

What Can We Offer Our Youth?

I Timothy 4: 12-16

Tonight we begin a week of VBS. This is an exciting time in the lives of our young people. During this week we have a wonderful opportunity to make a significant impact on their lives. This year's theme is based on the Armor of God. Our youth desperately need to hear the message detailing the Armor of God. They face so many battles today that they will never overcome if they are not properly equipped. The only way that we can gain victory today is to be clothed in God's armor and know how to use it to our advantage.

I pray this week will remind us of our obligation to our youth. They need those they can look up to and find leadership and confidence. Paul wanted young Timothy to provide that leadership and confidence for the church at Ephesus. With God's help, he had much to offer those he came in contact with. We have much to offer the young people who attend our services, but it does no good if it isn't shared! So, [What can we offer our youth?](#) These verses reveal some [truths](#) about what we should offer.

I. A Positive Influence (12) – [Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.](#) Timothy was charged to be an example before his fellow believers. The Christians of his day needed to see a victorious life lived out before them. Timothy had great potential to make a positive impact. Many would've written him off due to his heritage, but he was able to show the power of God in his life.

- I have thought much about the influences in our world today: Musicians whose lyrics are filled with cursing, violence, drug use, and sexual promiscuity; actors who are in and out of rehab, changing spouses more often than we do cars; politicians convicted of corruption and greed; and preachers and pastors who preach one thing and live something totally different.
- It's evident that our young people need a positive influence in their lives. They need to see those who consistently live out their faith on a daily basis. They need to see everyday people, like you and me that are committed to the Lord, genuinely and whole-heartily serving Him.
- Paul covered just about every area that Timothy could be an example:
 - 1) **Word** - We must constantly be aware of what we say and how we say it. They hear much more than we think.

2) **Conversation** (conduct) - We can offer a life of consistency. We can live out the faith that we possess. They need to see lives that are lived pleasing unto the Lord.

3) **Charity** - This is God's love. Our love must be more than superficial. Young people need those who truly love them and try to understand the world they live in.

4) **Spirit** - We can offer an example of a spirit filled life, led of God, obedient to His will.

5) **Faith** - They need to see real faith in us, trusting God regardless of circumstances.

6) **Purity** - This is mentioned last, but it certainly isn't least. Our young people are surrounded by moral decay. People live as they please regardless of the consequences. We are obligated to live a life of purity before them. You may not feel as if you can make much of a difference, but you can offer a positive influence!

I. A Positive Influence (12)

II. Our Personal Involvement (13-15) – The youth of our day are practically raising themselves. They are left alone with the TV, play station, or internet, without any personal contact with those who can be a positive influence on their lives. The simple truth is our youth need us to take an active role in their lives. We have the tools and abilities to help them, but often they never have those offered, specifically our time. [Jam.2:15-16 – If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?](#) Our youth need our interaction in their lives. This includes:

A. Biblical Instruction (13) – [Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.](#)

The word [attendance](#) means “*to pay attention to, apply oneself to, and adhere to.*” Let me say that there is nothing that we can provide for them that will be any more effective than the Word of God. They need to hear the Word read, preached, and taught. We cannot assume that they will get what they need just because they have been given a Bible. We are responsible to ensure that they are getting sound, biblical doctrine.

- This requires personal involvement on our part. If you are in a teaching position, make the most of every opportunity. Don't just go in there and give them what the writer of the quarterly has to say. Spend some time alone with God, get a word from Him, and then share it with the youth.

- The Word of God has the power to change their lives. If we are committed to getting involved in sharing the truth of God's Word, we'll see a difference in their lives. The Word will find a lodging place and accomplish God's will.

B. A Continual Investment (14) – [Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.](#) Timothy had received much from God. He had been called to preach the gospel. It would've been a great tragedy for him to have neglected his calling.

- All have not been called to preach, but all can make a difference. There is no place for us to sit down or quit. The youth of our church are depending on us to carry on for them. You and I need help and encouragement all the time and they are no different. If we are to see them mature and prosper spiritually, it will require a continual investment on our part.
- This requires much more than the extra-curricular activities that are planned for them. This burden rests on the shoulders of us all. I've never known a church that was guilty of investing too much in their youth.

C. Spiritual Inspiration (15) – [Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.](#) If Timothy grew and prospered in his spiritual walk it would be evident for others to see. He would have a positive impact on the church.

- Have you ever noticed that children are honest about what they see and hear? I wonder how they would rate their experience at church. How would they describe our worship? I desire for them to see something within our lives and services that they would desire to have as well. I want them to see and know that we are serious about our service unto the Lord. They need to see genuine worship from you and me.
- You may not realize it, but someone is watching your life. They are following your steps. [Prov.22:6 – Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.](#) I truly believe that this verse has application for the house of God as well. Our children will likely worship and serve the Lord in the same way that we do. Will they need more of a relationship with God than what we possess or show? If we serve the Lord with gladness they will see that. If we serve Him half-heartily they will see that too. There have been many saints of God who have inspired me to live for the Lord. It certainly paid off in their lives and it has in mine as well.

I. A Positive Influence (12)

II. Our Personal Involvement (13-15)

III. A Profitable Inheritance (16) – *Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* We all want our children to have it better than we did. I doubt any of us will be able to leave our families a sizeable material inheritance, but we can leave them a profitable one. We are right now building relationships and commitments that will last a life time. You maybe can't offer your children wealth, but you can offer them a legacy that will last long after we are gone. The future of our church greatly depends on the present, here and now, and how we prepare for the future. What kind of inheritance can we leave the youth at Fellowship?

A. An Enduring Faith – Timothy was to *take heed of himself and the doctrine, continuing in it.* Let's build a life based on faith in God. Our children need to have a firm foundation in their lives. They need to see the importance of living for God. It has to be more than just on Sunday!

- This world has nothing of value to offer. It is possible to develop a faith that will endure. This will involve our influence and investment, but the church can go on long after we are gone. Let's leave our children a legacy of faithfulness to the Lord and a love for Him. The money that we leave them will soon be gone, but genuine faith will endure.

B. An Eternal Future – *for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* Timothy's faith and obedience wasn't just for his own gain, it would also impact others. His faithfulness was sure to see many souls come to a saving knowledge of Christ.

- We have been blessed with many children and youth here. If we will live obedient lives unto the Lord, revealing our faith, it will influence them to seek the Lord in salvation. It ought to be our desire to see each and every one of these young ones saved by the grace of God. There is much that we can do for them, but having an active part in their salvation is the greatest of all.

- May we never be satisfied or content as long as there are souls in need of salvation! May we leave our young people an inheritance that is built on the eternal riches of God's saving grace! There would be nothing greater than to see precious souls come to know Christ this week. Let's pray for that and live a life of influence before them.

Our children desperately need a positive influence in our day. We have a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in their lives. Each of us has a unique gift that will be profitable in their lives. Will you determine to offer what the Lord has given you?