

The Instruction and Guidance of Youth

by St. Theophan the Recluse

The sermon emphasizes the importance of instilling Christian principles in youth from a young age, and of providing them with a strong foundation of faith and self-awareness to guide them through the challenges of youth.

Scripture: Proverbs 22:6, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Colossians 2:8, 1 Timothy 4:12, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Christian Education", "Youth Ministry"

Description

St. Theofan the Recluse preaches about the importance of guiding youth in a Christian way, emphasizing the need to maintain order, faith, and good behavior during the time of study. He highlights the significance of instilling Christian principles in all areas of learning and warns against the dangers of separating faith from education. St. Theofan stresses the conscious acceptance of the yoke of Christ, urging individuals to renew their commitment to Christianity and live in a way that pleases God. He addresses the turbulent period of youth, cautioning against the dangers of seeking constant new impressions and the inclination towards worldly companionship. The pinnacle of danger for youth is identified as contact with the opposite sex, with guidance provided on how to guard against temptations and maintain purity.

Transcript

I. The Instruction of Youth.

One cannot define just when a person comes to the awareness of himself as being a Christian and to the independent resolve to live in a Christian way. In actual fact this happens at different times: at the age of seven, ten, fifteen, or later. It may be that the time of study comes before this, as usually happens.

At the same time there is an unchanging rule: one must keep the whole previous order without change during the whole time of study also, for it proceeds essentially from the nature of our capabilities and from the demands of Christian life. The order of study must not be placed in opposition to the indicated outlook, otherwise everything will be destroyed which was created there. That is, one must preserve young students, just like infants, by means of the piety of everything surrounding them, by means of church life and the Mysteries; and likewise one must act upon their body, soul, and spirit.

At the same time, practically speaking, to the teaching itself one must add only this: Let instruction be so arranged that it will be evident what is the main point and what is secondary. This idea is easiest to imprint

through a division of the objects of study and the time for them. Let the study of faith be considered the chief thing. Let the best time be assigned to works of piety, and in case of conflict let them take the first place over learning. Let approval be given not only for success in learning, but likewise for faith and good behavior. In general, one must so dispose the mind of pupils that they do not lose the conviction that our chief work is the pleasing of God, and that learning is a secondary quality, something incidental, which is good only during the present life. This is why it should not at all be placed so high and in such an attractive form that it will occupy all one's attention and absorb all one's concern. There is nothing more poisonous or ruinous for the spirit of Christian life than such learning and an exclusive concern for it. It casts one straight into coldness and then can keep one forever in it, and sometimes it also adds to this an immoral life, if there are conditions which are favorable for this.

The second thing to which attention should be given is the spirit of the instruction or of the attitude towards the objects of study. It should be placed as an unfailing law that every kind of learning which is taught to a Christian should be penetrated with Christian principles and, more precisely, Orthodox ones. Every branch of learning is capable of this approach, and it will be a true kind of learning only when this condition is fulfilled. Christian principles are true beyond doubt. Therefore, without any doubting, make them the general measuring stick of truth. It is a most dangerous error among us that subjects of learning are taught without any attention to the true faith; one allows oneself freethinking and even lying under the supposition that faith and learning are two spheres which are quite distinct.

On the contrary, we have a single spirit. It receives learning and is imbued with its principles just as it receives faith and is penetrated by it. How is it then possible that these two spheres should not come into contact here, whether favorable or unfavorable? At the same time, the sphere of truth is one. Therefore, why pound into the head that which is not from this sphere?

If instruction will be conducted in this manner, so that faith together with life in the spirit of faith might dominate in the attention of pupils, both in the manner of studying and in the spirit of instruction, then there is no doubt that the principles placed in childhood not only will be preserved, but will increase, be strengthened, and come to a corresponding maturity. And what a good effect this will have!

If one will put in such order the upbringing of a child from his first years, then little by little the character which his whole life should have will be revealed before him, and he will grow more accustomed to the thought that upon him there lies the obligation given by our God and Saviour to live and act according to His decree, that all other deeds and occupations are lower than this and have a place only for the course of the present life, and that there is another dwelling place, another homeland towards which one must direct all one's thoughts and all one's desires.

In the natural course of the development of one's capabilities, everyone naturally comes to the awareness that he is a man. But if to his nature there is ingrafted the new principle of the grace of Christianity at the very moment when a person's powers and their movements are awakened (in Baptism), and if then in all the points of the development of these powers this new principle not only does not yield first place -- but on the contrary always prevails and gives as it were the form to everything -- then when a man comes to full awareness he will find himself at the same time acting according to Christian principles and will find himself to be a Christian.

This is the chief aim of a Christian upbringing: that a man as a result of this might say within himself that he is a Christian. And if, when he comes to full awareness of himself he will say, "I am a Christian, obliged

by my Saviour and God to live in such a way so as to be vouchsafed the blessed communion with Him and with His chosen ones in the future life," then in the very midst of his independent existence or the unique, rational ordering of his life, he will place for himself as his first and essential duty to preserve in an independent way and to warm the spirit of piety in which he previously walked under the guidance of others.

2. Conscious Acceptance of the Yoke of Christ.

It has already been noted that there must be a special moment when one must intentionally renew in one's awareness all the obligations of Christianity and place upon oneself their yoke as an unailing law.

In Baptism they were accepted without awareness because then they were kept more by the mind and attitude of someone else and in simplicity, but now one must consciously place upon oneself the good yoke of Christ, choose the life of Christianity, and exclusively dedicate oneself to God, so that later all the days of one's life one might serve Him with enthusiasm. Here only does a man himself begin the Christian life. It existed in him previously, also, but one may say it proceeded not from his own activity, nor from his own person. Now he himself, in his own person, begins to act in the spirit of a Christian. Before this, the light of Christ was in him like the light of the first day (of creation), which came not from one central source, but was diffused. But just as centers had to be provided for the light, drawing it to the suns and planets, so also this (spiritual) light must be gathered together around the central point of our life -- our consciousness.

A man becomes entirely human when he comes to self-awareness and independence of mind, when he becomes the complete master and commander of his own ideas and deeds and holds certain ideas not because others have given these to him, but because he himself finds them to be true. A man, when he becomes a Christian, still remains a man, and therefore in his Christianity he must also be rational, only this rationality he should turn to the profit of holy faith. Let him become rationally convinced that the holy faith which he confesses is the only faithful path of salvation, and that all other paths which are not in agreement with it lead to perdition. It is no honor to a man to be a blind confessor; he must be a conscious confessor, so that acting in this way, he acts as he should. All this he does when he consciously places upon himself the good yoke of Christ.

Only here does one's personal faith, or one's good life according to faith, become firm and unshakable. One will not be scandalized by a bad example, will not be attracted by empty thoughts, because he is clearly conscious of the obligation of thinking and acting already in a definite way.

But if he has not become conscious of this, then just as previously a good example inclined him to follow it, so now a bad example can dispose him to do what is bad, can draw him to sin. And just as the good thoughts of others previously possessed his mind easily and without protest, so now evil thoughts take possession of him. In experience it is evident how precarious is the confession of faith and goodness of life in a man who previously has not become conscious of himself as a Christian. He who encounters few temptations will continue to mature longer in simplicity of heart; but one who cannot escape them will stand before great danger. We see in the lives of all who have preserved the grace of Baptism that there was in these lives a moment when they decisively dedicated themselves to God; this is indicated by such words as "he became inflamed in spirit," "he was ignited by a divine desire."

Let him who has become conscious of himself as a Christian, or has consciously decided to live in a Christian way, himself now preserve with all care the perfection and purity of life which he has received at

a younger age, just as others have preserved this life before him. There is no need to offer special rules as a guide for him. In this respect he is the same as one who is repenting and, having abandoned sin, has enthusiastic resoluteness to live in a Christian way. Therefore, from now on he should be guided by the same rules already mentioned above. The difference between this kind of person and one who has repented and is on the way to perfection is already clear without any explanation.

Now we must make several very important warnings which refer exclusively to youth. How good and saving it is not only to be directed in a Christian way in one's upbringing, but also later to acknowledge oneself and decide to be a Christian before entering upon the years of mature youth. This is essential in view of the great dangers to which a youth is inevitably subjected: 1) from the very nature of his age, and 2) from the great temptations which occur throughout youth.

3. The Turbulent Period of Youth.

The river of our life is interrupted by the turbulent period of youth. This is the time when the life of body and spirit is boiling at full steam. A child, a boy, lives quietly; a mature man has few violent shocks; and those who are adorned with grey hairs are already inclined to repose. It is only youth that is boiling with life.

One must have a very strong foundation so as to stand firm at this time against the shocks of waves. The very disorderliness and impulsiveness of the movements of this age are dangerous.

Now there begin a youth's first movements of his own, the beginning of the awakening of his powers, and they have for him a great fascination. By the power of their influence they crowd out everything that had earlier been placed in the mind and heart of the boy. What was before becomes for him a dream, a prejudice. Only his present feelings seem true; only they seem to have actuality and significance.

However, if before these powers are awakened the boy has bound himself by the obligation of confessing and living as a Christian, then all the new impulses, being secondary, will be weaker and give way more easily to the demands of the earlier impulses he felt, because the latter are older, have already been tested and chosen by the heart, and, the chief thing, have been made firm by a vow. A youth absolutely wants to keep his word.

But what can one say to someone who not only does not love Christian life and truth, but has never even heard of it?

In this case he is a house without protection, given over to robbery, or a dry branch given over to burning in a fire. When the arbitrariness of youthful ideas throws a shadow of doubt on everything, when the arousal of the passions is causing a mighty disturbance in him, when the whole soul is filled with tempting thoughts and movements -- the young man is in fire. Who will give him a drop of dew to cool him, or give him a helping hand, if there is not a voice from his own heart that speaks for truth, for goodness, and for purity? But this voice will not come if love for it has not been sown previously. Even good advice in this case will not help; there will be nothing for it to stick to. Advice and persuasion are powerful if, entering through hearing into the heart, they arouse there feelings which already exist and have a value for us and have only been set aside for the time being, while we simply do not know how to get to them and give them their natural power. In this case advice from someone else is a precious gift to a youth. But if in the heart there are no beginnings of a pure life, such advice is useless.

A youth lives in his own world, and who will investigate all the movements and inclinations of his heart? This is the same thing as investigating the path of a bird in the air, or the course of a ship in the water! The bubbling of a fermenting liquid, the movement of unlike elements when mixed together -- this is the heart of a youth. All the demands of so-called nature are in active arousal; each one speaks up and seeks satisfaction. There is present a disorder in our nature, and so the coming together of these voices is like the disorderly cries of a noisy multitude.

What will happen to the youth if he has not been trained in advance to put his movements into a certain order and has not placed upon himself the obligation to preserve them in strict subordination to certain higher demands? If these principles have been deeply impressed upon the heart in his upbringing as a child, and then have been consciously accepted as a rule, then all these agitations will proceed as if on the surface, fleetingly, without moving the foundations or shaking the soul.

The state in which we emerge out of the years of youth depends a great deal upon the state in which we enter into them. Water falling from a cliff foams and swirls below, but then it goes its quiet way in various courses. This is an image of youth, into which everyone is thrown as water into a waterfall. From it there come out two kinds of people: some shine with virtue and nobility, while others are darkened by impiety and a corrupt life. There is also a third kind, a middle class, a mixture of good with evil, which is something like a firebrand that inclines now towards good and now towards evil, or like a broken clock that sometimes runs well but sometimes runs fast or slow.

He who has earlier made himself firm by an obligation has taken shelter, as it were, in a strong ship which allows no water to come into it, or has made a calm channel through a whirl-pool. Without this even a good upbringing will not always save a person. It may be that a young person might not fall into crude vices, but all the same, if he is not concentrated within himself and if his heart is not separated from everything by means of a vow, it will be pulled this way and that by things that attract him, and he will unfailingly come out of the years of youth in a state of coldness, without reaching harbor anywhere.

How saving it is before the years of youth not only to receive a good outlook, but also to make oneself firm with a vow to be a true Christian. Let one who has decided on this fear youth itself, like fire, and therefore let him flee all cases in which youth can easily be let loose and become untamable.

4. Two Tendencies Characteristic of Youth.

In itself youth is dangerous; but apart from this, there are two tendencies which are characteristic of this age, and from them the impulses of youth are powerfully inflamed and acquire great power and danger. These are: 1) a thirst for impressions, and 2) an inclination to enter into contact with others. Therefore, as a means for avoiding the dangers of this age, one may advise that these tendencies be subjected to rules, lest in place of good they bring evil. The good dispositions which were aroused earlier will remain in all their power if they are not quenched and not hindered.

The thirst for impressions.

The thirst for impressions gives a certain impetuosity, an uninterruptedness, a variety to the activities of a youth. He wishes constantly to test himself, to see everything, to hear everything, to be everywhere. You can look for him wherever there is a glitter for the eyes, a harmony for the ears, an open space for movement. He wishes to be under an uninterrupted stream of impressions, always new and therefore various. He does not like to sit home, does not like to stay in one place, does not like to concentrate on

only one activity. His element is enjoying himself.

But this is not enough for him. He is not satisfied with an actual testing of himself, but wishes to assimilate and, as it were, transfer what others have felt, how others have acted by themselves or in circumstances similar to his own. Then he throws himself into books and begins to read. He goes through one book after another, often without even understanding their contents; he is chiefly interested in finding an "effect," no matter what kind of thing it might be or what it might touch on. Something new, picturesque, sharp -- this for him is the best possible recommendation of a book. Here there is revealed and formed an inclination to light reading, which is the same thirst for impressions, only in a different form. But something more is involved here also.

A youth often becomes bored with reality because it somehow binds him from the side: it ties him down and encloses him too much within definite limits, whereas he is seeking a kind of freedom. Thus he often tears himself away from reality and goes off into a world he has created for himself, and there he begins to act in glory. Fantasy builds for him whole histories, where for the most part the hero is his own person. The youth is only entering into life; before him there is a deceptive, enticing future. In time he will have to take part in it -- but what will he be? Can one not draw aside this curtain and take a look? Fantasy, which is very active at this age, does not tarry with its satisfactions. Here day-dreaming manifests itself and develops in such actions.

Day-dreams, light reading, enjoyments -- all these, almost one and the same thing in spirit, are offspring of a thirst for impressions, a thirst for what is new and different. And the harm from them is one and the same. There is no better way to starve the good seeds which have been placed before in the heart of a youth than by these means. A young blossom planted in a place where the wind blows on it from all sides only endures a little and then dries up; grass on which people frequently walk does not grow; a part of the body which is subjected to friction for a long time becomes numb. The same thing happens to the heart and to the good dispositions in it if one is given over to day-dreams, to empty reading or to enjoyments.

If one stands for a long time in the wind, especially a damp wind, and then comes to a quiet place out of the wind, he feels that everything within him is not quite in its place; the same thing happens in the soul that has been amusing itself, in whatever way. When he returns to himself from his state of distraction, the youth finds that everything in his soul has become distorted. The most important thing that has happened is that everything good has been covered by a kind of veil of forgetfulness, and in the first place stand only those deceptive things which have left their impression on him. Consequently, what was before and should always be is no longer present; one's inclinations have changed, and new ones now take the first place.

Why, after returning to it after some kind of distraction, does the soul begin to grow bored? Because it finds itself robbed. A distracted person has made his soul a highway, along which, through imagination, tempting objects pass by like shadows and tempt the soul to follow them. And then, when one is thus, so to speak, torn away from oneself, the devil secretly approaches, takes away the good seed, and puts a bad one in its place. Thus the Saviour taught when He explained who it is that takes away the seed sown by the wayside and who it is that sows the tares. It is the enemy of mankind who does both the one and the other.

And so, young man! Do you desire to preserve the purity and innocence of childhood, or the vow of Christian life without reproach? With as much strength and good sense as you have, refrain from

amusements, from disorderly reading of tempting books, and from day-dreams.

How good it is to subject oneself in this regard to a strict and even a most strict discipline, and to be, during the whole time of one's youth, under the guidance of others. Those youths, who are not allowed to arrange their own conduct until they reach the age of manhood, one can call happy. Every youth should rejoice if he is placed in such circumstances. A young man, quite clearly, is scarcely able to come to this by himself; but he shows much sense if he believes the counsel to be more at home at his work, not to day-dream, and not to read empty things. Let him avoid amusements by love of labor, and let him avoid day-dreaming by serious occupations under guidance. Reading especially should be subject to such guidance -- both the choice of books and the method of reading. Let everyone arrange this the best way he can; but it must be done. Passions, doubts, inclinations -- all are kindled in precisely this unsteady ferment in the mind of a youth.

An Inclination towards Contact with Others.

The second inclination in a youth, just as dangerous as the first, is the inclination towards contact with others. It is revealed in the need for companionship, friendship, and love. All these, if they are in true order, are good; but it is not the youth himself who should place them in this order.

The age of youth is a time of lively feelings. They are in his heart like the ebb and flow of the tide at the ocean shore. Everything occupies his interest; everything astonishes him. Nature and society have opened their treasures before him. But feelings do not like to be hidden within themselves, and the youth wishes to share them. Then he has need of a person who might share his feelings, that is, a friend and companion. This need is good and noble, but it can also be dangerous! To the one to whom you entrust your feelings you give a certain authority over yourself. How careful one must be in the choice of a close friend! You may meet someone who can lead you far, far away from the straight path. It goes without saying that good naturally strives towards good and avoids the evil; there is a certain taste for this in the heart. But again, how often it happens that simplicity of heart is enticed by cunning.

Thus, every young man is rightly advised to be careful in his choice of a friend. It is good not to conclude friendship until the friend has been tested. It is even better to have as one's first friend one's father, or a person who in many respects takes the place of a father, or a relative who is experienced and good. For one who has resolved to live in a Christian way, the first friend given to him by God is his spiritual father. Converse with him, entrust your secrets to him, ponder what he says, and learn. Under his guidance, with prayer, God will send some other friend also, if it is necessary.

There is not as much danger in friendship, however, as there is in companionship. Rarely do we see real friends, but more often just acquaintances and "friends" in the loose sense. And here how much evil is possible, and how much there really is!

There are certain circles of "friends" with very bad ways of life. Being drawn in with them, you do not notice how you become united with them in spirit, just as you do not notice, when you are in a foul smelling place, how foul you yourself smell. People themselves often lose awareness of the indecency of their own conduct, and they quite calmly become crude in it. And even if this awareness is awakened in someone (in such a circle), he doesn't have the strength to get out. Each one is afraid to declare this, expecting that afterwards he will be persecuted with sarcasm, and he says, "So let it be, perhaps it will pass away." Evil communications corrupt good manners (I Cor. 15:33). O Lord, deliver everyone from these depths of satan! For someone who has decided to labor for the Lord, his only companionship is with those who are

pious, who are seeking the Lord; one should avoid others and in all sincerity have no close contact with them, following the example of the saints of God.

5. The Pinnacle of Danger for Youth.

The very pinnacle of danger for a youth is contact with the other sex. While in the first temptation a youth may only stray off the straight path; here, in addition, he loses himself. In its first awakening, this matter is mixed up with the need for what is beautiful, a need which from the time of its awakening compels a youth to seek satisfaction for it. Meanwhile, what is beautiful little by little begins in his soul to take on a form, because we can find nothing more beautiful than this. The image which has thus been formed is carried about in the head of the youth. From this time on he seems to be seeking what is beautiful, that is, ideal, not earthly, but at the same time he meets with one of the daughters of men, and is wounded by her. A youth should flee this kind of wounding more than any other, because it is a sickness, and a sickness that is all the more dangerous in that the patient wants to be sick all the way to madness.

How to Avoid Being Wounded.

How can one avoid this wound? Do not go on the path which leads to being wounded. Here is how this path is described in one work on psychology: it has three turning points.

1) At first there is awakened in the youth some kind of painful feeling (what it is about and where it comes from, he does not know), which expresses itself in the special feeling that he is alone. This is a feeling of loneliness. From this feeling there is immediately produced another feeling -- a certain pity, tenderness, and attention to oneself. Before this he lived as if not noticing himself. But now he turns to himself, examines himself, and constantly finds that he is not bad, that he is not worse than others, he is a person of some value. He begins to sense his own handsomeness, the pleasantness of the form of his body -- in other words, to be pleased with himself. This is the limit of the first movement of temptation towards himself. From this time on the youth turns to the outward world.

2) This entrance into the outward world is animated by the conviction that he must be pleasing to others. With this conviction he boldly and as it were victoriously goes out into the arena of activity and, perhaps for the first time, makes for himself a law to be neat, clean, orderly, even elegant. He begins to wander, or to seek companions, seemingly without any definite aim, but in accordance with a secret inclination of his heart, which is seeking something. At the same time, he tries to show how smart he is, how pleasant he is in contact with others, how kind and attentive he can be, and, in general, everything by which he hopes to be liked by others. At the same time he gives free reign to the primary organ of contact with other souls -- the eyes.

3) In such a state a youth is like gun powder placed next to a spark, and soon he finds something to ignite his disease. By a glance of the eyes or by a voice which is especially pleasant, as if struck by an arrow or wounded by a shot, he stands in the beginning as if in ecstasy or turned to stone. Coming to himself from this state and recovering, he finds that his attention and his heart are directed to a certain object and are drawn to it with an unconquerable power.

From this time his heart begins to be eaten up by languor. The youth becomes bored, he is immersed in himself, he is occupied with something important, he seeks as if he has lost something, and everything he does is done for the certain person and as if the person is present. He is like someone who is lost; thoughts of food and sleep don't even occur to him, his usual activities are forgotten, and he comes into a

disordered state. Nothing is dear to him. He is afflicted with a fierce illness which gnaws at his heart, hinders his breathing, dries up the very fountains of life. Such is the gradual course of being wounded!

6. How to Guard Against the Temptations of Youth.

It goes without saying that a youth should guard himself against falling into this misfortune. Do not go on this path! Banish the signs that precede it -- the vague sadness and the feeling of loneliness. Go directly against it. If you have become sad, do not give yourself over to dreams, but begin to do something serious with your attention, and it will pass. If self-pity has been aroused in you, or a feeling of how good you are, hasten to sober yourself up and banish this whim with some kind of strictness and discipline to yourself, especially by making clear a sound idea of the insignificance of whatever comes into your head. A chance or intentional belittlement or humbling in this case would be like water poured on fire.

One must take care to suppress and banish this feeling especially because it is a beginning of movement. If you stop here, you will go no further; you will have neither the desire to be especially pleasing to others, nor the pursuit of showing off fine clothes, nor the desire for constantly going out. If they break through, fight with them. The best protection in this lies in a strict discipline in everything -- in bodily labor, and even more in labor of the mind. Increase your studies, sit at home, and do not give yourself over to amusements. If you must go out, then guard your senses, avoid the other sex and -- the chief thing -- pray.

Besides these dangers which come from the attributes of youth, there are two more. First of all, an outlook that exalts to the heavens rational knowledge, or one's own understanding. A youth considers it a privilege to place a shade of doubt upon everything and to set aside everything which does not correspond with the measuring stick of his own understanding. By this alone he cuts off from his heart the whole attitude which comes from faith and the Church, and remains alone. Seeking substitutes for what has been abandoned, he throws himself into theories which are fabricated without any correspondence to divine Truth; he entangles himself in these and banishes from his own mind all the truths of faith. The disaster is even greater if the occasion for these theories are given in the schools, and if such a spirit is the prevailing one there. People today think to gain possession of the truth, but they only gather together foggy ideas, empty and fantastic and for the most part even contradicting common sense; but these ideas attract the inexperienced and become an idol for a curious youth.

Secondly, there is a worldly outlook. Even though it might present itself as something profitable, when this prevails in a youth it is ruinous. It is marked by a life according to the impressions of one's senses, by a condition in which a person remains very little within himself but is almost always outside of himself, whether in fact or in dreams. With such an outlook one hates the inward life and those who speak about it and live by it. True Christians, for them, are mystics who are confused in their understanding, or are hypocrites and so forth. Their understanding of the truth is hindered by the spirit of the world which is present in the circles of worldly life which a youth is allowed unhindered, and is even advised, to come into contact with. By this contact, the world with all its corrupt concepts and customs is pounded into the receptive soul of a youth who has not been warned ahead of time and has not been prepared to stand against it. He is just forming his outlook on life, and this worldly spirit becomes stamped on him as on wax, and he involuntarily becomes its child. But to be such a child is contrary to being a child of God in Christ Jesus.

And so, here are the dangers for youth from being young! And how difficult it is to resist! But for one who has been raised up well and has decided to dedicate himself to God before the years of youth, this age is

not so dangerous. He needs only to endure a little, and then there will come the most pure and blessed repose. Only keep the vow of pure Christian life during this time also, and afterwards you will live with a certain holy, unshakable firmness. Whoever has gone without danger through the years of youth has, as it were, sailed across a stormy river and, looking back, he blesses God. But someone else, with tears in his eyes, turns back in regret and curses himself. You will never recover what you have lost in your youth. Will one who has fallen ever again attain what is possessed by one who has not fallen?

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