

From Our Pastor November 25, 2017

Sabbath Greetings to everyone!

This past week, Charles Manson, the wild-eyed 1960s cult leader whose followers committed heinous murders that terrorized Los Angeles and shocked the nation, died of natural causes at the age of 83. For those of us who experienced the violent and chaotic years of 1968 and 1969, he was a familiar name.

Manson orchestrated a wave of violence in August 1969 that took the lives of seven people, spawned headlines worldwide and landed him and his "Manson Family" of followers in prison for most of the remainder of their lives.

How could a man become so evil? Perhaps there is something in his past. Charles Manson was born in Cincinnati in 1934 to an unmarried 16-year-old mother. She was a prostitute and abandoned him within a few years.

At age 12, Charles Manson was sent to Gibault School for Boys in Terre Haute, Indiana, for stealing. Over the next 20 years, he was in and out of reform schools and prison for various crimes. In a 1987 prison interview with CNN, he said, "I spent the best part of my life in boys' schools, prisons and reform school because I had nobody."

No doubt there were many factors involved, but here was a small boy that no one ever cared about, taught, or included. He was a "throwaway" who became a monster.

When our Creator made mankind, he formed the family unit. The family is beautifully described in Psalm 128. "When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the LORD. "

The words describe a man and wife who are working together, raising children, and enjoying family time together. Hundreds of verses in God's word reinforce and teach what God intended for us. Jesus Christ taught, "From the beginning of the creation, God 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.' 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE...(Mark 10:6- 7).

In the past 50 years we have witnessed a full court press attack on the family structure that our Creator intended. Yet it survives and thrives as the real path to happiness and the best environment for raising productive and responsible children. Parents are instructed, "Train up a child in the way he should go (Proverbs 22:6)." Training requires diligence, work, and effort, but sons and daughters you can be proud of are more than worth the effort. Parents are also warned, "A child left to himself brings shame (Proverbs 29:15)."

Charles Manson was abandoned, left to himself. He is just one example of so many children who are left to raise themselves. Even children who are raised by parents can be abandoned to the TV, cell phones, or pop culture. We are experiencing now the first generation who have grown up in a world overrun with technology. Born after 1995, it is known as the "Z gen" and is noted for having a world view and standards gained from cell phones and electronic devices. In many cases, parents have been edged out or just not in the picture because they are so busy and electronic devices are cheap babysitters.

We should be following God's word as the key to find true happiness in life. What really makes a man happy? "A wise son makes a glad father..(Proverbs 10:1)"

What brings happiness to a woman? "She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her:.. (Proverbs 31: 27-28)."

When Jesus Christ is ruling this Earth people will grow to full age and enjoy the blessing of the family unit that our Creator intended. As the prophet Zechariah predicts, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, Each one with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls Playing in its streets.' (Zechariah 8: 4-5)."

*Rex Sexton
Pastor, UCG Portland*