

Youth

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- [0 : 0 0] Anyway, he's a great guy. He's going to be a great blessing to you. And he's a much better comedian than me. So John, why don't you come up to the stage and lead us forward. I don't know. That was pretty good. I'll take it.
- John Bon Jovi, Man of Mystery. I've never been introduced like that, so thank you. Although the youth, they do call me John Bon. It's like a thing. So now that I revealed that, I feel like now I'm going to get emails.
- Dear John Bon. Well, yeah, like Elliot said, I'm from the eSight, and I do help give lead to the youth. Please, we're going to dive pretty much right in. You guys have made me feel so welcome.
- And I've got a lot to say, so I want to keep us moving here. So I do have the privilege of jumping back into our series, Fruitful, that we've been in for a couple months now, which we're getting ready to actually land and finish up here in the next couple weeks.
- And we're looking at Scripture to help us make the most of specific seasons in our life. Because every aspect of our life is enhanced when it comes under the gospel.
- [1 : 0 4] Not just some of them, but every aspect of our life is enhanced when it comes under the gospel. And so this morning, we're going to look at how to make the most of being a youth.
- Now before, you know, if you're like, oh, that's not me. I'm out of here. I'm going to brunch. Let the young people stay. Okay, I do want us to, I want to challenge you to lean in.
- Because like we have mentioned probably most weeks is that we're all part of the body. And that one part is hurting, they're all hurting. And one is honored, they're all honored. And so we actually, a lot of us have a role.
- Whether we're in that youth stage or we're out of it, we all have a role to play. But I want to help us give a little language to it. Because some of you, in one sense, might have a framework or think you have a framework for what youth is.
- It's over there. It's kids ministry. Or it's middle school and high school. Or it's anybody younger than me. And I want to help just give a little bit of framework to that to help us just understand a little bit about what scripture says about it.
- [2 : 0 2] And so some of us might be thinking, am I a youth? Am I an adult? I'm not 100% sure. But I think a couple things will be helpful for us to understand what do I mean when I'm talking about youth.
- Well, I think one is that you might be in both camps. You might be in both camps. I'm going to use the language youth and adult this morning. You might be in both camps.
- Now, what do I mean by that? Well, our main passage that we're going to look at this morning in Timothy, he says, Don't let anyone despise you for your youth. And that word youth actually means youthfulness and youthful age.
- And many scholars actually believe that the one who was receiving that, Timothy, was probably in his mid to late 20s, even his 30s when he received that. And so that's one sense.

And the other one, our culture, we often toggle back and forth between the word youth. We have here at One Harbor, we have youth group, which we have in age four. That is specifically middle school and high school, grades 6 through 12, kind of 11 to 18 years old.

[3 : 06] And actually much of what I'm going to say when I'm speaking to the youth is directed to that group of youth this morning. However, there's plenty of overlap between our young adults, down at 20s and 30s, as we have a young adult ministry here at One Harbor.

And many folks would refer to them as youth and youthful. And many of our cultural expectations actually apply to that group as well. And so I challenge everyone to lean in because here's the reality.

One is that there are roles for both sides to play. There are roles for the youth to play right now. And there's a role for adults to play to the youth.

So that's one. One, the other one is if you're not a youth anymore, you've kind of, you've got that framework built up. You're not, you're out of that. You actually believe it, believe it or not, you were once in that stage of life and have plenty of life experience to come alongside of the youth and help them walk alongside of you.

And so this morning, how it's going to work, I'm going to give five points, five to the youth and five to the adults. And so we're going to pretty much jump right in. But before we look at that passage that I mentioned about scripture, it would be helpful to know what is the world saying about youth today, the next generation?

[4 : 23] Because we probably came in here, as soon as I said youth, we probably came in here or at least had some thoughts run through our head of our understanding or our perception, our viewpoint of youth.

And some of that might be formed by the culture we live in. We live in a culture that promotes comfort and not challenge. We live in a culture that asks the question, what can be done for me?

Not the other way around. Not what I can do for others. And so what has happened is that promotion of culture has drip fed its way down to the younger generations, where now the expectations of our younger generations are actually quite low, if not non-existent.

So what's the immediate consequence of that? Well, it's one where the older generations now can simply ignore and dismiss the younger generations or, worse yet, can despise them and grow bitter towards the younger generations because of that promotion of culture that has drip fed down.

Now, on the other hand, younger generations, because of that viewpoint of culture, can not see themselves as valuable. They cannot see themselves as needed. They cannot see themselves as worthy to make significant contributions, not just to the world but to God's kingdom, until they become of age, whatever that is.

[5 : 46] And so the youth can be seen as, and maybe some of this resonates with you. I think Elliot had already listed some of these things. But maybe you see the next generation as needy, as not useful, as not really able to contribute, as being annoyed by them because of everything you see on social media.

Maybe you see them as entitled. Maybe you do actually have a sense of despising the younger generations in you. Now, to be fair, some adults can speak out of both sides of their mouth.

Youth, that was your amen. You missed it. Okay? Don't worry. The nine missed it, too. It's okay. Because what do I mean by adults can speak out of both sides of their mouth? Well, it's our view of these because, on one hand, adults, we actually celebrate youth and youthfulness and often wish that we were young once again.

That is why the 1984 hit, Forever Young, is still popular. Feel free to hum that throughout this time. But at the same time, we can then often dismiss the younger generations for not being mature or for them not being what we want them to be.

And youth, your viewpoint of yourselves, of that generation, might be like, yeah, I'm actually not able to contribute to society because of what the world is telling me.

[7 : 07] Or, actually, this is just a time it's all about me. It's a time for me to think about myself, to skate on by until I actually have to contribute or until I'm taken seriously.

Now, my prayer for this morning is to actually hear what Scripture is calling the next generation to and our role as adults in that. Because here's the thing.

Living for the glory of Christ is not on hold until some specific age. There's a way right now for six-year-olds over in kids' ministry to make much of Jesus. There's a way for our youth, that 11 to 18-year-old, right now to make much of Jesus.

There's a way for young adults building their career to make much of Jesus right now. There's also a way for parents in this room and adults in this room and for others out in the world to create a matrix of relationships, to create a matrix of teachings and expectations and blessings that will help awaken our young people from this emptiness that our pop culture gives and give them a Christ-exalting significance throughout their preteen, teen, and young adult years.

And so, youth, how can you begin to shift your lens and your understanding of what the world and culture says about you? And adults, how can we shift our lens to walk alongside the younger generations?

[8 : 32] Is there perhaps a role for us to play? And so, with that being said, youth, I'm going to speak to you first. But adults, don't tune out because there's a way for you to keep them accountable through this and vice versa when we get to your turn.

So, if you have your Bibles, go ahead and turn to 1 Timothy 4, verse 12. This is where we're going to spend a lot of our time this morning. You may have heard of this before.

And so, with all these expectations, all the viewpoints of what the world is saying about our young generation, what does Scripture say about the youth years?

In this passage, we have an aging apostle named Paul who is writing to a younger generation protege, Timothy. He says this, 1 Timothy 4, 12.

Let no one despise you for your youth. But set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

[9 : 34] So, remember, Timothy was likely in his 20s and 30s there. And people would have looked down on him. And Paul knew that, and that's why he was writing to that.

But I love what Paul is implying here. He's saying, no, no, no, it's not your age that matters. What matters is that you're in Christ. And because you're in Christ, you have significance and a purpose right now. Youth, the same is true for you.

There's a calling for you. There's an expectation for you right now. So, what does that look like? Well, it starts right here in this verse. There's a call for you. But before we jump in, apply, and run, and charge the mountain, we just need to pause.

And like Paul did with Timothy, is we need to first, youth, you must first know your value. So, before you go and defy what the world is saying, first, you just must sit in your value.

Because the world's going to tell you one of two things. One, it's going to tell you of your value. Or it's going to say, you know what? Just make it up yourself. Make up your value. But you have to know your value in Christ.

[10 : 39] What is God actually saying about you as a person, as a contributor to his kingdom, to your contributor as a contributor in society? What is God saying about you as a young person in a specific culture, in a specific age?

God says, for I know I have the plans for you. He's not referring just to plans way down the road for you. He's referring to plans right now for you. Now, youth, did you know you won't even find the word adolescent or teenager in Scripture?

Now, don't point that out now to say, like, yep, this was about youth, but sorry. Come back next week or in a few years, and maybe you'll have something. I actually say it as an encouragement.

Well, why? On two occasions, Paul, at least two occasions, Paul talks about being a child and being youth. One is the passage we just looked at. The other one, look at 1 Corinthians 13, 11 with me.

It says, when I was a child, I spoke like a child. I thought like a child. I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. What he didn't say, he did not say this.

[11 : 47] When I was a child, I spoke like a child. I thought like a child. I reasoned like a child. But then I became a teenager. And I looked like an adult. I sounded like an adult. But I still acted like a child.

It's in none of the translations. You can fact check that. What we find here, though, is clear evidence that God doesn't hold two standards. He doesn't hold a standard for teens, preteens, teens, and young adults, and then older adults over here.

He actually has high expectations for both sides. Where some might look down and excuse our teens and our young adults, God actually calls you to be examples, which leads us to our second point.

You see, the back half of the passage says, set the believers an example. So number two, youth, you're called to be an example. There's something for you to do right now.

It can often feel like in our world that, one, no one is really looking at you or paying attention to you because of your age, whether it's 11, 17, 25.

[12 : 55] And you're simply told, don't do this, don't do that. And your life is all about not doing things, not doing bad things. But what if I told you that your life, that Christianity is actually way more than just some don'ts.

It's actually quite a lot of do's as well. Right now, you're called to be an example. And I love this language. To all believers. In what you say.

In the way that you live. In the way that you love others. In your faith. In your integrity. So it doesn't just mean that you're keeping out of trouble.

I do recommend that. It is some helpful advice. That's free. Take it home. And it doesn't just mean that you're being an example to your peers.

It says all believers. Right? Right. Younger peers. Older. Theologian Dwight Schrute from The Office. He says, in the Schrute family, the youngest child always raises the rest.

[14 : 01] I've been raising kids since I was a baby. Now, as funny as that is, what we see is actually age not being the factor here. There is a way right now, younger generations, for you to be an example to all of those around you.

To your parents. To your pastors. To your coaches. To your community leaders. To your youth leaders. To your teachers. To your bosses. And beyond. Now, the world has little expectation for you to be an example.

But remember, living for the glory of Christ is not on hold until you become a certain age. And the reality is, people are actually watching you.

They're looking at you. So, give the older generation no good cause for despising your youth. Be an example.

Now, that advice can be a little bit hard or a little bit challenging. Why? It's because it requires you to quiet the critics, the older generations, by not just your words, but by your conduct.

[15 : 06] I love this quote from Plato, who was falsely accused of dishonorable conduct. And here was his response. He said, well, we must live in such a way that all men and women will see that the charge is false.

In other words, youth, simply verbally defending your age might not silence the criticism. But conduct, by the way you act, will.

That's why Paul tells Timothy to be an example. So, right now, there's a way for you to speak kindly and respectfully to others. Right now, there's a way for you to live a life that honors God.

Right now, there's a way that you can live life that seeks the good of others. Right now, there's a way that you can lead without having titles around your name. Right now, you can teach other believers with your life.

Now, that doesn't mean being an example is easy, right? Well, why is that? Well, two things. One, it requires you to push back against sin in your life.

[16 : 13] And two, it requires you to push back against what the world is telling you. Things like, think only about yourself. Things like, don't sacrifice your time for other people.

It's too important. Be responsible for yourself. Or, you know what? Just simply go along with the popular decision. Make life easier for everybody around you.

And so, in order to be an example, point number three, you must confidently and firmly stand against culture. Whose expectations and standards are you living by?

Are you living by cultures, which is filled and entrenched with things like, you do you? You've probably heard that. Or, worry about yourself. Or, are you living by God's standards and expectations?

Romans 12, 2 says, don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way that you think.

[17 : 17] When you will learn, then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Younger generations, as you no doubt know from personal experience, the world around you is telling you how to act, telling you how to think, telling you how to look, telling you how to talk.

You don't have to go very far to see that. But if the only measure of success is other people's standards and expectations of what is acceptable, of what is true, then you're never going to reach your God-given potential.

Meaning, what he has for you in this life. So, in order to do that, we've got to stop comparing ourselves. We've got to stop looking around.

We've got to stop listening to culture and ask ourselves, what is God saying? What does he have for me right now? Because God says he brings life abundantly. And so, when we lean on God for strength and his understanding, we can experience God and his plan fully.

Now, this isn't just good advice that I've been sleeping on as I've been prepping. And I'm like, you know what? I wish I would have known this or been told this. This will be great for him. Stand against culture.

[18 : 36] We actually see young people in Scripture stand against culture all the time. You may have heard of the story of Daniel, right? The children's ministry story, Daniel in the lion's den.

And way before that story, Daniel and his friends were ripped up and taken to a foreign land by the Babylonians. And the Babylonians were doing a couple of things.

They were trying to impose their culture on them. They were trying to instill all these things around them. And they did that by doing things like changing their name.

They did that by trying to teach them a literature and language and food and all of these things. But what we see is Daniel and his friends, who were teenagers, take a stand against a ruthless king.

Or at least a king who had their lives in his hands. What they took a stand against is the food that was being fed to them.

[19 : 39] What a stance. Food, right? That was my reaction. But why was that so important? Why was that a big deal? Well, by rejecting the food, they were ultimately rejecting the Babylonian culture and direct orders from the king who held their life in his hands.

Also, it was a big deal because in Jewish culture, certain foods were forbidden by law and considered to defile you if you consumed them. So Daniel and his friends decided to reject the orders of the king.

To stand up against cultural norms. And not give in to the pressure. Imagine the immense pressure. And they chose not to give in to the pressure around them in order to retain their identity and beliefs as people of God who God told them they were.

You too might feel pressured at school or at work or wherever you are to compromise your standard and live more like the unbelieving world around you.

But just as Daniel continued to honor and obey God in a culture that rejected God, you too can stand up for God's absolute truths in your life.

[20 : 51] Amen? Amen? Amen. You can take a stand against culture in a loving and respecting way, just like Daniel did. The king and Daniel actually had a pretty good relationship.

Now, if you don't, if you don't take a stand against culture, what is at stake for you? What was at stake for Daniel? Well, you can read the entire book of Daniel. I encourage you to do so. And there are some amazing stories of how God came through in Daniel's faithfulness of his life.

And so you might miss out on some amazing stories of what God has for you and how God is with you in your life. But you also might end up, if you don't stand against culture, simply looking like culture in the world around you.

Now, what do I mean by that? Well, I think Galatians gives us a good little snapshot of what the world looks like. It reads this, chapter 5, verses 19 through 21.

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear. Here we go. Sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these.

[22 : 09] And so in order to not become like the world, in order to stand against culture, you have to let God break into your life. To heed his call when he says, trust him, that he has a plan and a purpose for your life.

Now, another way to stand against culture is to know that it's not you against the world. There's actually lots of people around you to encourage you, to follow.

And so as you take a stand against culture, you have to pay attention to who you are watching, who is influencing you. Next point, you have to look to godly role models in your life.

Deion Sanders, Mr. Primetime, current college football coach, former NFL Hall of Famer. On the news at the beginning of the college football season, Colorado has not performed overly well, so it's kind of drifted.

But he was in the news quite a bit at the beginning of the season. But in an interview from last year, one asked, who would you have your kids watch as a role model on and off the field?

[23 : 17] He's talking not about just his biological kids. He's talking about his football team. He paused and he said, Jesus. Man, what an answer.

Peter, in his letter, wrote this. He said, Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you may follow in his footsteps.

I love that. Right there. That's a good one. But Deion continued on in his interview and he said this. You have to realize that the people that you are cheering for, the things that you are clapping for, the things that you are idolizing, aren't role models.

They are models playing a role. You don't know who they are. You get to watch them do what they are gifted at for a couple of hours, whether on a stage, on a court, on a field, or whatever.

But what happens to the other 22 hours of the day? He continues on and says, see, that's where the problem occurs. That's where the trappings of life occur.

[24 : 20] And so often we fall into those trappings. And then he calls out the older generations. He says, I would advise parents to be that role model for your child. But then he brings it back to the current generations.

He said, or youth, for you to be that role model for your friends or for your homies. I think they're the same thing. That person who looks up to you and looks out for you.

You need to be that person. And I love how he finishes. He says this. A role model should be someone you can touch. So younger generations, pay attention to who you're watching.

Pay attention to who you're listening to on a daily basis. Who are those people? Write them down. Jesus calls us to listen to his voice. Paul says, follow me as I follow Christ.

We often become like the people we spend the most time around. Who we're listening to and we're watching. And so if that is true, which it is, who are you becoming like?

[25 : 25] Who do you watch online? Who do you listen to? Because if you are called to be an example to all believers, then you want to and you need to be mindful of role models who you can follow as they follow Christ.

Start thinking of them right now. Some of them might be in this room. Who are the role models in your life? Older generations, are you that role model to come alongside of somebody and walk next to them?

Now the expectations of today's culture is for you not to care about the last four points that I just said. To be an example to other believers. To stand against culture.

To chase after him. To care about who you're watching and who's influencing you. And even if you do understand it, the world doesn't expect you to care. And even if you do care, the world doesn't expect you to do anything about it.

And even if you do something about it, the world does not expect it to last. But final point, youth, don't settle for the low expectations of culture. Culture doesn't get to set the expectations for your youth.

[26 : 37] Jesus does. Amen? Listen to the way that God and Jeremiah argue about Jeremiah's call when he was young. Always good to get in an argument with God.

Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 6 and 7 say this. Then I say, Lord God, behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.

But the Lord said to me, do not say, I am only a youth. For to all to whom I send, you shall go. And whatever I command, you shall speak.

Youth, be careful that you don't postpone the blessing of fruitfulness in your life because you're using the excuse, I am only a youth. Right?

Jeremiah, God said to Jeremiah, don't say those things. There are some people younger than you that you can lead and that you can be an example to. There are people your age that you can lead and be an example to.

[27 : 39] And there are people older than you that you can lead and be an example to. One pastor said, do not say I am only a youth as though the only thing you are good for is watching YouTube videos or playing games or gossiping about celebrities as though there is no ministry work for you to do.

So let me land with this question for you. Do you want to merely survive your teen and young adult years? Or do you want to thrive in them and everything that God has for you?

If so, what things right now can you do today that will have an internal impact for the sake of the gospel? So youth, there is more to life right now than the world claims.

Now don't get me wrong, being youth is amazing. There's a reason why God just didn't spit us out all as 40-year-olds and run, right? He himself came into this world and grew up as a young person.

There is a reason why he created pockets and seasons of life because they all have beauty and significance in them. Ecclesiastes 11.9 says, Rejoice, O young man, in your youth and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.

[28 : 50] Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things, God will bring you into judgment. Started really lighthearted and got a little bit heavy there at the end.

Why? Well, in other words, what is being said is know that the things in your life that you do right now matter. So do things in your life right now that do foster relationships with other people.

Foster your relationship with the Lord. But don't for a moment think that you can't be impactful at this age. You can and should do the power of the Holy Spirit that lives in you, the same as somebody in their 40s, 70s, or beyond, is in you and that allows you to be an example to younger, current, and older generations.

He has created you to be a blessing, to be a gift to others. So don't wait until our culture says you're of age to lead.

Your time is now. Adults, five points for you. What is our role in all of this? What do the younger generations and the youth have to do with us?

[30 : 07] We did our time. Now, younger generations, don't tune me out because now you can hear something to help keep the older generations accountable. Okay?

So if you lean back, lean back forward. What does Scripture say about the next generation? This is a good place for us to start. It says quite a bit, but I want to start with a prayer from the book of Psalms.

Psalms 71, 18 says this. So even to old age and gray hairs, oh God, do not forsake me until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come.

So there's a calling to pass on the gospel to the next generation. And if we don't, there's a lot at stake, which we'll come to in a minute.

Now, as much as 1 Timothy, our passage that we were reading this morning, is written to somebody in their young age and for the youth, it's very much a two-part charge.

[31 : 04] What do I mean by that? Well, the first part is for younger generations. Gen Z, Gen Alpha is the newest generation, bragging rights on their name right away.

Gen Z, you got the end of the alphabet. And to a certain degree, remember that charge is also for millennials, those young adults. You kind of are in both camps. But the second charge is for older generations.

Again, millennials, but to Gen X and baby boomers and to those before them. It calls adults to not despise the young.

Okay? Not just the young people to not be despised, but the other side is that it's for older generations not to despise the young. When we give the younger generation the benefit of the doubt, when we push back against what culture is saying, that everything that is wrong with the world is the younger generation's fault, when we push back against that, we actually get to set the gospel-centered tone for how younger generations are viewed and ultimately treated.

Now, to be clear, when I say despise the youth, I don't just mean sitting on your porch with a cup of coffee, moaning and groaning about the younger generations. That is one way.

[32 : 20] But another way is by dismissing their zeal for God. We can say or think something like, oh, they'll outgrow that. I remember when I was young.

As if that's a good thing. Instead, we should be inspired by them. Let that be an example to us. We should say, oh, what zeal and vigor you have for the Lord.

I want some of that. Keep going. And we have the opportunity to come alongside of them and not squash their zeal, but simply offer wisdom and guidance to walk alongside of them.

Now, in order to not despise the youth, point number two, adults, we have to seek to understand the youth. Rather than despising the youth and seeing all the brokenness in the world and the seemingly ways they're contributing to it, our lens should change.

Our perspective should become, if the world is going to change, it's God's working through the next generation. We must seek to understand what they are going through. What it's like to grow up in a world where they have more information, more truth, at their fingertips than ever before.

[33 : 30] We actually see Jesus and Paul and other prophets and other apostles do this in Scripture. A quick example is in the book of Acts. Paul's in Athens, and he's speaking to non-believing Greeks.

This comes from Acts chapter 17. You can read it more on your own. But he's speaking to non-believing Greeks, specifically a group of philosophers, basically people wildly different than him.

He meets them in the marketplace and he engages with them. He debates with them and he ultimately presents the gospel to them. And Paul was able to do this simply because he studied and learned their culture.

Instead of being outraged and offended by what he was hearing, he actually took that and used that as a way to begin a discussion, to speak to them on terms that they would understand that would point them back to Jesus.

He wasn't changing, wandering down, or ignoring parts of the gospel. Rather, he was simply changing the ways he communicated and showed the relevance of the gospel to that younger generation.

[34 : 34] There are a lot of things that the younger generations go through. A world telling them what they should be, what is good, what is real, what is true, what to give their time and attention to.

I mean, just a quick example, the mass confusion around identity is rampant in our culture. This includes confusion around gender, sexual orientation, finding identity through being an influencer on Instagram or on YouTube.

All these things are squeezing them. Remember, they have truth that it is at a rapid pace coming to them, something that none of us faced growing up due to dial-up internet.

We must seek to understand them in order to help them stand against culture. We have to understand what they're going through. Are we walking alongside of them or are we shouting from a distance?

How many of us, like Paul, have studied, sought to comprehend the culture around us, to understand for us American pop culture in such a way that allows us to engage with the youth?

[35 : 50] Now, as we engage with their cultural moment and their time, in order to help foster what they are capable and called to, we have to, point number three, create space for our youth.

In a way, what you guys are already doing this morning, with Asher and Riley leading us in worship. Well done, guys. Thank you for doing that. It's amazing. Because the reality is, before long, the younger generation is going to be driving the ship.

And for the advancement of the gospel and for the good of the church tomorrow, but also today, we need to create space for them at the table. Where are areas that they can lead? Where are areas that they can speak and be heard?

Where are areas that they can sit at the adult table? I always long for that moment at Thanksgiving to sit at the adult table. I found out a way. You just host Thanksgiving and you can sit at whatever table you want.

Older generations, look for ways at the younger generations behind you, not to be frowned upon, but to walk alongside of them and to stir their faith so they can make much of Jesus well after you're gone.

[37 : 02] The expectations are low for our culture, for the youth. So let's raise the bar church family. Let's expect them to lead.

Let's expect them to be godly examples. Let's expect them to serve the kingdom. Now, the youth and the younger generations are always watching and looking at what values are important to chase after once becoming an adult.

We can say all these things, but they're watching us. And so we need to show that the continuation of the gospel, of living for him, is of the utmost importance. And in order to do that, point number four is we have to be an example.

It's not just the young who are called to be an example. We are too. In order to be an example, that means we have to be present. That means we have to be available.

That means we have to be intentional. That means we have to be sacrificial with our time. Remember, a role model should be somebody that you can touch. This could look like a one-on-one mentorship. Maybe there's people in your mind that you are walking with or can think about walking with.

[38 : 10] This can look like intentional parenting, which I know many of you are doing. This could look like coaching. Or this could look like shameless plug serving in our youth ministry. We'll be in the back afterwards if you want to join the team.

One of my favorite bands is Switchfoot. It doesn't matter if you know them or not. They've been around for a while. But I was actually originally going to talk about these lyrics when speaking to the youth.

But I think they apply quite well talking to the adults. The lyrics go like this. I think they're on the screen behind me. Life is more than money. Time was never money. Time was never cash.

Life is still more than girls. Life is more than girls. Life is more than hundred dollar bills and roto tom fills, drums. Life is more than fame and rock and roll and thrills.

All the riches of the kings end up in wills. Now that's great. Great advice. And we can often tell the youth and the younger generations, live this way.

[39 : 08] Listen to my experience. It's not worth it. But then we fail to practice those things ourself. You see, being an example means that we have to be practicing and living out truth in both word and deed.

I think Psalm 145, a few verses here, gives some encouragement and guidance in the matter. Let me read this over us. Key verse here, number five.

On the glorious splendor of your majesty, on your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of your might and of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud your righteousness. Now there's a lot of doing in that passage, declaring and speaking and pouring out and singing and all of these things.

But it comes from meditating on God and his wondrous works. Now why is that important? Because as we meditate on everything that the Lord has done in our life, in his goodness, that begins to overflow from us.

[40 : 21] And we begin to share stories of who God is and what he's done for us. From our experiences with the Lord, as we share them, those begin to permeate into the lives of the younger generations.

And they too can see what the Lord has done and that there is in fact something better to live for. So let us be a church that can confidently say, be imitators of me as I am of Christ.

Now we aren't always around our youth. We're not always around teens and young adults. And so like we did this morning, last point is we have to pray for our youth.

And let it not just be in one moment, but let us take that back and let us pray for them on a daily basis. Psalm 144 verse 12 says this, May our sons and their youth be like plants full grown.

King David's praying for his children and our children. But what exactly does he mean? Pastor John Piper summarizes it beautifully. It says this, He's praying that the strength and fruitfulness of the more mature plant will already show itself in his sons.

[41 : 31] Here we go. Even while they are young and the expectations for such fruitfulness are low. Should that not be our prayer all the more? May our sons and daughters and their youth be like plants full grown.

So as the band comes up, I said, If we don't do these things, there's a lot at stake. There's a lot at stake if we don't do these things. Look at me with Judges, the book of Judges chapter 2 verse 10.

Read this sobering passage with me. And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.

How could that happen? Pretty easy. The adults did not pass on the history of the great works of God. They did not meditate on who God is and what he's done.

They did not pass on the life of God in their midst. This happens today. There are staggering numbers of kids and young adults who leave, who graduate and go on and walk away from the church. Simply because they don't have an understanding of who God is.

[42 : 48] We prayerfully would like to be the kind of church where that, where students and young people walk away from the Lord, is not the norm. Amen? Amen? Amen. Amen. Amen.

heart, for the generations that are coming up, for all of history to know who you are. And Lord, I thank you that that comes from a place of overflow from our heart. Lord, I pray that you will stir our hearts and our affections for you this morning, and that we see that you are who is worth living for, not what the world says to chase after.

So Lord, continue to do work in our hearts this morning. We pray this in your name. Amen.