

Slide 1

Advice To You Who Are Young

ECCLESIASTES 11:9-12:1; 1 TIMOTHY 4:12

Introduction

1. I would like those of you who consider yourself young to look around this room for a moment.
2. You will notice there are a lot of heads with gray hair on them.
3. In your mind, you might consider us old.
4. If you go by the number of years between the time we were born and today, you might be right.
5. However, Terry Pratchett who was an English humorist and author once said, "Inside every old person is a young person wondering what happened."
6. To be young, idealistic, and full of energy is something which many of us who are older would wish for again.
7. How many times have some of us heard an older person say, "If only I knew then what I know now"?
8. Wisdom is an invaluable commodity.
9. It enables us to navigate the twists and turns of our lives and, with God's blessing, look back upon a life well lived.
10. Today, I would like to share with you the advice of two men who experienced more than perhaps any of us can imagine.
11. One was a man who had it all — "wine, women and song" (*Ecclesiastes 2:3,8b*), not to mention wealth untold (*Ecclesiastes 2:4-8a*).
12. We know him as the wise King Solomon.
13. The other was a man who began persecuting Christians for their faith but later died defending that same faith — we know him as the apostle Paul.

14. I want to encourage you to listen to what both have to say, because that ultimately it will bless your life in ways you can only imagine.

Slide 2

I. Rejoice In Your Youth

A. ENJOY THIS PERIOD OF TIME IN YOUR LIFE

“Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.” (Ecclesiastes 11:9a, ESV)

1. To be young is to be at a special time in your life.
2. Notice what Solomon doesn't say. He doesn't say, “You are young now, but don't forget that one of these days you are going to be old.”
3. Instead, Solomon says, “Rejoice . . . in your youth, and let your heart cheer you” in these days.
4. He says, “walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.”
5. Drink deeply from the well of God's abundant goodness.
6. Live each day of your life with a constant wonder at His daily provision.
7. Learn to love, laugh and delight in the little things of life.
8. Remember, you are building foundation for the rest of your life.
9. If you and I cannot find joy in the little things of life, we aren't likely to find it in the big things.

Slide 3

B. AVOID THOSE THINGS WHICH BRING UNNECESSARY SORROW AND PAIN

“So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.” (Ecclesiastes 11:10, NASB95)

1. As you are enjoying this period of your life, there are two things, however,

that you should avoid.

- a. “Remove grief and anger from your heart”
 - b. “Put away pain from your body”
2. The best way to do this is to be careful about how you are building your life.
 3. Many of us in this room know at least one person who is either angry at themselves or sorrowful over a choice they made or an action they took.
 4. We likely also know someone who is having to live with physical pain or disability because of something they did.
 5. I know of people who fall into each category, and I can also tell you that none of them thought the things they experienced would ever happen to them.
 6. There is an important principle of which the apostle Paul reminds us in his letter to the Christians in Galatia (Galatians 6:7-8).

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.” (Galatians 6:7-8, NIV84)

Slide 4

C. DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

“But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.”
(Ecclesiastes 11:9, ESV)

1. God wants you to enjoy your youth, He wants you to cherish these days, and live your life to the fullest.
2. He wants you to do so in a way that blesses your life and draws you closer to Him.
3. Ultimately, every one of us will stand before our Lord at the last day to give an account to Him for the life we have lived.

4. The apostle Paul put it this way in 2 Corinthians 5:10 : “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10, NASB95)
5. Jesus said, “there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known” (Matthew 10:26).

Slide 5

II. Remember God In Your Youth

“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no delight in them” (Ecclesiastes 12:1, NASB95)

A. REMEMBERING OUR “CREATOR” CHANGES OUR PERSPECTIVE

1. Notice that Solomon does not say, “Remember God in the days of your youth,” but “remember . . . your Creator in the days of your youth.”
2. Remembering our “Creator” means remembering that God made a good world, not an evil one.
3. Throughout the six days of creation God declared His creation to be good (Genesis 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31).
4. The truth is, we are the ones who messed it up (cf. Ecclesiastes 7:29).

“Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.” (Ecclesiastes 7:29, NASB95)

5. Instead, we should be like the psalmist Asaph who, in Psalm 77:11-12, wrote,

“I shall remember the deeds of the Lord;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.

I will meditate on all Your work
And muse on Your deeds.”

Slide 6

B. REMEMBERING HIM WHILE WE ARE YOUNG ALLOWS US TO FIND PLEASURE IN THE LATTER YEARS OF OUR LIVES

1. To remember our Creator while we are young is to be reminded how the world was meant to be and to live in light of that.
2. There is still goodness and beauty in God’s creation.
3. Satan, however, does not want you to remember this.
4. His goal is for you to become a person who, as you age,
 - a. sees only the evils.
 - b. grumbles and complains about the way things are
5. You and I want to be able to say, “My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:2, NASB95).

Slide 7

III. Be An Example To Other Christians

A. THERE ARE THINGS WHICH WE WHO ARE OLDER CAN LEARN FROM YOU

“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.” (1 Timothy 4:12, NASB95)

1. There is an old saying, “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” (John Fitzherbert, *The Book of Husbandry*, 1534).
 - a. It means that it is very difficult, if not impossible to change the way someone does something when they have been doing it the same way for many years.
2. However, the apostle Paul says that you can be an example to many of us in a number of ways.

Slide 8

B. LIVE LIVES WORTHY OF EMULATION IN YOUR . . .

1. Speech

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.” (Colossians 4:6, NASB95)

“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.” (Ephesians 4:29, NASB95)

2. Conduct

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,” (Ephesians 4:1, NASB95)

“so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;” (Colossians 1:10, NASB95)

3. Love

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35, ESV)

“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18, ESV)

4. Faith

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.” (Romans 1:8, NASB95)

“For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone

forth, so that we have no need to say anything.” (1 Thessalonians 1:8, NASB95)

5. Purity

- a. In a world so tainted with sin, it is refreshing to see those who are striving to maintain holy lives.
- b. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, the apostle Paul reminds us that our bodies are the “temple of God” and that we should “glorify God in [our] body.”
- c. As many of you may remember in our study through Peter’s first letter, he wrote “as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (1 Peter 1:15).

Conclusion

1. Your life is before you and I pray that for each of you it is a long and blessed life.
2. I can promise you that Satan will . . .
 - a. Continue to place many temptations before you.
 - b. Promise much, but deliver little that is of true benefit to your life.
3. I can also promise you, that if you belong to God,
 - a. He will never leave you or forsake you.
 - b. He has an eternal home awaiting you.
 - c. In His presence “is fullness of joy” (Psalm 16:11).

Slide 9

4. When Solomon concluded the book which we know as Ecclesiastes, he gave this advice which will guide each of us safely through this life:

“Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man”
(Ecclesiastes 12:13b, ESV).