

# Judges 2:7

by Chuck Smith

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*The cycle of serving God and then forgetting Him repeats because each generation forgets God's power and miracles in their history, leading them to serve idols and other gods.*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 6:20, Judges 2:7, Judges 2:10

**Topics:** "Generational Faith", "Passing on God's Works"

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## Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the cyclical nature of Israel's history in the book of Judges, where each generation experiences God's power, only to forget Him in times of prosperity. He highlights the importance of passing on the stories and experiences of God's faithfulness to the next generation, warning that neglecting this leads to a generation that does not know the Lord. Smith urges the need for a personal relationship with God to ensure that future generations can experience His love and power firsthand. He cautions against the allure of false gods that promise immediate gratification but lead to bondage. Ultimately, he calls for a revival of fervent faith to prevent drifting away from God.

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## Transcript

"PASS IT ON."

Intro. The book of Judges is the history of the nation of Israel after the death of Joshua. We see a repeated pattern throughout the book. The people serve God and are blessed by God. In their prosperity they forget God and serve idols.

They go into servitude to their enemies, and in their misery they cry out to God who delivers them. And as they serve God, He prospers them and in their prosperity they forget God and serve other gods. And over and over, ad infinitum, ad nauseam. Why this vicious cycle? Why does it seem to repeat itself throughout the history of the church? How can we escape this cycle?

I. THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SERVED THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF JOSHUA.

A. Joshua was their leader and under his leadership they experienced the mighty power of God and they saw the work of God.

1. They saw the Jordan river dry up at flood season so that they could cross over.
2. They saw the walls of Jericho fall flat.

3. They saw God fight against the five kings of the Amorites destroying them with large hailstones.

4. They saw the sun stand still for a day.

5. They saw all their enemies subdued before them.

B. They were the generation that experienced the power of God.

C. They were the generation that were forced to trust God because their enemies were much stronger than they.

1. They went through many hardships and sacrifices.

2. They experienced the faithfulness of God in every circumstance.

D. They were the generation that through the power of God conquered the land.

II. THE NEXT GENERATION REAPED THE BENEFITS OF THEIR SACRIFICES AND THE HARD FOUGHT BATTLES OF THEIR FATHERS.

A. They heard the stories of what God had done.

1. They saw the pile of stones that were brought up out of the river Jordan, and heard the story of the miracle of how the river stopped flowing until their fathers were all safely across.

2. They saw the ruins of the city of Jericho and heard how the walls had fallen flat.

B. They heard the stories of the power of God but did not experience the power of God.

C. They had become interested in developing the land that God had given them, and did not have time for God Himself.

D. They grew up in affluence.

1. They were dwelling safely in the cities that they did not build.

2. They were eating the fruit of the vineyards they did not terrace and plant.

3. They were enjoying the abundant riches that their fathers had taken from their enemies.

4. They did not have to experience sacrifice and hardship. They had not learned to trust in God.

5. With all these benefits just handed to them, they had time to pursue after pleasure, which soon became their God, so that we read that they served the gods of the Amorites.

6. This time of prosperity continued until the time of which we read in verse 10, that generation was gathered to their fathers, or had died off, and then we read:

III. THERE AROSE ANOTHER GENERATION AFTER THEM, WHICH KNEW NOT THE LORD, NOR YET THE WORKS WHICH HE HAD DONE FOR ISRAEL. A. Somehow in all of their material prosperity they failed to share with their children the reason for all of the success. 1. Their children did not hear of how the Red Sea parted. 2. They did not hear the law of God that was given to Moses. 3. They did not

hear the stories of Joshua, and the sun standing still. B. Their fathers had not kept the commandment to offer to God, as a sacrifice, the firstborn male of all their animals.

So in time to come when the children would ask them, "Why are you doing that?" They could answer them, "By strength of His hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would not let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem." 1.

God intended that the children should hear of Him and His awesome works. 2. In Deuteronomy 6 God said: "When your son shall ask you in time to come, saying, What are these testimonies, and statutes, and judgments, which the LORD our God has commanded you? Then you shall say to your son, We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: And the LORD showed great and awesome signs and wonders, in Egypt, and upon the Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: And he brought us out from there, that He might bring us into this land which he swore to our fathers to give to us.

And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive." C. The purpose of Joshua piling up the stones that had been taken from the middle of the Jordan river was: That it might be a sign among them that in the future when your children ask, "What are these stones?" Then you shall answer them, "That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." 1.

Somehow in all of the prosperity they were enjoying, they failed to keep these commandments to instruct their children. 2. Thus there arose a generation who knew not Jehovah. 3. There seemed to be an attempt to remove the place of God in their history, and revise their history without the mention of God. 4. I see this same thing in our history text books in the public schools today. They do not tell of the great faith of our founding fathers, of their prayer meetings and their declarations of their reliance upon God. 5.

And as we read in the next verse: JUD 2:11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: JUD 2:12 And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that [were] round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. JUD 2:13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. D. Why is it that it seems easier to serve other gods than Jehovah? 1.

The other gods represent our fleshly desires and a person just does what comes naturally. 2. The other gods offer immediate fulfillment, immediate satisfaction, immediate gratification. 3. When Satan was tempting Jesus, he took Him to a high mountain and showed to Him the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them. He then offered them to Jesus. If Jesus would just bow down and worship him. a. He knew that the purpose of the coming of Jesus was to redeem the world back to God's possession. b.

He knew that the price would be the death of Jesus on the cross. c. He knew that the cross was going to be a bitter experience that Jesus despised. d. What is he suggesting to Jesus? e. You do not have to take God's way of the cross to accomplish your goals, you can have immediate fulfillment, just bow down and worship me, and I will give the world to you. f. This is always Satan's ploy, to offer immediate fulfillment without having to take the path of the cross. g. What he doesn't tell people, that his path is one of ultimate sorrow, emptiness, and death. h.

He makes great promises, but never keeps them. He does not tell them that to bow down and worship Him will bring eternal damnation. E. To follow God, you must deny your flesh, take up your cross and follow Him. 1. But think about it, what would it profit you if you gained the whole world, but in so doing, you lost your own soul? 2. What will you take in trade for your soul? 3. Better yet, take a look at yourself, what are you selling your soul for? a. A sexual fling? b. A higher salary? c.

A drug high? d. What is it in your life that is keeping you from serving God with all your heart? Find that, and you will have found your god. F. Serving the false gods always led them into bondage. 1. The apostle Peter wrote: 2PE 2:9 The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the ungodly unto the day of judgment to be punished: Mainly those who walk after the flesh in the lust of sexual impurity, they are self-willed, they speak evil of things that are pure.

They do not understand that they shall perish in their own corruption. They will receive the consequences of their unrighteousness. Their eyes are full of adultery, and they cannot stop sinning, they are cursed. They riot in the day time. Their eyes are full of adultery, they never cease from sin, they like to beguile the simple people as they enrich themselves by deceiving them; They speak great swelling words of vanity that appeal to the lusts of the flesh and lead to a wanton life. Though they promise liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption, for by whatever temptation you are overcome, it will bring you into bondage.

#### IV. HOW CAN WE MAKE SURE THAT THE THIRD GENERATION WILL STILL BE SERVING THE LORD?

A. The general trend is that the first generation experiences.

B. The second generation hears of the experiences.

C. The third generation does not even hear. Like in our text, there arises a generation that knows not the Lord or the works He has done.

D. We must make sure that we do not have only past-tense experiences with God, so that we can only tell of what God did in the past.

1. Keep a current relationship with God.

2. Look for a fresh work of God in your life each day.

3. The prophet Jeremiah said:

LAM 3:22 It is the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions they fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. Each morning seek a fresh work of God's love in your life.

E. Be sure to tell your children what the Lord has done, but then encourage them to have their own personal experiences with God's love and power.

F. We must make the second and third generations, first generation. A generation that experiences the miraculous works of God in their own lives.

G. The writer of the book of Hebrews warned: "Let us take earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest we should drift away from them."

1. Beware of that subtle tendency to drift from your fervent relationship with the Lord.
  2. Jesus warned the church at Ephesus that they had left their first love.
    - a. That is always the first step backwards. Not quite as fervent as you once were.
    - b. Your heart drawn away and enticed by other things.
    - c. In your prosperity you no longer need to trust in the Lord for your daily bread.
    - d. Perhaps you no longer pause to thank God for your food.
    - e. Maybe your children no longer ask God to bless the hands that prepared the food as they pour their breakfast out of a box.
    - f. It is now a rare occasion when you attend church more than once a week, when it used to be several times.
    - h. These are all warning signs that you have left your first love.
    - i. You will soon be wondering why your children have no interest in the things of God, and your grandchildren never even go to Sunday school and care nothing about Jesus.
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