

Definitions:

1st Generation – Started something new, took a leap of faith, broke away from the mold of the past to try something untried. Maybe they failed. Maybe they succeeded.

2nd Generation – Watched and took part of the 1st Generation's leap of faith. Saw it all happen, but not responsible for the successes or the failures. Now they are standing on the edge of the future – deciding whether or not to live by faith themselves.

3rd Generation – Just beginning to exist. The acts of the 1st Generation will be history. The acts of the 2nd Generation will determine the course of their lives. If faith does not continue, it may be many generations before another 1st Generation comes along again.

Deuteronomy 11

“Instructions For The 2nd Generation”

Setting the Scene: The children of Israel escaped from Egypt by the Mighty Hand of God. They were the **1st Generation**. They crossed the Red Sea by the power of His outstretched arm. The Lord Himself communicated with them and cared for them and spoke harshly to them when they did not want to exercise faith in Him. He brought them from Egypt to the land He had promised them. They followed – sometimes faltering – but still, they followed.

Then they stood on the edge of the Jordan River and decided they just could not enter the land He had given them because they were too afraid. They had taken the leap of faith in Egypt, but just did not keep going at the Jordan.

So God sent them back out into the wilderness, forcing them to wander for 40 years until almost the whole 1st Generation had died. Only aged Caleb and Joshua remained of the original 1st Generation.

Now, after 40 years, the **2nd Generation** stands again on the edge of the Jordan River. It is their turn to decide: will they live by faith....or by sight? Will they choose the unseen blessings which God is offering...or will they step back into the wilderness which had been their familiar home for the last 40 years?

Deuteronomy 11:1 *“Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.”*

There are 4 things the LORD tells them to do:

1. **Keep His “Charge”** - In other words, do the things He has commissioned them to do. This is not a matter of “do good things, and don’t do bad things”. This isn’t talking about morality. This is a directive to follow the path He has set out for them. Their calling was to enter the Promised Land and conquer it. Every believer alive has a “calling” from God. Yours may be different than mine. But all of us are expected to “keep His charge”. Do the things He has laid out for us to do. *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”* Ephesians 2:10
2. **Keep His “Statutes”** – Of all the things God told the Israelites to do and not do in the books of the Law, many, many of them were simply boundaries set on relationships so that people could live with each other and next to each other without killing and hating each other. The “statutes” God mentions here are, I think, these very “relationship rules” which they must live by in order to do the things He had planned for them to do. They were to treat each other with respect. They were to honor certain people simply because of the position they held. (parents, leaders, etc.) They were to be honest. They were to tell the truth. They were to stay off their neighbor’s land. The 2nd Generation, while following God’s “calling”, had to be willing to limit themselves sometimes in order to give place for all. It wasn’t just about them...it was about everyone. They had to set boundaries and live by them.
3. **Keep His “Judgments”** – I think of God’s judgments as God’s opinions - in other words - the way He looks at things. His ways. They had to be open to changing their own ways to match God’s ways. Maybe there wouldn’t even be a direct commandment to do some things...but the Israelites would know His ways – and be warned that their ways were not always God’s ways, and they should always bow to His ways, even when it didn’t make sense.
4. **Keep His “Commandments”** – Now these are the “rules” we all think of when we think of obeying God. The Ten Commandments. Do this. Don’t do that. The rules which apply no matter what the circumstances. They had to keep those commandments.

Deuteronomy 11:2-7 *“Know today that I do not speak with your children, who have not known and who have not seen the chastening of the LORD your God, His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm— ³ His signs and His acts which He did in the midst of Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to all his land; ⁴ what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and their chariots: how He made the waters of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued you, and how the LORD has destroyed them to this day; ⁵ what He did for you in the wilderness until you came to this place; ⁶ and what He did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them*

up, their households, their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel—⁷ but your eyes have seen every great act of the LORD which He did.”

He is speaking to the generation which saw it all but was not in charge. They have seen the mighty works of God....and the mighty works of men. They have seen that the works of God...even the chastisement of God ...is what matters. The works of men are puny. If their parents succeeded...or failed...the important thing is...they saw the works of God. They saw His mighty power. He is not speaking to the 3rd generation – because they didn't see and experience it. The 2nd generation has the responsibility now to take steps of faith themselves. Not to just speak of it...but to do it....and then to pass it on to the 3rd.

Deuteronomy 11: 8-9 *“Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess,⁹ and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey...”*

In other words – you do as God says. You think as God thinks. You move as God directs. You treat others as God treats them. And you will possess what God always intended for your parents to have. If your parents did awesome things for God....you will do more. If your parents walked with God...you will go farther. If your parents failed, you don't have to. If your parents found the grace of God in spite of their foolish acts...you more. If your parents starved, you will eat. If your parents neglected to trust their God and Maker, you can.

Deuteronomy 11:10-12 *For the land which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot, as a vegetable garden;¹¹ but the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven..¹² a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.”*

Why? Because God loves and has His eyes on all the people of the world, and on the land He designed for one purpose: to show Himself to the world. The land of Israel was especially designed by God to be the place that drew the attention of the whole world. It is a fertile and beautiful land which can only be beautiful and prosperous if God gives rain. There is no river to water it. No irrigation ditches will keep it green. It only prospers if God gives rain. He has His eye there, and He has His eye on you, 2nd Generation. Your parents were the apple of His eye...and you, too, are the apple of His eye. *“He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.”* Deuteronomy 32:10

Deuteronomy 11:13-15 *“And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul,¹⁴ then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil.¹⁵ And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.¹⁶ Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them,¹⁷ lest the LORD’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you. ””*

Farmers need rain, of course, to grow crops and feed animals. But they don’t only need the first rain, to get the crops going...to keep the livestock alive...to survive. They don’t only need rain all the year long in order to survive and thrive.

They especially need the most amazing rain of all. The latter rain...which is timed by God to bring a super-abundant-harvest. It only comes from God. It comes when the seed is nearly ripe – it explodes each kernel into the hugest possible size. It turns a harvest which will get you through to a harvest which will feed people for years to come. And it only comes because God is blessing. The farmer can’t know what is the perfect time for the latter rain...and he can’t make the latter rain come when it comes. He cannot bring it himself. And this latter rain is what is promised to the 2nd Generation as they choose to walk by faith. And withholding this latter rain is what God promises, also...if they choose to not walk by faith.

Deuteronomy 11:18-21 *“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.¹⁹ You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.²⁰ And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,²¹ that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.”*

So....how does the 2nd Generation stay in tune with this terrifying God they serve? How do they keep His charge, and His statutes, His judgments and His commandments?

Here’s how: Believe His words. Grab His words and hold them tightly to themselves. Put them in front of their eyes at all times. Think of them as they walk, as they fall asleep, and as they wake up. Teach them to the 3rd Generation. Write them on their walls. Mediate on them. Let those words lead them and change them. Respond to the Words of God Almighty in Faith!

Deuteronomy 11:22-25 *“For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him—²³ then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves.²⁴ Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory.²⁵ No man*

shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.”

2nd Generation: If you will do this, God will handle your enemies, and will give you great victories and you will do great things. You will possess the land God intends you to possess. You will be able to keep His charge. No man will be able to rise up against you. They will all fear you because they will see the hand of God on your life.

Deuteronomy 11:26-32 *“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. ²⁹ Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. ³⁰ Are they not on the other side of the Jordan, toward the setting sun, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh? ³¹ For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it. ³² And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.”*

2nd Generation: A blessing is yours if you do these things. A curse is yours if you choose not to. When you begin to act in faith and carry this out.....shout your story and God’s story from the mountains, so that all the world which God loves will hear and watch and see His mighty hand...even if It must be used some day to bruise you for your lack of faith...and some future generation has to take up the charge.