

REJOICE, YOUNG MAN! [Ecclesiastes 11.9-12:1]

Young men, God calls you to rejoice! Perhaps nothing will distinguish you as a young man of God more than a happy, joyful, satisfied Christian. This most surely will set you apart from the world. But you, young man, may ask: is it even *possible* for me to rejoice? I have so much going on, so many emotions, so many hardships, so many hurt and broken relationships, so many confusing changes in life, can I rejoice? Indeed, you may ask: how can I rejoice? To that question, I want to provide *5 words of counsel to you, young people, so that you would rejoice in your God!*

1. WATCH THE DOOR OF YOUR HEART.

God calls you, young man, to rejoice in Him! Indeed, you are to rejoice in your youthful years. And the way that God instructs His people to do that is to let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. This provides a wondrously helpful clue into living a life of true joy and happiness -- guarding your heart. Your heart is the gate into the city of your life. Your heart is the door that protects your house. Your heart is the door that, when opened, lets out everything that has been contained inside. The words you speak are merely the revealing of what's in your heart. The things you watch and ponder demonstrate what it is you really *want*. The conduct and actions of your life will prove what it is you really chase after and pursue. To guard your mouth, your desires, and your actions, the solution is quite simple: watch the door of your heart. And this is what God says: let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. How do you do this? Put down the device and fill your heart with Truth. There is truth. There is objective truth -- and it's God's Truth, revealed in the Word of Truth & you can commune intimately with Him who is the Way and *the Truth*, and the Life. Guard the door of your heart. Fill your heart with God's truth in Scripture. Download truth daily into the hard-drive of your heart. Go back again and again to the treasure of God's truth!

2. KEEP FUTURE JUDGMENT IN MIND.

A plague seems to be hijacking young people's minds and taking them to the grave perilously -- and that is that young people live for the *here and now* and give no thought to *life after death* (=eternity). God says to you, young man: follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes! Ah, but just remember one thing: God will bring you to judgment for all these things (Ecclesiastes 11.9). What is God's word of wisdom to you? Live your life well and enjoy life, but in all that you do, remember that God will judge you for it. Quite simply, young man: live your days, speak from your lips, let your eyes gaze, conduct your life in such a way that you *constantly* remind yourself that God will judge you for these things. After all, God made you and He knows you. He cares for His creation! If you perpetually placarded upon the frame of your brain that God would bring every act of yours into judgment on that Great Day to come, you would think twice before you click on that link, zoom on that picture, touch that woman, go to that party, listen to that music, or engage in that activity. Young man, you would do well to keep future judgment always in mind.

3. FIGHT HARD AGAINST SIN.

Life is a fight. For young men, you get that reality. The tragedy is that many young men fight for the fleeting, momentary pleasures that just don't satisfy because they were never intended to satisfy the deep recesses of your soul. Sex, money, pleasure, friendships, grades, jobs, careers, popularity are chased after with relentless zeal in our day. But young men, remember this: you must exert great energy to fight -- and fight hard -- against sin! There is one great goal in life: to love God and to worship God and to follow God. Whatever *keeps* you from the triumphant treasure and the seriously delightful journey of joy must be cast aside so you can fight hard against sin and fight hard to follow Christ. God says to you, young man, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body (Ecclesiastes 11:10). What does God mean by this? Make the most of your youth because these prime years of your life are fleeting. Don't indulge in sinful lusts of youthfulness. Rather, put away such sins by fighting fervently *against* sin and following hard *after* God. And our great and loving God is so wise. Young men, God doesn't *only* tell you *not* to do something. He compassionately tells you what it is that you *must pursue*. Now flee from youthful lusts

and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22). Fight hard against the sins that rush against your heart with the immense pull of an ocean current and seek to *put off those sins* with the ferocious fight of following God in pursuing righteousness (what is right in God's eyes), faith (growing in the faith once for all delivered to the saints found in God's Word), love (a genuine, self-giving, and sacrificial service to others for their good regardless of how they respond to you), and peace (harmony and reconciliation of relationships). By God's grace and with His help, young man, you *can* fight hard against sin!

4. UNLEASH YOUR ENERGIES FOR CHRIST.

Solomon was one of the wisest men who ever lived and he wrote a word of counsel to you: whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all our might (Ecclesiastes 9:10). God, the glorious and gracious Spirit, guided the hand of Solomon to write down this clear word of counsel to you, young men: unleash your energies for Christ! Live wholly for Him. Live sold-out for Him. Your energy, your passion, your drive, your zeal, your tirelessness is to be used and utilized and unleashed for the *greatest good*: for the magnification and praise of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. Are you in school? Unleash your energies by working and studying hard for God's glory as you study hard and speak much of Christ on campus. Are you working a job? Unleash your energies by arriving on time, working hard while on the clock, refusing to engage in deceptive, lazy, wicked behavior and, of course, always refuse to join in gossip, slander, and bitterness. Are you playing a sport? Unleash your energies by doing the best you can with the body and strength God has given you as you practice hard and perform to the best of your ability as you give praise and honor to Christ for what He allows you to do. Your energy and your passions and your abilities and your zealousness is not bad! Direct your energies for Christ's glory!

5. LIVE FOR, LINGER WITH, & LOVE YOUR CREATOR!

In the wondrous wisdom of God, He has given you, young man, a mind whereby you can remember things. You remember passwords. You remember to check social media. You remember musicians. You remember lines from movies. You have been given a mind to know, to remember, to ponder, to hide within you. Do this with God! God says: remember your Creator in the days of your youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Let it humble your soul to ponder the reality that you didn't create yourself, chance didn't create you, evolutionary theories did not result in 'you'. No! Rather, the gloriously mighty and sovereignly loving and unspeakably merciful hand of God made you. Remember He created you. And it will do you well to remember this in the days of your youth. You're not your own. You're made by another. You, really, belong to another -- to *God!* So remember Him! It's more than simply bringing a thought to mind. A man could say to his boss: I remembered that I was scheduled to work today but I didn't do anything about it. That man would quickly be searching for new employment. Thoughts and remembrance must lead to obedience and action. It's like a birthday. When you remember that it's your friend's birthday, you *do* something about it to celebrate. So, to remember God, live for His glory! Indeed, linger much with Him in prayer, in Bible reading, in your local church, in serving others that God has placed around you. To remember God, love Him, obey Him, praise Him, thank Him, repent of your sin before Him, plead the promises of God in prayer, preach gospel-truth to your soul daily. Young man, in all your remembering, remember Christ the Savior of sinners who died in the place of His people by fully satisfying God's just punishment aimed at their hearts. What a merciful Christ. What a friend of sinners! What a companion to linger with in prayer and worship. What a Champion to live for and proclaim from the housetops. What a Creator to declare on campus and to friends. Live for, linger with, and love your God, young men, for this truly is the path of undying joy and serious gladness and delightful happiness in the days of young manhood.