

It Is Written

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Are We Losing Our Youth?

By Dennis Abernathy

It is alarming to see the number of young people who, when they grow older, completely desert the Lord's church. To see young people thrill at Bible study, only to grow cold and uninterested in the work of the Lord as they grow older, is indeed tragic.

Why are so many young people leaving the faith? What is making shipwreck of their faith? What does the church need to do? What can it do? What can parents do? What do parents need to do? What is the answer? Is the answer (solution or remedy) to be found in youth rallies, youth programs with fun, frolic and gimmickry, youth retreats, etc.?

I don't believe the faithfulness of a young person to the Lord has anything to do with youth rallies, church sponsored recreation, etc., nor do I believe such is gauged by whether or not a young person attends a large or small congregation. Faithfulness to the Lord is just not dependent on these things. I am convinced, however, that the most important thing in this regard is the young person's immediate family.

Several congregations ran a survey and came up with the following results:

1. Where both parents are faithful to the Lord, and that includes active interest in the work of the local church, 93 percent of the kids remained faithful.
2. Where only one of the parents was faithful, that figure dropped to 73 percent.
3. In those cases where both parents attended church services only infrequently, the percentage of their children who remained faithful to the Lord dropped to 6 percent!

Shocking you say? But, is it really? We should all realize that indifference and lack of concern breeds the same. How on earth can parents expect their children to care anything about the Lord and his church, if they themselves do not care? Parents with children at home, if you are indifferent to the Lord's cause, please wake up before it is too late. Common sense tells us that these figures do not lie. You need to be faithful to the Lord. Attend every service of the church that you possibly can. Be active and work hard, giving your very best to the Master, and then teach your children to do the same.

Some reading these words may be thinking: "But, I don't have any children at home." That may be true. But there is something you do have. You do have an influence on young people who regard you as a Christian. Which way do you wish to influence their young and impressionable minds?

Do you want your children, your grandchildren, your friends' children to go to heaven? Are you concerned about so many who are being lost to the Lord? You can teach them faithfulness to the Lord by your manner of life and that will reinforce and strengthen your teaching by word of mouth. I can assure you that you will be blessed, our nation will be blessed, the church of the Lord will be blessed, and our youth will be blessed (read Heb. 10:25; Eph. 6:14; Jas. 1:22-25).

The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire

By R. J. Evans

Edward Gibbon authored a six-volume series of books between 1776 and 1788. In this series he covers the deteriorating conditions of the Roman Empire from 180 A.D. to 1590 A.D. He points to five major factors in which he attributed to the fall of the Empire. Let's list the five reasons for Rome's fall, and then make some comments and observations as applied to America today:

1. The rapid increase of divorce; the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.

Right now in America, one out of every two marriages (50%) are ending in divorce. It is becoming more and more common to talk to individuals who have been divorced three or four times. Then we have a large number of our population who do not bother to get married, they just live together—in the sin of fornication. (Col. 3:5-7) And if that is

not bad enough, the sin of homosexuality is gaining acceptance, and “same-sex marriages” are becoming legal in some states. (See Rom. 1:26-28) But just because some sin or vice is legally right, that does not mean that it is morally or biblically right! “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isa. 5:20).

Concerning the undermining of the sanctity of the home, we live in a time when husbands and wives are ignoring and giving up their God-given roles in the family. Many homes today are run by children, which is appalling!

2. Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public monies for free bread and circuses for the populace.

Consider all the debates that are now being considered over tax issues. Christians are to pay their taxes (Rom. 13:6-7). But there is so much controversy over tax hikes and where Americans’ tax dollars are to be spent. Part of the discussions over the new health-care bill involved tax payers’ money being used to fund abortions. In fact, it was included in the Senate bill until the president signed an executive order to stop it. If funding abortions with tax payers’ money ever starts (and many want to see that happen), it will be the first time in American history. While abortion (the murder of the unborn) has been legal in this country since 1973, that still doesn’t make it right in view of such passages as Psalm 139:13-16. How tragic for a nation to even allow abortion in the first place! And, of course, “the right to choose” (or “choice”) sounds so much better than killing or murdering unborn babies.

3. The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.

We live in a pleasure-crazed culture. That is all some live for, especially their partying, dancing, beer-drinking weekends. (Lk. 8:14; Gal. 5:19; 2 Tim. 3:4; 1 Pet. 4:3-4) The obsession with sports has just about gotten out of hand. I must say that I enjoy sports, but in recent years, my enthusiasm has waned. The last time I attended a college football game, I asked myself, “What am I doing here?” — many who were seated around me were acting totally out of their minds; appeared totally drunk; and talked like they would fight you “at the drop of a hat.” The mad craze for sports reflects a warped value system in America today. It is truly amazing to think that athletes and coaches are paid multi-millions each year to play or coach a game.

4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within, the decadence of the people.

Over and over, the Old Testament prophets warned the people of God to place their faith and trust in Him, not in horses, chariots, or weapons. Some years back, a world leader stated that America would fall without a shot being fired.

Think of how far we have fallen into decadence within one or two generations. Young children are growing up without any training on morals or teaching concerning respect for the authority of God or their fellowman.

5. The decay of religion—faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and becoming impotent to warn and guide the people.

Paul spoke of those in the “last days” who would be “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Tim. 3:4-5). Many denominations have become nothing more than glorified “social clubs”. Even some of our own brethren have lost sight of the spiritual mission of the church. All they think of is fun, food, and frolic. There is no authority in the New Testament for churches to build gymnasiums, have ball teams, dining halls, day-care centers, etc., etc.

I fear that America is rapidly forgetting God.

Some of our own leaders resent this nation being referred to as founded upon biblical principles— “under God” or “in God we trust.” The Psalmist stated, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God” (Psa. 9:17). We all need to be praying for America and its’ leaders (1 Tim. 2:1-2). May we always remember: “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34).