

The old proverb is true. The grass always seems to look greener on the other side of the fence. Young people can't wait until they get older so they can get their driver's license, date, vote, and get cheaper insurance. In the world, they want to reach legal drinking age. Older adults wistfully reflect upon the past as the "good ol' days." In both cases, individuals often think of things they cannot do rather than what they can do. Such negative attitudes propagate negative attitudes which then persist.

Young people right now are determining their life long attitudes and attributes. Change is difficult and once habits, attitudes and attributes are developed, it is difficult to change them. If negative attitudes are being instilled in young people regarding the church and the Lord's work, it is probable that those negative attitudes will persist. Young people are often told they are the church of tomorrow. What message does that convey? It tells them they are not the church of today. If that attitude is instilled within them, will they ever become the church of today?

Young people are not the church of tomorrow. They are as much the church of today as anyone else is. When a young person is baptized into Christ, he begins a new life in Christ, regardless of age. He is to use his talents, his resources, and his opportunities for the Lord just as much as any older Christian is to do so.

God has always used the young. Consider Joseph, for instance (Genesis 30-50). At the age of seventeen years, Joseph was loved and favored by his father and envied and hated by his brothers. When he told his father and his brothers of his dreams, his father rebuked him. His brothers were jealous and hated him even more. When the opportunity arose, they disposed of him by selling him into slavery. Yet, God used this young man through his providence to eventually bring his entire family into Egypt to begin the fulfillment of God's prophecy to Abraham years earlier (Genesis 15:13-16). Over and over, Joseph's faith to God was demonstrated as he served God.

Consider David. He was the youngest of eight

boys born to Jesse (1 Samuel 16:7-12). Many believe he was a mere teenager at the time Samuel anointed him to become king of Israel one day. He was young, but God had plans for this faithful son of Jesse. While still a young man, he visited his brothers who were at the front line of battle (1 Samuel 17). It was at that time that he slew Goliath because God was with him. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Esther were among other young people whom God used in His cause.

Young people make the mistake of thinking they cannot do something great. Thus, they feel they are not needed and are not beneficial to God's kingdom. However, it doesn't take great acts to be great in the kingdom and in the eyes of God. Barzillai the Gileadite is remembered in God's record for one minor act (2 Samuel 17:27 & 19:31-39). He was a wealthy man and he sent supplies to David to sustain him when he fled Jerusalem due to Absalom's rebellion. Jesus said the woman who had anointed his feet would be remembered for her simple act wherever the gospel would be proclaimed (Mark 14:3-9). Consider, also, Aquila and Priscilla. You probably remember reading their names in God's word. But what great thing did they do? We first find them opening themselves and their home to Paul (Acts 18:1-3). They were faithful Christians that Paul left in Ephesus. As a result, they had the opportunity to teach Apollos the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:18-26). They opened their house to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:19). Paul called them fellow-workers. In some way they had put their lives at risk for him and they had opened their house to the saints meeting in Rome (Romans 16:3-5). Young people, like those those faithful servants, can do what may seem as small things, yet be great things in the sight of God.

Young people have a choice as to how they will live their lives both now and later. God has always given man choice. Adam and Eve were given choices in the garden (Genesis 2:16-17). They could eat the fruit of all the trees in the garden. They had their choice, but God said they were not

to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Even then made a bad choice and ate of that tree. God did not keep them from making the choice. He gives all free will choice. Not long before the children of Israel were to enter the promised land, Moses told them they would be blessed if they obeyed God and cursed if they did not. He had set before them the blessing and the curse, life and death, and then told them to choose life (Deuteronomy 30:19cf). Before Joshua died, he told the children of Israel they had a choice—serve Jehovah God, the gods their fathers had served in Egypt, or the gods of the Amorites. He and his house would serve Jehovah (Joshua 24:15).

Young people have free will. They have choices. They have a choice as to how they live now and how they will prepare for tomorrow. It is time for young Christians to accept responsibility. They should take advantage of the opportunities that they have (Ephesians 5:15-16). They have opportunities available to them that others do not have, opportunities that are somewhat unique to their circumstances. They have opportunities to teach others (Mark 16:15). Their peers have not had years to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. They have not had years of indoctrination of error that has been ingrained within them. They will be more open to young Christians who are their peers than to anyone else during a time when they may have questions about life and religion. Youth is a time when one is searching for purpose and direction in life, and young Christians can affect others. They can help others (Galatians 6:2, 10). Young people today face many challenges and temptations in life, and young Christians are surrounded by those who are crying out for help. Some are bullied. Some don't fit into the "popular" clicks and are outcasts. Many are from broken homes, struggling with problems. All of those need a friend, someone to talk to. Young Christians can be an example (Matthew 5:14-16). They and their peers face more temptations daily than adults. Peer pressure is tremendous among youth. Satan is having a "hey day" among young people, tempting

them with sexual pressures, pornography, drugs and alcohol, language, and more.

Young Christians have a choice. They should choose to live courageously for Christ. Joseph had the courage to refuse the sexual advances of his master's wife (Genesis 39:9). As a result, he was cast into prison because of her lies. Yet, he remained faithful to God. Daniel, as a young man, was deported as a prisoner to a foreign land. There, away from the support of family, he was being trained to serve in the king's court. He was resolved not to defile himself by eating those things which were considered unclean. He risked his life to remain faithful to God's laws (Daniel 1:8). Young Christians should dare to stand out from the world (Romans 12:2). They can, also, choose to serve within the body of Christ. They can serve as Bible Camp counselors. Young men can help lead in worship. Young ladies can learn to lead in ladies groups. They can visit nursing homes and the elderly. They can find service projects to help the elderly or unfortunate. Remember, in all this, they must redeem the time. They must take advantage of opportunities. They should choose to make themselves available. This is a time in their lives that many things are vying for their time. Satan will give them many worldly activities to fill their schedule. If they are not careful, there will be no time for God and for service.

Parents and the church play important roles in instilling within young people the proper attitudes toward the church and the Lord's work.

Parents are extremely important in molding the attitudes and attributes of their children. They can do so by being the proper example to their children. They need to be faithful servants themselves, active in the service of the Lord and in regular worship. Being examples go a long way in showing young people what is expected. Not only should parents show them the way, but they can include them as they work for the Lord. Another way the parent helps mold the child is by praying in behalf of that young person. They can pray for the kind of mate they will marry. They can pray for their growth and faith. Parents need to include God

in their work as parents. Positive encouragement will, also, go a long way in molding the proper attitudes and attributes in children. Encouraging words are important. Encouraging young people to be active, to take advantage of opportunities, and to give time for the Lord should be on the mind of every parent. The parent should utilize every opportunity to encourage their youth.

The church can provide opportunity and training to their young. Opportunities such as campaigns, projects, youth rallies, and community projects should be arranged. Young people can be teacher helpers and even teachers in Vacation Bible School. Training classes can be organized for both young men and young women. Young men can learn how to lead in worship. Young women can learn how to lead in women's groups. There are, also, workshops for young leaders that the church can send their young people to. The church should utilize every opportunity to train and involve young people in the work and activities of the church.

Young people are not the church of tomorrow. They may very well never be the church of tomorrow unless they are made to realize they are the church of today. They may not become the church of tomorrow unless they are active in the church today. Young people must realize that God has always used the young. Today is no different. Young people must realize that it doesn't take great acts to be great in the kingdom. They must realize they have a choice as to how they will live their lives both now and later. Parents must take an active part in instilling the proper attitudes and attributes in their youth. The church, too, must provide opportunities that will instill the proper attitudes toward the church and the Lord's work.

Talent of the young should not be wasted.

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the  
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To hear or view the complete lesson go to  
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**"They Shall Be Turned  
Unto Fables"**

# **"I'm Too Young To Do Anything In The Church"**

by  
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