

How Shall the Young Secure His Heart?
Psalm 119:9-16

Introduction:

- I. We live in a time in which our children are more bombarded with temptations of evil than ever before. More and more young people leave the church now (about half of them on average between 18 and 25 years old).
 - a. What can we do to stop this trend and keep our young people pure and faithful?
 - i. It takes strong parenting, great discipline, and encouragement from everyone in the church. Today's children cannot make it on their own.
 - b. In Psalm 119, the longest chapter of the Bible, the Psalmist asks the question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" Another way of saying that is, 'How can the youth keep his way pure?'
 - i. By looking at this passage, we will discuss today how the youth can be secure here. It includes what parents can do and the child's responsibility.
 1. Like I said before, half of the church's 18-year-olds will be unfaithful at the age of 25. Why is this?
 - a. This is the age when their parents' faith must give way to their own, and if it is not there, the parents' faith will fade and nothing will replace it.
- II. So what can we do?
 - a. Emphasize four things, from as early as possible in the child's life

Discussion:

- I. Priority (13-14)
 - a. "Second place is first loser."
 - i. God has first place or no place in your life.
 - b. Do you notice how people are so careless when it comes to following God?
 - i. They do things they know are wrong, because they can repent later.
 1. By that same logic, I could say, I'll just take some money from the church contribution. I can give it back later!
 - a. We see that as a direct breach of trust. Such action would be enough for you to fire me from being the preacher here.
 - i. Yet that is no more a breach of trust toward you than willfully committing any sin is toward God.
 - ii. We must seek first to please God.
 1. Matthew 6:33
 - a. Seek his kingdom first – what is good for the church, both here and in general
 - i. My involvement, my participation, my reputation
 - b. Seek his righteousness – what brings me forgiveness of sins.
 - i. Does taking advantage of forgiveness fit this description? Absolutely not!

1. Hebrews 10:26-31 – If you sin willfully, there is no longer sacrifice for sins.
 - a. Cell phone insurance
 - b. Insurance Fraud
- ii. I Samuel 15:22-23
 1. If it were not for sin and disobedience, there would be no need of forgiveness.
 2. Presumption (stubbornness) is as the sin of wickedness and idolatry.
 - a. Presumption – taking something for granted, overstepping your bounds

II. Assistance

- a. The best way for a child to grow up spiritually strong with his heart secure is for him to be led by great parents who love God as well.
 - i. Proverbs 22:6 – Train up a child in the way he should go.
 1. If we want our children to stay faithful, they need to grow up seeing their parents remaining faithful.
 - a. There is not much that one resents more than being told by a parent something that the parent does not want to do.
 - b. If you want your children to be at church, go to church. If you want them at Bible class, go to Bible class.
 - ii. Eli – I Samuel 3:13 – He knew his sons were committing evil, yet he did not restrain them.
 1. If we want our children to be faithful, they must be well-disciplined.
 - a. I have seen people before who taught their toddler to say curse words because it was cute to hear them,
 - b. I have seen people refuse to scold a child for not being obedient, just because “he’s being a kid.”
 2. These are the children that grow up to be unfaithful and noncommittal when it comes to life.
 - a. We must teach our children to love.
 - b. We must teach our children to get along with other people.
 - c. We must teach our children that education is important.
 - d. We must teach our children to treat their families well.
 - i. Watchman – Ezekiel 3:16-21 – What God has commanded for mankind, we must teach our children to follow.

III. Sincerity (10)

- a. We must seek him with our “whole heart.”
 - i. Deuteronomy 6:1-9
 1. Moses told the people of Israel that in order to fear God, they must keep all of his commands, all the days of their lives. That is the fear of the Lord!
 - a. 3 – Be careful to do them, that it may go well with you.
 - b. 5 – Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and might.

- c. 6 – These words must be on your heart.
 - d. 7 – You must teach them to your children diligently.
 - ii. Deuteronomy 10:12
 - 1. What does God require, except to fear him, obey him in all things, and love him with all your heart? Nothing!
 - b. According to the field of psychology, we get discouraged when we think of how our family situations affect our future walk with God.
 - i. Lack of parental involvement, rough childhoods, and other things like these make us feel like we have no chance.
 - 1. Moses – Spent most of his early life in a foster family. He did not speak well, and he had a furious temper.
 - 2. Joseph – Lived in a family where his brothers hated him and his parents misunderstood him.
 - 3. Josiah – Served as king after a long line of wicked kings, yet was actually one of the most faithful to the Law.
 - ii. Conversely, we tend to think that we can slide by more easily on a parent’s good faithful life.
 - 1. Jehoiakim – Was one of the most wicked kings, the one who was king when Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem. Josiah was his father.
 - 2. Simeon and Levi – Sons of Jacob, killed a whole city of men, because one of the men had raped their sister.
 - iii. This tells us that no one decides our path except us. Our environment may try to affect our direction, but we choose whether or not to go the way that seems easiest.
 - 1. Our environment and upbringing only *prepares* us for being faithful or not. We still have to make the decision to follow that path.
- IV. Scripture (15-16)
 - a. Verses 4-7
 - i. God commands us to keep his commands diligently.
 - 1. Romans 10:17 – Faith comes from reading, hearing, studying Scripture.
 - a. If you are not reading or studying the Bible, what you have is not faith. It is habit.
 - 2. Psalm 119:34 – Give me understanding that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.
 - a. We cannot love God with all of our heart if we do not understand the Bible. We must seek to know and grow in knowledge. Otherwise we will be destroyed in our struggles (Psalm 119:92)
 - ii. We will not be put to shame if we have our eyes fixed on his commands.
 - 1. “Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal.”
 - a. Peter walking on the water (Matthew 14:30-31).
 - iii. By following righteous rules, we can praise with an upright heart.

1. 119:101 – We must hold our feet from every evil way in order to keep God’s word.
 - a. 102 – We do not turn aside from his rules; they teach us, and must be our source of understanding so we can hate every false way (104).

Conclusion:

- I. Only through being strong in each of these areas can a young person have a hope of surviving the temptations of the teenage and early adult years.
- II. If you have children, make sure these qualities are deeply ingrained in their characters.
 - a. If you are still young, apply these things to your lifestyle. Make God a priority. Seek assistance with faith, whether you think you need it or not. We must grow together. Be sincere about Christianity. Do not lie to yourself or others about your salvation. Let the Scriptures be a lamp to your feet and a light unto your path.