

A Light in the Valley

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

September, 2016
Volume 2
Issue 9

In the Days of Your Youth

by: Kris Brewer

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them": (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

The wise man, as he reached the end of his book that was focused on the concept of how vain life is without God, encouraged all readers to begin their service to God in their youth. This *wisdom* is contrary to the normally accepted thought of today. In our world, most people think that young people have a need to "sow their wild oats" before settling down to serve the Lord. For some reason, many people (even those who claim to be religious) have decided that young people have a need to spend time reveling in sinful behavior. That was the very thing that Solomon tried in his day, and did so with the wisdom that was given to him by God.

It is time for parents and religious leaders to start emphasizing the need

for young people to serve the Lord. There is much foolishness involved in waiting until later in life to turn to the Lord. Consider just a few reasons:

Young people can die... There is a notion among many young people that they are invincible. They can involve themselves in any and all activities, no matter the nature of them. They believe they will have time to serve the Lord... later. They are convinced that they will have the best of both worlds. They think they can enjoy all the sinful activities that they like now, and that they can wait until they are older to serve the Lord. Unfortunately, there have been many a young person who has not lived through their young and rebellious phase. Paul warned Timothy that he needed to flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22), not give in to them!

Bad habits are hard to break... It is difficult, once certain practices are accepted and become a part of a person's life, to then give them up. Sin

is appealing! That is why so many people are rushing headlong into it! If sin were not appealing, there would be no such thing as temptation. There are many times in which young people, in the process of joining themselves to sinful practices, develop habits that are sinful and very difficult to give up. Involvement in smoking, drinking, foul language, and the like can become so ingrained in a person's habits that they are very difficult to later give up, even if he wants to do so. Rather than developing these habits, we should be striving to develop good habits instead. Paul's instruction to Timothy emphasized this point for the young man as well. Rather than succumbing to youthful lusts, Paul told Timothy that he should "pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22).

Rebelling against God becomes easier over time... Many people think that they will enjoy their sinful time for a while, then they will eventually come around to serving God, when they decide the time is right. However, in reality, rebellion becomes easier and easier the longer we continue in such a lifestyle. While many truly believe they can stop their sinful practices, they find it more and more difficult to submit to God. At the heart of this is selfishness. Once we get a taste of serving ourselves, it becomes more and more difficult to give up our own selfish desires and submit ourselves to God (James 4:7).

We should make no mistake: when we reject God's instructions for us, we are rebelling against Him! So, the young person who hears and understands God's instructions, but refuses to be obedient, is acting in rebellion against Him. While that rebellion may pull at the conscience of a person initially, after it occurs multiple times it becomes easier to feel good about sinful behavior. Done often enough, one will cease thinking about his rebellion at all!

God wants our best... The Lord has always wanted the best that His people can offer to Him. In the Old Testament, that meant the offering of sacrifices without blemish (Exodus 12:5, for example). Under the New Testament, we see the same principle, but instead of animal sacrifices, God wants us to offer Him our all (Romans 12:1-2). Though God wants us to serve him, no matter what age we might learn the truth, there is a need to realize that some of our abilities deteriorate with age. That is the very point that Solomon makes in Ecclesiastes chapter 12. He encouraged his readers to serve God in youth, before the physical body began to break down and limited what they were able to do. This approach is not to diminish the value of older servants of God, but rather to make it clear that there

are some things that are more easily accomplished in youth! When the body begins to break down, it makes it much more difficult to do certain things.

When young people have the attitude that they can wait until later to serve the Lord, they are intentionally choosing to withhold the best times of their lives from Him, and instead waste it on the pleasures of sin.

Young people have a lot to offer... Here is the point at which older people need to be reminded of just how valuable young people are to the service of the Lord! Young people, when they are brought into the service of the Lord at their young age, often provide an influx of zeal that is refreshing to any local church. When there are older Christians that are willing to truly work with zealous young people, to help them understand what the Christian's responsibility is in the local work, and guide them according to the principles of divine authority, there can be a tremendous drive toward evangelism and local encouragement.

Sometimes, zeal must be directed so as to stay within the confines of what God has asked us to do as His people. However, sometimes, we as the "older people" reject the good things that young people can provide to the local work simply because their ideas are different than what we have always done, or what we have felt comfortable doing. We should always be cautious so as to not stray from God's divine plan for the work and worship of the church, but at the same time we need to make sure that our acceptance or rejection of new ideas is not based solely in our traditionalism.

As we close our thoughts, it is important to emphasize the need for young people to serve God in their youth. This is not about just getting young people baptized, but rather it is about having them converted, and truly serving before the Lord. There are so many benefits to the local church when zealous, serving young people are a part of it. They have so many reasons to not serve the Lord, yet so many better reasons to dedicate their lives to such service. We need to be very careful, if we are among the older Christians, that we do not squash the zeal that our young people have. If there is some doctrinal issue that they, in misguided zeal, are in danger of violating, then we need to help them to understand the truth, and the right way to go about conducting ourselves in our efforts to function as a godly, sound congregation. That should be done gently and lovingly so that they understand what the will of the Lord is. We also should use the zeal they often exhibit to encourage us to be reenergized in our own zeal. May we work diligently to teach our young people to serve the Lord that they might have the right foundation for life!

Two Men Disagree With the Preacher

by: Bill Hall

Two men disagree with the preacher. They have both been taught that they are not just to “swallow” everything the preacher says; that they are to think for themselves. They are to be commended, therefore, for their careful evaluation of what is taught.

The key words with the first man, however, are, “It seems to me.” All teaching is judged according to his own thinking, as to whether or not it makes sense to him.

The key words with the second man are, “What does God say about it?” He desires truth and knows that truth can only be found in God’s word (John 17:17). If he disagrees with the preacher, he does so because he is convinced the preacher has misused a passage of scripture or has failed to consider a scripture that might affect his conclusion. He comes with an open Bible and an open mind, prepared to defend his position or to yield if he sees that it is indefensible.

The first man exalts self. He places too much confidence in his own thinking. He may do so unconsciously, but in reality he makes his own intellect and experience his god. His thinking is reflected in the words of Naaman, “Behold, I thought,” words that would have taken Naaman to a leper’s grave had it not been for the admonition of his servants (2 Kings 5:1-14).

The second man exalts God. His confidence is in what God says in the scriptures. He recognizes that his own intellect and experience fade into nothingness when placed in the brightness of the light of truth. A “thus saith the Lord” ends all controversy with him. His thinking is reflected in that of the Bereans who “were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they... searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so “ (Acts 17:11).

Unless the first man changes his attitude he is hopeless.

He is susceptible to all manner of false ideas. He cannot come to know God and His truth through his own wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:21). He must throw his own wisdom, intellect, and experience aside; he must become poor in spirit, meek before God, mourning, hungering and thirsting for righteousness; he must bow in submission to the Lord and to His word. He must say with Paul, “Oh, the depth

of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34).

The second man is a blessed and fortunate man indeed, for he will learn the truth that will make him free (John 8:32). Unfortunately, he is a rare man in the twentieth century. But he does exist—and he can exist even in the man who is presently reading this article. What a challenge to each of us! After all, it is one thing to disagree with a preacher, but quite another thing to disagree with Almighty God!

Continued from page 7

overcome the enemy. Ephesians 6:10-17 describes how we obtain this strength and why it is needful for us.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Remember that it takes a lot more strength to do what is right, than to go along with the rest of the world, or to do what we think is easier at the time. The strength shown by the Proverbs 31 woman and Mary is the strength we should desire! This strength will come from God, as we fear Him (Proverbs 31:30) and take time to learn from His son, Jesus Christ (Luke 10:39,42). Even though the world may call us weak, we do not seek to conform ourselves to their definition of strong. Our desire is to please God! Therefore, we seek His will, submit ourselves to Him, and He will help us become godly women, clothed in strength.

Strength

Ladies

Corner

by: Machella Goad

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. (Colossians 3:18)

It seems as though the woman's role of submitting herself to her husband is often mistaken as "weakness." Because of a failure to seek God's wisdom, people lean on their own understanding, and settle on their own ideas of what makes a woman strong. This dangerous mindset is foolish, and shows a lack of faith in God (Proverbs 3:5; 28:26)! When carnal minds inaccurately view the submissive woman as weak, they encourage her to be someone different from whom God desires. Do not be fooled! Women serving God must have strength. Not the world's idea that says, "I am so strong I do not need a man!" kind of strength; but godly strength that comes from sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Physical Strength

There are different aspects of life that require strength from a woman. I am reminded of the godly woman described for us in Proverbs 31:

She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms. (verse 17)

Women need physical strength... to endure pregnancy and childbirth, to care for her children as they grow, to keep up with household duties, fight sickness, etc. Our physical bodies must be strong enough to carry out our daily tasks, and we should strengthen ourselves accordingly.

Mental Strength

A lot of women are considered to be "overly emotional." In addition to physical strength, there is also a need for us to have mental/emotional strength. This fortitude will be shown in our attitude and demeanor. Again, let us look at the Proverbs 31 woman:

Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come. (verse 25)

We shouldn't become frantic, worried, and emotional over every situation, but remain calm and controlled. A dear friend said it is the calming strength we strive for that sets the tone in our homes. Indeed, it is. Let's read about Mary and

Martha in Luke 10:

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman
1023 E Baxter Ln,
Bozeman, MT 59715

Everyone Welcome!

It is easy to be like Martha; working ourselves into a frenzy as we try to complete the tasks set before us. However, it is the calm strength of Mary that allowed her to learn at the feet of Jesus. We may miss opportunity to learn from God if we are always overwhelmed by the circumstances around us. Even when faced with truly troubling and difficult times, we can remain strong and calm when we put our confidence in Christ, and meditate upon His promises and faithfulness!

Spiritual Strength

Finally, we want to examine the importance of being strong spiritually. This is the most important strength of all; for it is spiritual strength that allows us to become godly women, fulfilling the role God has given us. It takes spiritual strength to submit to our husbands. It is not a weakness, as the world would have you to believe. Any submissive woman can tell you that practicing self-control is not for the feeble! It takes spiritual strength to care for our children and teach them God's way. We must be strong to discipline our children, even when it seems easier to overlook. Our children will know us as weak if we are not consistent in correction! It takes spiritual strength to remain calm and confident in times of trouble. We must endure when we feel like giving up, finding strength in God's promises. It takes spiritual strength to teach the gospel to the lost, taking advantage of opportunity instead of shirking responsibility. And it takes spiritual strength to

Continued on page 5

Daily Bible Reading

October 2016

October 3, 2016	Psalms 1-6	October 18, 2016	Psalms 41-44
October 4, 2016	Psalms 7-10	October 19, 2016	Psalms 45-48
October 5, 2016	Psalms 11-16	October 20, 2016	Psalms 49-51
October 6, 2016	Psalms 17-18	October 21, 2016	Psalms 52-55
October 7, 2016	Psalms 19-22	October 24, 2016	Psalms 56-59
October 10, 2016	Psalms 23-25	October 25, 2016	Psalms 60-63
October 11, 2016	Psalms 26-29	October 26, 2016	Psalms 64-67
October 12, 2016	Psalms 30-32	October 27, 2016	Psalms 68-69
October 13, 2016	Psalms 33-35	October 28, 2016	Psalms 70-72
October 14, 2016	Psalms 36-37	October 31, 2016	Psalms 73-74
October 17, 2016	Psalms 38-40		

Gallatin Valley Church of Christ
C/O Kris Brewer
PO Box 11111
Bozeman, MT 59719

Mail To:

www.gallatinvalleycoc.com