I say the strengths of the pioneer people, if you wanted to sum it up, would be called character. There was a great weakness.

Success for the pioneer people was measured by material success. And value was placed on possession. The man who was the hardest worker had the biggest car, the best house, etc.

Then their kids grew up. These are a different breed. We'll call them the Madison Avenue men.

I'm sorry I'm erasing this so fast. This is a different breed of people. It is a group of people who, their great strength was that they learned to use technology.

The Madison Avenue men, you could call them the organizational men. They inherited some of their value systems from their parents, although often less of their parents' virtue. You see, God has no grandchildren, unfortunately, and he doesn't pass on virtue down through the generations.

But this is a generation that built technology, that built the machine. Here are the lawyers, the doctors, the scientists, the big businessmen of the United States. They are often status conscious people.

Status is tremendously important here. For the organizational men or the Madison Avenue men, your strength or your position on the social ladder becomes a criterion of value. In other words, you could recognize a Madison Avenue man by this kind of statement.

You can never get ahead without an education, you know. And another one is this. It pays to pick a profession and carries a lot of social standing with it.

Now, you can find out whether you like your profession or not after you start making \$150,000 a year. But you can see the strength of this thing, of this group of people, was that they learned to master technology. They learned to use the machine.

The only unforgivable sin in this particular culture, I could say, is failure. You are not allowed to fail. You're allowed to do anything, but you can't fail.

That's one sin. And you see this in this graduate that I talked about. The graduate in it, Dustin Hoffman, comes home.

His dad yells at him, What did I send you to school for? And he says, Search me, Dad. And I'm told when this happens, all the parents go, Oh! And all the kids go, Hooray! That's generation gap. Thirdly, I'd better give you the weakness.

Got the strength here and no weakness. The weakness, of course, I guess you could call it the status consciousness of the thing. The emphasis on making it all, moving up the ladder properly.

If you wanted to use another word, you could say it's hypocrisy. People are evaluated by their place in social standing instead of what they are. Now, finally, we come to the street kids.

These are kids I'm working with. Some of them may even be your kids. I call them the personal people.

There's a difference between personal and personable. Some of them smell. You know, they have hair looking like an explosion in a mattress factory.

You have to stand a reasonable distance away sometimes. But I love these kids because they are kids who have souls that need to be saved. They are kids who Jesus died for.

And their great search, and this is their strength, their great strength is that they are human beings. They will share anything with you in the culture. It's really weird.

They'll share things with you. They'll do things for you. Often, if you're long-haired, you're walking along the road, one of them will pick you up, put you in the back of his van, give you his bread and his wine or anything else he has, and his marijuana, if that's what he's got.

And then he'll just dump you off, sick, drunk, and whatever else, you know, whenever he's got to move on. But he'll say, you know, bless your brother and go on. But they really are human beings.

I know they don't look often like human beings, but they have an interest in people, and they don't put you down because of what you look like or your color or race or creed. They don't care about status. That's

why they don't dress.

You know, there's dress in blue jeans, and you can put on Indian feathers and be an Indian if you want to. You can wear a cowboy hat and be a cowboy. You can swim in your clothes.

You can run up a hill, roll down it in it. You can sit on a beach with it. You can do anything with the same clothes, and they do.

The weakness of the personal people is they have no absolute. They have no real sense of right and wrong. And brethren, what I've just put on the board in those last number of minutes has been the basis of what you could call a generation gap.

Now time is running out. I do want to give you quickly a fast answer to this thing. I believe sight comes to blind-bodied masses when Jesus restores it.

And spiritual sight must come from Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life. That's the way the pioneer people look for. This is what the organizational Madison Avenue man needs, truth.

And this is what the personal people on the streets are looking for. Let me show you quickly how to restore sight. Is it just guidelines? Spiritual blindness is caused by selfishness.

Selfishness can be true of both kids and parents. So parents, here's my sort of guidelines for you. I would say live a life of true discipleship in front of your kids.

Don't tell them about Christianity. Live it. Live it.

You show them two parents who are in love with each other and in love with God and willing to sacrifice for right and to do that which is best, whatever the cost. So many preachers have lost their kids because they've said to them, Listen, you ought to do this because you're a preacher's kid. Remember that.

That's not the reason. They ought to do it because it's right and because it hurts God not to do it, not because they're preacher's kids or anything else. And secondly, for the kids, I'd say learn to submit to older people.

Learn to submit. Even when it's hard. The scriptures tell us children, obey your parents and the Lord.

Now, your kids here do not, you do not have to agree with an older person's, let's say, principles. They may even have wrong principles. But you ought to respect them for their position in God's path.

You could just tell us, except the man forsake all that he has, he cannot be my disciple. Truth is necessary. We've got to deal with this thing called hypocrisy.

Honesty. I'd say, parents, you live what you believe. Don't tell your kids this.

Don't lie to them in ways like, I know some parents, they're just absolutely shocked when they find out the kids have been cheating. And yet that same mother will say, Oh, Mrs. So-and-so's at the door. I don't want to see her today.

You go down and tell her I'm not in. Or Dad will boast how much he got out of the income tax thing by cheating. Do you see this? You must live it.

They've got to see it. Jesus did it. He showed, he put God on display so they could look and see what real truth was like.

And these kids know how to spot phony. But parents, you must learn to be real with your kids. Be sincere, I think, if you wanted to use the word.

Be genuine with them. If you don't understand, ask them. Kids, I'd say this, don't judge.

Judge not that you be not judged. You must, see this microphone around my neck? This microphone is recording everything I'm saying. Do you know the way the Spirit of God says? He records things.

He measures our actions, our words. Imagine I'm standing here and I'm saying, This person's a hypocrite, that person is wrong, etc. Now, everything and every time I make a moral judgment, that goes down on this microphone.

There's a kid and he stands before God and he says, God, the reason why I'm not a Christian is because of the hypocrisy of the older generation. God says, oh really? Sit down, we're going to have a movie. This kid said, God, I wasn't even allowed to go to movies, I came from a Pentecostal church.

He said, well, you're going to see one now, watch. And he sees on the screen, This is Your Life. God says, I have a special edited version.

And there underneath, the subtitle is this kid's name. The kid says, oh, what is this? God says, watch. And he sees himself on the screen, doing something very hypocritical.

And then the soundtrack comes on the screen, and you know whose voice it is? His own voice. And this is what it says. He is a hypocrite.

The Bible says, by your words you'll be condemned, or by your words you'll be justified. So if we point a finger, either way, remember the three that point back, and remember the words of Jesus. And lastly, life.

We have to have an experience of God that is real. It must be real. That means parents, I'd say, learn to be social with your kids.

Learn to have fun with them. Learn to play with them, as well as teach them the Word of God. They've got to see their parents are real people, who love them.

And then, they must see the supernatural. They must see it happen. And I would not call it even the supernatural.

I'll call it the spirit natural. Because with God, there's no really freaky supernatural thing. There's the spirit natural.

In other words, when you walk in the Spirit of God, there is a natural outflow of miraculous things that happen whenever you need them. I have some stories here of young people. This will give you an idea of their feelings.

I don't know how time is going. How many minutes have we got? Five? We've got enough? Six minutes, all right. I've got just enough time to read you some letters, and then give you a closing thing.

Here's a letter from a girl. She says, I have two problems. My mother and my father.

They're driving me nuts. They don't realize I'm a grown woman of 15. They want to know who's on the phone every time it rings.

They want to know where I'm going every time I step my foot outside the house. They want to know the life history of every guy I go out with. Mother says I'm still a child until there's work to be done.

Then suddenly I'm an adult and must take my share of adult responsibility. She's on my back every minute about something or other. My dad acts as if going steady is a crime or something.

I've taught myself horse, but they don't seem to understand we're living in a different century than when they grew up. I need more freedom and I wish they'd see this letter. And please hurry your answer.

I think I'm cracking up. Here's a guy, 17. My dad works 100 hours a day.

He brings work home every evening. He goes to his office on Sunday. A month ago he went into the backyard and he shot some baskets with me.

He thought he was a hero because he spent 15 minutes there. I could scarcely wait until he left. I literally have no idea who he is.

How could I? I used to wonder why he was hiding from me. Now I don't care. Another kid says I have few problems with my parents because I don't have that much to do with them.

Why should I? What do they know about me? They know I go to school and I come home. I have freedom. Boy, do I have freedom.

I wish someone would tell me what to do sometimes. And here's a guy, 17. My dad and I have only two topics of conversation, cars and grades.

If I come home with a C on a test, he reminds me he was an honor graduate from Harvard. And mom and I fool him now. She signs everything bad from school and doesn't tell him.

Why the pushing? There are so many things to worry about. Why invent problems? And if I realize this, why doesn't my father? Love. L-O-V-E.

Love is what most of the kids on the street are longing for. They never found it. They never found that marvelous relationship of love and discipline in their homes.

It can only come when selfishness is given up and people surrender their lives to Jesus Christ. Listen to this sad letter. I'm a girl, 11 years old, who is very sad.

My father carries a picture of my sister in his wallet, who is 16, as a Madison Avenue man. She is very pretty. I'm ugly compared to her.

Everyone tells her how beautiful she is and she sure does know it by this time. My father also carries a picture of my little brother, who is 7. He looks just like daddy, which makes him the second favorite in the family. My father doesn't carry my picture at all.

I gave him my picture and made sure it was put in his wallet. It wasn't very pretty, but it looks like me. He put it in the drawer.

What can I do to get my daddy to carry my picture? Love. Simple love that comes from the Holy Spirit operating through parents who really care about their kids. We'll break more through this generation gap than anything else I've put on the board.

And the Spirit's natural. Kids today, faced with the challenge of the occult, must see a life that really works. Power of God.

And I heard a beautiful thing. Tommy Tyson was one praying for people, laying hands on them, crushing their heads and things. And the Lord spoke to him and said, Son, are people healed by the pressure of your hands or by the power of my Spirit? And then God said to him, Son, if you'll be natural, I'll be supernatural.

Parents, if I had one thing to say to you, I would say, really be yourself. Really be yourself. And if that is ugly, then get it cleaned up with your kids.

Deal with hypocrisy, selfishness, and get the power of God to rule your life and your home. And you'll know what it means to begin to break through that generation gap. Shall we close in prayer, please? Heavenly Father, it is not an easy problem to solve these changes of values and of thinking that have taken our world by storm.

Young people are reacting to violence and anger and bitterness across this nation and around the world. We pray that parents will reach out in compassion and wisdom and try to understand that you will give that generation-bridging and communication-bridging love of God. We ask this for Jesus' lovely namesake.

Amen.

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