

# The Three “R’s” of Youth

**Text: Ecclesiastes 11:9 - 12:1**

## Introduction

1. Youth is the most fascinating, enjoyable, perplexing and challenging time of life.
  - a. It is a critically important time because in it one chooses, consciously or unconsciously, his/her direction in life.
  - b. In youth:
    - 1) Many decisions are made which affect one for the rest of his/her life, even for eternity.
    - 2) Habits, whether good or bad, are formed which will be difficult to change in later years.
    - 3) The kind of people one chooses to associate with will be determined.
    - 4) Attitudes which often prevail throughout one’s life will be developed.
    - 5) Respect or disrespect for authority will be learned.
    - 6) Whether one learns to work and be diligent or to be lazy and slothful will be acquired.
    - 7) Whether one becomes dependable or undependable is developed.
    - 8) Whether one is open or honest or lies and covers the truth will be cultivated.
2. The Bible places a great deal of emphasis on youth.
  - a. Not the over-emphasis of the world.
    - 1) In view of a good deal of society, all things belong to the young and thus those of age, experience, wisdom and maturity are shoved aside as “old-fashioned” or out of touch.
    - 2) Some make youth feel that the universe revolves around them and they must have special treatment.
  - b. The Bible championed the cause of youth in a world which gave little concern to them.
    - 1) In Biblical times youth was expendable.
    - 2) God gave much instruction to His people in both the Old and New Testaments in regard to the proper teaching and training of youth.
3. Most, in time past, were familiar with the three “R’s” of “readin, ‘ritin and ‘rithmetic” but God has his own three “R’s” for youth.

- a. They are set forth in Ecclesiastes 11:9 - 12:1.
- b. They remain relevant to the youth of today.
- c. They are the subject of this lesson.

## I. “Rejoice in Your Youth”

- A. The Bible recognizes that youth is to be a fun time.
  1. God does not want to deprive you of fun and happiness.
  2. God intends for this period in your life to be enjoyable, exciting and vibrant.
- B. “Let your heart cheer you.”
  1. It is sad to realize that today many young people cannot allow their heart to cheer them.
  2. Despondent young people are ending their lives everywhere because they see nothing but pain, problems and hopelessness.
    - a. Teenage suicide is rampant.
    - b. Teenage violence has escalated beyond anyone’s wildest dreams.
  3. Too many youths think that the outlook is forlorn and that life is empty.
    - a. Some because of the seeming “hopelessness” of their situation.
    - b. Some because of the emptiness of materialism.
  4. Realize you can make a difference.
    - a. You can rise above and conquer.
    - b. You have the chance because life is before you.
- C. “Walk in the ways of your heart.”
  1. Make the choices *you* want to make.
    - a. Do not be pressured by peers, even parents.
    - b. Your destiny is in your hands.
  2. Pursue your dreams.
    - a. If they are honorable, go after them.
    - b. Not much is worse in life than the thought “What could have been.”
- D. Walk “in the sight of your eyes.”
  1. Pursue your dreams now as “you see to be best.” (Footnote NKJV)
  2. Be a person of vision
  3. Do not settle for a dull, mundane and bitter life because you did not try.
  4. At the same time, do not lose sight of far-reaching goals for short term satisfaction or pleasure.
- E. Remember, though, “for all these God will bring you into judgment.”
  1. Whatever you do and whatever choices you make, all must be done in view of the will of God.

2. You must allow God's will to encompass your entire existence and color all your choices.
  - a. You are accountable to God for every choice you make, mature or immature. (2 Corinthians 5:10)
  - b. Your youth does not excuse any sin.

## II. "Remove Sorrow from Your Heart"

- A. The footnote in the NKJV for "sorrow" is "anger, vexation."
  1. The anger of youth is responsible for much sorrow.
  2. Rebellion has its seed in such anger.
    - a. Quote from a rock musician: "You can't sing rock and roll with a smile on your face."
    - b. Most of this anger is directed at parents and others who have given you the most.
      - 1) You resent them for their authority.
      - 2) You resent them for what they do not give you.
      - 3) You cause a constant uproar in the home.
- B. Many activities which appeal to young people only produce sorrow, not the anticipated joy.
  1. Smoking. While many young people think smoking will bring enjoyment, in reality it brings addiction, lung cancer, emphysema and heart disease.
  2. Drinking.
    - a. Young people are drinking at an alarming rate for the joy they think it will bring them.
    - b. Consider that every alcoholic begins with one drink.
    - c. Homes are wrecked, spouses and children are abused, jobs lost and innocent victims are killed because of alcohol.
    - d. Addiction, cirrhosis of the liver and a number of other diseases are all linked to drinking alcohol.
  3. Drugs.
    - a. Many young people seek happiness and escape through the use of drugs.
    - b. Drugs provide only a temporary good feeling.
    - c. I have never known of any happy person who derived his happiness from drugs.
    - d. It is the sad, resentful and tortured who thrive on them in an effort to escape but they only complete their road to sorrow.

4. Promiscuity.
  - a. Promiscuity among the young brings much suffering and many problems.
  - b. Unwanted pregnancies, abortions, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS are all sorrowful consequences of it that usually last a lifetime.
  - c. Eternal consequences must also be considered. (Revelation 21:8)
- C. Youthful sins can carry with them sorrow for life.
  1. Even though the guilt of the sin may be forgiven and forgotten, many times the consequences of those sins may linger a lifetime.
- D. Heaven's alternative to sorrow is to "put away evil from your flesh."
  1. "Flee youthful lusts." (2 Timothy 2:22)
  2. "Cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh." (2 Corinthians 7:1)
  3. The "works of the flesh" are not to be done. (Galatians 5:19-21)
- E. Why, while young, should you "put away evil from your flesh?"
  1. Because "childhood and youth are vanity."
  2. One day your youth will be gone and you will have to live with the sorrow your younger years brought you.
  3. Many who are older know of such sorrow of sin.
  4. How much better it is to spend your youthful days in a worthwhile way.

### **III. "Remember Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth"**

- A. Some reasons why it is important.
  1. Often temptations are stronger and one is more apt to succumb to them than at any other time.
  2. Every sin must be accounted for and your youth is no excuse.
  3. Decisions are made, habits are formed and attitudes are developed in youth that will affect one throughout the rest of his life.
  4. To follow the example of Joseph, David, Josiah and Daniel who were youths determined to serve God.
    - a. Were they nerds, wimps, sissies or geeks?
    - b. They were heroes—some of the greatest, strongest men in history.
- B. It is best to do it "before the difficult days come."
  1. Those days will afford you little pleasure because of advanced age and all the things attendant with it.
  2. You will reach a time in your life when you will regret not having established your priorities earlier.

C. Because “the years draw near.”

1. Youth is fleeting. You are not going to be young forever nor are you going to live here forever.
2. Young men are to be “soberminded.” (Titus 2:6)
  - a. You need to view life with your eyes wide open.
  - b. You must not live just for “today.”

## **Conclusion**

While “readin’, ‘ritin’ and ‘rithmetic” are essential to a successful life in the physical world, the three “R’s” of God must not be neglected if one would be successful in the eyes of God.