

Freedom FOCUS

NEWSLETTER

May-June 2009

"...to turn them
from darkness
to light..."

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Overcoming the Sinful Patterns of Unfaithful Fathers (Part 2)

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done." (Psalm 78:1-4)

Generational thinking creates right thinking. Asaph, the author of Psalm 78, was a man who had a Multi-generational perspective. The first few verses of the psalm offer great hope to those seeking to break the sinful patterns inherited from their fathers and establish new God-centered patterns of righteousness and faithfulness. By communicating the goodness of God to their families, fathers can encourage their children to turn away from the sins of their past and put their hope in the living God.

The following characteristics found in Psalm 78:1-4 describe a man who is developing a God-centered lifestyle in his family:

First, he is tuned into hearing from God's Word. His ears need to be inclined to the right source. In his message on Psalm 78, John Piper says,

It means the Bible will be the sun in the solar system of all that we teach our children. It will not be one among many books. It will be the central book, the all-permeating book. The other books are dark planets; the Bible is the life-giving sun. All other books will be read in the light of this book. All books will be judged by this book. All books will find meaning in the worldview built by this book. Which means that this book must be known first and known better than all the other books. (DesiringGod.com)



Secondly, he is a man with a message from God, and he bears the responsibility of communicating that message to his family.

Thirdly, he has a generational perspective. A generational perspective impacts his thinking and how he sets his priorities.

Fourthly, he is a man who praises God and finds his strength in God, not his own efforts or wisdom.

Finally, he teaches his children to put their hope in God by remembering what God has done, to keep His commands, and to break ungodly sin patterns.

As we seek to establish a God-centered way of life in our homes and families, there are several pitfalls we must recognize and take great care to avoid. Psalm 78:8-11 warns us of these pitfalls when it says, "*and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God. The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned back on the day of battle. They did not keep God's covenant, but refused to walk according to his law. They forgot his works and the wonders that he had shown them.*" (Psalm 78:8-11)

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Upcoming Events

Counseling Training Seminar II



Date:

Saturday, June 6, 2009

Time:

10:00am-4:00pm

Instructor:

Rev. Jeff Pokone

Location:

2nd Reformed Presbyterian Church
4800 N. Michigan Road
Indianapolis, IN 46228

Space is limited, so register now! See back page for details. For more information, contact our office at 317-585-1845.

Fall Praise Banquet (date change)



Don't forget to mark your calendar for the 2009 Fall Praise Banquet, to be held on Friday, November 13 at 7:00 pm at the Indianapolis Training Center. Hope to see you there!

Overcoming the Sinful Patterns of Unfaithful Fathers (Part 2), cont.

In this passage, God warns us of the following sin patterns that lingered in the hearts of the Israelite fathers—patterns that many of us need to address in our own lives.

1. They were stubborn. In Webster's 1828 dictionary, the word *stubborn* is defined as "unreasonably obstinate, inflexibly fixed in opinion, not to be moved or persuaded by reasons." Stubbornness is a manifestation of pride in our lives; pride is an improper focus on self.
2. They were rebellious. In 1 Samuel 15:23, God equates the sin of rebellion with witchcraft. In the same way that a person gives ground to the enemy through participating in witchcraft or occult activities, ground is given to the enemy through rebellion. Both open the door for Satan to influence our lives.
3. Their heart was not steadfast—they set their heart on the wrong things. Commentator Matthew Henry writes, "*Hypocrisy is the high road to apostasy; those that do not set their hearts right, will not be steadfast with God. Many parents, by negligence and wickedness, become murderers of their children.*"
4. Their spirit was unfaithful to God. They served false gods.
5. They were cowardly—they did not fight for righteous-

ness. In other words, they had PMS—passive male syndrome. Throughout Scripture, God is calling men out of their passivity.

6. They did not keep God's covenant. They were not doers of the Word.
7. They were forgetful of the works of God.

Psalm 78 contains both a warning and a promise. The warning is the disaster that lies ahead for our families if we fail to forsake the sinful patterns of our fathers and instead persist in our stubborn and rebellious ways. The promise is abundant spiritual blessing for our families when we turn to the Lord in faith and repentance, seeking His grace to establish a God-centered way of life in our homes that will impact generations to come.

Do you struggle with discouragement? Are you tempted to give up? Do you feel that the sinful patterns of your fathers are impossible to break? Take heart! Our God has a way of turning sinful, failure-ridden pasts into glorious, hope-filled futures through the transforming power of His Spirit in the lives of His people. May He do so in each of our families, that the generations to come may praise and honor Him.

For more information on this subject, we invite you to download Rev. Pokone's message entitled Overcoming the Sinful Patterns of Unfaithful Fathers, available at www.indianabcc.com/family_series.htm.

Testimonies from Changed Lives



Over the past few months, Rev. Jeff Pokone has had the opportunity to conduct two weekend seminars based on highlights from his audio series *Biblical Principles for Building a Strong Family*. These seminars, held at Upper Room Christian Church in Lafayette, IN and Bethel Baptist Temple in Cincinnati, OH, were times of great refreshment and renewal for pastors and laypeople, families and individuals. Here are testimonies from a few attendees:

"The thing I felt the Lord was saying to me through this conference was, 'Learn to hear from Me.' He reminded me of how He directs me through His Word, His Spirit, and other people in matters regarding the family. As a pastor, I appreciate Rev. Pokone's ministry because he constantly points people to the Word, giving them a thirst to go back there. His vision of strengthening the family goes hand-in-hand with our vision as a church." -A pastor from Ohio

"The material was very practical and insightful. God impressed me with the need we have as men to find our approval in Christ and to place a higher priority on relationships. I am seeking to spend more time with my wife and learning to understand her heart's needs." -A husband from Ohio

"The sessions were very personal and pertinent to the lives of the people. The one-one-one interaction made us feel as though we were in a counseling session! I feel comfortable inviting Rev. Pokone to speak because he draws people back to the Scriptures." -A pastor from Indiana

"I learned more in one weekend that will really be effective in helping people than I learned in the entire two years of my graduate counseling program!" -A Columbia University graduate

Praise the Lord with us for touching many hearts through these conferences, and pray that the truths of His Word will continue to bear fruit in the lives of those who attended!

Counseling Training Seminar II

Interested in getting better equipped for discipleship ministry in your own sphere of influence? On June 6, 2009, the Indiana Biblical Counseling Center is offering its second annual one-day seminar in effective counseling ministry.

Taught by Rev. Jeff Pokone and conducted in an interactive, small group format, this one-day seminar will provide you with practical tools you can use in your own local church or individual ministry.

Topics covered in this year's seminar will include:

- Helping People Understand Their Identity in Christ
- Helping People Resolve Specific Strongholds of Pride, Rejection, Bitterness, and Rebellion
- Counseling People who are Suffering
- Helping People to Mature Emotionally and Spiritually

Please prayerfully consider joining us! (Note: You do not need to have attended Counseling Training Seminar I to be eligible for this seminar.)