

If I Were Young Again

by Bob Spurlin

Many give serious thought guiding hand of caring parents. about their early lives when middle age creeps long and takes over. This is the norm as sober reflection gives time for pause and consideration. There is something about passing middle age that causes us to think about our own youth, and what changes we would like to make, if such were possible. Of course, such a mental exercise is beyond human ability to go back in time, but it challenges us to think what could have been. Undeniably, there were flaws and blemishes in our early years that we would just as soon blot out of the book of remembrance. Knowing what we know now would, no doubt, cause many to make some serious moral changes. Many today would like to go back and eliminate all bad habits and liabilities, including drinking, drugs, smoking, etc. If this writer could go back and live my life again, there would be some serious changes made that would enhance life to the fullest. What would you do if your life could be lived over again? Adults can only give reflection; teens can learn from us and hopefully implement those positive qualities (1 Tim. 4:12).

1. IF I WERE YOUNG AGAIN I WOULD BE MORE RESPECTFUL OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND ADULTS IN GENERAL.

Rebellion permeates every segment of society and it effects the relationship between parents and children, which is the foundation of our society. If I were a teenager, my respect, high opinion, and esteem for my parents would be unequalled. This preacher has witnessed unparalleled disrespect and disregard for parents, teachers, and adults in general. What a difference a generation makes when mom and dad fail to give the needed instruction, or when sons and daughters fail to heed the

The attitudes they have displayed have obviously spilled over into society at large. Paul gives the much needed counsel, "Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right" (Eph. 6:1-4). The youth of today could have much richer lives if they would follow this basic rule of honoring and being respectful. There are two promises offered in connection with the command to "Honor thy Father and thy Mother." (1) "It will be well with thee," that is life will be enjoyable and fruitful; and (2) Your life will have long days or an extension of life. A broad statement for all.

2. IF I WERE YOUNG AGAIN, DEVELOPING HABITS OF BIBLE STUDY & PRAYER WOULD BE A PRIORITY, WHILE ELIMINATING ALL BAD HABITS.

Habits can be good or bad. Accordingly the right way is most desirable as we journey through life. Paul stressed, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, f there be any praise, think on these things (Phil. 4:8).

Good habits are formed when we focus on positive and upright things. Mother used to tell her children, "If you play on the coal pile, the black soot will get on you." Young people today would profit greatly from this essential truth if serious consideration were given to it. It is easy to get caught up in detrimental habits when surrounded by unsuitable circumstances such as tobacco, drug and alcohol use. Conversely, the youth of today, by giving serious attention to fruitful Bible study, and a powerful prayer life will see strong, spiritual lives. Parents can provide a positive atmosphere with home devotions and a genuine emphasis on spiritual things, which will encourage godliness. Bible study and fervent prayer will strengthen character and add spiritual stature to all (2 Tim. 2:15, 1 Thess. 5:17).

3. IF YOUNG AGAIN I WOULD READ MATTHEW 25 REGULARLY AND USE MY TALENTS TO DO MORE FOR MY GOD.

Jesus said, "And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: and there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30). Fear was not an admissible excuse for the one talent man and it is not acceptable for us today.

Young people should begin early in life to utilize their abilities, skills and talents to the glory of God (Eccl. 9:10, Col. 3:23). The wise man, Solomon, said, "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth" (Eccl. 12:1). If beginning my life over, this writer would use the time and ability granted him to be more Christ-like (1 Cor. 11:1). Taking each opportunity as presented will hasten us in service to the church, such as: Praying publicly, reading scripture, delivering lessons, and waiting on the Lord's table will help me become more proficient in my service to God. If young, I would not allow a single opportunity to pass that would help me to increase my talents before God and brethren.

4. IF YOUNG AGAIN, I WOULD DATE AND MARRY A CHRISTIAN.

The writer of this article can say the wisest decision he ever made, other than obeying Christ, was to meet and marry an outstanding Christian woman. Marriage, at the very best, will confront multiple problems and yet these can be insignificant when compared with a spiritually divided union. Many couples think sex appeal, physical attraction and love alone will solve all problems within the wedded unit. More than one million divorces occur annually, or 2,740 times daily judges issue the proclamation, "divorce granted." This divine institution at its best will be difficult, but marrying a Christian will give one a stabilizing prospect to face the future with confidence.

My young friend, do yourself a favor and do not settle for anything less than a Christian mate. How can we "Seek the kingdom of God first" (Matt. 6:33), and embrace someone that will lead us in the opposite direction? Christians marrying unbelievers bring undue pressure to bear upon their marriage, and all too often divorce is the result. Paul said, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers . . ." (2 Cor. 6:14). Friend, can you imagine a greater yoke than the marriage yoke? Paul, in addition, asserted, "Have we not

the right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (1 Cor. 9:5). The apostle had a right to lead about a wife which is a believer; he did not declare the "right" to lead about a wife that was an unbeliever. The clear teaching of the New Testament either by direct command, or by implication, "Christians should marry Christians." This writer affirms unequivocally that we will all be much happier, if we marry "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39). The four points given in this article will strengthen your life and fulfill you in every way, if followed.