



GATHERED

The Empowered Presence of God's People

TEACHER NOTES & DISCUSSION GUIDE

SESSION TEN: The Next Generation of the Church

A Study on the Church by



SMYRNAFIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH



Session Ten

The Next Generation of the Church

Introduction

When Jim Elliot was called as a young man to spend his life ministering to the Quechua people of South America, his parents thought he might live a better life if he stayed put in the United States and enjoyed a pastorate here. He responded in typical Jim Elliot fashion, saying:

I do not wonder that you were saddened at the word of my going to South America,' he replied on August 8. This is nothing else than what the Lord Jesus warned us of when He told the disciples that they must become so infatuated with the kingdom and following Him that all other allegiances must become as though they were not. And He never excluded the family tie. In fact, those loves that we regard as closest, He told us must become as hate in comparison with our desires to uphold His cause. Grieve not, then, if your sons seem to desert you, but rejoice, rather, seeing the will of God done gladly. Remember how the Psalmist described children? He said that they were as an heritage from the Lord, and that every man should be happy who had his quiver full of them. And what is a quiver full of but arrows? And what are arrows for but to shoot? So, with the strong arms of prayer, draw the bowstring back and let the arrows fly—all of them, straight at the Enemy's hosts.

*Give of thy sons to bear the message glorious,
Give of thy wealth to speed them on their way,
Pour out thy soul for them in prayer victorious,
And all thou spendest Jesus will repay.¹*

Jim would of course go on to be one of the most famous missionaries to ever live. But his life was not a long one. He was murdered at age 28 by the very people he sought to evangelize. He died before he could ever begin telling them the story of Jesus.

When we consider the mission of the church, there is obviously a central command - make disciples. This is the great commission of Christ. It is his last word on earth to the church. It is what drives the church's zeal and hope for evangelism and missions. His people are gathered by him so that he might continue his harvest through the church until he returns. People are saved by the Word, and the Word is proclaimed by the church. There simply is no other mechanism by which the gospel is spread.

But before we get into what making disciples means for our community and the nations, let's first consider what it means for the home. We have a primary responsibility to exalt God not only before a watching world, but also before the watching eyes of our own children. Building godly homes that produce believing children who in turn exalt a big God is the great privilege of our existence. We dare not call ourselves God's people if we do not have a commitment to proclaim God's glory first of all to our own homes. It is God's design. It should therefore be our delight.

¹ Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1958), 132. (This is a quotation from a hymn titled, "Oh, Zion Haste.")

I. Praise a Radically Great God

A. Give Your Whole Self to His Majesty

1. **Deuteronomy 6:4-9** is one of the first places in Scripture we should think of in regard to home discipleship.
2. God gives a command here that would become the cornerstone of the culture of God's people.
3. They called these verses the Shema, which means "Hear" and is the first Hebrew word of the passage.
 - a) *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."*
 - b) God is proclaiming his intention for the greatest good of his people. It includes setting him at the center of their hearts desires.
 - (1) They are to acknowledge his unique glory.
 - (2) Love him with their whole heart.
 - (3) Serve him with their whole might.
 - (4) And center their homes and lives around making him known.
 - c) God commands his own praise. Why?
 - (1) Because God is the only worthy object of worship.
 - (2) **Isaiah 46:9** "I am God, and there is none like me..."
 - (3) **Psalms 96:7-9** "Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!"
 - d) His glory and worthiness should capture our whole hearts.
 - (1) Love the Lord...w/ all your heart, all your soul, all your might.
 - (2) Our imaginations should be full of the glory of God.
 - (3) Our thoughts should be always turned to his infinite worth and goodness.
 - (4) Our energies should be expended on nothing but that which brings him honor.
 - e) It makes sense then that the sphere our entire existence should be saturated with making a big deal out of God.
 - (1) How else could that be demonstrated than by total commitment.
 - (2) ILL> Football fans, team decorations, logos, flags, cups, shirts, car decals. We put our love of team on display.
 - (3) Where else could this be more powerfully shown than in our own homes.

B. Guide the Next Generation to His Majesty

1. **Psalm 145:4** "One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts."
 - a) God has ordained the home and children as a hallmark of his people.
 - (1) **Psalm 127:3** "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward."
 - (2) Children are the sign of godly blessing.
 - (a) We shouldn't take this to mean that barren couples are not blessed by God.



- (b) But as a whole we can rightly say that children are a sign of God's mercy, provision, and continuation of his people.
- (c) He is the one that builds the house and children are a necessary part of generational richness.
- b) When our nurseries are full and our children's classrooms full and our student ministry halls are full, then we rejoice.
 - (1) South Sudan in the heart of Africa is host to the largest number of child soldiers in the world. When the children are taken, it tears the heart from the people and hope dies.
 - (2) Children at home are a blessing.
 - (3) But even children at home are under a greater threat.
- 2. One generation is to make much of God to the next generation.
 - a) Commend your works is another way to say we should praise God.
 - b) Our mouths should always be talking about how great God is.
 - c) If we don't, then our children won't know the truth and won't love God because of it.
 - d) Our praise to God should have as one of its chief aims to capture the minds and hearts of our children.
 - e) So, how do we do this as the church?

II. Create Radically Biblical Homes

A. Invest in Fathers and Mothers

- 1. The home is defined in the Bible as a man and a woman bound in marriage who then under natural circumstances would produce children.
 - a) **Ephesians 5:31** "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."
 - (1) A man and wife becoming one flesh is significant in both a physical and spiritual sense and you can't have one without the other.
 - (2) It is the sexual bond (outward) that signifies the spiritual bond (inward) that is unique between a husband and wife.
 - (a) The marriage relationship has everything to do with the church because it is a picture of Jesus and his bride (the church).
 - (b) **Ephesians 5:32** "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church."
 - (3) Producing children is fundamental to the meaning of sex.
 - (a) Sex is a sign of fruitfulness and always carries with it the possibility of offspring.
 - (b) We cannot separate sex from the fruitfulness of children.
 - (c) That is one of our cultures biggest failures - divorcing sex from the conception of children.
 - b) In God's design, children come from a father and mother who are joined in the covenant of marriage.
 - (1) We have many single parents, especially moms.
 - (a) While we honor single parents and love them and serve them, we do not seek to replicate that in the lives of God's people.
 - (b) Single parents will be the first to tell you this.
 - (2) We honor and esteem and hold up as the example a home with both a Father and a Mother.
 - (a) Therefore, we intentionally equip men to be fathers and women to be mothers.
 - (b) When I raise my sons, I raise them to be men. But not only men, men who will be husbands. But not only husbands, husbands who will be fathers.

- (c) When Jeff Pennington raises his daughters, he raises them to be women. But not only women, women who will be wives. But not only wives, wives who will be mothers.
- (3) The church cannot submit to the world's ungodly construct of the family.
 - (a) In which genders don't matter, family structures don't matter, roles don't matter, and in the end children don't matter.
 - (b) God's design is beautiful and worthy of praise.
 - (c) Don't be ashamed to equip boys to be dads and girls to be moms.
 - (d) We invest in these things because they bring honor to God and happiness to us.
- c) It is amazing that simply defining things in this way would seem radical, but it does in today's society. So how do we best demonstrate this model? By going back to Deuteronomy 6.

B. Institute Home Discipleship

1. **Deuteronomy 6:7-9** "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. **8** You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. **9** You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."
2. We seek to equip parents to be the primary disciple makers in the home.
 - a) Parents are to teach God's glory in the home with diligence.
 - b) We are to instruct our children at all times concerning the greatness and goodness of God.
 - c) The commands of God should be so ubiquitous in our lives that we think them, do them, and our homes should be marked by them.
3. The goal of our children's, and student ministries is not to produce godly children.
 - a) It is to assist the parents of the children in producing the most mature followers of Christ possible.
 - b) Children's and Student ministries only exist as a supplement to the home.
 - c) The best children's and student ministries create strong, stable, godly homes.
 - d) These ministries cannot substitute the home, only supplement it.
 - (1) Do we have children who come from ungodly homes? Yes.
 - (2) Should we do everything in our power to love and delight these children in God? Yes.
 - (3) But the only way we can truly do that is by aiming to establish discipleship in the home.
4. Therefore, the goal of the ministries of the church should be to create robust and radically biblical homes full of fathers and mothers who walk with God and pass down his praise to the next generation.
 - a) This means that **Titus 2** must be a model for men's and women's discipleship in the church.
 - (1) Men should be reading God's Word, applying it, and teaching other men to obey it.
 - (2) Women should be reading God's Word, applying it, and teaching other women to obey it.
 - (3) Men and women should be investing in the lives of children and students in the church through honoring the home, instructing God's Word, and building up the family.
 - (a) If you are young, look to those who are older in Christ and the knowledge of the Word.
 - (b) If you are old, pay attention to those who are younger in Christ and the knowledge of the Word.

5. We can only do this if we live with laser focused attention on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

III. Walk a Radically Gospel Life

A. Set Your Mind on the Gospel

1. **Colossians 3:1-17** gives us a picture of how our individual and corporate lives should look in light of the gospel.
2. It is impossible to teach the praise of God if it is not authentic in your own life.
3. That is why the Scripture teaches us “*seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*” (**Colossians 3:1-2**)
 - a) We don’t live for our own passions or desires any more. We are dead to self and alive to God.
 - b) Therefore we are told continually, “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.*” (**Romans 12:2**)
 - c) And to “be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self” (**Ephesians 4:23-24**).
4. Go back to the command of **Deuteronomy 6**.
 - a) Love the Lord your God with all your heart.
 - b) Jesus said this was the greatest commandment and used the word “mind”. (**Matthew 22:37**).
5. Just as the old hymn tells us to “turn your eyes upon Jesus”, we ought to fix our minds on his glory and goodness.

B. Spend Your Life in the Gospel

1. Back in Colossians 3, Paul tells us how a mind fixed on the gospel must practically work in real life.
 - a) It’s not enough to just give God lip service, we must actually be conformed to his image.
 - b) **Verses 5-11** tell us to put to death or put off what is earthly.
 - c) **Verses 12-17** tell us to put on what is godly.
2. We must continually put off that which dishonors the name of Jesus and put on that which brings his name honor.
 - a) The clothes of our lives, must not be full of stain and stinking of filth.
 - b) Instead they should be pure and clean.
3. Only in thinking and living in such a way can we truly bring glory to God and demonstrate to our children how great and good he is.
 - a) Children can sniff out a fraud quicker than almost anyone.
 - b) They will know if our lives don’t match our words.
 - c) And if our minds don’t think greatly of God, then our ministry to the next generation won’t produce people who think greatly of God.
 - (1) God will get his glory.
 - (2) What is at stake in our obedience? Whether our children have a part in God’s glory with him.

Conclusion

Jim Elliot said, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

In the years following his death, the Huaorani people came to trust the wives of the missionaries they murdered and through their testimony, came to put their faith in Jesus Christ. The children of slain missionaries grew up playing together with the children of born again murderers. The tribe continues to have a Christian witness today. This is the price of God’s glory to the next generation. May our church gladly pay it.



Session Ten
Discussion Guide

USE AS MUCH OR AS LITTLE OF THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE AS YOU LIKE.

Introduction

What would your advice be to a young person who thought of giving up everything to live in a place that might mean poverty or death?

I. Praise a Radically Great God

What am I doing in my own life to ensure I think highly of God?

How am I actively being obedient to the command to make God known to the next generation?

Why is it important that we don't think of the next generation as someone else's responsibility?

II. Create Radically Biblical Homes

What does the world think about fathers and mothers? How are we treated if we teach men to be fathers and women to be mothers?

What are some of the reasons why the world doesn't think biblically about fatherhood and motherhood any more?

How have we failed in the church to adequately pass on the greatness of God to the next generation? What can we do about it now?

How am I demonstrating the importance of the godly home?

How am I actively obeying God's command to teach his commands at all times and in all places?

What priorities in my life need to change to best reflect God's design for the family and the next generation?

III. Walk a Radically Gospel Life

What things have I put in place in my own life to ensure I am continually putting off the things that dishonor God's name?

What things have I put in place in my own life to ensure I am continually putting on the things that honor God's name?

What are some practical ways I can seek those things which are above?

How would I describe the life of a renewed mind to a child?