

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Un-despised Youth

(Jerry Fite)

Timothy, as an evangelist, was placed in a position of authority. Paul exhorted him not to heed fables and endless genealogies, but to “command and teach” the absolute truths of Christ Jesus (I Timothy 1:4, 4:6, 11). In commanding these truths, young Timothy might find hearers disregarding him because of his youth. Paul writes, “*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith in purity*” (I Timothy 4:12).

Paul’s statement is remarkable, for we usually hear of older people being called on in our prayers to be examples to the young. But Paul says to Timothy that he should become a permanent- etched in stone- unforgettable, “ensample” to all believers, regardless of their age. Paul does not address those who might look down upon Timothy’s youth, but he exhorts Timothy to not allow it by being what he ought to be.

How is Timothy not to allow others to look down upon his youth, or disregard him completely because he is young? He is to make sure he manifests faith and love in his words and conduct, while conducting himself before the opposite sex in all puri-

ty. As a Christian, our faith in Christ works through love, which values the Lord and others in seeking the other person’s well-being (*Gal. 5:6*). A young person must therefore continue to read and meditate upon the word of God, the source of faith (*Rom. 10:17*). Trust in the Lord should begin in one’s youth (*Psalms 71:5*). Youth’s faith will manifest itself in faithfulness to the Lord and others. The young person will filter his or hers words and conduct through love for the Lord, and others.

When a person lives close to the Lord, he or she cannot help but see the Lord’s will that all come to repentance and salvation (*2 Peter. 3:9, Lk. 19:10*). There is no greater love shown than giving one’s life for his friends (*Jn. 15:13*). Jesus took this great love to another level. He gave his life for his enemies (*Rom. 5:8,10*). Youth can catch the Lord’s zeal for the lost, and be a soul winner for Jesus at an early age. Faith and love communicated in word and action will never be a detriment to honest hearts seeking the Lord, but will energize one throughout life to keep spreading the seed of God’s word seeking germination in the honest heart.

Young Timothy was to conduct himself before young woman in “all purity” (*I Tim. 5:2*). The strong sexual desires of youth, must be held in check, as one abstains from fornication (*I Thess. 4:3-8*).

When you possess the character that Paul exhorts Timothy to manifest, you will surely be setting yourself apart from the youth in today’s culture. Many young people today are disrespectful, rebellious, self-absorbed and fixated on having fun. Seeking the well-being of others is not as much a concern as being “clickish,” thus excluding others. Trusting in the Lord by following His Word is a foreign concept to many of our youth today as they feel quite at home with giving in to peer pressure.

Following the pattern that Timothy was to manifest in his youth, you, in your youth, will be a challenge to the thinking of many. Many have low expectations of youth. God sees the possibility of you being wise in your youth (*Eccl. 4:13*). You can not only be strong, but you can also manifest “discretion” in your youth (*Prov. 1:4*). Be wise! Manifest God’s pattern for the “un-despised youth!”