**Let No One Despise Your Youth**

*1 Timothy 4:12*

**Introduction**

1. The youth are faced with unique challenges in life. These are often forgotten, overlooked, or minimized by those who are older.
2. This dynamic opens the door for some youths being despised due to an unfair stigma attached to their generation, or their own folly.
3. Paul told Timothy that he had a responsibility in this – **1 Timothy 4:12**
4. The youth must understand that they belong to God, and they are responsible before Him now. There is much they can do for the kingdom, and much they can avoid by devoting themselves to God early.
5. The Command and Execution
6. The Implication of Characteristics Typical of Youth
   1. **1 Timothy 4:12** – the command gives an implication that the youth can be looked down upon by others.
      1. ***“YOUR youth”*** – indicates that Timothy is atypical and should maintain his status.
      2. Paul’s early encounter with Timothy showed as much – **cf. Acts 16:1-3**
   2. Youths can be foolish – **Proverbs 22:15** – ignorance, needing guidance, naïve, etc.
   3. Youths can be prideful – **1 Corinthians 4:8** – thinking they are somehow smarter, wiser, etc. than older generations. (EX: Rehoboam rejecting advice of elders, and turning to peers.)
   4. Youths can be self-centered – **2 Timothy 3:2, 4**
   5. Youths can be wasteful – **Luke 15:11-13**
   6. Youths can be imprudent – **Ecclesiastes 11:9-10; Luke 16:9-12**
   7. Youths can be impure – **2 Timothy 2:22**
   8. Youths can be earthly minded – **Colossians 3:2; 1 John 2:15-17**
7. The Responsibility Placed on the Youth
   1. **1 Timothy 4:12** – the command is one, but with two sides:
      1. **Negative** – Let no one…
         1. Paul is not implying that we can control what others say or do.
         2. Paul is telling Timothy to avoid providing occasion for anyone to look down on him through typical youthful behavior.
      2. **Positive** – But be an…
         1. Example – i.e. a model of godly behavior – **cf. 1 Timothy 4:7-8**
         2. ***“to the believers”*** – **cf. 1 Timothy 3:15-16** – conduct befitting members of the church according to the mystery.
   2. I.e. this is not instruction for those in Ephesus where Timothy was left to preach (though they would benefit from reading it), but for Timothy himself.
      1. The worst thing youths can do for themselves and others is to push the responsibility to others.
      2. **Cf. Romans 2:11; Ezekiel 18:4** – God shows no partiality but acknowledges the young just as well as the old.
      3. **Ecclesiastes 12:1** – the youth should live with God in their mind and heart now.
8. Be An Example In
9. Word
   1. **Word** – *logos*; something said (including the thought). (Strong)
      1. What we say matters – **Matthew 12:33-37** (Jesus speaking to Pharisees)
         1. **(vv. 36-37)** – We stand and fall in judgment based (in part) upon our words.
         2. **(vv. 33-35)** – this is because the things we say are manifestations of who we are.
         3. ***“idle word”*** – *argos* – *a* (negative – not) and *ergon* (work) – free from labor, at leisure, therefore unprofitable – “the ‘idle word’ means the word that is thoughtless or profitless.” (Vine)
            1. It is of utmost importance that we THINK before we speak.
            2. ***“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21).***
   2. The tongue is full of potential energy that must be maintained and used appropriately – **cf. James 3:2-5** – “perfect” or complete/mature men have control of their speech.
      1. James 3 warns of the damage the unchecked tongue can cause.
      2. However, while great potential for harm exists, so there exists potential for good. (**v. 9** – capable of good and evil. Should not be forked, but single – for good)
      3. Therefore, our tongue must be governed
   3. ***“Whatever you do in word…do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17).***
   4. **Avoid**:
      1. **Blasphemy** (**cf. Colossians 3:8**) – (a) slander, detraction, speech injurious to another's good name; (b) impious and reproachful speech injurious to the divine majesty. (Thayer)
      2. **Filthy language** (**cf. Colossians 3:8**) – foul speaking, low and obscene speech. (Thayer) “**But more often it indicates all foul-mouthed abusiveness of every kind**…**includes therein every license of the ungoverned tongue employing itself in the abuse of others” (R.C. Trench)**
      3. **Lying** (**cf. Colossians 3:9**) – to speak falsehood.
      4. **Coarse jesting** (**cf. Ephesians 5:4**) – witty speech which includes sinful insinuations. (Dirty jokes, etc.)
   5. **Pursue**:
      1. **Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29** – grace, and seasoned with salt.
      2. Speech that would edify, and bestow favor on the hearer.
      3. Our speech should be used for the good of others.
10. Conduct
    1. **Conduct** – *anastrophē*; behavior. (Strong)
       1. **Romans 12:1-2** – must be a sacrifice to the Lord, and separate from the world as we are changed by the will of God.
       2. ***“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Philippians 1:27).***
       3. ***“Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” (Ephesians 4:1).***
       4. Our behavior – in ALL that we do – must be fitting for the Christian – is it approved by Christ? – ***“Whatever you do in…deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17).***
    2. **Instruments of righteousness** – **Romans 6:12-14** – i.e. tools to be used in service to God, in the way of righteousness.
       1. **Cf. Isaiah 10:5-7, 15** – Assyria used by God as an instrument of judgment against other nations, and His people.
       2. We need to acknowledge ourselves in that way – we are tools of God.
       3. My body is for the Lord in my conduct, and all He desires of me – **cf. 1 Corinthians 6:13, 20**
    3. **Understanding of stewardship** – **Mattthew 25:14-19, 21, 26** – our entire lives belong to God, and are in entrusted to us to use in His will.
       1. Redeem the time – **Ephesians 5:15-16** – opportunities.
11. Love
    1. Love is the hallmark of discipleship – **John 13:12-17, 34-35**
       1. God is love – **1 John 4:8**
       2. Jesus is God in the flesh – **John 1:14**
       3. If we’re His disciples, we ought to be devoted to love.
    2. Love for God means no reservations for self or others – **Deuteronomy 6:4-5**
    3. Love for others means putting them before ourselves within God’s will – **Philippians 2:3-4**
    4. Love must be pure – **Romans 12:9**
    5. An example of seeing the Lord in others, and loving them accordingly – **1 John 4:20-21; Matthew 25:37-40**
12. Faith
    1. Before the secular humanists, atheists, materialists, etc.
       1. **Hebrews 11:3, 6** – We must believe that God is and then seek Him.
       2. **Psalm 14:1** – We must understand it is foolish not to believe in God.
          1. **Romans 1:20-23** – they became fools in rejecting the evidence/truth and rejecting God.
          2. Not letting intellectuals belittle and intimidate, but stand strong with the evidence.
       3. **Acts 26:24-25** – Paul knew his faith was from truth, and reason.
          1. **Cf. Hebrews 11:1** – understand the nature of faith. (Not without logic, or substance.)
    2. Before religious error – **John 14:6; 1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3** – defend the Lord, and the one way to God.
    3. In personal devotion – **Proverbs 3:5-8** – not relying on own understanding, but walking faithfully with the Lord.
13. Purity
    1. **Purity** – *hagneia;* cleanliness (the quality), i.e. (specially) chastity: — purity; sinlessness of life. (Strong)
       1. From *hagnos* which is from the same as *hagios* – holy – set apart.
       2. **Cf. 1 Peter 1:15-16** – be holy like God. (**cf. 1 John 1:5** – no darkness AT ALL – completely separate)
       3. **1 John 3:4-9** – entirely separate from sin.
          1. Christians are not to be okay with any sin.
          2. There should be ZERO tolerance for sin, and complete abstinence.
          3. **Cf. Romans 13:14** – not even providing for the flesh.
    2. Fleeing youthful lusts – **2 Timothy 2:22; 1 John 2:15-17**
    3. Thinking only on what is godly – **Philippians 4:8-9**
    4. Wary of the company we keep – **1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1**
14. Let No One Despise the Youth
15. Woe to the Offender! – **Matthew 18:6-7**
16. Be an Encourager – **Acts 4:36; 11:22-24**

**Conclusion**

1. God expects great things from young people who have decided to follow the Lord.
2. There will be some who have overtly negative views concerning younger generations, but the youth must not give them cause to despise them.
3. Young people are to live faithfully before their Creator, and become an example to everyone around them.