

## What Every Young Person Should Know

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Even though I think I'm still young, I'm constantly reminded that's not the case anymore. Teenagers call me "sir". I don't have near the energy or stamina I used to have. Roller coasters don't like me anymore. I have 3 kids. But I still remember what it was like to be young, and when I look back on my youth, I can see how my perspective on many things has changed dramatically. Many times I wish I had known then what I know now. Allow me to share some things that I wish I had known or realized at that age that are extremely important for every young person.

First, being popular in school is really not that important. I don't mean you shouldn't want to be liked, but being the right kind of person is what's important. Following Christ's example is what we should do, and that may mean we're viewed as different, strange, weird, etc. We may not have as many friends as others because we don't talk like they do, dress like they do, go where they go, do the things they do. In fact, we probably will be made fun of at times (1 Peter 4:3-5).

Having friends is important, and while you're young you'll make friendships that last a lifetime. However, choose your friends wisely. Remember what Paul said in 1 Cor. 15:33: "*Do not be deceived: evil company corrupts good habits.*" We are so easily influenced by others, especially when we're younger. You need to surround yourself with friends who have the same morals as you do. Temptations are constantly bombarding you, so choosing the right friends will help you stay on the right path.

Of the friends you make as you go to school, church, or camp, you'll find one you might want to start dating. Lisa's grandfather told me what he always told his kids: "Don't date someone you wouldn't be willing to marry." The point is, if you can't see yourself married to that person, stop dating. In fact, don't even go out on the first date with someone you know is not marriage material. It's vital you marry someone who is a Christian. I've seen too many instances of wrecked marriages and unfaithful children as a result of one of the spouses not being a Christian. This doesn't mean you have to only date Christians. One of our duties as a Christian is to teach the lost, and if you can date a non-Christian and help teach them the truth, then that's wonderful. However, be prepared to stop dating if that person shows no interest in spiritual matters, or is unwilling to submit to Christ. Dating someone who does not have the same spiritual goals can influence us even more than our friends.

During the teenage years, hormones are raging wildly, and many times they get out of control. One of the most dangerous aspects of this is sexual temptation. Considering the fact we live in a society that promotes a lascivious and immoral lifestyle, it makes it very difficult to remain pure, which is why you need to remember what Paul said in 1 Cor. 6:18: "*Flee sexual immorality.*" Notice he uses the word "flee". That's most appropriate because we have to do that sometimes...literally run away from the temptation. Sexual temptations are very powerful and sometimes it takes every bit of strength and discipline to not succumb to Satan's fiery darts. As you're dating, you should both agree to remain pure and holy, not defiling yourself with sin. Be

up-front about it; talk about it; pray about it; study about it. If you do these things, you'll be able to overcome those temptations.

Last, but certainly not least, remember who you are. We are servants of the most high God, which is the most important thing in our life. Everything previously stated is undergirded by this one truth. All the decisions we make should be based upon His law. Our time here is short, but eternity is forever. Consequently, we need to make decisions with the understanding they affect our eternal destination. Also, since this is the most important thing in our life, shouldn't we spend more time in learning, studying, praying, serving? If you want to be a professional baseball player, you have to spend countless hours taking ground balls, fly balls, throwing to first base, batting practice, etc. What about us as Christians? If we don't put our nose in the Book and study and practice being a Christian, we're not going to be very good at it. If you can spend hours doing homework, hours playing video games, hours playing sports, then you can also spend time with His word.

Hopefully, you are already practicing these things. I'm sure you've heard all this before, but as Peter said in 2 Peter 3:1, I'm "*stirring up your pure minds by way of reminder.*" Being a teenager is fun, but it is also difficult. Put the Lord first and remember these points, and you'll soon realize being right with the Lord is more important than being popular at school, having lots of friends, or engaging in sin that might seem fun at the time. As I was once told, this earthly life is a probationary period to see if we're fit for eternity with God. Let's all make sure we see each other again after this probationary period is over.