

# Youth With Purpose of Heart

~ Jerald Witmer

In Daniel 1 we find the story of an exceptional young man. He had been chosen by the king's own delegate because there was no blemish found in him; he was well favored, skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge. He was chosen out of the very best that Babylon had to offer, and Babylon ruled the world. He was chosen to stand in the palace of the most powerful ruler of the world. Power and prestige were within his grasp. Certainly, to those looking on, Daniel was in an enviable position. What more could his heart wish for?

Only one thing stood in the way. A small thing, as most people would see it. Yet there it was. He was to eat of the king's meat and drink of the same wine which the king drank. The very best were to be his. Yet Daniel knew he could not partake. Exactly why Daniel refused we do not know, but one thing we do know, Daniel stood for what he knew to be right. He understood that the luxuries of Babylon would never be able to fill his life and meet his needs as the God of Israel could, so Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with a portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. We need young men and women today who purpose in their hearts not to defile themselves, just as Daniel did.

We live in a world that is pursuing pleasure, money, fame, knowledge, etc. Today, as never before, the opportunity lies before you as a youth to indulge in these things. Circumstances look promising. You have a good job. Money is yours to spend as you choose. You have many friends. The road appears to stretch before you, holding out promises of a good life. What more could your heart wish for?

Only one thing stands in the way. A small thing as many would have you believe. Yet it stands before you. What does God think? What does the Bible say?

Certainly, it is no less important for youth today to take a serious look at what God expects and deserves from them than it was for Daniel many years ago.

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul tells him to "flee youthful lusts." What are youthful lusts? Lust is defined as "an intense longing or craving for the forbidden." So we are faced with the question, do youth have a longing for the forbidden? Lust for forbidden things is a problem that has existed on this earth since soon after Adam and Eve were created and certainly has not diminished in the age in which we live. What are some of these things facing youth today?

The world's music often has a strong appeal to youth. Is there really anything wrong with listening to the same music the world listens to, especially if the words are good? We must understand that the music one enjoys expresses what is in the heart. It is no secret that the songs this world enjoys are extremely immoral. Not only are the lyrics filthy, the music appeals to the flesh in a very sensual manner. The music alone can bring upon a person feelings of hatred, rebellion, and lust. How can we take gospel words and sing it to music that still encourages these ungodly feelings? What concord hath Christ with Belial? Certainly God is looking for youth who purpose in their hearts not to defile themselves with the world's music.

A second area in which youth may be tempted to compromise is the area of dress. It is amazing how much is conveyed about a person by the clothing they wear. While you may not dress just like the world, how easy is it to choose clothing that is as close to the world's fads as possible? Do you stop to think what message you will send to the world by the clothing you choose to wear? While clothing alone can never make a person a Christian, it can surely be an indicator which kingdom one is a part of. Many

people in the world unashamedly declare that they are a part of the kingdom of darkness by their clothing. Shouldn't Christians also be willing to bear a clear mark of belonging to God's kingdom? We need youth who purpose in their hearts not to defile themselves with worldly dress.

Thirdly, a youth may be lured by the world's leisure and hobbies. We live in a fast-paced, ever changing world, and there seems to be no end to the list of new and exciting things to try. Does it really matter how much time and money we spend on these things? We must understand why the world always needs something new. Outside of Christ a person will always be searching for something to fill the void in his life. It will never be found in worldly entertainment.

Let's consider what Solomon says.

*“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them”* (Ecc 11:9-12:1).

If anyone would know if fulfillment can be found through what this world has to offer, Solomon should. Two things are made very clear in these verses. God will bring us into judgment for how we follow our heart's desires, and remembering our Creator is important in our youth if we don't want to live with regrets later in life.

While there may be room for leisure activities, even justifiable activities can quickly be overdone. Consider these figures. In 2011, 13.7 million hunters spent \$38.3 billion on equipment, licenses, trips, and more. This averages out to \$2,800 per hunter. No figure was given of the value of game that each hunter took home. Will these things bring contentment and satisfaction in old age, or will they bring emptiness?

As God's chosen people we have a purpose to live for. Remember your Creator TODAY in the days of your youth. God is still searching for those who will choose Him above all the things this world has to offer and who will purpose in their hearts not to defile themselves with the vanity of this world.

*“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”* (Ecc 12:13-14).

~ Kokomo, MS  
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