

No Adjustments Later

by Lou Sutera

Youth are thoughtless about the most important issues in life, and it's essential to make the most of their youthful years to fulfill their life's purpose.

Topics: "Eternal Perspective", "Fear Of God"

Description

Lou Sutera preaches about the critical issues young people are thoughtless about in life, emphasizing the primary purpose of life as God's loving interlude between two eternities and the importance of restoring the relationship with God. He highlights the brevity of life, the tragedy of wasted talents, and the irreversible nature of some life decisions. Sutera urges youth to consider the kind of God God truly is, emphasizing the need for a reverent fear of God and the consequences of delaying a relationship with Him.

Transcript

I am convinced that young people are thoughtless about six important issues in life. These are issues that, within five years after their teens, they will have wished they had not only thought about while in their teens but had also made them top priority in their thinking.

1. Youth are thoughtless about what life is really all about anyway.

Someone has defined life as "God's loving interlude between two great eternities." After Adam and Eve ruined man's first relationship with God in the Garden of Eden that great eternal morning, God did not need to give the human race another chance. But, in His love, He gave each one of us the opportunity to be reconciled to Him by instituting a period of time on earth wherein we could make a willful individual choice to restore that relationship. God's desire was for us to enjoy His fellowship in the great eternal forever. Thus, life on earth is well identified as God's loving interlude between the great eternal morning when God made man, and the great eternal forever when God wants us to enjoy His fellowship forever.

Everything else in life is secondary to the primary purpose for which life on earth was instituted by God! What a tragedy to have all the secondaries of life in place and yet miss the primary purpose for which life on earth was ordained by God! The devil wants to blind young people to the primary purpose of life and get them taken up with secondaries. If we try to make secondaries provide that which we cannot get unless the primary purpose of life is fulfilled, those secondaries will even lose their true meaning.

A teenager had all this in perspective when he wrote the following poem:

Have You Ever Stopped to Wonder?

Have you ever stopped to wonder

What this life is all about?

Why you're here and where you're going

When your lease on time runs out?

Maybe you've been far too busy,

Trying hard to reach your goal;

Would you let me ask you kindly,

"Have you thought about your soul?"

You may reach the highest portals,

And your dreams may all come true;

Wealth and fame may be your portion,

And success may shine on you.

All your friends may sing your praises,

Not a care on you may roll.

What about the great tomorrow--

Have you thought about your soul?

Don't forget your days are numbered

Though you may be ridin' high;

But like all of us poor mortals,

Someday you'll just up and die.

Your success and fame and glory

Won't be worth the bell they toll.

Let me ask you just one question,

"Have you thought about your soul?"

If you've never thought it over,

Spend a little time today;
There is nothing more important
That will ever come your way,
Than the joy of sins forgiven,
And to know you've been made whole.
In the name of Christ the Savior,
Have you thought about your soul?

The person who lives for this life only will have eternity to regret it. Life is too short to miss its true meaning. What then is life all about anyway? Life is but a moment, but eternity is in it!

2. Youth are thoughtless about the shortness of life.

They think that only people with gray hair are the ones who die, but young people never die! Have you ever heard of a teenager dying? If you know of one teenager who has died, you'd better be aware that you could be number two. Someone has said, "The speed and power of the new cars help to bring places closer together--like this world and the next!" The auto-mobile is no respecter of age.

How OLD must you be to die?

Newspaper headlines read:

"Body Seen Flying as Car Hits Youth on a Hayride." A church was having a hayride for teenagers and four, ages fourteen to sixteen, were killed instantly.

"B.C. School Principal and Five Students Die in a Crash." A Christian school basketball team was enroute to a tournament. Five starting players, and their coach who was the principal of the school, were in the first car, with friends and relatives following them. Suddenly, the first car was involved in a head-on collision and all six passengers died!

"Utility Error Leads to Death of a Child." Somebody pulled the wrong switch on a set of controls and a child was killed.

"Father Finds Son at Motorcycle Accident." Upon hearing a crash down the block, what a shock it was for the father to find his own son dead.

"Twelve-Year-Old Burluson Boy Collapses." He had a physical examination in order to play on the basketball team, but died suddenly while at practice.

A twenty-two-year-old mother went to the altar of a church to dedicate her baby to Jesus, and dropped dead of a heart attack!

A nine-year-old boy and his two older brothers were canoeing on a stream behind their house. Though a storm caused the stream to flood, they thought the water was low enough to be safe. The canoe tipped over--the two brothers were rescued, but the nine-year-old drowned.

A first-year Bible school student began to feel sick, and in a few days she was dead.

The question I ask, "How old must you be to die?" Young people, life is too short to be frittered away. Take advantage of life right now while you have it. It's not safe to go around acting as though you're going to live forever. We never know how short our life may be.

In his last interview before he died, actor Brandon Lee stated it well: "We do not know when we are going to die. We look at life as an inexhaustible well. The world would be a different place and you would see it differently if you could come back one year after you died." (His girlfriend said later that he had had a premonition he wouldn't live past twenty-five, and that was the case.)

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross in a newspaper article stated, "Facing death means facing the ultimate question of the meaning of life. If we really want to live, we must have the courage to recognize that ultimately life is very short and that everything we do counts."

Even at best, life is short. A great preacher who had traveled all around the world was asked, "Now that you are old and you've seen so much in life, what has been the biggest surprise in life?" His astonishing answer was, "The brevity of life itself."

It seems like my own youthful years were but yesterday. They are so vivid in my mind. I have wondered many times, "Where did all the years go?" Young person, don't be thoughtless about the shortness of life. The days of our lives are like the sands through an hour glass.

Life is too short to waste on things that don't matter. Moses wrote, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

How strange it is, then, to hear the expression, "You're young only once," used as an excuse to throw life away.

3. Youth are thoughtless about the tragedy of wasted talents when teenagers.

After my twin brother and I were saved at the age of eight, the burden to witness for Jesus came as a result of seeing Mother and Dad sharing Christ with others. During the week we would fold up Gospel tracts and put them in colored cellophane paper. On Saturdays Mom would take us on a bus to a neighboring town to put a tract under each door. Mother would walk slowly by each house. If she saw someone reading the tract, she'd start a conversation. When we got to the end of the block, we would look back to see where Mom was, and find her talking to someone about Jesus or leading one to salvation. We spent many Saturdays doing that.

I can't tell you the thrill that was ours as twelve-year-olds when we started holding boys' and girls' meetings on Saturday mornings in our basement, leading our friends to Jesus. We would prepare little sermonettes the best way we knew how. What a thrill it is now to look back on those early days of trying to put those little messages together! I wouldn't trade places with any young person who is wasting his God-given talents and abilities and missing the call of God on his life. That is a tragedy!

Some young people already know they are called to the mission field, or that they will be in the Lord's service somewhere. Don't fool around with that call! Make your teen years count in relation to the development and enlargement of God's call on your life. Tune in to the call of God while young and start reaching people now!

When God called me to preach, I knew He had made a colossal mistake because I was the shyest person around. If I walked down the sidewalk and saw someone coming toward me, I would run across the street so I wouldn't have to pass him. If someone just said "hi" to me, my face would turn red and I'd almost "drop dead" on the spot! That's how shy I was when God said, "I want you to preach." I said, "God, I know You've made a terrible mistake." Right? Wrong!

I've learned that if God orders something, He'll pay the bill! Imagine you are in a restaurant and your host says, "Anything you want on the menu is all right with me." Would you choose something from the menu but think, "I wonder if he has enough money to pay for that? I had better look at the other side and order something cheaper; I'm afraid he might not have enough money." No! Your host said, "Anything you order is all right. I'll pay the bill." If God orders something in your life, He will pay the bill!

I had no idea that, within a year from the time God called me to preach, I would be standing before a crowd of two thousand people preaching a short sermon. This was the shy boy who had to walk on the other side of the street, thinking God had made a mistake in calling him to preach.

But you say, "I don't have many talents." God simply wants you to turn over every one of the talents He has given you. You might say, "My talent is just like a little old crooked stick; that's all I have to offer God." Someone else said, "There is no telling what God can do with even a little old crooked stick--if He owns the stick." He already owns your talents but He wants you, by your own willful decision, to give them back to Him. Let Him truly own every talent.

Samuel Morris was a little black boy who came from Africa with the power of God upon him, though he had little education. He came across the ocean to North America, and all he would do was sit in a church meeting and pray. He had such power with God that while he was praying people would weep and get right with God and a revival would break out. People would then ask, "Where did this revival come from?" Nobody knew that the little black boy had prayed it down.

Even though he died at age twenty-one, it was said about him: "It is questionable whether any single life has influenced directly or indirectly a greater number of people than Sammy Morris, who lived only twenty-one years."

How significant! It would have been tragic if Sammy Morris had acted like some of us and said, "When I get to be twenty-one I'll really get serious about walking with God." He would have been dead at the age of twenty-one. We are thoughtless about the tragedy of wasted youthful years. You have those early years of life only once, yet so many young people tragically waste them.

4. Youth are thoughtless of the fact that when youthful years are wasted, opportunities are lost that will never come their way again.

One youthful opportunity is the privilege to make deposits into a bank account. "Oh," you say, "I can go to work and do that. I can get a job and put fifty dollars a week in the bank." But I am talking about a life-reserve bank account. If you waste your teenage days and don't make them count for God, it's going to hit you hard, and it could be sooner than you think.

Another opportunity teenagers have is to prepare to be a parent. You say, "There will come a day when I'll meet a girl or fellow and then settle down. Then I'll really come to grips with my spiritual life and become a serious Christian. I'll have a home and raise children for God, and I'll endeavor to be the best parent I can

possibly be." Do you know what will happen then? You will have no "reserve account" to draw on to minister to your children. When you sit at the supper table they'll say, "Daddy, tell me what you did when you were a teenager. What was exciting in your life when you were a child? Tell me the kind of fun you had and what lessons you learned in life when you were young. Tell me about your Christian experience and how real Jesus was to you when you were a teenager. Daddy, tell me about it."

I speak from personal experience. When I was a teenager I never dreamed that I was building a life-reserve account. I was filling the account with a reserve of experiences for the day my children would say, "Daddy, tell me about it." I thank God I wasn't fooling around when a teenager but was walking with the Lord. I had much to draw upon for examples to my children.

I call my father and mother blessed today because, after their conversion to Christ when I was still a child, I knew that they were totally sold out to God. My brothers, sisters, and I were raised in a home where Jesus reigned supreme, where father and mother and six children all served God together. Our enjoyment was in the things that really mattered. I thank God for those values that were instilled in my heart when I was young to then pass them on to another generation.

But I wouldn't be able to pass those values on to my own flesh and blood simply by remembering my parents' example. I've had to apply them to my own life. The devil never tells you this when you're fooling around as a teenager. I never thought about things like this while I was in my teen years. I'm glad I didn't do as others who wasted their teenage days without making deposits into a life-reserve account. Remember this: Every day you are building a life structure, and when you are twenty-five, you will then be what you are now becoming! That's a solemn thought.

A third youthful opportunity is to give one's life to God. If a person doesn't give his heart to God and become a Christian while he is a child or teenager, he probably never will. The statistics are stacked against him ever becoming one.

Nineteen out of every twenty people who become Christians do so before the age of twenty-five; one in 10,000 by age thirty-five; one in 50,000 by forty-five; one in 300,000 by fifty-five; one in 500,000 by sixty-five; and only one in 700,000 by seventy-five. The devil doesn't want teenagers to know this. He will use peer pressure and worldly pleasures to keep them from accepting Christ.

Another survey reported on the program Insight For Living on May 20, 1994, stated that 4 percent of the population become Christians by age four. Eighty-five percent do so between ages four and fourteen; ten percent between ages fifteen and thirty; and the remaining percent after the age of thirty.

Someone said, "The peak years of a child's mental activity are between the ages of four and seventeen. At age four we know all the questions; at age seventeen we know all the answers. Why didn't life's problems hit me when I was a teenager because then I knew everything?"

My heart goes out to you young people because you live in a different society than I lived in. I take my hat off to a teenager who really sells himself out to God, because he has things thrown at him that I never would have imagined. I know the price they're paying to stand for God, with the peer pressure and everything else that hits them in this culture. I have seen beautiful places in my travels but the most beautiful thing to me in the whole world is a teenager totally sold out to Jesus Christ. That's the essence of beauty--seeing God's glory pouring through a teenager who wants to surrender everything to Him.

No wonder Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, warned young people to "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" (Eccles. 12:1). It seems that the older a person gets and the longer he procrastinates, the harder his heart becomes towards God's truth. He seems to become more set in his ways, thus making it more difficult to become a Christian. The longer one waits means one more day to repent of and one less day to repent in. II Corinthians 6:2 should be heeded by young people: ". . . Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (emphasis added).

A fourth opportunity teenagers have is to mold their basic attitudes and character traits, which will stay with them for the rest of their lives. On CBC news in Canada I heard a report on "What is the difference between a person who is twenty and a person who is eighty?" How much change takes place in attitudes? Researchers found that there is not much difference. They said, "If you are grouchy at age twenty, you'll be grouchy at eighty. If you stuck your tongue out at twenty, you will still probably be doing it at eighty. If you have moral and sexual problems at twenty, you'll still have them at eighty. So you better learn to keep your tongue in while you are young, otherwise it might be sticking out the rest of your life." They were really saying that you are setting the basic attitudes that you are going to be stuck with for the rest of your life.

To illustrate this truth, a lady came to one of our meetings and said that she and her husband couldn't get along and she was planning to leave her husband. Then she decided not to do it because she realized she would have to go with herself wherever she went. All of her self and ego problems would follow her.

A fifth opportunity teenagers have is to prepare for the pressures that are coming in life. This is the time to prepare so one knows how to deal with stress, pressures, and ungodly influences throughout one's life.

A sixth opportunity teenagers have is their witness for Christ in school. They rub shoulders with school friends, and if they don't burn for God, friends could die and go to hell. Some teens will never be reached unless their friends reach them while there's a chance.

In an Eastern Canadian city a teenage girl came down the aisle of the church weeping profusely. When she regained her composure, she expressed the reason she was so broken in spirit. The young man who sat near her in many classes at school had been found that day hanging from a tree in the woods behind his house. She was weeping because the solemn fact had gripped her that she had failed to witness to a young man so close to her day by day. Teenagers came forward one by one with the same confession, and also with the determination to be on fire for God before the summer break and witness to as many as possible in the short time left.

It is thrilling to find teenagers all across North America becoming aware of this divine opportunity, as well as the awesome responsibility to be a witness for Christ in school. Many are wearing T-shirts with thought-provoking messages to be used as conversation starters. Some of the challenging messages they're wearing are:

"I'm a child of God and proud of it!"

"Where will you go when you die?"

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

"Jesus and me forever"

"Life begins at the Cross."

"Love God! Hate sin!"

"He died to give us life."

"The blood of Jesus sets us free!"

"Jesus lives inside my heart."

"New kids on the rock"

"Jonah says . . . don't mess with God."

"Go against the flow."

"Be patient. God isn't finished with me yet."

"In the twinkling of an eye"

"There ain't no parties in hell."

"When I get raptured, you can have this shirt."

I saw a bumper sticker once that said, "In case of the rapture, this vehicle will be unmanned."

Some teens today are asking their youth directors for more recreation. But the greatest recreation you will ever have in your life is the joy of tuning in to those

things that are eternal and seeing God use you to reach your friends.

Why do I speak so strongly about this? I have an older brother who acted like a lot of young people who say, "When I turn twenty-five I'll get back to God and really be on fire for Him." When he was in high school he never witnessed for God. He was a lukewarm Christian, but was also the community's number-one player on the football team, playing next to quarterback Lawrence. You know the relationship between quarterback and fullback--with the quarterback constantly handing the ball to the fullback as he goes through the line. So my brother and Lawrence were pretty good friends.

Lawrence was one of the most wicked boys in the school. He had no time for God or anything biblical, and he virtually spat in the face of God by the way he lived. He was the kind of fellow who liked no one and no one liked him--one of those mutual admiration societies! Through football my older brother had an "in" with him. But my brother was fooling around in his Christian life and never took advantage of the opportunity to witness to Lawrence.

Upon graduation, Lawrence went out into a life of sin and crime, and ended up in prison. After paying his debt to society, he was instantly killed while driving in a drunken stupor. He hadn't even reached the age of twenty-one.

My older brother is now a preacher of the Gospel. I have seen him stand before congregations with tears streaming down his face as he tells that story. He asked God to forgive him for his lukewarmness as a teenager. He wept over the fact that perhaps he was the only Christian that had an "in" with Lawrence,

and that he missed his teenage opportunity while fooling around in high school. They never saw each other again after graduating from high school. Lawrence is in hell today, and my older brother never witnessed to him.

Does it mean anything to you and me, young people, when the Bible states that we shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of the deeds done in our bodies according to what we have done, whether good or bad? Does this mean anything at all to us?

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men . . . I live that I may be approved unto God." There is no generation gap with this truth. It is for the young person as well as the older one. The tragedy is that we forget there's a judgment coming for wasted opportunities. The Bible says in Ezekiel 3 that if the wicked go to hell and we fail to warn them, their blood will be required at our hand; but if we warn the wicked and they still go to hell, their blood will not be required at our hand. If you don't warn some young person because you're lukewarm, you'll stand before God with blood guiltiness on your hands. The devil doesn't want teenagers to hear or understand this truth.

When I was a senior in college I had a freshman roommate who was studying for the ministry. Chick was truly a specimen of perfect health. He was a strapping 250-pounder and looked like he played football for a major league. Four weeks into schooling he complained, "I've got a pain in my side." I told him to lie down for a while. The next day the pain persisted so I encouraged him to take another rest. This went on for several days so I told him he better check at the university hospital. The pain had increased to the point where he could not hold even water on his stomach. He was immediately admitted to the hospital.

After a few days the doctor called me in and said, "Lou, we really don't know what to do with your roommate. Put him on a plane at the airport a hundred miles away and send him home to his family doctor in Detroit."

As I drove to the airport every bump on the road jarred him, causing pain all through his body. I told the stewardess on the airplane, "Watch him! He's a very sick boy and the doctors don't know what's wrong with him. Watch him all the way to Detroit."

Just before Chick and I parted, he reached into his suitcase and pulled out his big Bible. "Lou," he said, "here's the Bible given to me by my youth group in church back home before I came to college." As he held it up he added, "Lou, I hope someday I'll be able to use this Bible to preach out of it." Four days later I received a call from Detroit--Chick was dead! The doctors had looked inside his body and found a tumor the size of a baseball. He didn't even know he had it. All at once, just like that, never having had a pain in his life and being the very picture of health itself, he was dead!

Why have I told you this story? The word that came to me about my twenty-one-year-old roommate's funeral was that many of his high school friends flocked to the church to honor him. After the message, the preacher invited young people to get right with God. Scores of teenagers who went to high school with Chick were converted to Christ at his funeral. He had been such a dynamic witness before them as a teenager that, at his death, Heaven had the privilege of seeing some of those same students who had mocked him in high school come into the family of God. And I thought to myself: It was because he had a powerful, faithful testimony as a teenager! What if he had been like many of us and said, "When I'm twenty-one I'll really get busy and serious about spiritual things"? Just think of this: All of Chick's rewards in Heaven forever and ever are going to be granted on the basis of how he lived until the age of twenty-one. What a sobering thought!

I want to ask you, "If you would stand before God today and receive your rewards--which would be your rewards forever and ever in eternity--how many would you get?" Would you say, "Lord, you called me too soon," (if the Lord called you at twenty-one); or, "Lord, I was waiting until later to really get serious"? "But Lord, I thought from twenty-one to sixty-five--that's over forty years--I was going to give You those years. That's more than a lot of people give You!" Remember, it's not the number of years you give to God that counts; it's the quality. The measure of a man's life is the well-spending of it, not the length of it.

5. Youth are thoughtless of the fact that in some important decisions of life there are no adjustments later.

Why are teenage days so important? As a teenager, the decisions you make in the next ten years of your life are the most critical. Why? Because in life you will make many mistakes, but I hope you won't make the mistakes that will ruin you.

What is the significance of the phrase "no adjustments later"? That is the title of a Gospel tract with a picture of a lumberjack watching a tree he has just cut fall over. The significance of the picture is that the lumberjack failed to notice the underbrush surrounding the tree. As a result the tree fell into such heavy underbrush, making it impossible to retrieve it. Once the tree was cut, there were no adjustments later. The situation could not be changed thereafter. The decision on how to cut the tree determined its destiny.

Young people, I want to tell you why it is more important to be on fire for God right now, to know how to pray, to know how to get through to Heaven, and to have a more dynamic relationship with God, than with your parents and other adults. Every young person is soon to make the three or four basic decisions of life that will determine the destiny of his life, whether he's going to be happy or sad or experience tragedy the rest of his life! And, teenager, you'd better not make those decisions with only your own wisdom, leaning on your own understanding. You had better know how to get through to Heaven by prayer. In order to find the will of God you had better know how to get divine wisdom by being on speaking terms with God.

Why does the devil want youth to be thoughtless about the importance of the teen years in relation to walking with God? He knows that you are making the three or four decisions that spell happiness or tragedy for the rest of your life. That's why he says, "Later on get serious about God." He'll use peer pressure, problems in your family, human relationships, and everything he can to keep you from being serious while a teenager. The devil doesn't want you to be on praying terms with God in the years that the basic major decisions of life will be made.

The devil wants to ruin you by getting you to make the wrong decisions about where you'll go to college, what your life's work will be, whom you will marry and live with for the rest of your life, and where you will work and live for the remainder of your life. If you make a wrong decision in any one of these four areas, there is basically no adjustment later. It's like the lumberjack cutting the tree down, destroying its potential value to him because of a wrong decision. It's there, and it's down. There is no second chance, and no adjustment later. Listen, young people, you can make many mistakes in life and get by, but if you make a mistake in these four basic issues of life, there are serious effects and probably no adjustments later.

There isn't a young person who doesn't plan to get serious with God some day. But the devil says, "Later on." The devil wants you to decide on your life work when you're not right with God. He wants you to choose what college you will attend on your own. He doesn't want you to know how to pray and get the mind of God on this matter, because the college you attend will determine so many other things about your life. This is no casual matter. This is a serious thing! It could determine who will be your marriage partner for life. If you don't put seeds in the ground now as a teenager, don't think you can snap your

fingers later on when you are twenty-one and, all at once, like magic, spiritual maturity will be there.

I would "casually" speak like this when I first started preaching just after university days. But now I can say it with much more authority because of the broken pieces we've had to try to put together in the lives of so many through the years. All this was true because there was a day in their youthful lives when God spoke to them and they said, "Let me fool around a little longer. I'll get serious later."

The greatest thing every young person can learn is to be so right with God that he knows how to pray and hear from Heaven concerning the great decisions of life that are ahead. Jeremiah prayed, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Years are wasted and bitter experiences set in when one delays coming back to God.

I speak with much love in my heart for youth because it would break your heart to hear stories that started out just like many of yours if I could show you faces from the past. They fooled around in their teenage years wanting to go out and taste the world. They got involved with unsaved young men or women. They enrolled in schools that they never should have attended because they were out of the will of God, and now their lives are shipwrecked.

I've already mentioned my older brother. In a large church youth group of many Christian teenagers, he was one of five who were the so-called "popular ones." Three girls, my brother and another fellow all wanted to see what the world had to offer. Another girl in the church said, "I'm not going out. I'm going to stay with God. I'm not going to date a non-Christian. I'm not going to tamper with my emotions and take a chance on getting involved with a young man who is not a Christian, because I believe God has His perfect blueprint for me." And those five young people said, "Oh, come on; we're having fun out here. We can go to church, but afterwards come with us and have some fun." Today, four of them are basically shipwrecked.

The girl they laughed at didn't marry until she was twenty-seven. She met God's choice for her life and God gave her three beautiful children. She gave her testimony with the glow of God radiating from her face before singing in church one Sunday. The other young people sat there with their heads hanging low, and now wish they had walked with God as she did.

Also, those five young people never realized that there were some younger ones, like my brother and me, watching them. I thank God that He spared us. Older teenagers, you have young junior high youth watching you and walking in your footsteps. You give them cues as to what God is all about. You have no idea whom you are influencing. I am thankful that all my four children are walking with God. It all started with my mom and dad passing it on to me by being excited about God themselves.

If ever there were Bible verses for teenagers they are Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" Why? Because you don't really know what will satisfy you twenty-five years from now. Why does a newspaper ask, "Are you trapped in your vocation?" Oh what a tragedy it is to be so unfulfilled and dissatisfied in your life's vocation because you missed God's direction in your life!

Young people, do you now see why the devil will use peer pressure and any other pressure to keep you from an intimate relationship with God? It is to keep you from getting God's direction in the big decisions of life. And once you have made a wrong choice in those major decisions, there are basically no adjustments later! Then the devil can inflict pain and heartaches, and you may not even live out an average lifetime.

Remember, you can pull the nail out of the wall, but you can't remove the scar it made. Some people live with flashbacks and painful scars from their past sinful lives, but they never tell you about it. But, oh, it is wonderful to enjoy the call of God on your life! Oh, the enjoyment of being in the will of God!

Therefore, in practical terms, young people ought to be the most serious-minded and submissive to God, more than anyone else in the church. Then they can start out right in life. Teenager, let other young people go their own way in indifference toward God but don't let anything or anyone keep you from finding the will of God for your life. The price of missing the will of God for your life is higher than anyone can afford.

6. Youth are thoughtless about the kind of God that God really is.

The reason we are casual about all the other things is that we are thoughtless about who God is. We live in an age that has endeavored to take God off His throne and made Him like a buddy who lives next door. We do not view Him as a Holy God. When I say the word "God", what comes to your mind? What kind of a God do you believe in? Do you really know what kind of God He is?

First, God is no toy that we can "wind up" and play games with, or have Him come running in our direction any time we want.

Secondly, God is not a sentimental granddaddy who puts us on His knee when we don't do exactly right, and says, "Now, grandson, you didn't really mean to do that, did you?" "No, granddaddy, I really didn't mean to." "There's a lot better stuff in you than what came out, isn't there, grandson? And if you promise that you'll never do it again, I won't spank you." "Yes, granddaddy, I'll never do it again." And all the time that he is sitting on granddaddy's lap, he is snickering under his breath and thinking, "I knew granddaddy wouldn't spank me." Many young people think that's the kind of God we have.

The devil doesn't want you to know the God of the Bible. He wants you to have Hollywood's attitude of God--that the wages of sin is not death but to have fun now with no thought of eternity; to have four or five cars in the back yard along with a beautiful swimming pool; to have as many marriages as you want or to live with others and not be married. Oh, no! The God of the Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). The devil doesn't want you to know these things!

A twenty-one-year-old young man was driving down a highway in South Dakota. As he came over a hill he was killed instantly by a truck that was on the wrong side of the road. A few days later a forty-five year-old man, coming over a hill and in a very similar accident, was thrown from his car, sustaining a knee injury which only required minor surgery. There were two extremely different results from identical accidents--one dead at twenty-one and the other with just a minor knee surgery at forty-five!

After looking into the backgrounds of the two men, I found the man who survived his accident had never attended church nor been offered the opportunity to respond to the Gospel of Christ. God in His graciousness gave him another chance by allowing him to end up in the hospital. I had the privilege of leading this man to the Lord on his hospital bed. He was so thankful that I came to him and he thanked God for the accident that slowed him down so he could hear the Gospel.

The twenty-one-year-old who was killed instantly, had been raised in an evangelical church, had known the Bible as the Word of God, and had a tremendous Christian family. But he said "no" to God. He lived in rebellion and refused to turn his life over to God. At the early age of twenty-one God said, "I've had

enough."

The Bible verse describing this is Proverbs 29:1: "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck [heart], shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (emphasis added). No remedy, no chance to be saved! I saw this truth as a reality when God gave the older man who had never heard the Gospel a chance to hear and receive; but the young man who had hardened his heart was cut off suddenly and without a chance to be saved.

A preacher friend told me, "Once while preaching I noticed a young man standing off the aisle and who had raised his hand for prayer. God led me to leave the pulpit and go to him. I saw that he was under heavy conviction and in need of giving his life to God, so I said to him, "Why don't you give your life to God tonight?" He said, "Preacher, if this were Saturday night I'd do it, but it's only Thursday night." "

My preacher friend responded, "I've never heard such reasoning." The young man replied, "It's because tomorrow night is Friday night and we have our big "blow-out" all planned with the gang. If that were over and this were Saturday night I'd do it. I really want to do it. I'll be back on Saturday night." My preacher friend begged him not to play such a game with God, but to no avail.

In the middle of his sermon on Friday night two burly policemen entered and had a note delivered to the preacher. He realized that the name of the person wanted was the father of the procrastinating young man. The policemen asked the father to come and identify the victim, the mangled body of his son on the highway. This was the young man who just the night before said, "Preacher, if this were Saturday night I'd get right with God." He was playing games with God, thinking he could get right with Him any time he wanted.

Young people, you better not think that's the kind of God we have. You better not think you can "wind Him up" to do business for you any time you desire. In Proverbs 1 God says there is coming a day when, "because I called, and you have not answered, you will call and I will not answer, and I will laugh at your calamity." That's the kind of God we deal with. If you don't have a reverent fear of God, you had better be afraid of Him. One young man said, "I was fighting God off, but I found that I was no match for Him."

Think, young people, think on these things! The devil doesn't want young people thinking on these things. Tune in to these things with all your heart and mind--the sooner, the better. When my wife was young she heard many people say, "If only I had my life to live over again, I'd live it so differently." So as a teenager she prayed, "O God, don't ever let me have to say that. Let me live it right the first time." I covet that for every young person. Only eternity will reveal the extent of the glory and blessing of the decision you've made--to give your all to Jesus Christ. Eternity will reveal the rewards around the throne when you look into the face of Jesus.

Teenager, are the words of the following song descriptive of your life and your present desires?

Part-Time Servant

Pieces of promises, parts of a prayer,

No real commitment to stay or to care,

Partly believing and partly in doubt,

Not quite in the kingdom, but not really out.
Tied to Your Word, Lord, just by a thread,
The need in my heart and the world in my head,
So long in confusion that I couldn't see--
Full-time, not part-time, it's You that I need.
So, Lord, come on in
Cause I want to start all over again.
From this day on my life's an open door,
I won't be your part-time servant anymore.
I've stayed on the fences, Lord, lingering still,
Just on the edge of my world and Your will,
But now for the first time, I know what to do:
I'm ready, I'm coming full-time to You.

--Keith Thomas and Claire Cloninger

Prayer: Dear Lord, I thank You for the privilege of sharing with young people, and for their desire, their sensitive spirits, and their longing to hear from Thee. I thank You for my own personal experience and the experiences of others. O God, don't let young people learn from personal experience. Let them learn from others who have preceded them, lest they go through the same bitter experiences. Let them know that it is better to trust in the Lord with all their heart and not to lean on their own understanding, to acknowledge Him in all their ways, and to let Him direct their paths. O God, they are in the decision-making time of life when they need Thy direction.

O Lord, the devil wants to ruin and twist lives, and to bring entanglements that will take a lifetime to unravel. Spare them from that, I pray. Give divine determination, earnestness, and solemnity of spirit to know that You are speaking and calling to the depths of their being. Let them go all the way, even as the following poem says,

Part-time servant, oh, to go full-time, Lord.
Oh, to sell out to Thee,
Oh, to be laughed at as the world would laugh,
But to be approved of God.

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11). Let that be our motive so we can stand at the judgment seat someday and hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21). Let us see people

there who were saved because we were on fire for God as teenagers--not damned because we didn't show them the way to God in those teenage opportunities that come only once in a lifetime.

My Lord, thank You for young people. Send revival to every one of their hearts. Let them be flames of fire, learning how to pray and intercede. Even let them teach the adult generation what it is to call on God with sincerity from the depths of the heart. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/lou-sutera/no-adjustments-later/>

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