

The Daze Of Our Youth

According to tradition, Solomon wrote *Song of Solomon* when he was a young man, experiencing young love. He wrote *Proverbs* as a middle-aged parent, passing on valuable instructions to his children. And he wrote *Ecclesiastes* near the end of his life, offering wisdom on how best to spend your days under the sun.

In his last work, perhaps looking back on missed opportunities and misspent energies, he gave this advice: "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things. Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth" (Eccl 12:1). Notice how that last statement breaks down.

"Remember." This is not the only time the Lord uses that word. He said through Moses, "Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the Lord brought you out from this place" (Exo 13:3).

Both of these commands call on us to remember things that we shouldn't have to be told to remember. You wouldn't think that the Israelites would ever forget the story of their exodus from Egypt, from slavery to freedom. You wouldn't think that Christians would ever need to be reminded of the Son of God hanging on a cross for our sins. But each event involves a commemoration meal. Yes, we worship as we partake of the Lord's Supper, but we also do it to remember that which we ought to have trouble forgetting.

Remember. He shouldn't have to tell us that. Especially to remember our Creator.

"Remember your Creator." The National Center for Health Statistics recently released a report that listed the ten leading causes of death in the United States. I was not surprised to find heart disease, cancer, and strokes in the top three. What *did* surprise me was that suicide was number eight and homicide was number ten. In a country where people are afraid of being murdered, we have more people who are murdering themselves.

That's because we've forgotten where we come from, of Who made us. From a very young age, our children are being taught in science classes and in other subtle ways that they are nothing more than evolved algae cells or apes. No wonder so many teenagers, when under adversity, choose to end their lives, finding no meaning or value in them.

Brother Jones, a black preacher for the Grady Street church in Houston, says it this way: "God don't make no junk." Every person is made in His image, according to His likeness (Gen 1:26-27). If you really want to remember who you are, just remember your Creator. You're God-made, and that makes you somebody special.

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth." A lot of young people are not expected to be interested in religion. Many have suggested that spirituality is for older people and that kids need to "sew their wild oats" and "get it out of their system" while they are young. Even parents excuse the behavior of their children by saying, "they'll grow out of it." Some never do.

But the Bible speaks of those who remembered their Creator in the days of their youth. "Now the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men" (1 Sam 2:26). The fact is, the Lord has never said that He will excuse sin because it was committed by someone under 20. He expects the young and old alike to be accountable for their actions.

The reason it is wise to remember your Creator in your youth is because you make choices in your younger days that could likely plot the course for the remainder of your life. People are dying of cancer because they started smoking when they were a teenager. Students who lie and cheat their way through school will likely do the same at work. Alcoholics are born trying to impress their friends with their first beer. Choosing habits deserves our careful consideration, for they will not only follow us through life, they will accompany us to the judgment.

If God is not remembered in youth, He is likely to be forgotten with age. Don't think it is going to get any easier to serve the Lord as you get older. The truth is, it generally becomes more difficult. And how can we expect Him to know us in heaven if we've not remembered Him on the earth?

Bubba Garner