

REMEMBER GOD IN DAYS OF YOUTH

Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:1

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In Ecclesiastes is Solomon's search for meaning of life
 - 1. "Preacher" tried wisdom, riches, pleasure & power
 - 2. Shared what he saw as vanity, and what was good
- B. To the young, he offered the following exhortations
 - 1. Rejoice in your youth - Ecc 11:9
 - 2. Remove sorrow and evil from your youth - Ecc 11:10
 - 3. Remember God in your youth - Ecc 12:1
 - 4. Reflect upon what is coming - Ecc 12:1
- C. Not many young take issue with first exhortation: happy to let their hearts cheer them, to walk in the ways of their hearts and in the sight of their eyes
- D. But exhortations to remove sorrow & evil, remember God, reflect on what's to come: Doesn't that take joy out of youth
- E. Not really, and there are several good reasons why we need to "Remember God In The Days Of Your Youth"

DISCUSSION:

I. YOUTH HAS NO GUARANTEE OF THE FUTURE

- A. Death no respecter of persons - frequently strikes those who believe they are invincible: Accidents - Disease - War. We see it happen time and again (Felix King; Terry Rogers; Kyle Taylor; Amy Gay, Greg Carter, Whit Sassar's son, Rebekah Henderson)
 - 1. Not morbid, or trying to scare, but reality - Jas 4:14-17
 - 2. Bumper sticker: "Many who plan to repent at the 11th hour, die at 10:30"
- B. Lord is coming in judgment 2Pet 3:7,9-11; 2Thes 1:7-9
 - 1. Will be "youths" who will not have benefit of long life and will not have time to change
 - 2. Must prepare for future (a sign of maturity)
- C. If blessed with long life, & time to change, remember:

II. MISSPENT YOUTH CAN CURSE YOUR FUTURE

- A. Reap what we sow Gal 6:7-8
 - 1. What's done in youth can permanently affect future
 - 2. Not just future in eternity, but also future in this life!
- B. The danger of sowing "wild oats"
 - 1. Rebellion: young often rebel against all authority (parents, teachers, police, etc.)
 - a. Must submit Rom 13:1-2; 1Pet 2:13-14
 - b. Rebellion can causes years in prison
 - 2. Lying: many young people think nothing of lying
 - a. Once caught in lie, your credibility is shattered
 - b. Word means nothing, can no longer be trusted
 - c. Adversely affects relationships & employments
 - 3. Stealing: To many young folks it is a game

- a. Shoplifting and other such crimes are rampant
- b. When caught, others are suspicious and you will not be given positions of fiscal responsibility
- 4. Fornication: Sex among young very popular, yet many do not consider the "high price" 1Cor 6:18
 - a. Sexually transmitted diseases: syphilis, AIDs
 - b. Unwanted pregnancy (often involves abortion)
 - c. Forced marriages, which often lead to divorce
- 5. Drugs & Alcohol have great potential for ruining our lives, but what's so bad about drugs & alcohol?
 - a. Some are illegal, and use violates Rom 13:1
 - b. Many addictive, and use violates 1Cor 6:12
 - c. Others destructive to body: violates 1Cor 6:19-20
- C. "Most men spend the first half of their lives making the second half miserable." (La Bruyere) - Remember:

III. WELL SPENT YOUTH CAN BLESS YOUR FUTURE

- A. Compare the foolish and wise child
 - 1. Foolish child: won't remember God in youth; listen to advice of others; must learn for himself; Invariably makes mess of life (in health, marriage, or career)
 - a. Spends part of life undoing actions of youth
 - b. Suffers from the consequences of his actions
 - 2. Wise child: remembers God in youth; follows God's and other's advice; learns from mistakes of others; begins life with solid foundation & good head start
 - a. Able to accomplish more good in life
 - b. Enjoys pleasant memories, not bemoan his past
 - 3. Vast difference in quality of life when choose right
- B. The wise child will show his wisdom - sows to the Spirit
 - 1. Respect authority: beginning with parents Eph 6:1-3
 - 2. By controlling body (as did Paul) 1Cor 9:27
 - 3. By obeying the gospel Gal 3:26-27
 - 4. Grow spiritually, bear fruit of Spirit Gal 5:22-24
 - 5. Becoming an example of believers 1Tim 4:12
- C. This is remembering God while young

CONCLUSION:

- A. No one can be "forced" to remember God in their youth...
 - 1. We can only point out the dangers when one does not
 - 2. We can remind you of the benefits when one does
 - 3. Encourage young to make right choice
- B. One thing certain: God will remember & bring you into judgment for all that you do Ecc 11:9
- C. So "Fear God and keep His commandments" Ecc 12:13-14
- D. You only live once...will you make the right choice? Will you "Remember God In The Days Of Your Youth"?

From Mark A. Copeland - revised by JLH