

Exhortations and Warnings for Youth

- I. Definitions.
 - A. exhort: To admonish earnestly; to urge by stimulating words to conduct regarded as laudable.
 - B. admonish: To put (a person) in mind of duties; to counsel against wrong practices; to give authoritative or warning advice; to exhort, to warn.
 - C. warn: To make aware, to put on one's guard. To give timely notice to (a person) of impending danger or misfortune.
 - D. youth: The fact or state of being young; youngness. (Often blending with sense 2.) 2. The time when one is young; the early part or period of life; more specifically, the period from puberty till the attainment of full growth, between childhood and adult age.
- II. A man of God is to feed the flock under his care. **ACT 20:28; 1PE 5:2.**
 - A. The flock may consist of mature rams and ewes but also of little lambs.
 - B. A minister primarily feeds the lambs by feeding the sheep who then nourish their own lambs.
 - C. There are times when a minister may need to feed the lambs directly.
 - D. Jesus instructed Peter to feed sheep and lambs. **JOH 21:15-17.**
 - E. John wrote to fathers, young men and little children. **1JO 2:13.**
 - F. Solomon dedicated a goodly percentage of his writings to warning, encouraging and preparing his son for the rigors and dangers of adult life.
 - G. I deeply, genuinely care for the children in this church and desire only their good. Thus, I must preach to them (and to their parents).
- III. The focus of this study is on the youth under my ministry.
 - A. Our church no longer only has babes in arms and strollers. We have youth who are at a stage of physical development where they could be or soon could be a parent.
 - 1. They need to be forewarned and forearmed against what lies ahead in life.
 - 2. They need their minds and emotions to be steered towards maturity since the mind and emotions seldom keep pace with the maturing of the body.
 - 3. They need to know that foolish decisions have unprofitable consequences and that sin is nothing with which to trifle.
 - B. Hearken to some things Scripture says about youth:
 - 1. The imagination of the heart is evil from its youth. **GEN 8:21.**
 - a. "...the shame of thy youth..." (**ISA 54:4**).
 - b. "...committed whoredoms in their youth..." (**EZE 23:3**).
 - c. "...lewdness of thy youth..." (**EZE 23:21**).
 - d. "...the reproach of my youth..." (**JER 31:19**).
 - 2. It is a time of relative ignorance and immaturity which must be guided. **JER 3:4 c/w PRO 2:17.**
 - 3. It is a time of great potential and transition to independence which, if misused, bring judgment. **ECC 11:9.**
 - C. Instruction from Scripture, your parents and your pastor can, if heeded, save youth from a lifetime of regret over the sins of youth. **PSA 25:7.**
 - 1. Many are the lives that never fully recover physically, emotionally, mentally, financially or socially from the sinful things done in youth.
 - 2. Others have a way of bringing those things to your remembrance.

JOB 13:26; 20:11.

3. Worse yet, even though God may have forgiven the sins of one's youth, the memory of them is still there, sometimes tangibly and indelibly impressed upon our persons. And what the heart can't delete, it replays to the conscience.
4. Young people, you DON'T want to end up as one who cries **PRO 5:11-13.**
- D. Another thing that concerns me is the "post-Joshua syndrome."
 1. Joshua had brought Israel into their God-given inheritance.
 2. In the glow of that great season under a great leader, Israel served the LORD. **JDG 2:6-7.**
 3. But when that generation gave way to the next one, the latter did not carry the torch of faith. **JDG 2:8-13.**
 - a. The main battles that had through God gotten the victory and inheritance were in the past. What was the relevance of God and vigilance any longer?
 - b. Israel by this time was well-heeled in Canaan, prospering materially and so fell under the deceptions of materialism. **NEH 9:25-26.**
 - c. "Religion begat prosperity and the daughter devoured the mother."
(Cotton Mather)
 4. The parents in this church know full well how great, how significant, how blessed was their deliverance from their former ways into the knowledge of the truth about Jesus Christ.
 - a. But what about the children? How can they appreciate what they have?
 - b. And what about the parents? Have they taught and shown their children by example that the faith is real, is worth contending for, and that Jesus Christ is the only hope for sinners, and that submission to Him is the way to please Him and find true joy, peace and fulness?
- E. This study is designed to be a challenge and encouraging stimulation for the youth under my pastoral care, and for their parents.

IV. The time of youth and burgeoning adolescence is one of a maturing of the body and of a heightened desire for independence.

- A. The maturing of the body requires no effort; it is virtually inevitable.
- B. The maturing of the mind and the character are a different story.
- C. Young people! Don't ever get to thinking that just because your body is looking more like an adult's body means that you are mature! True maturity is a condition built by proper character development and that requires learning and discipline of one's thinking.
- D. Our culture is already awash with physically mature people who still think and act like children.
 1. A culture is in danger when children take control. **ECC 10:16; ISA 3:4-5.**
 2. We don't need to be adding to that problem; neither should we be conformed to that model. **ROM 12:1-2.**
 3. Though Solomon was an adult when he came to power, he knew that what he needed was wisdom. **1KI 3:7-9.**
 4. His son, Rehoboam, assumed that age and heritage were all that were needed to rule in Israel but his naivety and arrogance split the kingdom. **2CH 12:13-14; 13:7 c/w 1KI 12:12-20.**
 5. A nation can put a gun in immature peoples' hands and send them off to war but unless their character and thinking matures, they find that the biggest battles begin when they return home to where they can't kick doors in to get the job done.

- E. Independence is not an unqualified right, young people!
 - 1. Whereas parents do well to guide their children towards independence in due course, unqualified independence granted unto youth who have not proven themselves worthy of it will most likely destroy them.
 - 2. Consider the second clause of **PRO 29:15**.
 - 3. Independence involves responsibility. Parents should mete out opportunities for independent action according to youth's ability and TRUSTWORTHINESS to handle it.
 - a. Putting confidence in anyone who has proven themselves unfaithful is pain for all involved. **PRO 25:19**.
 - b. One must be faithful in small things if he expects to be entrusted with greater things. **LUK 16:10; 19:17**.
 - 4. Independence is never the liberty to do wrong! It is rather the privilege of acting responsibly in the presence or absence of parents. **PHIL 2:12**.
 - F. Young people! If you think that you know more than your parents what is best for you and resent their guidance and restrictions on your liberty and independence, then consider:
 - 1. Your parents provided for your care and safety when you could not do so.
 - 2. Do you think you're pretty good? Remember that you got where you are because of your parents. You would have never made it this far by yourselves. They apparently knew something!
 - 3. Your parents have been where you are. You have NOT been where they are. They can see what you cannot see.
 - 4. Your parents have by both positive and negative experience learned much about what it takes to succeed in life.
 - a. You don't have to suffer the negative, destructive things that your parents experienced in order to develop your character.
 - b. Some of what your parents are trying to do is to save you from the things that they now see were foolish and destructive things in their youth.
 - c. You don't have to learn about destructive things by bitter personal experience. Experience may be a good teacher but the tuition to her school can be very expensive.
 - d. Those who will not hear must feel.
 - G. Following is a challenge concerning maturity.
- V. Young people:
- A. Do you believe in God?
 - B. Do you believe God is good?
 - C. Do you believe God is supremely intelligent?
 - D. Do you believe the Bible is God's word?
 - E. Do you believe the Bible is true?
 - F. If so, do you believe what the Bible says about God's standard of maturity is right?
 - G. maturity: The state of being mature ('Having the powers of body and mind fully developed'); fullness or perfection of development or growth.
 - 1. Mind that the definition presupposes a standard of perfection or development.
 - 2. The measure of that standard by any other than Jesus Christ is a false measure.
- VI. Consider the Biblical concept of maturity.
- A. **LUK 2:52** describes the maturing of Jesus Christ.

1. stature: The height of an animal body in its normal standing position. a. esp. of a human body.
2. See **MAT 6:27**.
3. Jesus Christ's maturity consisted of more than physical development.
- B. Wisdom is set forth as the highest level of human development; it is the standard of maturity. **PRO 4:7-13; 8:12-21**.
 1. principal: First or highest in rank or importance; that is at the head of all the rest; of the greatest account or value; foremost.
 2. Wisdom brings life to its fullest potential but if sinned against brings the opposite. **PRO 8:34-36**.
- C. All wisdom is treasured up in the Lord Jesus Christ. **COL 2:3**.
 1. He is the absolute standard of all that it means to be mature. Conformity to Him IS maturity! **EPH 4:13-15**.
 2. There is NO TRUE maturity apart from being a Christian, striving continually to be more Christ-like in thinking and conduct.

VII. A fool lacks wisdom (**PRO 10:21**). Hence, a fool is NOT mature.

- A. Young people, ask yourselves the following questions:
 1. Do you hate being told what to do? **PRO 1:7**.
 2. Do you bring sorrow and heaviness to your parents? **PRO 10:1; 17:21**.
 3. Do you misrepresent or distort the actions of people in order to defame them or put them down? **PRO 10:18**.
 - a. slander: The utterance or dissemination of false statements or reports concerning a person, or malicious misrepresentation of his actions in order to defame or injure him. 2. A false or malicious statement or utterance intended to injure, defame, or cast detraction on the person about whom it is made.
 - b. Have you ever done this to a sibling? **PSA 50:20**.
 4. Do you enjoy wrongdoing? **PRO 10:23; 13:19**.
 5. Do you only consult with yourself to decide what is right? **PRO 12:15**.
 6. Do you have an explosive, uncontrolled temper? **PRO 12:16**.
 7. Are you proud? Do you think you are "hot stuff?" **PRO 14:3**.
 8. Do you think excellent speech is weird? **PRO 17:7**.
 9. Do you think all this talk about wisdom is boring? **PRO 17:16**.
 10. Are you unable to settle down and concentrate on something worthwhile? **PRO 17:24**.
 11. Do you think only of yourself? **PRO 18:2**.
 12. Are you quarrelsome? **PRO 18:6**.
 13. Do you lie? **PRO 19:1**.
 14. Are you wasteful? **PRO 21:20**.
 15. Are you lazy? **PRO 24:30**.
 16. Are you the type that can't be corrected? **PRO 27:22**.
 - a. bray: To beat small; to bruise, pound, crush to powder; usually in a mortar.
 - b. mortar: A vessel of hard material, having a cup-shaped cavity, in which ingredients used in pharmacy, cookery, etc., are pounded with a pestle.
 - c. pestle: An instrument (usually club-shaped) for bruising or pounding substances in a mortar.
 17. Do you never know when to shut up? **PRO 29:11**.

- B. If the answers to the above questions are “Yes,” then you are a fool and are therefore not mature.
 - 1. Being a fool, you will not get ahead. **PRO 11:29.**
 - 2. You will rather come to shame. **PRO 3:35.**
- C. Parents! Examine yourselves in the light of the foregoing questions. What kind of example have you given your children to follow? Could they be like you and be mature?

VIII. A wise, mature person:

- A. is submissive to authority. **PRO 10:8; 28:7.**
- B. admits when he is wrong and accepts correction. **PRO 9:8-9.**
- C. is willing to learn. He doesn't think he knows it all already. **PRO 1:5.**
- D. is thoughtful, cautious and foresightful rather than hasty and impulsive. **PRO 14:8, 15; 22:3; 4:26; 15:28.**
- E. is industrious and frugal. **PRO 30:24-25; 21:17.**
- F. understands his weaknesses and does not allow them to be exploited. **PRO 7:7; 17:18.**
- G. controls his passions. **PRO 14:29.**
- H. is generous to those in need. **PRO 3:27-28.**
- I. fears God and departs from evil. **PRO 3:7.**
- J. makes glad parents. **PRO 23:22-25.**

IX. Fathers! It is your solemn duty to provide leadership conducive to your children reaching the maturity herein described (**EPH 6:4**). Consider (again) some salient points about effective fathering and leadership.

- A. The Biblical ideal for effective fathering and wholesome family life is **DEU 6:4-9**.
 - 1. Normal life is to be saturated with the plan, presence and love of God.
 - 2. Life at home should be so appealing that all else is eclipsed by comparison.
 - 3. This exhortation was timely in view of what would be encountered in Canaan:
 - a. Affluence. **DEU 8:6-18.**
 - b. Competitive religions. **DEU 12:1-3, 29-31.**
 - c. Seductive women. **DEU 7:3-4.**
 - d. Alternate commandment-free lifestyles. **LEV 18.**
 - 4. Our society is a modern day counterpart to old Canaan.
 - 5. God's preparatory directives for Israel are as relevant today as then.
 - 6. Fathers: Prepare your children against their impending entrance to Canaan!
- B. The effective father will lead children to maturity first of all by example.
 - 1. You want to teach a child *diligence*. Does your work ethic agree with what you want the child to embrace?
 - 2. You want the child to prioritize spiritual things. **MAT 6:33.**
 - a. Is your day so overwhelmed with work and the cares of life that Scripture is choked out? **LUK 8:14.**
 - b. Does your child have any doubts that prayer is a vital part of your life?
 - c. Does your reverence for and attendance to God's house leave the child with the impression that you value it very highly?
 - d. Do you take your pastor's instructions and counsel seriously? If not, why should you expect your children to give serious attention to the same (or to your own instruction and counsel)?
 - e. Do you responsibly support the minister God gave you? Don't fool yourself on this one: children will “sniff out” a parent's attitude in this regard.

3. You want the child to learn *patience*. Are you patient with others? with your child? Are you patient in the matter of acquisitions or are you impulsive?
 4. You want the child to learn *thrift*. Do you eschew debt? Do you throw away money on vanities?
 5. You want the child to learn *endurance*. Do you just quit that household or yard task at the first hint of sweat or fatigue?
 6. You want the child to learn *responsibility*. Do you try to “pass the buck” on things for which you are responsible: duties, errors, security, etc.?
 7. You want the child to learn *prudence* and *circumspection*. Do you take stock of what's around you and what's on the horizon and adjust accordingly?
 8. You want the child to learn to handle frustration and disappointment with *dignity* and *grace*. Do you “lose it” when a planned outing is cancelled or if something breaks down or if you see someone driving foolishly?
 9. You want the child to learn that life is not defined by material acquisitions.
LUK 12:15.
 - a. Do you have any room left in your garage or closet?
 - b. Do you smother the child with stuff as if you think by that to buy the child's affection or obedience?
 - c. It is much more important to give children something to live for, not things to live with.
 - d. You don't want the child to think that the world revolves around them.
 10. In short, you want the child to learn *good values*.
 - a. Values are taught through lifestyles, preferences and priorities---not just words.
 - b. A bad example of values in fathering would be Lot. **GEN 19:8, 14, 30-36.**
- C. The effective father will also lead through verbal communication.
1. Words may build or destroy. **PRO 18:21.**
 2. Fathers are to be managers initiating productivity and creativity. Instruction should be:
 - a. *clear*. Is the instruction expressed as a wish or a command? As a child develops positive patterns, less instruction should be needed.
 - b. *well-defined and within the child's comprehension and ability to perform*. Mind that not every child develops these traits at the same age.
 - c. *certain*. Do not train your child to respond only to increased volume of command. Delayed obedience should be considered disobedience.
 3. Responsible leaders will check for results. **LUK 19:15; 2CO 9:2-3.**
- D. The effective father will use action more than words to get proper action out of children.
1. That which drives foolishness from children is the rod (**PRO 22:15; 23:13**), not the screams or shouts.
 2. Your rebukes and chastisements should be directed at correcting the child for his good.
 3. Discipline should not be merely a temper tantrum because of fatigue, pent-up frustrations, irritability or your own irresponsibility.
- E. The effective father will take advantage of opportunities to have a child assist in responsibility. Don't always do things for the child just to get them out of the way.
- F. The effective father will be approachable. Turning away children who want to communicate when they are small will lead to breach of communication when they are older.

- G. The effective father will not perpetuate his own errors of youth!
1. Fathers, were you ever led astray by unnecessary exposure to television?
 2. Fathers, if you had had easy and ungoverned access to the internet in your youth, what would you have been doing?
 3. “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (**1CO 15:33**).
- H. There are costs to effective fathering.
1. Evaluate children in a long-term perspective. It is easy to reckon other demands of time more important when children are small.
 2. The rich young ruler would not make needed adjustments in his lifestyle.
MAR 10:13-27.
 3. Personal freedoms such as leisure time, habits, words and phrases and evaluations made in the presence of children may have to go.
 4. Because of a lack of time due to numerous involvements, a father may handle problems in the home with haste and force when patience and understanding would prove more effective.
 5. Effective fathers must have a definition of success different from that of the world. Submission to God's claims relative to fatherhood may be painful and costly.