

LOOKING AT YOUTHS FROM JEHOVAH'S STANDPOINT

Note to the speaker:

Kindly help adults to see youths as Jehovah does and to deal with them accordingly. Warmly encourage youths to appreciate Jehovah's love for them and to respond to it by pursuing theocratic goals

JEHOVAH SHOWS LOVING CONCERN FOR YOUTHS (8 min.)

Genuine Christians are not ignorant of Jehovah's view of youths

He is deeply concerned about the welfare of young ones (Ps 94:6; Isa 1:23)

God's Word provides loving and necessary counsel to both youths and parents and sets forth their respective duties and responsibilities; it can make inexperienced ones wise (Ps 19:7)

There are hundreds of references in the Bible to infants, children, boys, girls, and youths

From these references we learn that Jehovah loves children (Ps 127:3-5)

He has taken measures to care for, educate, and protect them; he has a place for them in his divine arrangement

Jehovah established the family, making provisions for protection, nourishment, and development of humankind from conception onward (Eph 3:14, 15)

Training and care by loving, godly parents (Eph 6:4)

Education through family arrangement and the congregation (De 6:6-9; 31:12; *it-1* 435)

Laws to protect children from abuse (Ex 22:22-24)

CHRISTIANS IMITATE JEHOVAH'S VIEW OF YOUNG ONES (10 min.)

Jesus showed genuine interest in young ones (Mt 19:14)

Godly parents, especially fathers, are to train their children in Jehovah's ways

They should avoid exasperating, or irritating, their children (Eph 6:4; Col 3:21)

Bible principles should guide parents when administering discipline to their children (Consider key points from *g92* 9/8 26-7)

Mature Christians do not look down on youths; rather, the congregation views faithful youths as examples worthy of imitation (1Ti 4:12)

All Christians, including youths, should be treated with respect and dignity

Jehovah values their worship (Ps 110:3)

YOUTHS WHO ENJOYED JEHOVAH'S APPROVAL (9 min.)

Youths have marvelous potential but need to grow, to learn, and to be trained in order to fulfill it (Ps 71:17)

Encouraging examples of faithful youths in Bible times [Highlight how the following youths served Jehovah from youth onward, and specify qualities that endeared them to God]

Joseph: Received prophetic dreams from God while still a teenager (Ge 37:2, 5)

He loved righteousness and rejected immorality (Ge 39:7-9)

Jephthah's daughter: Devoted and obedient, willing to forsake normal life of Israelite woman (*it-2* 27-8)

David: Jehovah's spirit "began to be operative" upon him while he was still "a boy" (1Sa 16:11-13; 17:33)

Josiah: King of Judah when eight years old; he respected God's Word and wholeheartedly promoted true worship (*it-2* 117-18)

Daniel: Taken to Babylon likely as a teenager, he remained steadfast, loyal, uncompromising (Da 1:8; *it-1* 576)

ADMONITION FROM OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, WHO CARES FOR THE YOUNG (14 min.)

As a loving Father, Jehovah appeals to us and is deeply concerned about our well-being (Pr 4:20-27)

He is fully aware of the bad inclination of heart that all of us must contend with from youth onward (Ge 8:21)

God understands young ones and knows all about the pressures they face from adults, older youths, and peers

He provides loving counsel and beneficial examples to follow

Samuel, though just a boy, developed personal relationship with God and did not allow the disrespectful and immoral conduct of Eli's sons to squeeze him into their mold (1Sa 2:11-26)

Be quick to "flee from the desires incidental to youth" (2Ti 2:22)

Included are immoral sexual inclinations and unrestrained, obsessive pursuit of pleasures, so common today

Resolve in your heart not to pollute yourself with any form of uncleanness (Da 1:8)

Vital to appreciate that all of us, including youths, are accountable to God (Ec 11:9; Ro 14:12)

Involves obedience and respect due parents (Eph 6:1-3)

Youths brought up in the world but now in the truth must continue to resist returning to past ungodly conduct, drugs, immorality

Do not be misled by the attractions of this world or its thinking; they are *temporary* and *dangerous* (1Jo 2:15-17)

Seek to be balanced in all that you do, including entertainment (*w92* 8/15 16)

Develop wholesome interests and beneficial hobbies; avoid entertainment that promotes a rebellious spirit and unclean practices (Ps 101:3; *w92* 10/15 16)

Make your advancement manifest (1Ti 4:15)

Pursue theocratic goals; use provisions designed for youths, such as the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*

Progress in such areas as accurate knowledge of Bible, Christian qualities, and spiritual growth, as well as speaking, reading, and teaching ability

If not yet baptized, be determined to qualify for baptism and to share fully in ministry

JEHOVAH PROMISES FAITHFUL YOUTHS A SECURE AND HAPPY FUTURE (4 min.)

From Jehovah's standpoint, youths play a vital role in his purpose

However, this brings with it a weighty responsibility before Jehovah (Ec 12:1)

Show by your works that you appreciate his loving counsel and fatherly warnings

Be good at what you do for God; give him your best! (Compare Proverbs 22:29 with Malachi 1:6-9)

Take the truth seriously, and recognize that your relationship with Jehovah is your most precious possession

He invites you to enjoy a happy, secure future by serving him now (Jer 29:11-14a)

With the loving support, respect, and training of older ones in the congregation, young ones can make a significant contribution to the fulfillment of Jehovah's will (Read Psalm 148:12, 13)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on)