

# The Young Christian

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Oh, to be young again! I recently observed the enthusiasm of youth a few weeks ago when Steve Forbes spoke at the Florida College leadership dinner. Though his advice on overcoming trials and tribulations was helpful to all, one of the most impressive things about the evening was the special group of young Christian students at Florida College. These kids looked so youthful with their bright smiles and joyous laughter. There was a lot of hugging and hand shaking as they greeted one another or said goodbye. Their energy level was almost palpable. The young students were excited to share their stories about all the fun things they were doing or had done. This caused me to reminisce about being their age such a long time ago.

One definition of being youthful is from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development which identifies youth as the time between the ages of 15-29 years. Science has taught us that we learn more in our youth than in any other period of life. Medical science states our brain reaches full size by age thirteen. However, the prefrontal cortex, which curbs impulsive behavior and is responsible for attention, complex planning, decision making, logical and organized thinking, personality development, risk management, and short-term memory, is not fully developed until age 25.

It is during this time that you are learning how to process and make big decisions that can be life changing. This is probably when many of us made the decision to come to Jesus, if not younger. For some, coming to Jesus was easy. For others, it took more time. After learning about repentance, the realization of John 3:7 became apparent: "you must be born again." It was also at this time that, while feeling invincible, you learned John 15:5: "for apart from Me, you can do nothing." As the youthful mind and heart became further pricked, you made the decision as so many before you did in Acts 2:38: "repent and be baptized." What a burden lifted once you obeyed the gospel! Then being a young Christian really began.

Youth does not mean that you are vulnerable. You will learn that the hardest thing to do is to STAY a Christian. While you can do a lot of things in this world, being faithful will be challenging with many obstacles and temptations encountered. These are not insurmountable. There is comfort in knowing Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." You must not forget the impact that you have on others your own age who have not yet obeyed the gospel. Don't give in to temptation. Try to be that bright light which shines for everyone to see. Jesus knew you would have many challenges. That's why He told you to come to Him (Matt. 11:28-30).

It is okay for you to experience the blessings of youth when presented with the many

opportunities and possibilities of life. There is absolutely nothing wrong with being career-oriented, having aspirations of success, or trying to be prosperous. But not at the cost of losing your soul. These youthful years are fraught with peer pressure, immorality, hormone changes, alcohol, drugs, pornography, open-mindedness, tolerance, and sexuality issues. You do not have to be a victim to these temptations. Remember 1 Corinthians 10:13: "no temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man, and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able..." You can make a difference by letting others know that coming to Jesus is the best thing this world has to offer. You may feel alone, lose friends, or be unpopular. Know that Luke 11:23 states, "He who is not with me is against Me." Stand strong. You have a friend in Jesus!

As a young Christian, enjoy the journey. Be enthralled about coming to Christ. Live life to its fullest. Try to live joyfully every day that God has given you. Remember Galatians 6:9: "let us not lose heart in doing good." Love Him and keep His commandments. Live by Philippians 4:6-7: "be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Stay convicted. Stay sober-minded. Stay excited. Stay energetic. Stay faithful. Stay obedient. Keep running towards the goal. Embrace 1 Timothy 4:12: "let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."

While we are young only once, to be able to celebrate another birthday is a blessing. We must all hope and pray daily that God will give us more knowledge and wisdom as we age. Learning about God's will is always an active process that can become labor intensive. We are running a race that is exhausting at times. Trying to be righteous is full of challenges, but we must understand the reward will definitely be worth it in the end. Heaven! Being with God! Wow! Do you wonder what age you will be in heaven? We know we will have a different body in heaven (2 Cor. 5:1). It will be eternal. Maybe when we get to heaven we will all be young again. Who knows? Only God. Oh, to be young again!