

Forgotten

Dr. Billy Graham has been referred to as one of the world's greatest preachers and evangelists of all time. Do you suppose there are young Americans today who don't know Dr. Billy Graham is? Can a legacy of faith be forgotten in just one generation? We'll consider this penetrating question in today's Templates of Truth.

The opening chapter of the Book of Exodus tells us that *Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation... (and) a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph* (1:6,8). The Egyptian people would have starved to death in the famine had it not been for Joseph. His brilliant plan not only kept the nation alive, it produced enough grain to feed all the surrounding nations thereby greatly building Egypt's economy. So great was the man Joseph, that he was the highest-ranking official in the Egyptian government, second only to Pharaoh. How could any head of state in Egypt not know who Joseph was?

The sobering answer to that question is revealed in this passage. A great legacy of faith CAN be forgotten, and it only takes one generation! How is that possible? Consider this example - it is not difficult to acknowledge that God and the Judeo-Christian values of our faith are disappearing from many segments of the American society. We have taken prayer and the reading of God's Word out of our public school classrooms. We have removed the symbols of His commandments from our judicial court rooms. There are efforts underway right now to remove references of Him from our national pledge and the face of our currency. In the name of rights and free speech, we have removed most of the censorship that used to respect righteous standards of language, discretion and what could be morally depicted in movies, on television and in print media. In the name of freedom, we have blended God's deity into the multiplicity of religious systems that define American culture, so that God is just an option among many choices of faith. Why are we so surprised to find young Americans today who never heard of Jesus Christ?

We can't put all the blame on pagan society. As stewards of the Christian faith, we have a responsibility to perpetuate its heritage & legacy. If we are not faithful to abide in God's Word and allow it to dwell richly in us; if we don't prioritize the teaching & application of God's Word in all the arenas of our lives; if we don't tell our faith stories; if we fail to model & encourage a committed churchmanship; if we become lazy in teaching, training and developing disciples to minister & serve; and, if you and I personally falter in maintaining a lifestyle of faithfulness & obedience to God – what we cherish in the godly heritage of our faith could be easily forgotten by those growing up in the generation of our complacency. There are signs that this effect has already begun to solidify in America.

In advance of the final plague against Pharaoh, God gave Moses many details & instructions to prepare the people for their deliverance. They were to strategically place the blood of the sacrificial animal so that the death angel would see it and pass over their house. This event

would initiate a perpetual observance of celebration & worship that would greatly shape the heritage of their faith. God commanded them – *you are to observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever...and it will come about when your children will say to you, “What does this rite mean to you?” that you shall say, “It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.”* (Exodus 12:24-27). Earlier, God told Moses – *tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and how I performed My signs among them; that you may know that I am the Lord* (Exodus 10:2). Before he died, Moses would stress to God’s people once more – *You shall teach (these words) diligently to your sons 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 up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates* (Deuteronomy 6:7-9). Moses was teaching God’s people how to perpetuate and preserve their heritage and legacy of faith, so that it would not be forgotten.

How are you perpetuating your legacy of faith? How are you preserving the godly heritage you embrace in the minds and hearts of your children and grandchildren? When you are passed from this life into eternity, will the legacy of your faith live on in the lives of your family, friends and church? Or, as a result of your complacency, will it just be forgotten?

That’s today’s Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.