

Impacting Generations

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By Pastor John Brillo

As many of you know, my mother, June Brillo, passed away of a sudden heart attack on August 6. When people came to the viewing to pay their respects and show their support, I shared four things. I said, "We had a great mother, she often said that our father had passed years ago and she had lived her life." She would say, "I'm ready to go." Her doctor, who came to the viewing, said, "She was not afraid." It was comforting that she knew Jesus Christ and followed Him. In a sermon at Jonathan Creek I shared about the influence she had on me and my brothers. I also spoke about the positive influence a woman named Hannah imparted to her son Samuel (I Samuel 1-2) and King Asa's influence on his son, Jehoshaphat (II Chronicles 17:3-4). I also mentioned the negative influence a king named Ahaziah received from his family (II Chronicles 22:1-4) that led to his ruin.

We sometimes wonder if our lives matter. Do the sacrifices we make for our families have any impact? A comparison of two men's lives answers the question.

One was named Max Juke. Juke was an atheist of very questionable character. He hated imposed responsibilities and was averse to steady work.

The other man was Jonathan Edwards. Edwards was everything that Jukes was not. He was hardworking, God-fearing and Bible believing. Edwards was a godly minister who was credited with igniting the Great Awakening through his sermons.

Both Juke and Edwards had an impact on their immediate families, but here is what happened after they died:

Of 1026 descendants of Max Juke, 300 were convicts, 27 were murderers, 190 were prostitutes and 509 were either alcoholics or drug addicts. It was estimated that the Jukes had cost the State of New York almost \$1.4 million dollars to house, institutionalize and treat the family of deviants.

By contrast, the 929 descendants of Jonathan Edwards included 13 college presidents, 86 college professors, 430 ministers, 314 war veterans, 75 authors, 100 lawyers, 30 judges, 66 physicians and 80 holders of public office, including three U.S. senators, seven congressmen, mayors of three large cities, governors of three states, a Vice-President of the US and a comptroller of the United States Treasury.

Having a strong, disciplined and godly family does not guarantee success for generations to come. But the studies of Juke and Edwards confirms what we know in our hearts. The way we live has a profound impact on people around us and on generations to come. We

must be careful, then, how we live our family lives. Our great, great grandchildren are watching.