

**INTRO:** The Word of God has several young people that are mentioned and their influence upon those that they were around and their testimony of their dedication unto God. Daniel is first seen as a young person with 3 other young people, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and as young people taken into captivity by a hostile government, they stood tall and strong against the enticements that they faced and even against the threats they had to face, never caving under the pressures of the moment. Though all the other captives were simply complying with the demands of their captors, Daniel and his friends would not, for the sake of their Lord. And we read of Daniel being influential in the affairs of state wherever he ended up and was so blessed by God that he was allowed to prophesy about the end of the age and the return of Christ. Joseph as a young boy learned the importance of following God and even though he suffered at the hands of his own brothers, as well as others; even though it seemed every time he tried to do something right, it came out wrong; still he held firmly to his belief in God and when the time was right he took the position that God had prepared him for all along his way. David was just a young man of 15 or 16 when he faced the giant, Goliath and stood against this enemy of God when the rest of the nation were fearful to stand. Eventually he became the King of Israel and one of God's greatest kings. Saul was a young man standing at the foot of Steven, holding the garments of Steven's assassins as they stoned Steven to death, but in a short time, he became the greatest missionary for Jesus Christ this world has ever seen. And we could speak of Mary of Nazareth, Samuel, Ruth and John the Apostle, all young individuals being used of God. But perhaps we know as much about Timothy as any of these young people cause Paul wrote two epistles to him and Timothy was being trained to take the place of Paul, the apostle. Timothy is one of the greatest examples of youth in the Bible, a life that should be emulated by all young people who want to be the person God intended for them to be.

**A.** Look at the first thing Paul tells Timothy, "**Let no one look down on your youthfulness...**", the KJV says "**Let no man despise thy youth...**" How apropos that is for our generation today as most young people have a reputation of spoiled, lazy, disobedient brats that always want their own way and want to get by with everything without doing anything. In other words, there are few young people of this generation that are respected by other young people and by older people. Paul tells Timothy to be an example, not just of a godly young person, but an example, become a pattern, that all, including the elder, would desire to imitate.

**1.** Especially as a minister of the gospel should he be the example, but because an individual is not a minister does not mean they are free to act as they so desire. This is especially commendable in Timothy when we realize his youth and what young people are often prone to. Often they are reckless, foolish, unruly, brash and show little respect for others; but as Christian young people this should not be. So one may say "how can I be an example"? I am going to give you a list of traits that, especially as a youth, you should work on.

**2.** Before I give this list we should note something, young people have strength, agility, talent, determination, zeal and enjoy action and when these are used in the manner in which God intended, the possibly of an outstanding work for God is right before them. There are young Christians in our world today that have found an issue that needed to be addressed and are working as much as they can to solve that problem. About 20 young women traveled the globe with the ministry Youth With a Mission documenting social injustice with their cameras and laptops and were doing what they could to stem the tide of human trafficking across this globe. There are groups of young people that were wrapped up in this "Christian Rock" genre of music and have come out speaking against its effect upon them as it destroyed their Christian walk, rather than strengthen it. There are many young people that are unsung heroes for the faith as they fight against often overwhelming odds to stand for the truth of God's Word.

**B.** Young people - I will list about five areas that you can work on. Write these down and look at them each day before you go about your day's business and be on your guard.

**1.** Watch your conversation and behavior: know when to speak and know when to be quiet. Watch the slang words that are so prevalent in our society and stay away from them. Do not give anyone occasion to think you have said things that should not come out of the mouth of a Christian. Understand you do not have to speak like the world, you do not have to use the same terminology of wicked kids, you do not have to prove anything to anyone except to God Himself. Show respect in your conversation, especially for those that are older than you. Get away from that "smart-alec" attitude where you think you must have the last word. Whether you think they are smart or as dumb as a

fencepost, show them the respect that is due them for they are older than you are, have been through more, and you will eventually realize they are probably a lot smarter than you in the ways of the world. Watch your conversation to your parents, for to fulfill the commandment of honoring your father and mother means you treat them with respect in word and in deed. Act in a manner that shows the example of how a young Christian boy or girl should act. Watch the temper, watch throwing fits...

**2.** Be an example in charity or love for others. Treat others in the manner in which you would desire to be treated. Learn to do for others instead of always expecting others to do for you - this will show the benevolent love that each Christian should exhibit. Help others, encourage others, lift others up - all these are indicative of love for others. I do not mean to embarrass nor do I mean to place someone on a pedestal in order to give them the big head, but let me tell you about two young girls that befriended my wife and I almost 40 years ago and even though they received some ridicule for this, they stayed with it and we have been close ever since. They were an example of love to us and because of that, among other things, we hold them in high respect and love them today. That was Darena and Debbie. When other teenagers were finding ways to get into trouble, they were hanging around some "old" people, cause we were in our late 20's and early 30's at that time with two small children. As young people, show Christian love to others. Let me encourage you as young people, find some godly "older" people and become their "friend", not a pest - it will be a benefit you and to those you have befriended.

**3.** Then be an example in your walk with God, in your spirit -- that is, in controlling yourselves, your passions, your appetites and demonstrating an humble and willing to forgive disposition. Do not go around with a "chip on your shoulder", do not demonstrate a "spirit" that would be derogatory as a child of God. Do not be overly boastful, arrogant, or prideful, rather realize what talent you may possess came from God, not because of your own personal worth. And as easily as God gave you talent, He can also remove the talent, so walk worthily and humbly before your God and man. Do whatever you can, no matter how small or insignificant or even silly you may think it is to work for the Lord while you are young. Don't think living the Christian walk is some kind of "burden you must bear" -- it is an honor and a privilege.

**4.** Show an example in your faith, show the world your unshaken confidence in God. Read His word to understand, then believe His word. Show by your actions that you believe God. Remember the case of David facing the giant, Daniel facing the lions, Joseph facing imprisonment and others and keep your faith strong. Do not allow "things" to cloud your faith or weaken your faith but understand "If God said it, you can believe it!" Most of you have enough faith in your parents that you do not worry about your next meal or where your clothes come from, etc., Realize God can do far more than your parents can do and even if your parents "let you down" or are not able to supply what you think you need, God will give you what you need. Not just your desires, but your needs. So have faith in "God."

**5.** Then in this world in which we live, guard your purity. Do nothing in your contact with other boys or girls that would give rise to some scandal or would result in something disrespectful. As you grow into those teen years and beyond, understand what is happening with your desires and as a young person, learn the necessity of controlling those desires. Do not place yourself in a knowingly difficult situation what you would be tempted to become involved in those things that would be displeasing to God. Young people will eventually want to date or be in the company of the opposite sex and this normal. Treat each other with the respect that they are due and as you would want to be treated. Do nothing to harm your reputation nor the reputation of those you are with, therefore be on the guard at all times and do not allow personal appetites to override common sense.

**CONCLUSION:** Paul was concerned over Timothy - I am concerned over the youth of this church for you are an important part of this church and should the Lord tarry, you are the next generation that will take over this church. Paul told Timothy to be an example: Young people, be an example of a believer. Show your generation and the generation in charge now that you will live in a manner that will show forth the grace of God has not been wasted on your lives, rather you are going to be the best Christian it is possible for you to be. Do not waste your lives, do not make foolish mistakes while young that will affect the remainder of your life. You will make mistakes on the way to heaven, but there are some things a young person can become involved in, if they are not careful, that will cause heartaches for their whole life - be on the guard. Let other young people see Christ in you, let other people see a life that is in balance, sensible, pure, contented and shows wisdom beyond your age. If you do this, you will be glorifying God. Find Him young, give your life to Christ while young, determine to serve Christ while young, do not allow the world to turn you away from Christ and you will have a life with purpose, with reason, with stability, with respect and with honor. May God bless the youth of this church!