I have always loved the stories of Joshua and Caleb. Their courage to stand up against the other 10 spies and the people of Israel was incredible. Their faith that God would faithfully deliver the Promised Land into their hands never wavered. Their physical and spiritual vitality into what should have been their "waning years" is inspiring.

For many years, I have looked at the following verse as a target for my own life, leadership, and influence:

Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the leaders who outlived him — those who had personally experienced all that the LORD had done for Israel. (Joshua 24:31 NLT)

I want those I love and influence to faithfully and passionately live for God! I hope that when the final chapter of my life is written that people can say that God used me to inspire others to live for Him!

Yet as powerful as this description is, Joshua, Caleb, and those they drew into their circle of leadership failed in one crucial area: their faithfulness, their experience of God, their physical and spiritual vitality was not passed on to future generations. When this circle of faithful leaders passed from the scene,
God's people enter one of the darkest eras of Israel's history — a period of repeated moral failure called the period of the Judges.

This observation should stir and humble each of us. In an era where patience is considered a weakness rather than a virtue and urgency dominates our every plan and perspective, we must hear the warning of Israel's history — even if it casts a shadow on some of our greatest heroes! We must live for more than just our own time.

As the writings of John so powerfully proclaim in the New Testament, truth is not something to be proven, but something to be demonstrated and lived. Truth is not something to be deduced, but something to be "enfleshed," incarnated, and embodied. Truth in our head is worthless if it doesn't come to life in our ordinary daily lives. In fact, truth is not truth, unless it changes hearts, calls us to action, and impacts others redemptively in our daily living. In fact, truth is not found in a book, but in a person. And as radical as each of these statements may sound in our ears, they are statements that are true in Jesus and declared in Scripture. The goal of our Bible study is not necessarily Scriptural truth, but God's actual truth and that truth is Jesus coming to life again in us individually and as His people and passing that truth on to the next generation.

Rather than giving up hope for future generations to have faith, let's awaken to the reality that what this emerging culture seeks is found in the One who first championed their reticence about previous generations understanding of truth. He is the truth they seek; so let's embrace a search to find Him true in our lifestyles, our religious passions, and in our life with others. After all, our concern for truth shouldn't have us concerned about what will happen to our little group. Instead, we want people to find their way to Jesus and let Him be their absolute, their truth, and their Lord and God. All Scripture should point to Jesus. "You search the Scriptures because you believe they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! Yet you refuse to come to me so that I can give you this eternal life." (John 5:39-40 NLT)

John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw a man using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he isn't one of our group."
"Don't stop him!" Jesus said. "No one who performs miracles in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us. If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I assure you, that person will be rewarded." (Mark 9:38-40 NLT)

The apostle Paul knew the heart of this issue. He urged his "son in the faith," Timothy, to do the following:

“Timothy, my dear son, be strong with the special favor God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach many things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others.” (II Timothy 2:1-2)

Paul heard the message of Israel's past. While he lived with passion and urgency in the present, he also lived intentionally to pass along faith into the future "generationally."

Notice in his message to Timothy, he urges Timothy to see four generations as the target of faith.

1. me (Paul)
2. you(Timothy) and many witnesses
3. reliable witnesses
4. others

This generational approach to faith is not new to Paul. It was recognized throughout the Old Testament:

- Genesis 50:23
- Exodus 20:5-6
- Exodus 34:1-7
- Numbers 14:18-19
- II Kings 10:30
- Job 42:16-17

As we move into the new year let us passionately share the Word of the Lord with members of our household and love ones. It is so amazing that we are willing to share the Lord
with acquaintances and strangers, but the members of our household are not afforded the same grace we so generously bestow on others.

To put the principle into good ol' cornbread English, we are being challenged to live our faith so that our children and grandchildren's children have faith! That means we live with passion and urgency for today, but we also live intentionally to pass our faith along into the future "generationally."