

## 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.