

If I Were Young

No. 174

Introduction.

- I. One time a well-known author began to pursue the universal question, “What would I do with my life if I could live it over again?”
- II. In reply to this question he set down some splendid answers under the heading, “If I Were Young.”
 - I. “**If I Were Young, I Would Form Good Habits**” - He said: “If I were young, I would form good habits.”
 - A. This is excellent advice for young people, but difficult to heed. It is so easy to drift into bad habits, but it is so hard to break bad habits.
 1. For example swearing. This habit has become such a habitual part of many people that they do it almost unconsciously.
 2. Some years ago **a gospel preacher was called to the bedside of an unfaithful Christian** whose life was nearly ended. He pointed out to this man his duty, and the sick man indicated repentance and his desire for the prayers of the church. A short time later the end came, a frown spread over his face, and he parted this world with an oath on his lips. Swearing had become such a habit that it was almost “Second nature” with him.
 3. A habit can make us an absolute slave. (Jere. 13:23).
 - B. Since habits have such power over us, it is very important that we form good habits. I would like to suggest some desirable habits young people should form.
 1. One good habit all young people should form is **worship**.
 - a. **Daniel** formed the habit of praying three times a day to the heavenly Father. These period of prayer made an outstanding man of Daniel and gave him the courage to do what was right in times of trial and danger.
 - b. Young people, you will do well to emulate his fine example. Worship God every day! Pray to God every day! Staying close to God will bless and enrich your life.
 2. A second desirable habit for young people to cultivate is that of **always looking on the bright side of things**.
 - a. Life is filled with much sorrow.
 - b. If a person is not careful, he can form the habit of always viewing life in terms of these sorrowful things. By doing this he will make himself and others miserable.
 - c. It is much better to look for the bright side of life.
 - d. Someone has written these words that have meant a lot to me.

The Bright Side

<p>When you feel life but a burden, When your way is overcast, When the day is full of trials, With new dangers thickening fast, Think then of the lark's sweet singing As she gaily soars about, Sure enough she has her troubles Yet she keeps the bright side out.</p>	<p>All the world is full of sorrow, Full of heartaches and of fears, Full of loneliness and sadness, Full of partings and of tears. It's in need of something different That will put despair to rout, That is why it greets the fellow Who will keep the bright side out.</p>	<p>Never mind the little setbacks, Never mind the brushing blow, Never mind about tomorrow, Keep on singing as you go. Though your heart may have misgivings, Security push aside the doubt, For you'll cheer some other person When you keep the bright side out</p>
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3. A third habit young people should form is that of **helping others**.

a. This is a hard lesson to learn.

1) Many people are like **the little boy in Bible class** who heard his teacher relate the story of the Good Samaritan. The teacher told her class how the Samaritan helped the man who was wounded by the thieves and left to die. When she finished the story she asked the students what lesson they had received from it. One of the boys replied, "I learned that when I get into trouble someone should rush to me and help me."

2) He missed the point of the story just as many people do. They look at everything in terms of self, instead of in terms of others. They fail to realize that the real blessings of life come from serving. (Acts 20:35).

b. Young people if you will form this habit of helping others you will find that your faith will never grow old.

1) I read of a **backsliden member who called at the preacher's study** to request that his name be dropped from the church roll. As they were talking a poorly clad little boy entered the study bearing a note scribbled on a piece of paper. The minister read it, and then said to the indifferent church member, "My friend, this is an appeal from a poor, sick woman for a visit and help. I must go to a funeral within a few minutes. Would you be good enough to go along with this lad and learn what his mother needs?" "Certainty, I shall gladly do that for her," he replied. The boy led the man down an alley to a shanty. As the man stepped into the house, a half-blind woman began to speak. Thinking she was speaking to the preacher, she said, "I knew you would come. I am sick and hungry, but I want you to first pray for me. Please pray." At first he hesitated to pray for he had not prayed in years, but his heart would not let him refuse to pray for this sick woman. He dropped to his knees, and his first sentence was for his own backsliden soul. He then besought the throne of grace for this woman and closed the prayer. He said, My dear woman, you have discovered that I am not the preacher. I am the most worthless Christian in this city. The preacher is conducting a funeral and sent me to help you, but oh, how you have helped me! And now what do your need?" There was no food, fuel or medicine in the house. He asked the boy to accompany him. He went to the store, filled a basket with food and gave it to the boy for his mother. He ordered medicine and fuel sent, and had it charged to himself. Then he hurried back to the preacher's study, and when the minister returned from the funeral service, the church member, with tears in his eyes, said, "I don't want to be dropped from the roll, I'm all right now."

2) This man's love for Christ was rekindled by serving, and, young people, your love will stay kindled if you will serve others.

4. A fourth habit young people should form is **daily Bible reading**.

- a. This will be a rich blessing to you. The Bible will comfort, guide, and strengthen you. As I think back over my life I know that Bible reading has been a rich blessing for me. I started reading the Bible daily as a young boy, and I would trade nothing for what it has meant to me.
- b. Amos R. Wells has written these words about the Bible and what it meant to him.

The Bible

<p>When I am tired, the Bible is my bed; Or in the dark, the Bible is my light. When I am hungry, it is vital bread; Or fearful, it is armor for the fight; When I am sick, 'tis healing medicine; Or lonely, thronging friends I find therein.</p> <p>If I would work, the Bible is my tool; Or play, it is a harp of happy sound. If I am ignorant, it is my school; If I am sinking, it is solid ground. If I am cold, the Bible is my fire; And wings, if boldly I aspire</p>	<p>Should I be lost, the Bible is my guide; Or naked, it is raiment, rich and warm; Am I imprisoned, it is ranges wide; Or storm-tossed, a shelter from the storm. Would I adventure, 'tis a gallant sea; Or would I rest, it is a flowery lea.</p>
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5. Another desirable habit to form is **honesty**.

- a. If you form the habit of cheating now, you will always have to cheat to get by in life. It will cause you to lose your soul and your respect.
- b. The story is told of a **lawyer** who had enjoyed a successful practice for several years. On the wall in his office hung the law degree which he had received from a renowned university. After looking with remorse at the diploma through the years, one day he took it down and traveled back to the university. With tear-stained eyes he explained to the dean that he had cheated to gain the degree and that he could no longer keep it nor practice the profession of law. He had lost all self-esteem because he had not been true to himself.

6. Another habit young people should form is **putting the lord first**. If you make the Lord first in your life now, you will find that it will be very difficult to break this habit in later life. The Lord will always be first in your life. Put God first in all things. You will never be sorry. (Matt. 6:33).

II. **“If I Were Young I Would Have A Good Time”** - The author we mentioned in the beginning of our lesson said: “If I were young I would have a good time.”

A. This is excellent advice for young people to follow. (Prov. 17:22; Jn. 10:10; 16:33; Phil. 4:4).

B. God does not want us to go through life with a long face being miserable. He wants us to have a time.

1. He warns, however, against the wrong kind of good time. (Psa. 1:1).

2. He does not want us to sow wild oats, but He wants us to engage in wholesome activities that will be beneficial to us and bring glory and honor to Him. (1 Cor. 10:31).

III. **“If I Were Young I’d Grow Up”** - The author also said, “If I were young I’d grow up.”

A. Paul said. (1 Cor. 13:11).

1. It is to be understood that we act like children for a while, but the day comes when we must grow up. We must lay aside our toys and take our place in the world and the church.
2. Sometimes young people ask the question, **“What can I do?”**

B. In the remaining portion of our lesson, **I would like to briefly discuss some things young people can do.**

1. Young people can bring friends to Bible classes and worship services. By doing this they may win these precious souls to Christ.
2. Teenagers can also teach others about the Lord.
 - a. There have been many teenagers who were Bible class teachers and personal workers.
 - b. **I have know teenagers who were preachers.** I went to school with a fellow who started preaching when he was about 15. He preached every Sunday while he was attending school. By the time he reached college he had trained himself to be an excellent preacher and had led a number of souls to Christ.
3. Young people can **help in worship services.** Many young men have trained themselves to lead prayer and help wait on the table. It is wonderful that some of our young men have been helping in this way.
4. Young people can **serve others.**
 - a. The girls could clean the home of some sick person. They could visit some lonely person in need of friendship.
 - b. Young men can mow the church lawn or mow someone’s yard who cannot do this for himself.
 - c. In the **“Christian Youth Chronicle”** years ago, an article appeared concerning some teenage girls in Odessa, Texas. It reported that the teenage girls were going to a nursing home to wash, roll and fix the hair of the elderly ladies. The article stated the ladies were thrilled by the interest the girls had taken in them. The greatest joy came, however, to the teenage girls. They had received many blessings by serving others. This same paper also challenged young girls to bake cookies and send them to the various orphan’s home. This is another thing young people can do.
 - d. Young people need to remember the instruction Paul gave Timothy. (1 Tim. 4:12).

Conclusion.

- I. In closing I call your attention to Solomon’s statement in Ecclesiastes 12:1.
 - A. Youth is the time to remember the Creator. It is the time to worship, serve and honor Him.
 - B. The longer we wait the more opportunities for good are wasted and the harder it becomes to serve Him.
- II. If you have not remembered the Creator, don’t put it off. Obey the Lord now and give Him all your remaining years. Come as we stand and sing.

