

Enduring Faith: Discipling the Next Generation

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- Our goal: To raise up “children of Issachar” who have “understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do, 200 principle leaders: and all the rest followed through counsel.” 1 Chronicles 12:32 **Question: who do you know that is a man or woman of Issachar, someone who is wise as to what is going on in the world and how the Lord would have us act?**

Our context: In the Next Generation [our children and our children’s children], the “New Norms” will not be *new*, they will be “the Norms” in the culture. **Question: What new norms do you find yourself either adapting to, ignoring or challenging?**

Five enduring norms of discipleship:

1. Christ first: a deep love for the Lord fueled by His sacrificial love. Rom. 8:
2. Break with sin. 1 John 1:9
3. Daily hearing and heeding God’s voice in the Word. Psalm 119:105
4. Worship and prayer without ceasing. Phil. 4:4
5. Obeying the call to care for others and share the gospel. Multiply disciples. Matt. 4:19 [Followers Fish.]
6. Fellowship with the faithful. Heb. 10:15

Question: Which of the above discipleship norms is having the greatest impact in your life right now? What other discipleship norm do you want to add to the list?

Six Norms of the Next Generation [Born 2002-2016]: Question: rate the following norms 1-6 by which you are the most troubled by. Explain your rating. Rate the biblical “medicines” prescribed too. Which of the prescriptions might be the most attractive to the students you teach? Why?

ENVIRONMENT: Climate change, annual fire seasons with unhealthy air quality, and ecological crises like accelerating animal species extinctions and the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Biblical insights: Romans 8:19-23 Why the Lord allows nature to suffer. 2 Chron. 7:14 When humanity sins, creation suffers too. When humanity repents, nature experiences healing. God has a land ethic- everything (people, animals and the land) gets a rest every seventh day and every seventh year and every 49th year a Jubilee.

EQUALITY: Multiculturalism, racism and racial reconciliation is the norm for the next generation. By the time someone born in 2010 reaches age 40, there will be no majority in the US population, everyone will be in a minority. God wants the US to keep its promise of “liberty and justice for ALL.” Amos 5:24 “Let justice roll down like a river.” Proverbs 16:11 Honest scales and balances belong to the Lord.” The first “good work” of believing in and living with Christ is to recognize that His cross breaks down all hostilities and distinct prejudices between diverse peoples. Ephesians 2:8-10, 13-16

GENDER: Gender fluidity and dysphoria is the norm for the next generation where we are told we can choose, rather than accept, our gender identity and sexuality. There are three biblical ways to express your sexuality. Male and female in marriage and by chastity. Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:5. There are three biblical gender descriptions: male and female and “gender ambiguity” -- eunuchs and barren women. Jesus spoke to gender ambiguity as eunuchs having three origins, Matthew

19:12. When the Messiah comes, Isaiah prophesied that those marginalized because of their gender ambiguity will be accepted into the Holy place: Isaiah 54:1-8; 56:3-6. When the Ethiopian eunuch understood this verse from Phillip's teaching, he wanted Phillip to baptize him in Christ's name. Acts 8:26-39

AI, FB, VR & CELLPHONES: Artificial intelligence, big data analysis, Internet technology is the norm for the next generation. They cannot ever remember not using a computer screen. Technology and its fusion with biometrics is the norm for the next generation. Google wants to track, predict and even secretly control the next generations desires. The Bible calls us to live in His rhythms of work, play and "give it a rest." Remember the Sabbath, commandment number 4. Smart phones and watches, iPads and computers can be tools and toys, but if they are more, they are idols. See Commandment #2. If someone has a better or newer toy we can be jealous, greedy, and ungrateful. For covetousness see commandment #10. The key is what Christ does inside us: do not be pressed into the scheme of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" by the Word. Romans 12:2

EPIDEMICS: Because of the highly mobile populations around the nations and the many viruses and diseases persisting and mutating, pandemic reoccurrences and social distancing will be the norm for the next generation. Wearing masks, getting tested and learning by social apps will be the everyday, everyone experience. Scripture is full of health secrets. God will protect us from disease if we will use common sense to walk in His ways. Deut. 7:15 "The Lord will protect you from these infectious diseases. Christ comes to heal. Luke 17:11-17 So live with gratitude toward Him.

GUN VIOLENCE: Increasing school and community violence will be a normal anxiety and reality for the next generation. 30% of children who have five or more adverse childhood experiences (ACE) are 30 times more likely to consider suicide and many times more likely to inject drugs. Jesus warns us not to live angry because anger street does exit at murder town. Matt. 5:21-26. We are warned to "be angry but not sin" and not to leave anger around in our lives until it turns into bitterness. Eph. 4:26-32. End every argument with a hug because if He has forgiven us, we too must forgive. Matt. 6:14