

## Shepherds & Servants 11

Don't Look Down On The Young

1 Timothy 4:12

Memory Verses: 1 Timothy 4:12

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

For leaders in the church and members of the church body, it is vital that we know what to do, and we know what to look out for. Last week we were warned to not fall victim to legalism. Legalism is dangerous because in many aspects it seems right. It seems religious. But it is merely another distraction to keep us from doing what God has called us to do. Its the same with this morning's topic. If our Leaders are to stay vigilant and steer us towards best practices for accomplishing our goals of depending on Christ to see the lost reached with the gospel and become completely transformed then they must not look down on the young. Look with me today in **1 Timothy 4:12**.

This is a common temptation within the church isn't it, to look down on the young? They are too immature, they are too wild, they aren't disciplined, they aren't focused, they are irrational, moody, and disrespectful. Sure, I get that to some extent. But if we were all honest, at times we all are the same. None of us are where we need to be with Christ, and in that sense we are all his kids. Paul's point to Timothy is simple. You are young which means in some circles you won't be respected. You have to rise above that. You have to rise above the bias of those who can't see what you have to offer because you are young. You must be so respectable that they can't ignore the truth which lives in you.

We don't know how young Timothy was. Most believe he was between 16 and 30. Mary was as young as 14 when she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus. Solomon was 20 when he was called to be a prophet. David was 15 when he was anointed King of Israel. Josiah was 8 when he was called to be king and he turned out to be one of the best kings Israel had ever known. We can't judge someone's worth or value or maturity in Christ based on their age. If we do that we run the risk of missing out on some of our best and most valuable members of the church body.

How can young people rise above the bias of others in the church who look down on them? They must set an example to the believers. Young people can be an example to us. Everyday I am around 5 young people. Canaan, Pierson, Landon, Hudson, and Vera. And everyday I see them showing me how to be a better person. Each of them has a unique quality and gift. If I were to simply ignore those qualities and gifts

because they are young, I would miss some of the greatest examples God has given to me. The point this morning is simple... **When we neglect the examples of young believers we may be ignoring God.**

#### Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to recognize is that... **We Can Hear Words Of Life From Young Believers**. **Proverbs 18:21** says "death and life are in the power of the tongue. Speaking words of life that build up rather than tear down seems to be a struggle for young people. Young people often say what's on the top of their minds rather than thinking about whether it needs to be said. And of course this isn't just a young person problem. As I've said before, I've known many people who are in their 70's and 80's who wear the fact that they always say what's on their mind like a badge of honor. It's not.

But what I've noticed from young believers is that they try to change that narrative by denying the impulse to say what's on their mind. Rather, they try to say things that are honoring to God. When I was in middle school and high school the one thing that set me apart from the non-christian kids was my language. I was always asked, "why don't you cuss?" My answer was always, "I'm a Christian." I think one of the greatest ways Christian young people can stand out is to say things that bring glory to God. When a young person speaks life it can shine a light so bright that others must take notice. Our prayer should be the same as the Psalmist in **Psalm 19:14**, "let the words of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord." Make sure you are listening to young believers and hear the life they are speaking. It will encourage you. **When we neglect the examples of young believers we may be ignoring God.**

The next thing we need to recognize is that **We Can Learn Self-Control From Young Believers**. The way we live is a huge testimony to who we are. Yes, the way we talk is big, but living out what we say is even more important. Again, in school, I tried not to curse as to keep a Christian testimony, but sometimes my life was louder than my words. I got into fights, I had a bad attitude. And that really made people question if I truly was a believer.

What I love about young people is that when they show self-control in their conduct they really get people's attention. Young people are supposed to be impulsive and uncontrollable right? That's what the world thinks. But with Christ it's different. When a young person has a relationship with Jesus they have a motivation to refrain from sin, to refrain from bad conduct. We see this in the way they obey their parents, listen to their teachers, and have good behavior. The behavior of a young believer stands out! Do you have a self-control like that? **When we neglect the examples of young believers we may be ignoring God.**

Next we need to recognize that **We Can See Acts Of Love From Young Believers**. **1 Peter 2:12** says that we are to live in a way that brings glory to God. **John 13:35** says everyone will know we are believers because of our love. When young people talk with love and walk in love their example is love. And love is attractive.

You will often hear young people talk about how they love pizza or Taylor Swift, or some sports team or tv show. When I was a kid I loved Transformers, GI Joe, and Ninja Turtles. But when I went to church I knew true love in the songs we sung and the messages we heard. Even as a child I would lift my hands and cry during the songs. Some things never change. How awesome is it to see a child or a young person who really loves Jesus and loves others in the way they act? It's an example to follow. **When we neglect the examples of young believers we may be ignoring God.**

Next we see that **We Can Recognize Genuine Faith In Young Believers**. The same can be said for a young person who exhibits a true faith in Christ. Kids Vera's age often don't even question a faith in God or Jesus. But when they get to Landon's age they have lots of questions. It's good to have questions. But we don't believe because of logic or evidence, we believe primarily through faith. Jesus tells us to come to Christ with a child-like faith in **Matthew 18:3-4**. Young people have a humility that recognizes they are not all there is in this world... they recognize a need for a big God. Do you have a faith like this? If not look to the young believers and imitate them. **When we neglect the examples of young believers we may be ignoring God.**

Lastly **We Can Share In The Fight For Purity With Young Believers**. Purity is hard. It is hard for us adults but for some of our young people it is the hardest fight they can fight right now. For our kids, we admire their innocence, they don't have any impurity except the occasional tattle or lie. Our students however face peer pressure everyday. Everyday there is a draw to the dark side and to impurity. I admire their fight! I admire how hard it is for Canaan and Pierson to say no to the peer pressure of this world. I love how they are remaining pure and not treating girls like things but like sisters in Christ. That is hard. When I was their age I failed where they are succeeding!

**Psalms 119:9** asks, "how can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word." Our young people are in a fight and they need the word but they also need mentors and people who are in the fight with them. If you would like to join the fight we'd love to have you help in SC Kids or SC Students. Otherwise pray for our kids! Pray they stay strong in Christ and pure in all their ways! Their fight is

something we should commend. **When we neglect the examples of young believers we may be ignoring God.**

### Application

Yes, so here's an elderly Paul, writing to a young Timothy. And his message is... when your age is an issue, set an example. He's telling him to not give into low expectations. The older people in Timothy's church expect him to blow it, to mess up and fail. They have pretty low expectations of him because of his youth. Paul's saying, don't give in to those low expectations, rather elevate their expectations.

Listen, kids and students, you don't have to be a silly ole kid or wild youth kid just cause that's what they think you are. Your attitude instead should be, I'm going to show people I can be an example of godliness. Not for my glory, but so I can give glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. What an amazing opportunity you've got right here, right now, beginning today.

### Conclusion

And for us as a church. Leaders, stop pre-judging young people as worthless. They bring a lot of value and they are examples that God wants us to be looking at. Church, include the youth, watch the youth, disciple the youth, but don't ever look down on them because they are young. They are just as much a part of this church as you are and God has them here as an example to you! **When we neglect the examples of young believers we may be ignoring God.**