

## Remember Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth

Ecclesiastes 12:1-8

### I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** All of us need the admonishment and encouragement the word of God provides.
2. The Word of God gives admonition to those of all ages.
  - A. Older men: **Titus 2:2**: “that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;”
  - B. Older women: **Titus 2:3-4**: “the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things — 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,”
  - C. Young women: **Titus 2:3-5**: “that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”; **I Tim. 5:14**: “Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”
  - D. Young men: **Titus 2:6-8**: “Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”
  - E. Youth: **2 Tim. 2:22**: “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”; **I Tim. 4:12**: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”
3. Christians are supposed to encourage one another, build one another up in the faith.
  - A. Over the years I am thankful for so many that have encouraged me and built up my faith by their faithfulness (e.g., Charles & Gerry, John Witt, Rody & Tessie, and now many of you here at Westside, e.g., Al: Sherry calls him “our Barnabas, the son of encouragement”).
  - B. I sincerely appreciate any Christian who is faithful, because faithfulness in others encourages me to be faithful.
  - C. But that being said, I find that young faithful Christians and elderly Christians who are faithful particularly encourage me.
4. The passages just read tell us we need to emphasize certain things at different stages of our lives.
5. The Word of God does not single out any age group and give it emphasis above another age group, but gives equal emphasis to our spiritual needs at any age.
6. However, in our lesson of the hour I want to single out one particular age group that I would like to encourage to be faithful: our young people.
7. **3** That’s why I’ve chosen Ecclesiastes 12:1-8 for the text of our lesson: “Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth...”

### II. DISCUSSION:

#### “Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth” by...

1. **4** Putting God first in your life:
  - A. Jesus said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

- B. As a young person you have your entire life before; so many opportunities, you think you'll live forever, that you'll be strong and vibrant forever!
- (1) It's true your opportunities are limitless and you have the strength and vigor of youth.
  - (2) But don't let this fool you into not thinking about your most important possession!
  - (3) You should seek *"the kingdom of God, and His righteousness"* first because of the value of your soul and the brevity of your life:
 

**Matt. 16:26:** *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

**Jas. 4:14:** *"whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."*
- C. This is why Solomon said what he said in Ecclesiastes 12:1-8!
- (1) We retain the vigor of youth for only a short time; if we live long enough we all grow old and our strength wanes and our opportunities (in the world) narrow.
  - (2) Relate my own decline in physical strength.
  - (3) Relate my own decline in opportunities (i.e., insofar as my career is concerned).
- D. Recall the rich man of Luke 12:16-21?
- (1) He thought his time on earth was unlimited; he didn't give the first thought concerning his own mortality.
  - (2) Over the years I've known many relatives, friends and acquaintances who "died young" (e.g., mother and brother, Paine boy, CA-DHIA guy, Tuffy at LSU, etc.).
  - (3) We all know we will die, we just don't know when (Heb. 9:27); therefore, we must always be ready!
  - (4) Recall what Jesus said: **Lk. 12:37:** *"Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching."*
- E. Thus, each and every day we must busy ourselves in serving God (Phil. 2:12).
- (1) Because sooner or later we all will have to give an account of ourselves to God (**2 Cor. 5:10:** *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*).
  - (2) When judgment comes God is not going to excuse us because we are young (i.e., sowing you wild oats).
- F. We need to *"remember our Creator in the days of our youth"*!
- (1) If you're not a member of the church, you need to become one (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23; 2:16; Acts 20:28).
  - (2) Outside of Christ there is no hope! Eph. 2:12
- G. Your first priority must be to please Him by our manner of life (**Col. 1:10:** *"that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;"*).
- (1) You will be criticized and maybe even ridiculed by your peers.
  - (2) But hang in there, because you'll never regret serving the Lord.

H. As Solomon winds down encouraging us to “remember the Creator in the days of our youth” he reminds us: **Eccl. 12:7**: “Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.”

- (1) When your peers ridicule you and criticize you remember that! We have an appointment with death and judgment!
- (2) All the criticism and ridicule will be worth it when you hear the Lord on the Day of Judgment say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” (Matt. 25:21)

**“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth” by...**

2. **5** Respecting and obeying your parents:

A. God commands us to obey our parents!

- (1) Paul said, **Eph. 6:1-3**: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: 3 ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’”
- (2) God deemed obedience to parents so important that if a child was rebelliously disobedient under the Law of Moses they were to be stoned to death! Deut. 21:18-21

B. I’m not advocating the death penalty for disobeying your parents, I’m just trying to impress upon you the importance of respecting and obeying them.

- (1) In Romans chapter one Paul talks about the Gentile world who had fallen deeply into sin because they intentionally removed God from their knowledge, they refused to acknowledge His existence, and were not thankful for His blessings.
- (2) As Paul writes about these godless people he lists all of the awful sins they were guilty of committing, notice:

**Rom. 1:28-31**: “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;”

- (3) Did you catch that?! Right in the middle of what we all recognize as vile and evil sins there it is “disobedient to parents”! Important?!
- (4) Paul also said there were some people we are to “turn away” from; what kind of people?

**2 Tim. 3:2-5**: “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”

C. Obviously we don’t obey our parents if it’s something in violation of God’s word.

- (1) But, God comes first before all other earthly relationships: **Matt 10:37**: “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.”
- (2) We should obey and respect our parents no matter how old we are (pre-teen, teen, middle age, etc.).

- (3) Also, when our mothers and fathers grow old we are to show them our respect by caring for them and loving them:

**Matt. 15:4-6:** *“For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ 5 But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God’ — 6 then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.”*

**I Tim. 5:4:** *“But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.”*

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#### **3. 6 Bewaring the sins of disposition:**

- A. By sins of disposition I mean the sins of pride, envy, covetousness, malice, selfishness and hatred; these sins are a constant threat to the spiritual welfare of all Christians, but especially to young people.

- B. Paul warns about the sins of disposition:

**Gal. 5:19-21:** *“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

**Eph. 4:31-32:** *“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”*

**Heb. 12:15:** *“looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;”*

**Prov. 16:18-19:** *“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. 19 Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.”*

**2 Tim. 3:2-4:** *“For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,”*

**Titus 3:3:** *“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”*

- C. The sins of our disposition make us ugly people; don't be an ugly person! **Titus 2:10:** *“...showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”*

- (1) Many people today are physically sick because of the sins of disposition.

- (2) But the “fruit of the Spirit” will keep one spiritually and physically healthy: **Gal. 5:22-25:** *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”*

- (3) You'll never be sorry for pursuing the “fruit of the Spirit” because it will make you “well”: **Phil. 4:7:** *“and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

- F. I encourage you to examine the story of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-32); the elder son was miserable because he was guilty of the sins of disposition:
- (1) Anger (v. 28),
  - (2) Resentment (v. 28),
  - (3) Self-righteousness (v. 29),
  - (4) Envy (v. 29),
  - (5) Contempt (v. 30),
  - (6) Malice (i.e., he did not forgive his brother).
- G. All of these sins are a big waste of energy, it makes us look ugly and small, it discourages other Christians and, most importantly, it surely doesn't please God!

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**4. 7 Fleeing youthful lusts:**

- A. That's what Paul told the young evangelist Timothy: **2 Tim. 2:22:** *“Flee also youthful lusts.”*
- B. Satan works day and night on all of us to lead us into temptation and sin (1 Pet. 5:8); he knows what buttons to push and as a young person you are particularly vulnerable to *“youthful lusts.”*
- C. The Word of God warns us about youthful lusts such as drunkenness, fornication, lasciviousness, coarse language (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6: 9-10).
  - (1) For example, we are told to flee fornication and filthy language:
 

**1 Cor. 6: 18:** *“Flee sexual immorality!”*

**1 Thess. 4:3:** *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.”*

**Eph. 5:3-4:** *“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”*

**Eph. 4:29:** *“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”*
  - (2) We are not to look and lust (e.g., pornography): **Matt. 5:28:** *“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*
  - (3) Young people, you are not fleeing youthful lusts if you:
    - (a) Mixed dancing,
    - (b) Engage in petting (i.e., making out),
    - (c) Drinking alcohol, smoke pot or do drugs,
    - (d) Attend night clubs,
    - (e) Immodest clothing (too short, too tight, too thin, etc.),
    - (f) Mixed swimming
  - (4) According to a Gallup survey:
    - (a) 93% of Americans consider “married men and woman having an affair” to be “morally wrong.”

- (b) However, unbelievably, 58% said premarital sex is morally acceptable!
- (c) Premarital sex may be accepted by a majority of Americans, but it is not acceptable to God! **Heb. 13:4:** *“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”*
- (5) Paul told Timothy to “keep yourself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22); young people keep yourself pure, in all ways, but particularly sexually.
  - (a) God will be pleased.
  - (b) You will be pleased (in the long run!).
  - (c) Whoever you marry will be pleased.

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**5. 8** Choosing a Christian mate:

- A. Can I prove it is a sin to marry a non-Christian...NO!
  - (1) But I know from personal experience over the years it is an extremely bad idea.
  - (2) It rarely works out, for many reasons.
  - (3) Young ladies: would you think it a good idea to marry someone to whom Ephesians 5:25 means nothing?! **Eph. 5:25:** *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,”*
  - (4) Marrying a Christian doesn’t guarantee a good marriage, or that your spouse will respect Ephesians 5:25, but it’s a much better risk than marrying a non-Christian (marry a strong, dedicated Christian!).
- B. Your salvation and personal relationship with God is the most important thing in your life.
  - (1) Christians must permit nothing to turn them away from God:
 

**1 Kgs. 11:3-4:** *“And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.”*
  - (2) You need all the help you can get in living the life of a Christian.
  - (3) To do this, you should seek a person with similar goals & ideals to team up with for life.
  - (4) No person will have as much influence on your life as your husband or wife.
  - (5) If you are blessed with parents that are faithful Christians, just imagine if your mother or you father were not a Christian and they did everything imaginable to frustrate your faithful parent’s efforts to be faithful and to help you be faithful.
  - (6) Now, how important is it to choose a good Christian as your life companion?
- C. A preacher for a church in Oklahoma compiled this information over the 20 year period he worked with that church. The figures are for marriages within that congregation during that period of time:
  - (1) Christians married to non-Christians (79 total):
    - (a) 57 left the church (72%; three-quarters, 3 out of 4!),
    - (b) 22 remained faithful (28%, one-quarter, 1 out of 4!),
    - (c) 14 converted their mates (18%, 1 out of 5!),

- (d) 26 divorced (33%, one-third, one in three!).
- (2) Christians married to Christians (64 total):
  - (a) 5 left the church (8%, less than 1 in 10!),
  - (b) 59 remained faithful (92%, over 9 out of 10!),
  - (c) 2 divorced (3%, less than 1 out of 20!).
- D. Young man and young lady: those statistics should cause you to stop and think! Do you think it is wiser to marry a Christian or a non-Christian?!

**“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth” by...**

**6. 9** Selecting your life’s work very carefully:

- A. When selecting your life’s work select an occupation that allows you to use your talents in the fullest in the service of God.
 

**Eph. 6:5-7:** “Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ: 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.”

**Col. 3:23:** “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,”
- B. Too many young people carelessly drift into some occupations where they are not free to do much insofar as the work of the church (bad hours, compromise godly principles, etc.).
  - (1) Prayerfully consider the career you pursue.
    - (a) Will it make your service to the Lord easier or harder?
    - (b) Will it tempt you to compromise your godly values or reinforce those values?
    - (c) Will it take you to places where it is harder to serve the Lord?
  - (2) Prayerfully consider which job you take.
    - (a) Will it make your service to the Lord easier or harder?
    - (b) Will it tempt you to compromise your godly values or reinforce them?
    - (c) Will it take you to places where it is harder to serve the Lord?
- C. Select the career and job which gives you the greatest opportunity to develop as a Christian.
  - (1) Be very careful where your career and job take you geographically.
  - (2) Does it take you where you can easily work and worship with a faithful congregation?
  - (3) Be very careful in your selection of a congregation (Does this congregation really need me? What do I have to offer this congregation? It’s not just “what can this congregation do for me?”).

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**7. 10** Developing your talents to glorify God:

- A. God has given us all certain abilities:
 

**Matt. 25:14-15:** “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another

two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.”

B. Notice that in this parable God only made each man responsible for what his ability was able to handle.

(1) The one talent man did not use his ability and was condemned:

**Matt. 25:24-28:** “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’ 26 But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.’”

(2) Therefore, no matter how much ability we have or how little, we must remember God has given us some ability and expects us to use it to His glory.

C. I would quickly add in the way of encouragement: You can do much, much more than you think you can do!

(1) Don’t let others put limits on your dreams and don’t put limits on them yourself!

(2) You can achieve anything if you put your mind to it, roll up your sleeves and work at it!

(3) Never be afraid of developing yourself to the fullest!

### **“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth” by...**

8. **II** Being a good steward of your time and money:

A. When it comes to all of the blessings (resources) God has given us he expects (demands!) we be good stewards over them:

**I Cor. 4:2:** “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”

**Matt. 25:21:** “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”

B. If we are not good stewards over our money and time, which in the whole scheme of things are “small things,” God will not trust us with true riches:

**Lk. 16:10-12:** “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. 11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?”

**I Pet. 4:10:** “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

C. God has given us life, therefore, it is critical that we realize we belong to God.

**I Cor. 6:20:** “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

(1) Therefore, we belong to God and thus our time belongs to God.

(2) Don’t rob God of the time that belongs to Him by pursuing the things of the world.



- D. Also, we must realize that our money belongs to God (**1 Cor. 4:7**: “For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”).
- (1) Plan to give generously to God; the man who robs God becomes poor indeed.
  - (2) Failing to give will destroy your personal sense of responsibility for the work and growth of the church.
    - (a) This lessens your concern for the greatest cause on earth.
    - (b) We can’t go to heaven with the attitude “Let the other fellow pay.”
- E. You will never regret living a giving life:

**Matt. 6:19-21**: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**1 Jn. 3:16-17**: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

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9. **12** Keeping your eyes on the prize!

- A. Heaven is real and its joys are more wonderful than we can imagine:

**1 Pet. 1:3-5**: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Jn. 14:1-6; Rom. 8:17

2. This being the case, then let us:

**Col 3:2**: “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

- C. Let’s go back to the Scripture that formed the basis of our lesson: **Eccl. 12:1-8, 13-14**

**2 Tim. 4:6-8**: “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

**Matt. 25:46**: “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

**III. CONCLUSION: 13**

1. If you keep your eyes on heaven you will have an abundant life here on earth and eternal life with Christ in the hereafter.
2. Young people, I hope that you will carefully consider and ponder in your hearts what I have said.

Adapted from a sermon (“Admonition to Young People Who Are Christians”) by Donald Townsley.