

THE BATTLE BETWEEN GOD AND SATAN OVER GENERATIONAL CONFLICT

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Generational tension. What I want to do for a few minutes is I want to talk to the older generation. You may say, "Am I in the older generation?" If you ask, enough said. But I want to talk to the younger generation, and as a guy who's kind of like maybe a little bit in between I want to try to speak to the older guys.

So let's talk first to the older generation, and I really have one say which I hope is helpful. I would beg you not to resent, fear or judge the next generation of ministers but to believe in them. Invest in them. Find it as one of the greatest callings on your life to pour into the next generation. Some people say, "Well, they are the future of the church. They are the church of tomorrow." No. They are the church of today. They are not on deck; they are in the batter's box today. We're not raising the future church. They are the church of today. I'm talking about 11-year-olds. I'm telling you put them on the stage and let them lead worship. Let them teach and lead. They are not the church of the future. They are the church of today and you can invest in them. Don't resent them. They're different, just like you were different. They're supposed to be different. Spiky hair, and things, and candles and barefoot worship leaders, all going to hell! Don't get off on the style or the appearance. Believe in them and invest in them.

One of the reasons why the older generation finds it difficult to invest in the younger generation quite honestly because sometimes we feel very insecure. We do. In fact I'll tell you, when I turned 40 -- I'll be 43 in a couple of months -- when I turned 40, this odd thought entered my mind. I started to think, "I wonder if my best days are behind me." I wondered, "Can I still connect?" This was at 40. You know, imagine the person who's 55, 65, 72, and you lead from the sense of insecurity, and when you lead from insecurity nothing works well because you start thinking you know it all or faking you know it all, and you start telling people what to do instead of empowering them as leaders. You delegate completely in the wrong way. You delegate tasks, but when you delegate tasks you create followers. But what we should do with the next generation is we should delegate authority because when we delegate authority we create leaders. We say to the next generation, "Don't just do what I say, but I give you freedom to go and make some mistakes, to be aggressive." And we invest in them out of a position of security.

The big thing is many older people don't feel cool enough. You don't have to be cool. You have to be real. It is much worse to be unreal than uncool. You can be uncool all day long. The younger generation, they want authenticity. They want someone who believes in them. They are absent of parental involvement in so many ways because both parents are working. They're craving someone who will sit down, listen, dialog, and be yourself. There is nothing worse than a fat 50-year-old preacher wearing skinny jeans. That is not of God. Just say no! Just -- say -- no! You just be yourself, show up and listen. You may feel insecure, "I don't have much left to offer." I want to tell you right now, if you're in the older generation, if you are not dead you are not done. If you are not dead you are not done. I believe the best days of ministry are here for you today. Your age and your experience, it is not a liability. It is your greatest asset. You are veterans of ministry.

Lyle Schaller. I don't know if any of you know who Lyle Schaller is. Lyle is a crazy man. He is one of the best church leadership consultants in the world in my opinion. People have written him off for years because his ideas are so crazy. I met Lyle when he was 75 years old. He's 87.6 years of age today. That's what he told me the other day. He told me he peaked in his early seventies. That's what he told me. He said, "Now I just counts my bowel movements." That's what he told me the other day. That's what he said. He told me, and I believe him, he said he was writing his best books and doing his best thinking in his seventies.

Here's what Lyle did for me. Back when I was starting the church in the early years we had three services and we were considering going to a fourth. Back then we didn't know a church in our country that did four services. It was just unheard of. And I bumped into Lyle at an airport. I was like, "There's Lyle The Man Schaller." I said, "Lyle, what do you think," he was 75, "should we go from three to four, or is that too many services?" Lyle was getting on the airplane at the age of 75; he said, "**All you young guys are just alike. You think too small.**" He said, "You should be thinking seven services at your first location, then you should be thinking your second, third, fourth location." He got on a plane and left me with a splitting headache. Seventy-five years of age. Here now some 12, 13 years later we're doing church in 14 locations at 80-some-odd services. Why? Because there was a 75-year-old hero who was peaking and took the time to invest in the next generation.

If you're not dead you are not done. I beg you, embrace the season that you're in. Embrace the season that you're in.

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