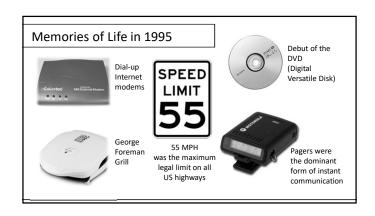


## Why are you here?

- "I have no idea what to do as a parent. I need guidance so that I don't ruin my children."
- "I'm struggling, and I need help. Please tell me what I can do to make it all work out right. Life is just too messy."
- "I know I've messed up. I want to fix things. Show me how."
- "I'm doing it right—just look at my kids. I'm here to help others."

The Gospel challenges our actions and motives.



What are your parenting memories?

Things good/bad you remember from your parents.

Things good/bad you have done yourself.

#### A Different World

Source: Pew Research Center "How America Changed During Barack Obama's Presidency"

- Millennials have surpassed Baby Boomers as the largest living generation.
- The US is more diverse: 1) in 2013, the majority of babies were racial or ethnic minorities; 2) in 2013, 12% of newlyweds were mixed-race couples.
- Those who identify as "atheist," "agnostic," or "nothing in particular" increased from 16% to 23% of the population. Professing Christians dropped from 78% to 71%.
- The iPhone debuted in 2007 and now 68% own a smartphone. In 2010, only 3% owned a tablet; the number is now 45%.
- 8 states and DC have legalized marijuana for recreational purposes. A majority of Americans now support legalization of the drug.
- In 2015, the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, and a majority of Americans agree.

#### Our challenges

- · Parenting can be intimidating and challenging.
  - We struggle with envy.
  - We struggle with discontent.
- Mankind's tendency is to pick a place in time and stay there.
  - We prefer a period of parenting (infancy, toddler, etc.)
  - "Things were great in the 'good ole' days'."  $\,$
- · Every generation has "pet sins" they tend to overlook.
  - Older generations ignore issues of justice and stewardship as they pursue material wealth.
  - Younger generations ignore sexual sin as they pursue individual freedom and expression.

# Our challenges

- The generation gaps
  - The children of today will soon see the youth of today as out of touch.
  - Prolonged adolescence is coupled with age compression & age aspiration.
- · Communication is changing rapidly.
  - Social media is a paradigm shift in communication. The platforms are transient.
  - Disagreement = rejection and disrespect.
- · Terms are unknown.
  - Biblical and doctrinal literacy is declining, and the appetite is waning.
  - Grace = "God lets me do what I want."
  - Rules of any kind are oppressive legalism.

## Acts 2:39 ESV

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

- Peter's sermon at Pentecost after the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- The promise = the promise of salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- God worked to fulfill his ancient promise, using even the evil deeds of the Jewish and Gentile leaders.
- God is not deterred by man's sin, as he saves those he has chosen for himself. His work continues today.

## Our task

- God's promise is transcendent, but the context in which the promise operates is always changing.
- We make the promise known through all generations.
- We study to understand the needs of the culture and the language that most effectively communicates.
  - Study the messages teens receive (the Internet, media, music, videos, etc.).
  - Note the themes underlying popular culture.
- We strive to bring the unchangeable truth of Scripture to bear on the circumstances of today (Ezekiel 37: "Can these bones live?").

Walt Mueller: "We take care to stay nurtured in God's Word AND study the shifting sands of culture."

#### Our hope

Walt Mueller: "The battle in every culture is the same. It is a battle against the sin nature."

- The sin nature in you, and the sin nature in your child.
- The weapons remain the same: the Word, prayer, relationships
- We are not alone in the task. "I am with you" is the antidote for our fear.
- Covenant children have a God-given status, and the Lord will always receive one of his covenant people.
- The power and goodness of God is eternally confirmed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

#### Resources to help

- Center for Parent and Youth Understanding (cpyu.org)
- Almost Christian by Kenda Creasy Dean
- Soul Searching by Christian Smith
- Souls in Transition by Christian Smith
- postchristiancondition.org (a new website/blog on apologetics in today's culture by a PCA Teaching Elder)