



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Ecclesiastes 12:1 “Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no delight in them.’”

Solomon’s age-old advice still rings true for us today. Putting God first in your life at an early age can keep the soul and your life from decades of heartache and trouble. Religion isn’t just for old people. All of us need God. And, this wonderful passage has several things built in that we need to notice.

First, in order to “remember” your Creator, you must first know something about Him. You can’t remember if there is nothing to remember. This implies some early instruction, especially in the home. That was a part of the Jewish fabric of life and it ought to be a part of our fabric as well. In the home, in the church, be talking, explaining, showing and teaching God.

Second, evil days come. Solomon may be driving at temptation and the influence of friends. When a child is young, the immediate family is his social world. But as the child grows, there are kids at school, kids on the team, kids at camp—and that circle of influence widens and it is here that a child can be introduced to evil. Evil days are coming, is what Solomon warned. You can’t keep that from happening. But what you can do is ‘remember your Creator’ and that will keep the evil at bay.

Third, Solomon says the ‘years draw near.’ We call that age. There are many days I think I am still in my 40’s, but then I look in the mirror and reality reminds me that the years are here. Many adventures. Many memories. Many blessings. Many faces. Many places. And, without God in you to guide you, you end up as a selfish grump who no one wants to be around.

Now, from this, here are five lessons that teens need to hear. It’s best that they hear it from home.

First, all young people struggle with choices and temptations. You did. I did. They do. The challenge to fit in. The challenge to be accepted. Sometimes there is a cost that comes with those challenges. Sometimes that cost isn’t worth paying. You sell your soul just to be liked by people who will use you and forget you is not worth what you think you will get out of that. It’s hard swimming upstream in a world that is floating downstream. It’s hard to do what is right, when all around you is wrong. Parents remember to be helpful, kind and let your teen know that they are not the first to face tough things.

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Second, the habits you start now may be with you the rest of your life. This is true both of good habits and bad habits. A young person who starts smoking in middle school, may well be smoking in his 30's and if he lives long enough, even in his 60's. People in their 60's don't take up smoking, they are trying to quit. The habit of lying can start early and it can follow you all of your life. Eventually, one starts lying to themselves. But good habits, such as starting the day with prayer, being punctual, being honest, being a servant, those too, can grow and define you the rest of your life. Find the good things and get after them. Make them habits in your life.

Third, what you believe will be challenged by friends and adults. This happens at school. This happens in the work place. This even happens in the family. Those that do not like Jesus, or think that you are taking things way to seriously, will throw hard questions at you. Some will try to trick you and get things scrambled up in your mind. Your faith, what you know, will get you through those moments. The critics tested Jesus often. They twisted His words. They tried to put Him in a corner. The same may happen to you.

Fourth, teens die. We know this, but sometimes it just doesn't sink in. I knew kids in my school who never graduated. They died. My children had kids in their school who died. Some were foolish. Some took their own lives. Some were in car accidents. Some had cancer. Don't keep kicking the can down the road of what you ought to be doing. You may not have a 'down the road.' Make a difference where you are now. Be a person of Christ and influence right now.

Fifth, God loves you and is always there for you. You will experience in life people who disappoint you, let you down and leave you. God won't do that. You'll have people making poor choices that hurt you. God won't do that. And, to know, where ever you go the Lord is with you. You are never truly alone. Daniel in the lion's den—God was there. Noah in the ark—God was there. Peter in prison—God was there. Your life may not be easy. You may have some really tough mountains to climb, but you never climb them alone when you have God.

All of this begins with, Remember your Creator...

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
