

Psalms 129:1 *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say: 2 any a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.*

The Bible speaks to Israel as “from their youth”, afflicted with many things, but fighting to not be drown by them. The remedy for this is the same that God gave Israel, to trust in God, and to seek Him with all their heart, and the frustrations will leave, or they will turn into blessings.

A Time when Everything is New

Job 13:26 *For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.*

When one is a child, their parents decide everything for them, and there is really no problem. But when the person enters the teen years, he thinks he is an adult, and resents everything that others decide for him, from what he is to eat, to what clothes he is to buy and wear, to what household chores he is to do, and all this causes many strong battles between the teen and whatever adult is supervising. It is a pity, but youth is a time of “bitterness and ... iniquities” (**Job 13:26**). It is important for both the teen and those adults responsible for the teen to recognize this process of becoming an adult, and that both works together as the teen takes on more responsibility and makes their own decisions. One is not without the other.

Proverbs 20:29 *The glory of young men [is] their strength: and the beauty of old men [is] the gray head.*

Youth is a time of much energy, strength, and activity. They “get bored” very easily because they always want to go, move, have experiences, and do things. To be quiet and calm is not normal for youth. On the other hand, the “beauty” of age is its experiences and understanding (wisdom).

Ecclesiastes 11:10b *for childhood and youth are vanity.* The idea here is that teens wrongly invest their energy and life in vain things, which have no eternal benefit, and the aged have wisdom, but don't have the

energy to apply it and use it in their old age. Teens live to experience life, and what they invest their lives in is total vanity. What they live for doesn't have spiritual substance that really is a benefit for them neither here and now, nor for eternity.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these [things] God will bring thee into judgment. 10 Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth [are] vanity.*

God wants teens to be happy (rejoice) in their youth, and to enjoy their youth. But God also calls each teen to always remember that God will judge everything that every person does, for good or for evil. Those things that are good in His sight, God will reward the person, and for the things that are not pleasing in His sight (vanity and emptiness of spiritual value are the same as sinful here), God will punish.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;*

God calls each teen to remember that his life is trip, and as this pilgrimage begins, then it will run, and then it will be over. In the end, life is not so beautiful and “fun” as it was in the beginning. In the end, we will have to face God our Creator, who gave us this life and all in it, and then we will have to make an accounting with Him. Also notice that there are specific sins for youth, and these are to be afflicted (frustrated), bitterness, sorrow (vexation or anger), etc. These specific sins are what commonly occur among teens in their road to adulthood. These come from not wanting to accept or receive the spiritual guides God has set in one's life, counselors which God has established to care for and guide teens, counselors like parents, teachers, and pastors that have experience, wisdom, and the principles of God to help them. God commands teens to get rid of these sins, to submit themselves to God, to His principles and commands, and to respect the authorities which God establishes in their life to safely guide them into the ways of God.

Ephesians 6:1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right 2 Honour thy father and mother;*

(which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

God has put your parents in your life as a divine authority to protect and guide you until you gain sufficient wisdom and experience to make all your decisions for yourself. This is not to say that they are dictators in your life forever, but they are spiritual guides to guide you in the way of God, and to protect you from problems and dangers, especially spiritual ones. When you pay attention to this authority placed in your life by God, God promises you “wellness” and “long life”. The attitude itself of seeking wise counsel from older people, people who are wiser and have more experience than you in a matter (even though you may be an adult) is a wise character trait that permits God to help you by wise and godly counsel. **Proverbs 11:14** *“Where no counsel [is], the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors [there is] safety.”* **Proverbs 15:22** *“Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.”* Many teens live frustrated lives in agony because they refuse to accept that they simply don't know about things, they are not all wise, and they refuse to seek sound and wise counsel before making decisions or acting **Proverbs 24:6** *For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors [there is] safety...”*

The Main Problem of Teens

Teen's main problem is that in a way, they are adults with adult problems at times, and consequences that are fully adult problems, and yet in another way, they are adults because they lack the wisdom and experience to deal with these adult tasks. For example, in Proverbs 7, Solomon presents us with the picture of a young man who passes by a harlot, all pretty and advertising herself with offers of sex, and he is easy prey to her. In the reflection, it is observed in **Proverbs 7:7**, that he was “void of understanding.” The teen is marked with the state of “opening his eyes to the world” but still not

understanding how all this works, especially the dangers, tricks, traps, and deceitful of sin and sinful men.

Proverbs 7:10 *And, behold, there met him a woman [with] the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.*

Teenagers trip over their character. They see, they want, they take immediately, and without reflection of the consequences or problems that may come of their actions, they act. If something is attractive or desirable for a teen, he wants it, and his reasoning stops right there. God counsels teens that they go slowly with life, analyzing everything in the light of the Word the God to find wise counsel from wise Christians who have experience and personal victory in their own lives.

Be Wise and Learn

Proverbs 1:4 *To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.*

The book of Proverbs is a book of pure wisdom, given specifically from 1:4 to youth, so that they are intelligent and have discretion. Discretion is to handle a thing with a plan, not as things just happen, but with principles, guidance, and with the purpose of it ending well (for his own benefit and in God's will).

Proverbs 12:1 *Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof [is] brutish.*

Psalms 119:98 *Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they [are] ever with me.*

It is possible that a teen may be wiser than the most intelligent and wisest adult, but this will only happen when he is totally saturated with the Word of God, and he understands it very well, and follows it with all his heart. Tempt tantrums and wild rebellious actions work against this.

Psalms 119:99 *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies [are] my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.*

Obedying the Word of God and the will of God is where true wisdom and understanding begin.

Psalms 119:9 *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed [thereto] according to thy word. 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. 11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

A wise teen is highly occupied and busy about knowing God's will and not sinning, obeying God, and following the morality that God imposes over us, and being found pleasing in His sight.

Youth, Trust in God

Psalms 71:5 *For thou [art] my hope, O Lord GOD: [thou art] my trust from my youth. 17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.*

What gives the blessing of God on somebody is his faith in God. This faith also includes your confidence in God's counsels, positions, standards, and commandments, that they are wise and useful (beneficial) to you every moment of every day. It is a grave problem of youth (and others) when they see their own judgment and will as better than God's "take on a matter." They see Christianity as a product of their parents, and "that generation" which is not "their generation." They don't understand that Christianity is really a relationship with God, with Jesus Christ their Saviour, and that many adults that have no such relationship pretend to be Christians and ruin their own lives and the lives of other around them. Also, they forget that everybody can make mistakes. This happens when one is responsible, but they forget to seek God's will and wisdom before acting. They forget that everyone, young and old, will have to make account with God one day for everything they have said and done. You are not responsible for other's actions, but for your own. Trust God, follow Him, believe in the goodness of God, and God's ways, and you will be happy and blessed always.

Wise Advice for Youth

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The Way Things Are

Genesis 8:21... *for the imagination of man's heart [is] evil from his youth*

Even God Himself recognizes that in this stage of life, the wickedness of the heart begins and really gets going strongly in the human heart.

Youth is a difficult time, whatever the person or his situation. At the age of 13 to 18, the human body undergoes a lot of changes. The hormones start kicking in, and a child becomes an adult. It is a time of transition to an adult which is when the body goes (height) as well as becomes fully functioning. Youth begin to have a sexual life in that they are physically mature enough to have sex, have babies, and they begin to think about this (again their hormones are at work).