

2015 Lads to Leaders Sermon

By Doug Hamilton

A first grade teacher collected well known proverbs. He gave each kid in the class the first half of the proverb, and asked them to come up with the rest. Here is what the kids came up with:

Better to be safe than.....punch a 5th grader.
Strike while the.....bug is close.
It's always darkest before.....daylight savings time.
Never underestimate the power of.....termites.
You can lead a horse to water, but.....how?
Don't bite the hand that.....looks dirty.
No news is.....impossible.
You can't teach an old dog.....math.
If you lie down with dogs.....you will stink in the morning.
Love all, trust.....me.
The pen is mightier than.....the pigs.
An idle mind is.....the best way to relax.
Where there is smoke, there's.....pollution.
Happy is the bride who.....gets all the presents.
A penny saved is.....not much.
Two is company, three's.....The Musketeers.
None are so blind as.....Helen Keller.
Children should be seen and not.....spanked or grounded.
If at first you don't succeed.....get new batteries.
You get out of something what you...see pictured on the box.
When the blind lead the blind.....get out of the way.

The point of this is that children are coming from a different mindset than the adults. They could not understand the sayings as an adult because they lacked the life experience built into the statements. A child must be trained through life experience to be prepared to be successful in life.

The same thing is true in the spiritual world. God has blessed us with children in our families and congregation. They must be trained by someone.

- *Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*
- *Ephesians 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*
- *Deuteronomy 6:6-7 “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. ⁷ “You shall teach them 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.*

According to these verses, it is the parents of the child who is primarily responsible for the training of the child. Without a doubt the parents play the largest role in the life of the child

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and whether or not they will be in heaven on the Day of Judgment. It is always sad when a parent does not take serious their role in the spiritual development of their own children.

There was once a Sunday School teacher asking the question to her group of three-year-olds, "How many of you would like to go to heaven?" All eagerly raised their hand except Tommy. "I'm sorry, I can't. My mother told me to come right home after Sunday school." The mother thought enough to let her child be picked up for Bible class, but was not willing to go herself. The spiritual training of a child is a parent's responsibility first and foremost.

It is tough to be a parent these days because of all the evil in our culture. They try to do the best they can, but many times fall short and in the end lose their child to the world. No longer can you expect anything spiritual from a public classroom, from television or from media. The parent is left to fend for themselves. It can be done, but it is a tough climb to raise a spiritual child in today's world.

One of the greatest tools for the parent to incorporate faith in the heart of a child is the church family. This does not supersede the parents, but becomes a tool for the parents in preparing the youth for the generation to come.

- *Titus 2:2-6 "Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. ³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, ⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. ⁶ Likewise urge the young men to be sensible..."*
- *1 Timothy 5:1-2 "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, ² the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity."*

There are many programs that can be offered through the church family which are designed to train the youth to be spiritual beings in the midst of this "crooked and perverse generation" (Philippians 2:15). There are Bible camps, Bible classes, Bible Bowl and Bible retreats.

That leads us to the title of the lesson this morning, "*Lads to Leaders: A Tool for the Next Generation*". One of the greatest tools for our next generation of leaders is the Lads to Leaders program which our youth competed in a couple of weekends ago. These proven programs are designed to train the youth to become leaders in the church in the years to come. They are designed to put Christ and the Bible at the forefront of their minds. As it says on the Lads to Leaders website...

"L2L is the oldest and largest leadership training program used by the churches of Christ today. It is a tool churches of Christ can use to help prepare their youth and adults for service in the Kingdom of God and help develop their overall leadership potential."

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Since 1968, they have been training the youth in the churches of Christ to be leaders. Here are just 10 of 37 activities which are part of Lads to Leaders that Camp Hill Youth will be active in the coming year.

- 1) Centurion Scripture: The goal is to memorize one hundred verses in throughout the year. Needed: Encouraging proctors who will listen to them quote the verses and let Lydia know.
- 2) GIFTS and GUARDS (Girls In Fellowship and Team Study/Guys Understanding Authority and Real Discipleship). It is for the 6th to 12th graders with the goal of completing a four month devotion with 12 project lessons. Needed: Encouraging helpers to share information and insight on projects and application.
- 3) Keeper's and Provider's Class: These dual courses train young men and women in valuable skills for the Christian home. Needed: People who know these skills such as sewing, canning, repair, cooking, wood-working. They can help train the young people to be more productive servants of God.
- 4) Speech for both Boys and Girls: They will write, rehearse and publically give multiple Bible lessons which coincide with the year's theme, "Where your treasure is, there shall be your heart also." Needed: Individuals who have taught lessons in the past and can share their experience and talents with the youth. Note: This is for both the men and women.
- 5) Good Samaritan: This deals with service projects by the youth for not only members of the church family, but also the community, including raking leaves, visiting nursing homes and card writing. Needed: Men and women who are willing to chaperone, elderly who would like to have a hand in yard or house work, those who have projects of help for the youth to participate.
- 6) Song-leading: This is for both the boys and the girls. In the competition, the girls song-lead for the women and the boys for the men. Needed: Those who know how to song-lead and understand music. They can instruct the younger ones in their talents.
- 7) Puppet Theatre: The youth will prepare a small production of puppets following the theme of the year. Needed: Men and women willing to build backdrops, volunteer to go to some of the puppet shows to help set-up, writers for the skits and sewers to make clothes for the puppets.
- 8) Art: The students will participate in photography, drawing and painting in accordance to the theme. Needed: People who can draw, use a camera and are good with crafts. They can also give some guidance to make the projects better.

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- 9) Bulletin Board: The students will be responsible for the making of bulletin boards in the church. A picture of the bulletin boards will be taken and entered for the judging. Needed: People who have good taste in bulletin boards and art. They can assist and encourage the said students in the process.

- 10) Mass-Media: This involves Power-Points, infomercials and blogs which go along with the theme for the year. Needed: Volunteers who are good at filming and computer work.

It takes a parent to raise a child in the spiritual ways of God. It takes a congregation to help these parents to do their job. If we as a congregation are willing to assist our youth in such a way so as to train them to be the next generation of leaders, then we will reap the benefits for years to come. We can put Christ and the Bible at the forefront of the minds of this generation to come. And when they are old, they shall not depart from it.

Closing Story

A little boy opened the big, old Family Bible with fascination, and looked at the old pages as he turned them. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible, and he picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that had been pressed in between the pages. "Momma, look what I found," the boy called out. "What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked. With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered: "I think it's Adam's suit!"

Application:

This little boy had been trained to think from the perspective of the Bible and it showed in his innocent logic. We are in a position to make Christian leaders for the generations to come. Will you help? Will you lend your experience, your talents and time to assist? There is meeting next week here at the building at 4:00 PM. Be willing to come and sign up to help in this great and awesome goal! Talk to Lydia if you would like to come, but cannot. She can use your help. The children can use your help. Most importantly, God can use your help to accomplish his goals.