

***The Gospel Greats Weekly
Newsletter***
Published April 17, 2018

Paul's Epistle
"Touching The Future"

We've been asking a lot of "big" questions lately, and here's another one to think about: What have you done – or what will you do – today to advance the cause of Christ? Have you ever considered that what you do for Christ today – what you tell someone about Him, what you do to spread the Gospel – might impact others for years, perhaps generations, to come? Back in 1934, Mordecai Ham was a well-known Independent Baptist evangelist. His revival services, especially throughout the South, brought thousands of people to Christ. One of them – at a revival in Charlotte, North Carolina – was a young man named Billy Graham. (I'm guessing Ham had no idea the young Graham was in the audience that night. Why would he?)

That same year, at a prayer meeting in Charlotte, a man named Vernon Patterson prayed that "out of Charlotte the Lord would raise up someone to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth." God used Ham's preaching and Patterson's prayer to do just that, in the person of Billy Graham. But God used others, too. Consider Elner Edman, and his brother, the one-time president of Wheaton College, V. Raymond Edman. The brothers were vacationing in Florida when their golf caddy – a student at Florida Bible Institute near Tampa – greatly impressed them. That caddy was Billy Graham. The two Edmans encouraged Graham to attend Wheaton, where his mother had wanted him to go. But, he said, he couldn't afford it. So they even offered to pay Graham's first-year tuition at Wheaton. Graham accepted. And that proved to be a turning point in his life as he prepared for a much broader ministry.

Notice that God used many different people – many more than just those mentioned above – to prepare Billy Graham for the unique ministry that God eventually gave him. But every soul touched by Graham's ministry in succeeding years was an extension of Ham's ministry, Patterson's prayer and the Edmans' benevolence. Each one of them touched the future for God in a mighty way through Rev. Graham's ministry. Now, think back. How did you come to Christ? Was it under the preaching of some particular individual? Perhaps it was a pastor, a Sunday School teacher, a godly parent, a Christian camp counselor or even a Christian neighbor or friend. Whoever it was, their faithfulness in sharing the Gospel resulted in an eternal difference in your life. You were changed forever!

What would have happened to you if that person had not followed the Holy Spirit's guidance and led you to the Lord? Now consider... You have an obligation to pass it along. Yes, you! Parents, for example, have a special obligation toward their children to "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4b), following the teaching of Proverbs 22:6 – "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." It starts in the home, but it goes far beyond that. So, we come back to the original question. What can you do today to advance the cause of Christ? Who can you talk to who needs a Savior? Who can you help bring to a saving knowledge of Christ? How can you support the spreading of the Gospel?

Back in 1983, the Gaither Vocal Band recorded a song called "Passin' The Faith Along"¹ – which is exactly what we're talking about here:

Touching The Future,,,excerots from newsletter at TheGospelGreats.com...April 2018

"The runner of a relay finds in his baton
Purpose for the running and strength to carry on
We hold within our grasp the faith that makes us strong
And like the relay runner we seek to pass it on...2

Songwriter John Mohr then adds,

"Countless generations of saints have come and gone
A spark ignites as an ember fades and the flame continues on..."3

Today's Christians, of course, rely on what they were told about Christ by previous generations of Christians. Tomorrow's Christians will be affected by what they receive (or don't receive) from today's Christians – from you, from me. When you "pass the faith along" to someone you will be "touching the future" – not just for that individual, but for each of the people he or she might subsequently bring to Christ as a result of your faithfulness. And one of them, perhaps – only God knows – could be the next "Billy Graham."

- Paul Heil
TheGospelGreats.com

PS: Visit TheGospelGreats.com and subscribe to Paul Heil's free newsletter...