

# Young and Free!

"I am young, and I am free! My whole life is before me! I will have my good times now! Later in life I can settle down. But today, I will enjoy my freedoms. At least for a few years, I will live without restraint. Why should everybody else tell me what to do?"

## What to Do in Your Youth

But stop, my dear youthful friend; pause long enough to consider the following facts from God's Word, the Bible.

Yes, youth is a time to enjoy life. "Rejoice...in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

But youth is also a time to act responsibly. "But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Yes, youth is a time of strength and energy. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong" (1 John 2:14).

But it is also a time to do what is right. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Yes, youth is a time of awakening desires and new discoveries. Even Jesus as a youth "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

But it is also a time of serious personal responsibilities. "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established" (Proverbs 4:26).

Yes, youth is a truly wonderful time of life. The possibilities and choices are unlimited. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

But, it is also the best time to lay a good foundation for the rest of your life. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3:27).

## True Freedom

Jesus' words to the people of His day are still true for the youth of today. "If the Son [of God] therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Real freedom is found in escaping the corrupting power of sin. It is found in full surrender to the divine plan of an infinitely wise heavenly Father.

Freedom, in its true sense, is not a release from moral obligations or a lack of respect for decency and wise authority. The young person who casts away all restraint and does whatever he wants to do enters into bondage. He will become a slave to his own evil habits and wrong desires, which eventually will destroy himself and others.

Only a "fair share" of natural freedom can be experienced by anyone before he begins violating the freedoms of others. For example, when a person acts as though he owns the highway and is responsible to no one, danger, accident, and death result. The privilege to freely drive my car ends where the privileges of the oncoming driver begin. The highways would be chaos if there were no laws and no respect for safety regulations.

This same principle applies to how we should live. A person always becomes a slave to the devil when he rejects God's laws and guidelines as being too narrow and old-fashioned. True freedom can be found only when the heart is in harmony with its Creator. I can then do as I please because I have determined to do only those things that please my heavenly Father. Only then will these Bible words make sense to me. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made [you] free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

God says, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). The reasoning continues with the right outcome: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17, 18).

### **Be Young and Free**

Jesus died so that you can be delivered from sin and your own selfish desires. Through Him you may experience new life and true freedom. By surrendering fully to Him, you can learn in a new way what it means to be young and free.

—Harry Erb