

The THREE CHAIRS

Judges 2:7-12 – NKJV - Death of Joshua

⁷ So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

⁸ Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died *when he was* one hundred and ten years old. ⁹ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, **another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.**

Israel's Unfaithfulness

¹¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the **Baals**; ¹² and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger.

There are three different positions concerning **FAITH**; all of humanity is sitting on one of these areas.

The THREE C's:

1. **Commitment** 2. **Compromise** 3. **Conflict**

The question must be asked today, where is our church sitting concerning **FAITH**?

The answer to this question will be a determining factor to whether you as well as the My church **will experience a Spiritual Breakthrough today!!!**

Reviving the spirit of Leadership is essential for there to be a **reviving** of the church today...

There will be **NO REVIVAL**, **NO RENEWAL**, and **NO RELEASE** in our ministries or church until we answer the question correctly!!!

Joshua finds himself coming to the end of his life and he understood the importance of clarity for the future.

In Joshua 23 we see Joshua bring the leaders together for a time of reflection.

In Joshua 24 we see **Joshua present the question of a lifetime** to them in verse 15.

Joshua 24:15 NIV

¹⁵ But **if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you**, then **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But **as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.**"

They found themselves **standing at a crossroads** and the decision was before them, **which path would they choose?**

I sense in my spirit that **we are back to that very same challenge** today.

- Who will you and I choose to serve this day???
- Are we aware that where we choose to sit today
- **WILL** have a lasting impact on the future generations???
- Is there **CLARITY** for the future???

Let's examine and define The THREE C's together:

1. The Chair of COMMITMENT.

- This is a believer who has gone beyond accepting the free gift of salvation to willfully being under Christ's **AUTHORITY** and **DIRECTION**...
- **This person knows the Lord** as a personal friend and Savior.
- **They are developing** a meaningful and growing relationship with him for themselves and those around them.

Paul calls this walking or **LIVING** in a spiritual state.

COMMITMENT: Bible – God's Revelation... **The Bible** – set values... **Scripture** – COMMANDS...
Dedication to God – GROWTH – **What is RIGHT in God's eyes???**

Joshua – Experienced reality of God firsthand; saw miracles and choose to serve the Lord!!!!

2. The Chair of COMPROMISE.

- This chair represents someone who has received **NEW LIFE** in Christ, but **hasn't decided** how little or how much they will follow him.
- They claim to believe all the same truths as the person sitting in the first chair
- They even follow that of a Christian life style in many outward appearances
- But, instability and inconsistency marks their course...

This person often **runs short on internal strength** because certain bedrock commitments are **absent from their life**...

Paul calls this the **CARNAL** state...

- This person has God on the tip of their tongue **but self on the throne of their heart**.

COMPROMISE: Bible – Helpful guide... **Fellow Christians** – Set the Values... **SAINTS** =
Christians... **Dedication to Parents** – Plateau – **What is RIGHT in your eyes???**

THE ELDERS – Knew about reality of God secondhand; told stories – served God of fathers!!!

3. The Chair of **CONFLICT**.

- This final chair represents someone who has not PERSONALLY responded to God.
- They may have always known they **were not a Christian** and may have consciously rejected him.
- They may even be **confused about who he is...**
- They may have experienced church and religion, but a gulf of **sin and rebellion lies between them and their creator...**
- It is only when they kneel at the cross that **the conflict WILL end** between them and their Creator and **HIS plan for their life...**

- Since this person has never accepted Christ as Savior **further attempts at spiritual breakthrough will be met with frustrating defeats...**

This is what Paul calls the **NATURAL** state.

CONFLICT: Bible – Ancient Relic... The World – sets values... Society = Culture...
Dedication to SELF – Go with the Flow – **What is right in MY eyes???**

ANOTHER GENERATION – **Didn't know the works of God; unfamiliar with the miracles of God**
– **served false god's!!!!**

1. THE **COMMITMENT OF THE FIRST CHAIR**

- **Relationship with God** spawned by a new revelation or spiritual experience
- **Submitted to the will of God**, even though it ostracizes them from the world
- Always on guard against the natural slide from Godliness to Godlessness
- **Every new Christian sits in the First Chair** just after they get saved
- **JESUS HAS RESERVED A FIRST CHAIR FOR EVERY ONE OF US!**
- **THIS GENERATION WILL BE SAVED!**

2. THE **COMPROMISE OF THE SECOND CHAIR**

- **They live the lifestyle in which they were raised**, not deviating on surface from parent's teaching
- **They adopt convictions without understanding** the depth of experience in which they developed
- **They know about their faith**, but it doesn't shape their lifestyle - **only obey God when convenient**
- **They succumb to mediocrity**, and build a structure emphasizing programs, properties and products
- They go through the motions of the **First Chair**, **but live the lifestyle of the Third Chair**
- **COMPROMISE**: Just like the tribes in Judges 1 who did not drive out the inhabitants of Canaan!

- Those who remain in the Second Chair will inevitably raise Third Chair children
- **MOST CHRISTIANS LIVING TODAY SIT IN THE SECOND CHAIR!**
- **THIS GENERATION MAY BE SAVED!** (Illustration: Second Chair scraping across floor)

3. THE CONFLICT OF THE THIRD CHAIR

- They have seen the hypocrites sitting in the Second Chair
- And they have unspoken questions:
 1. You tell all the stories and use the jargon, but where are the miracles in our lives?
 2. If God is so important to you, then why don't you obey His Word all of the time?

Why the questions?

- Because **Second-Hand faith** doesn't have any **First-Hand experiences!**

They reject God primarily because they do not know Him;

- He is not as real as the world is to them.
- God consequently must turn to other people who are open and hungry, bypassing this generation
- Greater dedication to self than God; they dismiss burdens, accept what their forefathers rejected
- They think they are okay because they sit in the first chair occasionally!

They are usually the last generation of truth; but the cycle is not inevitable!

Joshua 24:13-15 - NIV

¹³ So I gave you a land on **which you did not toil and cities you did not build**; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves **that you did not plant.**'

¹⁴ **"Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness.** Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ **But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve,** whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. **But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."**

- Sense the year 2000, most of our leadership has become Third Generation believers.
- INDIVIDUALS IN THIS GENERATION MAY HAVE THEIR OWN FIRST CHAIR EXPERIENCE!
THIS GENERATION WILL NOT BE SAVED

Going back to our text it appears at first glance that the leaders of Israel answered correctly.

We read in Joshua 24:31 NIV

³¹ Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel.

However, the question is how committed were they in serving the Lord???

We see Joshua sitting in a place of **COMMITMENT**. He was fully committed to obeying God's plan concerning the children of Israel.

Yet after his death we see the elders, while still serving the Lord, **they begin to sit down in the chair of COMPROMISE**.

In Judges 1:27-30

When they began to experience resistance from their enemies and it proved difficult to remove them, **they called off the battle...**

Instead of taking land from their enemy, they shared the land. They placed the Canaanites under tribute, it **seemed like a brilliant plan**.

- Money was rolling in...
- No more FIGHTING...
- And no more WAR...
- They were on good terms!!!

Soon after - they were giving their sons and daughters for intermarriage agreements.

- It all seemed to make sense, ***RIGHT????????***
- Nothing wrong with sensible **COMPROMISE**.

Until we look at the generation known as **The Children of the Elders** in Judges 2:10-12, 19.

Judges 2:10-12 NIV

¹⁰ After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, **another generation** grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. ¹¹ Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. ¹² **They forsook the Lord**, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. **They followed and worshiped various gods** of the peoples around them. **They aroused the Lord's anger**

¹⁹ But when the judge died, **the people returned to ways even more corrupt** than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. **They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.**

The Children of the Elders were a clear description of **people who lived in conflict with God**.

- While they may have heard stories of the wilderness journey
- And the conquest lead by Joshua
- **Their understanding of God** had been shaped
- By a generation of leaders/parents
- Who lived sitting in **the chair of COMPROMISE...**

This was a group of people that lived as God's people in name only!!!!

Our strategy of HOPE must be one that takes us back to the Chair of COMMITMENT, while we remove the chair of COMPROMISE from the platforms of the American Church...

	Chair #1	Chair#2	Chair#3
Definition:	COMMITMENT	COMPROMISE	CONFLICT
Condition:	Saved, Spiritual	Saved, Carnal	Unsaved, Natural
Knows God:	A Close friend	Acquaintance	Awareness
Relates to God:	Relationship	Responsibility	Religion
Serves God:	God 1st- Self 2 nd	Self 1 st – God 2 nd	Only
Shaped by God:	Scripture	Other Christians	Society
Lives by:	Convictions	Beliefs	Opinions
Marital Views:	Unconditional Covenant	Conditional Covenant	Legal Convenience
Approach to Parenting:	Applies Biblical principles	Influenced by biblical principles	No principles
	Confident	Hopeful	Confused
Parenting Goals:	Raising Godly Kids	Raising Good Christian Kids	Raise good successful kids
	Knows God, 1 st Hand faith.	Knows of God, 2 nd hand faith.	Does NOT know God, NO faith.
	Has works.	Saw Works.	Doesn't believe in Works.
	Submits to the BIBLE.	Respects the Bible	May not even own A Bible...

Which Chair will YOU CHOOSE?????????

Question: WHERE ARE YOU SITTING?????

Isaiah 6:1 - I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.