

Good morning, Village Church. It's good to see you. Go ahead and grab your Bibles. Turn to Psalm 78. That's where we're going to be here this morning. Matt is out of town; he is up in Missouri at Kanakuk Institute teaching at a family camp up there in weather that is vastly different than it is here in Texas, so pray for him as he suffers in pleasant weather.

I want to try as best I can this morning to use this text to speak to us as The Village Church, really specifically the Flower Mound campus, about where we are in the season of ministry we're in right now, where we find ourselves as a church, and really to make a plea with us about how mindful we are to be in the midst of what is a sweet season right now, and to be ensuring that the next generation that is coming up behind us that is not experiencing what we're experiencing right now, that we're mindful of our need and our responsibility to capture that next generation and not lose them.

I understand when I say that, there is someone here who will go, *Okay, well you're going to use Psalm 78 to talk about the need of capturing the next generation to a church that for the past ten years has averaged age around mid to late 20s. Doesn't it appear that if there's any church that seems to be doing decent right now at capturing that next generation that, it would be this one?* I'd say yeah, man, exactly. The Lord has been good to us here in that regard, but at the same time, I would say sometimes it's when you're in your greatest stride as a church, when you're experiencing some of the best momentum you can as a church, it's in that moment you need to be mindful that you're only one generation away from losing everything you've invested in all the years prior.

We're just one handoff away to the next generation of losing that. You know, this past week, I've been watching a lot of Olympics like many if you. It's fun to get caught up in Michael Phelps gold and all the amazing badminton controversy that comes along in the Olympics. I was reminded of the last Summer Olympics in 2008 in Beijing. Some of you may remember in track and field a very significant event that happened. It was with a men's 4x100 relay. This was one of the best relay teams we had thought to put out from America, four men who had trained for the previous four years to prepare for this one race, to compete against Usain Bolt in Jamaica and really try to take that gold. All this preparatory work had come to it, all the training and practice.

The gun was shot and they went off, they're rounding the corner. If you remember this one in 2008, a guy by the name of Darvis Patton was coming around the corner to hand the baton to Tyson Gay, and they

dropped it. In one moment, in one failed handoff, all that work, four years of training, all that investment was disqualified because of one bad handoff. As I was reminded of that, I think in the same way, the author of Psalm 78 understood the reality well of the importance of one generation making the proper spiritual handoff to a next generation. When that handoff is dropped, when that baton is dropped, there are tremendous repercussions that come to the next generation.

We're going to look at this psalm here this morning. The guy who wrote it is a guy by the name of Asaph. Asaph, at this time, was one of King David's chief musicians. This is the equivalent of Michael Bleecker writing a psalm right here for us, alright? I've already talked to Bleecker in the back and said, "Bro, you have a lot of pressure on you, man. This brother brought out about 12 or 13 psalms. You have some work to do, man. Quit singing and get writing. Let's go."

Asaph is going to step up here, and he's going to speak to this issue about this handoff between generations. I'm going to jump around a little bit in the text to hopefully make it make more sense to us where we are in this state here at The Village Church right now. Start with me in verse 5, and notice what it is God did for the nation of Israel.

"He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God."

I want to highlight a few important things here to show you how I think this correlates to where we are right now in this particular season at The Village. Notice what God did here. He established a testimony in Jacob, and he appointed a law in Israel. The first time in Scripture we see God give instructions to his people is in the book of Genesis in the creation account when God clearly explains to Adam, "This is what you're to eat, this is what you're not to eat, and here are the consequences if you don't obey."

As you know, in Genesis 3, we saw what happened. Man botched it, sin ensued, and judgment came upon man. For the first time in creation, man was separated eternally from God, unable to restore that relationship in their own strength. God was good to give promises at that time. Several thousand years past, generation after generation after failed attempt after failed attempt on man's behalf, God decides to start over with his own chosen nation, the nation of Israel.

He calls unto himself his own people. He makes promises to them, that he's going to bless them, this nation, that he's going to bring them into a promised land, and that one day, he will provide a divine ruler, the promised Savior. That, as we know, is Jesus Christ. Even amidst all those promises, God's people still didn't get it. They still couldn't fully obey God. God decides at a certain point in history to speak to the nation of Israel in a way that would leave a lasting imprint on them as to who their God was, how he was for them, and how he would miraculously deliver them from their bondage into freedom.

What he does in the Old Testament, we would know this particular event as the exodus event. God's leading his people out of Egypt. Many of you know the story, right? You've seen the movies. Younger generation, you have Val Kilmer speaking to you right now. Older generation, it's Charlton Heston. God brings Moses, and he leads the Israelites out of Egypt, out of slavery. As they go out, he parts the Red Sea miraculously, closes in over Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and leads his people to victory, to freedom, delivers them from bondage.

This was such a miraculous event that even to this day, for a Jew, this is the pinnacle event of their Hebrew Bible, of our Old Testament, is this exodus event that happened. As soon as they part that Red Sea, as soon as they cross, God mandates for the nation of Israel that they would never forget that event. That's what verse 5 is speaking to when it says, "**He put a testimony in Jacob.**" It was the testimony of his divine deliverance from bondage in Egypt. They were never to forget it.

Even to this day, when a Jew celebrates Passover, they're looking back at the exodus event, remembering God's deliverance of the nation out of Egypt. In addition to that, shortly after that, God takes Moses up on Mt. Sinai, pulls him up, and inscribes to him on tablets of stone the Law of God, the Commandments of God. These commandments were to guide the nation in how they were to live in obedience to this God, how they would reflect his holiness, how they were to live in relationship with him. In doing so, God gives a law to Israel. This again is what verse 5 is talking to here, is that God gave a testimony in Jacob and a law in Israel. He mandates that these things be communicated from one generation to the next.

Here's the deal. If you're God (let's just put on the God hat for just a moment), how do you ensure the next generation that wasn't a part of that event, that did not see the Red Sea parting, who did not see the lightning bolts up on top of Mt. Sinai and God speaking to Moses, that wasn't there for all that, how do you ensure that the next generation that was unborn at the time gets it? How do you ensure that the next generation knows who that God is so they don't forget him? It's interesting, because God being God could have done a number of things to make sure generation after generation all the way up until our day gets that.

He could have said, "You know what, every 10 years, I'm just going to do another Red Sea event. I'm just going to blow something up, cover in on some enemies, and deliver my people out, so every 10 years, every generation will understand who I am and not forget it." He could have done that. He could have just dropped tracks from heaven that just fell down about every 10 years and said, "Hey, remember me! Don't forget who I am." He could have done a number of things, but notice at the end of verse 5 what God's plan is to make sure the next generation gets it.

The testimony, that law that was given, he said, "**...which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them.**" Interesting. This is how we're going to do it. One generation is going to be responsible for making sure the next generation understands who God is. That generation will be responsible for making sure the next generation knows who God is. That was God's plan that the older would impart to the younger. Now, this is interesting. They're going to teach, they're going to testify, they're going to tell the story.

Thankfully, later in time, God made it a little bit easier, and moved away from oral tradition to actually capture it in pen and ink for us, which made it a little easier to tell the story. Nonetheless, the story was mandated that it be passed from one generation to the next. This was nothing new. Asaph is simply quoting Deuteronomy 6 here in this passage. You don't need to turn there, but there is a passage in Deuteronomy 6 known to Israel as the Great Shema. The word *shema* means to hear. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord your God is one. You shall love the Lord your God with everything you have."

Then he goes on to describe how you're to instruct your children on how to know about who that God is and how to love him that way. He tells that it's the parents' job to sit around with their children and daily tell them about the wonders of God. Both when they lie down, when they rise up, when they're sitting at the table, when they're walking along the way, that it was the parents' job to instruct their own children, the next generation, about who this God is so they would get it. What's interesting is halfway through that passage, God tells them why it was important that a parent must tell their children about who this God is. He says this. Just listen to this. This will start in verse 10 of chapter 6 in Deuteronomy.

"And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the Lord..." You see, Asaph, in Deuteronomy 6 obviously, understood the idea that the danger of God doing all these miraculous things is that you're just one generation away from somebody forgetting it, so it's important that they pass it down.

Asaph is going to tell us here in Psalm 78 in verses 6-8 why again this testimony and this law needed to be taught from one generation to the next. He's going to give three reasons why it's important that one generation must pass it on to the next generation. Listen to this. Verse 6, the first reason.

1. *So the next generation might know.* In other words, the first reason why one generation teaches the next is that knowledge could be imparted, so there's understanding about who God is. In other words, there has to be some basic level education that takes place from one generation to the next. In this day, here is how it would look. You would have a father and a mother who would sit down with their children, and they would just start telling the stories to their kids. "This is how God created everything you see around you. **'In the beginning...'**"

They would start in Genesis 1. They'd go through the Creation account. They'd say, "Here's how man sinned, and here are the consequences. This is why our world is shaped the way it is now, but here's our hope in this Promised One who is to come." They would go through the flood account. Then they'd walk them through the exodus account. They would just share the stories, teaching their children from a young age about the wondrous deeds of their God that they serve and what he has done in their life today.

Then the father would sit down and say, "Not only that, but God gave us instruction. He didn't just leave us here aimless; he gave us instruction of how we're to live in relationship with him. Here's how he gave us the Law of God, a law which is reflective of the holiness of God, unlike the pagan gods the countries around us serve. This is the true God, and here's how we live in relationship to him." A father and a mother would impart that to their children, and they would hand down that knowledge so their kids would know who God is. Notice in verse 7, it wasn't just knowledge for knowledge's sake. It wasn't just memorizing some Bible just so you could say you did it. Notice in verse 7 what it was for.

2. *That they should set their hope in God.* The reason we teach the next generation is so they would know and not forget. The reason they know is so they'll set their hope in God and not themselves. In other words, by teaching the next generation, you start learning about who God is so you're not walking around here aimless and directionless wondering why life is so miserable, and if things will ever get any better.

Instead, you know who God is, so you can fix your hope on him and not your circumstances. You can fix your hope on him and not you and your own efforts. You'd fix your hope on him. That's the beauty of knowledge, is that it will open up your heart, that your heart and your affections now will run toward him who is the object and the sustainer of our faith, that you'll run toward him who can satisfy your deepest longings and desires where everything else falls short. That's the beauty of it.

3. *They would keep his commandments.* In other words, go teach the next generation about God so they can fix their hope in him, and so they can learn how to walk with him, so they don't fall into the same snares and traps the former generation did. I wonder how many of you in here, maybe your late 30s, maybe your 40s, 50s, 60s, on up. Right now you're kind of falling into that old adage where you're looking back at your life, and you're going, *Man, if only I knew then what I know now, man, I could have saved myself from so much pain.*

You're sitting there going, *Dang, where was this when I was...* Here's the beauty of what Asaph is saying. You get the opportunity to go capture the next generation so they won't have to walk through some of the pitfalls you did. They can learn about God from an earlier age and walk with him. In many ways, you've paid the dumb tax for the next generation so they don't have to pay it. That's the beauty of what Asaph is saying here.

Asaph understands what he's trying to say here is God has established his testimony in Jacob, he's established his Law, his Word in Israel, and it's each generation's job to make sure the next generation gets it, that they would know God, that they would put their hope in God, and learn how to walk with God. That's each generation's responsibility toward the next. The question is, how did the nation of Israel do? This was the command that was on them. How did the nation do with this command? Look at verses 9-72. We're going to take the next two hours this morning, and we're going to go through this. No, let me summarize it for you.

Verses 9-72 summarize the history of the nation of Israel and their response to this command of one generation passing it to the next. Now, before I summarize that though, look over at verses 1-3 of Psalm 78. Notice how Asaph begins this Psalm. He says, **"Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable..."** Literally, it's a riddle. **"I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us."** So it's interesting. He says, "I'm going to tell you a parable. I'm going to give you a riddle." The parable and the riddle is in verses 9-72.

What's interesting is it's not a parable or riddle like we think of a parable. When Jesus tells parables, kind of a made-up story that communicates a deeper truth. If you look at verses 9-72 and just scan it, it's actual history. What he's doing here in verses 9-72 is giving you the history from the exodus account all the way up unto the day he was living under King David's rule. It's from the exodus to King David is the history of Israel summarized in verses 9-72. He's telling you a riddle in this. See if you can get it. Look at this. In verses 12-16, he describes God's amazing work to rescue his people from slavery in Egypt. Look in verse 17. **"Yet they sinned still more against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert."**

In verses 23-29, God provides food and drink for them in the desert, satisfying their needs, but yet in verse 32, **"In spite of all this, they still sinned; despite his wonders, they did not believe."** In verse 38, God spares their lives over and over again. Yet in verse 42, **"They did not remember his power or the day when he redeemed them from the foe."** In verse 43-55, Asaph recounts again all that God did in Egypt to serve justice upon their enemies, but yet in verse 56, **"Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep his testimonies."** Asaph keeps showing this pattern all the way up until King David's day. Then the psalm just ends.

It's this weird ending to the psalm. It's almost like how the book of Jonah ends. It's just cryptic. It just leaves you going, *Wait a minute. You can't stop there! What happened? Finish the story!* That's the beauty of it. Remember what Asaph said. "I'm going to tell you a parable. I'm going to give you a riddle." What's the riddle? You see, here's a God who has demonstrated amazing power toward his people, has dispensed unlimited amounts of grace and mercy upon these people, a God who has revealed himself and written down for them exactly how to live, and yet after all that, the people still forget who he is.

See, the parable is asking the question, *How can something like this happen?* That's what you're meant to say when you read verses 9-72. *How can God do all that, and they don't get it?* The answer is because in the context of this psalm, the nation neglected to do what God had asked them to do, which was reproduce in the next generation. That's why when you open the book of Judges, it's one of the first things you see. "Thus arose another generation who did not know the Lord." They had dropped the baton on handing off to the next generation. That's how this psalm ends.

The question really for us this morning begins, why do I share this psalm with us? What does this mean for us today, right now with The Village Church? I would simply say my plea in this psalm is that this would not be our story 10 years from now with The Village. Right now, it's a sweet thing, man, to be at The Village Church right now. It's a sweet thing. God has had his hand all over this church. This is a young, catalytic, energetic, influential church that God is using right now in a period of history to transform many lives. For one, I'm thankful to be here in the midst of this.

Yet, at the same time, we have to be very careful that in the midst of enjoying all this bounty that God has been blessing this church with, we don't one, neglect who our God is and understanding of who he is, but also failing to turn around to the generation that's not here yet, that's not experiencing this yet, and making sure we're bringing them along. That's the danger I think in the season we're in. One of the dangers of a large church like this, as it grows like this one has, is that over time, you can fall into this trap of mistranslating numbers and start assuming that just because large amounts of people are coming here and are attracted to this particular church, that assumes discipleship is actually taking place.

Oftentimes, in large churches like that, that can be one of the dangerous façades in front of us, is to assume that one generation is actually handing off to another. What typically happens (this is just what I've seen in large churches) is you drift into what I've talked about many times up here as a mule mentality. Y'all know the difference again between a mule and a thoroughbred. A thoroughbred, man, if you go get the Kentucky Derby or any of these races, and you take these horses, these aren't horses that were just born in a barn, and somebody said, "Hey, let's throw him in a race."

These horses are bred. You can take some of these horses and literally trace their genealogical line all the way back for centuries to Arabian horses in the Middle East that are now racing in the Kentucky Derby. It's crazy the reproductive line that happens with these horses. A mule, on the other hand, a whole different beast. Do y'all know what a mule is? It's a nasty little critter, all right? It's when you get a donkey mating with a horse, all right? You get this weird crossbreed that comes out. Here's what's beautiful about mules. We call them pack mules for a reason. You can take a tremendous amount of weight, load it up on these animals, and they'll just grind and get after it. They'll plow fields like no other.

You will just whip the snot out of them for an entire life span and get tons of use out of them, but here's the dangerous thing. When they die, their legacy is over, because in that breeding of a horse and a donkey, there's a genetic mutation that happens that makes mules have an inability to reproduce. They can't have babies. What happens oftentimes with large churches like ours, if you're not careful, you can fall into this mule mentality, where we all of a sudden go, *Man, isn't that a gifted preacher?* We just start riding the back of one individual.

Listen, I love Chandler. I am blessed to sit under his teaching gift just as every one of you are, but the danger becomes when all of a sudden, we turn into a church that just wants to follow one man, and that man isn't Jesus Christ. That becomes a dangerous thing for a church when all of a sudden, we start getting wrapped up in the culture of the church and forget the cause of the church. We get to this place where all of a sudden we're depending on one guy to do all the preaching for us.

We're just like, "Hey man, you need to come hear this guy. He can speak." That becomes our mode of discipleship, is attractionalism, where we just ping about five or six pastors who are phenomenal mules. They're gifted, they're talented, and we put all the load on them and expect them to do the work of the ministry for us until their time is up. When their time is up, it becomes very dangerous about what's left with the church.

I saw a very real and really scary picture for me when I was in California. I was working at another church in California, a multisite church there very similar to The Village. One of campuses we inherited the same way the Denton campus and Dallas campus came online, of another congregation that handed over their

building and kind of morphed in with us. I remember when we first kind of occupied the building, and went in there, I went into the fellowship hall of this church. It was an old Lutheran church. It had been around about 100 years. I went in there, and they had all these pictures up on the wall of the confirmation classes that were in this church.

It was this interesting visual for me because the earliest pictures were early 1900s. It was a pastor with about three or four people. The next confirmation class was the pastor and about 15 people. The next class was the pastor and 30 people, and then 40, and 60. One of them in the '50s was 100 people in this class. It was just multiplying. Then when you got to the mid '60s, the pictures started changing. It was like the pastor and 40. It was the pastor and 25 people. Pastor and 15. Then it stopped in 1985 with a pastor and one dude sitting there. Then the pictures stopped.

It was this picture to me about how churches die. Listen, I'll be the first one to say I believe God indeed may have a shelf life for certain local congregations, that he'll give for a good 30-year run, and then he'll raise up another one to kind of really take the torch there. I've seen it happen. God has his own purposes in it, but more times than not, when you see a church shrink and die the way it is, it's because at some point the congregation switched to a mule mentality, and they started riding the back of one or two gifted individuals, and they stopped doing the work of the ministry themselves.

They dropped that baton, and over time they become like a men's 4x100 Olympic relay team of 2008 that had all the right pieces together, but then just missed the handoff and disqualified everything they'd invested in thus far. My prayer is that would not happen at this church, that we would take very seriously the responsibility that we have to be the church, to begin discipleship of the next generation, and entering into the lives of those who are coming up after us, and moving from consumers and spectators into fully active participants in the life of the body of the church. It's what we were meant to do.

Let me just do something real quick. There are a couple of ways this needs to happen. One of these (and I've beat this drum before here) is this has got to start in the home. It has to start in the home. If you're a parent in here, your number one mission field is your home. It has to start with Dad, and it has to start with Mom. That's your number one mission field. Let me tell you something. If you can't pour into your home spiritually, you have no business pouring out anywhere else spiritually. If you're going to go and start up some awesome nonprofits to try to save the world for Jesus Christ, but you can't disciple your own children, you have no business starting up that nonprofit.

If you're going to go crank up a home group and lead a home group and start pouring into people and leading ministries, but yet you can't pour into your own family, you have no business doing those other things. Your first priority, your first mission field is your home. It's your marriage, and it's your kids. That's

where it starts. If you want to know the best way we can reshape and hand off to the next generation, it starts under your roof. That's where it starts. Let me say if you're a young married couple in here or you're pursuing marriage, and you don't have kids yet, this needs to be on your radar now. You don't wait until you plop out a little baby on the table there and go, "Let's figure out how to do this." It doesn't work that way.

You need to start right now. You have to come to a point in your life where you make the decision, "We're going to turn this thing around and reinvest, starting here." You need to start sitting down and having conversations with your spouse now. "How are we going to nourish our marriage so we'll have something for our kids? How are we going to pour into our kids? How are we going to come around them and disciple them? How are we going to invest in the next generation, so starting in our home we can raise up another generation that does not forget who God is and his wondrous deeds?" It starts in your home.

Having said that though (and I've said this before), I know after surveying The Village Church, the vast majority of you in here have come from broken homes, and you haven't had those types of families that have poured into you spiritually with the deposits that should have been poured into you as the next generation, and I firmly believe that in those situations, when your own biological family dropped the baton, what God does is he raises up another family to grab the baton. It's called the church. That's where the church becomes your family. That's where we have to start pouring into one another to help raise up the next generation.

Let me just speak briefly here to those of you in the room who are of the grayed-hair persuasion, all right? Maybe the no-hairs that are in here. Those of you who are in your upper years of life, you have some incredible deposits to be made in the next generation. You bring to the table an immense amount of wisdom and experience that can be a blessing for the next generation. Sadly, you need to know we live in an American culture that values itself on trying to tell you there is no significance for you once you get to your 60s. We have entire businesses in America that literally exist to teach and to train you that when you turn 65, you have no value left.

You've worked hard; you owe it to yourself. You need to take all the money you've earned and saved, you need to go buy an RV, and you need to go cruise the nation for about five or six years. We have companies that will tell you, "Hey, you need to go grab a timeshare down in Florida, and you need to hit 18 holes, and you need to let that play out the rest of your life. Entire businesses that try to teach those who are in their 60s and up that that's how you're to spend the rest of your life. I'm talking about the issue of retirement. I'm not talking retirement from vocational jobs. That's different. There's a time and a place that needs to end. I'm talking about retirement from life.

Do you recognize that there is not one single verse in your entire Bible that tells you when you turn 65, you need to check out and go play? There's not one verse that's there. In fact, it's quite the opposite. It'll tell you that when you hit that age, you're in the golden years of your life. That's when you have the most to offer in the next generation. That's when you have the most to go pour into those who are coming up and make sure that baton is handed off well. Sadly, in our culture, it's the disappearing generation. When they hit that age, they're gone. You'll find them on a golf course if you want time. It's sad.

I want to apologize to that generation of folks in here because the worst thing we can do at The Village Church is take those of you who are gray-haired and older and drive you out. It's the worst thing we could do. Even if you have just recently started walking with the Lord, you have the opportunity to go proclaim to the next generation about what it means to find Jesus and experience the life-transforming power of the gospel and have it radically change their lives and alter their trajectory for the rest of their lives. You get a play in that role. It's a beautiful thing to be able to do that.

When it doesn't happen in the home, it has to happen in the church. Let me tell you, in the church, there are a couple ways to do that, to cross this generational gap. Some of it is informal; some of it is more organic and informal. Formally, and let me just do a shameless plug right now, there is opportunity for you right here at this church to engage with the next generation, to go in and influence them for Jesus Christ, especially ones who are coming from broken homes. Right now you can go volunteer and serve in our preschool ministry, in our children's ministry, in our middle school, in our high school. You can go and lead a home group and grab some young married couples and some singles around you.

You have the opportunity to invest in and shape the next generation right here. Maybe one of the best things you can do after this service is stop by Connection Central, go out there, visit with some of our folks, and then get dialed in, instead of passively waiting to see what's happened. Get dialed in. You can do that. By the way, you want some good homework, go read Psalm 71. Psalm 71 is a psalm about an old man who's at the end of his life. He's gray-haired, his strength is waning, his enemies are closing in on him, he has one last shout to the Lord, one last prayer request. Do you know what it isn't? It's not, "Lord, my strength is waning. My hair is gray, and my enemies are about to kill me. Increase my 401(k) so I can hit the retirement now."

It's not that. You know what it is? Listen to this, Psalm 71:18. This is what this old man says. **"So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation..."** Did you catch that? That is a bowed up verse right there. That is an old man who's at the end of his days. He has one bullet left in the chamber, and he fires it off to the Lord. He says, "Give me one last chance before these men take my life that I might have one more opportunity to proclaim your might, your goodness to this coming generation." That's the way to go out, man. That's how I want to go out.

So you take that, memorize that, put that on the hood of your car, whatever you want to do, but run with that verse. There are opportunities for you to do that here. Jump in. Don't just sit passively by and be a spectator. Jump in. Here's the beauty. We can come around you. The church, according to Ephesians 4, exists not to do the work of ministry for you, but to train you to do the work of the ministry. We have pastors and ministers and lay leaders who can come around you and help you and coach you on how to invest in the next generation, but you can do it here in any one of those ministries. Stop by Connection Central. We'll get you dialed in.

Some of it truthfully may not even be that formal. Maybe it's informal. Maybe one of the best things we can do is stop just walking by each other like we don't know each other. Maybe instead when we leave here today, instead of cattle herding out to the parking lot like we do through the foyer, maybe we linger for a little bit. Maybe some of the older folks grab some of the younger folks and introduce yourself in a way that's appropriate not weird, all right?

Listen, man, I know it's awkward. I know in our day and age, it's just awkward. It's like eHarmony or Match.com for mentoring. It's weird. But listen. I would rather have a little bit of awkwardness in this church than a whole lot of nothingness. Amen? We have to find ways to bridge this generational gap because we need each other as the church. This is God's chosen plan for how we're to hand off the baton to the next generation, is by one generation teaching the next. Let's pray.

Father, we are thankful that in your divine plan, of all the ways you could have chosen to capture that next generation, that you chose to use your church and the home. I pray for The Village Church. I love being here, Lord. We're in a good place. Your hand has been on us. You've been faithful. Lives are being transformed, but Father, I know all too well that there is a day that's coming when we cannot rely upon the gifts of one, two, or three, or more individuals when the church needs to be the church. Father, we need your help. Holy Spirit, we need you to intercede.

We need you to grow us up, to sanctify us, to mature us, and Father that you would encourage us to not just sit on the bench and watch, but to get in the game so, Father, we could do the job you've called us to do here in handing off the torch, handing off the baton to the next generation so they might know you, they might set their hope in you, and might know how to walk with you. We pray that would happen here for the sake of your name, for the edification of your body. We ask that in the mighty name of Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.