

1 Corinthians 16:9-15

Sunday 11/6/2011

One Sunday, we have all the kids come in, and I have always enjoyed doing that. When we started doing that, my goal was to have them be part of the service. They are getting to the age now where I want them to learn how to sit in and listen. Many of them take notes, and I always enjoy the feedback I get. I love our kids; I love doing things with our kids and for our kids, and I just appreciate all that they do.

Last week, little Riley wrote me a letter. Out of the sermon that I preached, he gave me an outline and a little Bible study that he got out of it. He put it in letter form and wanted me to preach it today, so I thought I would start my sermon by reading his letter, and then I will work it in. It is pretty good. This is what I am talking about with our kids; they are a lot smarter than you think they are. Riley is either going to be president or the Antichrist, I am not sure which yet. He is going to be my buddy, however he goes, aren't you, pal? This is what he wrote. Now, you talk about listening and getting things down. Listen to this; this is great.

God is in your heart, and the devil is bad in your heart. By Riley C.

The devil can take over your heart and brain, so can drugs and beer. God can take the bad devil stuff, and you do not care. Some of the people out there can do whatever they want because of the devil. I know that I will never do drugs and beer, and I never want to do anything that the devil wants me to do. I know that everybody makes mistakes. I even made a mistake this morning. I was crying because I could not make my hair all slicked back. My dad did not like it. I think my mom did a little bit, but on Halloween, I get to do it, so I can wait 48 hours. Everybody does drugs that I know that was not saved, and anybody can get a tattoo, a real one, but it is their choice, not ours. Everybody can do anything they want. It is not our thing to worry about. Love you, Pastor Bob.

Thank you, buddy. I am going to start my sermon with that today.

I. The Ministry Handbook: 1 & 2 Corinthians

As you know, we have been in the book of 1 Corinthians, coming through the aspect of how it all works out and how Christ is portrayed. We have been doing that in every book of the Bible. When we got to this one, we held up a minute because of where we are as a church. We are going to take this book and then launch into 2 Corinthians here in the next couple of weeks, hopefully, and look at the greatest book in the Bible on ministry. In fact, 2 Corinthians has been called the handbook of ministry.

The great contrast is that in 1 Corinthians, they are messed up on just about everything they can be messed up on, and somewhere between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, they get it all straightened out. We will talk about how that happened when we get to that book. In 1 Corinthians, chapter by chapter, he deals with them on all kinds of issues they are messed up on. In 2 Corinthians, chapter by chapter, he gives us the greatest insight on how to minister that you could ever have in your life. You will never understand true biblical ministry and how to make

ministry work in your life until you first understand how this book works in your life. It is without a doubt: where Romans is the handbook of Christian doctrine, 2 Corinthians is the handbook of ministry.

II. Open Doors and Adversaries: Lessons from Israel

But we are not quite there yet; we are still finishing up chapter 16. Last week, we learned a couple of incredible concepts about serving God, did we not? Two of the greatest, most important Bible principles that you are ever going to learn when it comes down to the ministry and understanding how it all works. You learned last week and the week before that God gives open doors. Paul talked about it in the passage we are going to read here for a moment. We have read it for three or four weeks now. He says, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me." We talked about the doors being opportunities in the Bible. We showed you examples of doors in the Bible, and keys in the Bible. I showed you how that for us, you and me and this church, when God opens up a door, it is a great opportunity to do something. It says "door of effectual," meaning with an effect, having an effect on somebody with the cause of Christ because God gave you the open door. It just so happened that we were at that place when God opened up the Restart program to go down there and minister to them, to really take over and help that situation down there, and in time, bring about the spiritual thing that we need to do there.

The following week, we looked at the last part of that verse. These two verses are key if you are ever going to get into ministry. Yes, God opens up great doors. But the last part of that verse, which we talked about last week, states, "and there are many adversaries." We talked about how the adversaries are always there to try to stop what God is doing in your life. As I thought this week a lot about last week and what I was going to try to put together this week, I thought about a great principle that is in connection with all this that you see throughout the Bible. That is the concept again of the nation of Israel. You have heard me say many, many times of the great parallels between what Israel went through and what the church goes through today.

In Israel's case, it deals with the promised land. God gave them the promised land; it was theirs. But they had to constantly stay in armed combat to stay in that land because God gave them the land, their open door. But then the adversary, the devil, brought the other nations that wanted to get them out. In a physical sense, they had to fight physical battles with physical nations to be able to stay in the physical land that God gave them. That promised land is a picture of your life and my life once we get to a point that we simply live by the promises of God. But for you and me, we know from Ephesians 6 that our warfare is not physical. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual wickedness in high places, principalities, and powers. What we deal with is the aspect of the spiritual side of things. So, just as they are in a constant warfare to stay in the physical land, you and I are in a constant spiritual battle to stay in the book and the promises that God has given us. We see that they have to continually fight their adversary to have what God wants for them to have, much as you and I have to do spiritually.

You also see that when God takes them out of Egypt, if you study on a map and plot on a map, God brings them down, and they come down around on the east side of Jordan to a place called Kadesh. That is where they send the spies over to the land, and the spies come back and give a

bad report, and the whole nation of Israel fears and trembles. It is at that point that God says, "You are not ready to face the adversities yet." So, for the next 40 years, God takes them out wandering in the wilderness, and then 40 years later, brings them back to the place where they come in and get over in that land. What you find by studying that aspect, going along with what we have talked about and what we are going to talk about today, is that you will find that God on purpose takes them out of the way of adversity. He does not allow them right after they come out of Egypt to have to deal with all of the nations that are waiting for them. He gives them a period of time to get themselves together, to get themselves in a relationship with God, to get themselves where they are ready to do something. That in itself is a great thing to see. My old father in the Lord, Malchabaka, used to say, and it is a true statement, that God never sends green troops into combat. That is a very true statement.

What we see with Israel is what we see in your life and my life: when you get saved, there has to be a period of time, a process where you start to put everything together. There has to be a growing time, a training process. You have to get some experience and some time under your belt. God is not just going to let you come into church and get right with God and suddenly throw you into pastoring someplace. God is not going to take you and just give you a scenario where you now have a responsibility with people if you have not been doing it already on a consistent basis in your own life, in your own church, and everything that you are doing. God will not take you young Christians here and just throw you into the fire. What we are doing at Restart, and what we do in everything that we do, is that training process. You go down there with seasoned veterans who have experience in what is going on, and you learn the process. You learn how to do that. We see Paul doing the exact same thing with the men that he trains.

Let us read our text this morning. Again, we are going to move out of verse 9, and we will come down through the rest of this passage here. Here is what he says, and we have read this now for three weeks, so we will read it again.

1 Corinthians 16:9-15

For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.

Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Let all your things be done with charity.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Thank You for those that have come out today. Again, we pray for the team in Wichita. We pray for Shane and all of our boys in harm's way, and ladies that are serving our country faithfully around this world. Lord, we pray for the

folks in our church that are here, that have needs. We pray for Nikki and for Stephanie and for her sister who are coming back from the funeral, and today as they drive back, watch over them. We just pray that You continue to bless our church, bless this afternoon. Lord, let us quiet our hearts right now and just look at what we have here. Help us to grasp the great principles. Help these young men and young ladies, who are the future of this church and the future of Christianity, Father, to get it right, get it straight, to do what Paul says, and to stand fast, and to be like a man, and to let all things be done with charity. We will thank You today and praise You in Jesus' name, for which sake we ask it. Amen.

III. Paul's Final Instructions and Key Individuals

In the rest of this passage, down through the rest of the chapter, he basically talks about three men, really four, one of them is a lady. Then he gives the church five commandments or things that they are to keep. Remember now that we are in chapter 16. He is finishing up his letter to them, and now he is leaving them with some final thoughts and some final instructions. Out of this writing of Paul, we find in all of his writings, it is an interesting thing, you find these three people showing up all the time. He makes a reference to them many, many, many times. They are obviously key to what he is doing. They really are his helpers. They have gotten his heart and his burden and his vision. It is clear by the way he uses them and talks about them that his burden has become their burden. Paul talks much about how valuable they are to him, and we will look at them in the next couple of weeks. We will talk about one today who is very familiar, but we probably never looked at him in the light we are going to talk about him today. That is found in verse 10 here with Timothy.

He says, "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren." The first one he mentions here is Timothy. We know a lot about Timothy. On our prayer groups, Iron Man groups on Saturday morning, we are actually coming through the twelve charges that Paul gave young Timothy, found in the book of 1 Timothy, preparing him to pastor. I have told you many times, it is the same twelve charges that every pastor ought to follow if he wants to build a church. He is coming through these things with them, so we are quite familiar with him.

I am sure that Paul had many sons in the Lord. The Bible has a way of taking one person or one group of people and telling a story about them, but in actuality, there are many more people like it. I am sure that Paul talks about Timothy, and he talks about Titus, and he talks about Philemon. They were all men that he won to Christ, young men that he prepared for the ministry. But I am telling you, Paul had thousands of young men just like that. But the Bible has a way of doing that. Adam and Eve is a good story. The Bible says that Adam and Eve lived for over 800 years, and they had kids all those years. How many kids do you imagine that must have been? Maybe 400, 300, 200, 500, maybe more than that, I do not know. 800 years is a long time to have kids. Yet the Bible only focuses on two that he had. That is just the way that it really works, and you have to know that about the Bible. I am sure that Paul had many sons in the ministry.

Paul gives the church at Corinth some specific constructs concerning Timothy, which again, I think really helps us understand. You can obviously see that Paul is a little concerned about sending Timothy down there because his instructions to that church are pretty straightforward and a little bit on the harsh side, as far as, "Okay, this is what I am afraid of." The first thing he says is, "Now when I send him to you, let him be there with you without fear." Then he says, "Do not let any man despise him." That is some pretty hard stuff. I personally think that once we are through with Timothy and the other men in the Bible that we are going to talk about in this chapter, these young men, these people here, represent what makes a church really work and makes a church really flow and makes a church really everything that we have. We have one young man, we have one older man, and then we have a couple. They are all found in the last chapter of this book. I think that they make up, basically, if you want a church that is going to be active, a church that is going to be, it takes all of that. That is why he takes the time in his last chapter to talk about it, but yet you find them referenced all the way through. We are going to look at them in the weeks to come, and we are going to study a little bit about them. Personally, I think that these three—Timothy, Apollos, and then the third group, which is a husband and wife—are a good model of what makes a healthy church.

IV. The Role and Limitations of Youth in Ministry

Timothy represents a young man. Again, ladies, we are not leaving you out. The Bible, you know the cultural frame of reference of the Bible, goes toward the man. But in essence, this same stuff applies to every young woman. Timothy represents a young man, or in our case, a young lady, somewhere probably between the age of 18 and 30, I do not know, somewhere in there, what we consider pretty young. Did you ever notice how God addresses some really key verses to young people in the Bible? It is an amazing thing. We talk about the book of Proverbs and Proverbs being wisdom, and all the things that come out of the book of Proverbs. But if you read the first seven chapters of Proverbs, he is not addressing that to any older people; he is addressing that to one of his young sons. If that was not enough, when you get into Proverbs 5 and Proverbs 7, and it talks about the evil man and the strange woman who represent two different things in life that we have to deal with, the story is built around a young man. He really addresses some specific things because of how God looks at young people in the Bible.

In Ecclesiastes 12:1, what does he say there? He says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." I always thought it was interesting in that passage in your King James Bible that it says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The Holy Spirit of God knew that for you and for me and for most of the generation of the last 200 years or so, the greatest issue that you were going to have to face as a young person, and every day that anybody ever taught you in a public school system, was going to come down to the fact: was God Creator? The Bible says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil day comes." You know enough, we have talked about it in child training, that in every child's life, every young man, every young lady, as you grow up, there comes that evil day in your life. That evil day in your life is when you are faced with what to do with what you have been taught and what you have been trained with the Word of God, versus what the world wants to give you now.

Everybody has to face that; nobody is immune from that. But young people have a certain quality that God looks for if it is done right and if they are the way they need to be.

In 1 Timothy 4:12, it is another strange thing. Paul, when he is talking to Timothy, makes another reference to it. Here he says, "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." Look at that verse. Just listen to it if you do not have it there. He did not say, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example to be a believer." He said, "Be an example of the believer." In other words, these are the things that a young man builds in his life, and God will take those things and God will use him.

- The word.
- His conversation.
- Charity.
- Spirit.
- Faith.
- Purity.

People have an affinity for clean, sharp-looking young men and young ladies. I think one of the biggest downsides to the 60s that caused so many problems and people, it went back to the hippie movement. Most of you do not know what a hippie is, but it was an anti-establishment crowd that let their hair grow long and never took a bath, and it was all young people. They were hated by the established men who had gone through World War II, many through World War I at that time, and Korea, and Vietnam was going on. It was a real break between the old generation who had some real principles to this new generation that had no principles. It was a real hatred and a real rift between the two. But it was not so much the ideas that they had that were different that made them hated. It was the fact that they looked... back then, men wore short haircuts that were real men. Everybody wears it today. But they were letting their hair grow as a statement against society, and they looked unkempt, they looked unclean; they were really a bad group of people. The other generation looked at young people and were thinking to themselves, "What an absolute waste," because of the way they looked and because of the way they acted and because of the things that they did. That is when your drugs really came in and all the music that goes along with that.

People have an affinity for good, clean young men and young ladies. When a Bible college wants to pick up people and get people to come to their school, what do they do? They get a singing group of clean-cut young men and young ladies, put them into a singing group, travel around the country to all the churches, and then put those kids up there, and they sing, and they look great. They are clean-cut. They say the right things. They are very polite: "Yes, ma'am," "No, ma'am," "Yes, sir," "No, sir." Everything is the way it looks like it is supposed to be. The parents sit down and they will say, "Wow, that is the way I want my kid to be." So they ship them off to that school. That works.

As a young man or a young lady, you have incredible power. When I used to preach and go to churches, and I have preached probably over, I do not know how many hundreds or maybe

thousands of churches in my time. But when I go to a church to preach, and I would be there over the weekend and over Sunday, and I was going to preach for the pastor, the first thing I would look for, I would look at the young people. Because young people tell you what the spiritual phenomena of your church is. I will take it one step further. I like when I say that. I will take it one step further. I just accented what I said. Accents. I learned that on TV last week. Your children are the spiritual phenomena of your family. God has a special place for young people. He really does. Young people can have a real impact. God can use them mightily. But the problem is that young people have limitations. A problem happens when young people do not understand their limitations, and therefore it has its problems.

What makes a church a viable church, as far as I am concerned, is the young people in it. Look at our church. Most churches have 80% people over 60 and maybe 10 to 15% in that age group 18 to 1. We are just the opposite. If you are over 50 here, you are in the minority, not the majority. That does not mean you are not as valuable as anybody else. But the bottom line is we are on the other side of the hill, and they are still coming up the hill. It is a thing where we have to help each other. I have seen some churches that everybody in it is 50, 60 years old, and I made a statement one time, and I said, "Well, that church will be... they will close that door in 10 years." A guy looked at me and he said, "Well, that is not a very nice thing to say." He said, "That is pretty much an attack on the pastor." And I said, "No, it was not an attack on the pastor." I said, "What do you mean by that?" I said, "In 10 years, everybody is going to be dead. The pastor is 60, excuse me, he is 75. Everybody in it is in their 70s and their 80s. There are no young couples. There are no young people. You are going to die by attrition. Everybody is going to die." That is just the way it works. We see it even in a greater way in the book of Daniel, Daniel 1. The devil knows this as well as I am telling you today. When he wanted to stop the cause of Christ, Christ ever being born, when the nation of Israel went into Babylon, he did not go after the old people. The Bible tells you very clearly in Daniel 1 that he wanted children who were of a king's seed. He wanted the young people because he knew that young people are the future to anything. That is just the truth. So God has a tremendous thing, and this is why Paul is telling these churches in Corinth. He says, "Now you do not let anybody despise him, and you do not make him afraid."

Here is the problem with being a young person. The problem is found in a great verse that just lays it out: Proverbs 20:29. You will want to mark this in your Bible. This really sums up your problem if you are between 18 and, oh, I do not know, 25. I do not know where your cutoff date is. For me, it is 18 to 60, but I cannot speak for you. But this really sums it up in a single verse.

Proverbs 20:29

The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head.

That is what it says. Young men have the strength to do just about anything they want to do. But you notice it says, "the glory of young men." The problem with young men is they have the strength to do it, but in most cases, they do it for their own glory. You have a football star, a basketball star. A young man can play sports. Whether it is high school or college, he has the ability to work all day or all night, not get much sleep, and go right on with what he wants to do. He has unbounded energy. He can run hard. He can play hard. He can work early Saturday

morning or whatever he wants to do and come home and do some other things, and then go play flag football with Kyle, and then go out to eat with everybody, and then stay out until 11 o'clock, and then somebody says, "Hey, let us go to a movie," and you say, "Yeah, let us do it." You have been running through the whole day. Steve Bracken back here goes to bed at 8:30. I know that is true because I have tried to call him before. "Yeah, what do you want?" I brag about... you people think I am wonderful because I brag about that I do not go to bed until 12 midnight with all that I do, but then I sleep until noon, so it works out on the other end. Not really.

So a young man has the strength, you see, and young ladies, but a young man has no experience with life. That is his downside. In many cases, or most cases, they do not have any common sense. I do not mean that in a bad way; I mean, they have not lived long enough. They have no thought of tomorrow; they only think about today. We talk about saving money. What is that? We talk about, "You need to prepare for the future." You do not think about the future. Young people think about today. They are very limited in their perspective on things. That is not a bad thing; that is just the way it is. An old preacher said one time, and it is so true, "A young man has the heat, but he has no light. An old man has the light, but he has no heat." Where a young man has the energy and the strength, the older man has the wisdom and the experience of 50, 60 years on earth and life, and he has been through some things, and that is the difference.

So you have to learn that you have to, as a young person, you have to be... this is my favorite phrase in everything I do because it is so true... you have to be smarter than the problem. You just have to. I had a friend of mine that had lost his job when he was in his 50s, and he went to a job interview, and he got past the first thing. He said, "Everybody there was kids who were 19 and 20, and I am 50 years old." He was not in bad shape, but you would think the job was going to be kind of a physical job, and he said, "I am competing with all these kids up here." He said, "This is the difference, listen to me, this is the difference." He said, "We had a thing around here in his last session where everybody was together, and they asked some questions, and they graded you on the questions." So they asked each guy down the line, "Why do you want to work for our company?" The questions were typical young men questions without any kind of common sense or reasoning. One guy said, "Well, man, I want to get a lot of money so I can get a nice car." And he said, and they would play him, "Well, what kind of car are you?" "Well, I want to get me an Alexis," you know, whatever that is. Then somebody else says, "Well, I want to get, I want to, you know, I want to do this because, you know, I just, I like this or do that." It was all stupid stuff.

My guy in a moment knew that this was his chance. On the wall, right between the table, and everybody saw it, was this company's mission statement. Just a stupid little mission statement of, "This is what we do, provide a quality product," that right there, everybody could have seen it. But the younger kids had no clue. They are wanting an Alexis. They want this, we want that. One guy wanted to buy a guitar. His name was Bubba. He did not get the job. This is picking on your friend today, by the way. Anyway, my guy is sitting there, and they are going around the room, and the guy says, "And what would you like to work for this?" And the guy said, "Well, you know what?" He says, "I have been impressed with a lot of things." He says, "I have had a lot of experiences with work, and I try to find out exactly what the employer wants, and I think my job

is to fulfill that." He said, "The thing that really struck me and why I want to work for you is your mission statement." Your mission statement, and he went down through it, and he basically gave them a four-point outline. It probably is in some brochure someplace now because it was so good. He laid that thing off, why he wanted to work for them, because "your qualities basically were my qualities." He got the job. The rest of them are still trying to get an Alexis someplace, probably. You see what I mean? This is the difference between somebody who had the energy to do the job, and it is a thing where the buzzword today is, "Do not work harder, work smarter." This guy was able to apply that, and that is exactly what it was.

I had a friend of mine who, when I was in the Army, and he was older than us, and he was going up for his sergeant exam. There was a bunch of other younger guys there that were going through it. He told me this story later, and we laughed about it. I still laugh about it today. He had to go before a major or a colonel or somebody because it was part of the exam process. They would ask you a bunch of soldier questions, and you are supposed to give soldier answers, and then they would evaluate your ability. So they were asking a bunch of things. In the military, you have to have a haircut. You have to look sharp when you go in there, stand before the man, as we used to say. He is up there, and these kids are up there, and they will say a question like, "When does a good soldier need a haircut?" "Every week, sir!" "Every five days!" Everybody had the same. My guy goes up, my buddy goes up, and he is probably six or seven years older, had a tour in Vietnam. He had some things under his belt. He stands before the colonel, and the colonel says, "When does a good soldier need a haircut?" He says, "Sir, a good soldier never needs a haircut." See a difference? See a difference? He made sergeant. The other guy was there trying to get an Alexis and then get some sergeant stripes so he could go where he wanted to go. That is what I am talking about. A young man might have the energy and the strength, but an older man has the wisdom and experience of 50, 60 years on this earth.

I will give you a great example. Take an 18-year-old or a 20-year-old and a 60-year-old. Give them both \$50,000. The 18 or 20-year-old will blow through that in a month. He will spend it on every trifle that is worthless. He will doubt there, and he will blow through it so fast it would be gone. You give it to the 60-year-old, he may spend it, but he will spend it wisely. He may invest it. Why? Because he has had some experience. The old man will invest it or spend it much more wisely because life has taught him some things. The reason why the young man will go through that is because he has no experience in life. He never looks at tomorrow; he just thinks of today. He has no thought of saving money. God forbid he has any thought that any of it belongs to God. It is all his. That is where they are at. In spite of that, young people have great value in the Lord's work within their limitations.

When I grew up, it was mandatory to do two years of military service. We called it the draft back then. When you turned 18, you went down and registered for the Social Security Office; you registered for the draft. You could expect probably within, oh, I do not know, two, three months, to get a letter from Uncle Sam saying that you report on this particular date for your two-year commitment. You could beat that by... when you got drafted, you did not have any say where you went. You could wind up anywhere. But if you enlisted and did four years, two more years, then you had a say what you wanted to do. They thought that was a good deal. But anyway, it was a

thing where you got drafted. Every male had to spend two years in the military. I think that was an excellent program. I think that was... you realize in Israel right now that every young kid at 18 spends two years in the military. Then when he gets out, the whole population of Israel up to about what, 65 or 70, is still on the reserve army list, and you are still in the military. So that is a good deal, I think. You learn some things in the military. I do not know what the military is like now. I think it went to a volunteer army. It is a thing where things have changed a lot. They cannot even hit you now. When I was in, man, they knocked you flat, boy. They threw some kid who could not haul a male running the road out of the upper story building, broke both arms in my platoon. I had a drill sergeant hit me because I dropped my rifle one time. I still have the scar on my head where he cracked me with an M14, knocked me on the dusty ground, and just laughed at me. I shot him later on, but nobody ever found out about that. But things have changed, you see. With all this new "don't tell, don't ask," I do not know who I want to be in a foxhole with late at night in the dark anymore. Got me a little worried about that. But I think, overall, it taught discipline. It was good to get you out of your mama's home, and you were told the first day when you got off the bus that this man that now is going to be your friend for the next eight weeks was not your mama and not your daddy. And he was not. But they built you into something.

I think the church's job is to say much like that. They were in a physical war, a physical army. We are in a spiritual army, a spiritual war. The church's job is to train you spiritually, to build you up from the ground up, to give you everything that God wants you to be, to be the soldier that He asks you to be. Children are great imitators. I love this about kids. That is just part of growing up. They see mom and dad. They see the adult things they do. They see what goes on around them, and they imitate it. We just get so caught up we do not pay attention. That is why at Halloween, you go to them and pick their costume. They always pick the costume with the person that is really important to them right now: Spiderman, Rocket Man, Cinderella, Dorothy from The Wizard of Oz, the Tin Man, the Wolf Man, whoever he was. They try to do that. When they grow up, they dress up and they play policemen. They dress up and they play army. They play cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians. I do not know if they do that anymore; it is a racial thing now. You cannot do anything with the Indians. Girls play house. They play nurse. They get a little baby doll that looks like a real one, and they make them as real as they can. They push them. They say "mama." They will wet their diapers. That is interesting. You give them a bottle and actually feed them. They walk around pretending, dress them like their clothes. But it is all pretend, folks. Do you actually think they are really at that age ready to take on real responsibility that goes with any of those jobs? Absolutely not.

Children are great pretenders. This is where a lot of parents make a mistake about their kids getting saved. Because kids can pretend that they understand it when they really do not. Because parents are not dialed into it, they think the first time they want their kid to go to heaven so bad, the first time out of their mouth they want to get saved, they just think that is it. "If you do not do it now, they are going to go to hell and spend an eternity in the lake of fire." So you jump on the bandwagon, and they are in that point where they are pretending because of what they see around them and what they hear from church and from me and from you. But it has not sunk in yet. But that is just the way it works.

As boys and girls grow up into adults, 18 to 25 growing up, especially men, they see the ministry the same way. Preaching and soul winning. They think, "Wow, I want to do that. That is really neat. I want to do that." That is great. That really is. Do not take this in a wrong way. I have been around for a while, and I know that the initial excitement of something wanes off in time when you find out that with the excitement of doing something comes a nasty word called responsibility. I have had 500 people come up to me and hug me and slap me on the back and saying, "Man, this thing, this Restart thing of going down here and doing this..." I had a couple of... I did not say this, but I thought this last week or two weeks ago, I forget what it was. Some number of people came up and said, "Man, I want to... this is what I have been waiting for. This is what I am doing. This is what I am really going to go. This is where I am going to get involved. This is what I want to do." I am saying to myself, and I am smiling, and saying all the things I am supposed to say. I am lying. I am thinking, "Hey, we have been down there five weeks. Where have you been?" The real proof is not you are excited and slapping me on the back. Wait until it is 20 below zero and the snow is six inches deep, and you have a nasty cold, and you are going to stay in bed, and you do not want to get out, and yet there is a responsibility that needs to be done. We will find where you are, where it is really at. It is nice down here to say it, but that is what people do. That is what young people do. They have the energy, but they do not have the light. So they imitate that. But what the real... they do not have the ability at this point to have the real understanding of the commitment that it is going to take.

That is why he says, "Let no man despise thy youth." God has some great things for young people, but young people have to understand that they have limitations. They have to work through. Older people will get a real blessing out of you and your walk with God and the things that you do, but they will not accept hard preaching coming from you. You know why? Because they know what you have not figured out yet. They know you do not know anything about life. You have not been where they have been. They have walked this ground for 60 years. You walked it for 18, and you are going to tell them about their problems. You are imitating what you hear. That is all. I have to tell you, there is a way to preach hard to people without getting them upset and rejecting it. But you have to be smarter than the people you are preaching to. Young men and young ladies just do not really have that at this particular point. But that is something you have to learn. You just have to learn. Instead of knowing your limitations and recognizing that because we are young, because we do not have the light, we just chalk it off. "Well, you know, they are unspiritual, you know, they have spiritual problems." You never... you go on through your life preaching stupid messages because you are stupid. That is what I wanted to say. You are one-dimensional in everything that we do, but that is the way young men are. You see me get away with it. But you do not want to understand that if I went someplace, somebody else's church to preach, I would never preach like I preach here. You know why? Because I have not earned a right to. Here, I have earned a right to do whatever I want to do. This is my church. I started this from scratch. You do not like it? There is a door back there with two hinges on it. Hit the road. I will tell you what I think and preach the way God wants me to preach, and I will put it on the table. You do not like it? It is okay. But I do not have that right anyplace else. You want to see me fine-cultured and just my fingernails all shining and my toenails looking good and just walking in there and every hair in place and just looking like I am the most respectable person? Just watch me go into somebody else's church because I have not earned a right to say things like

I say here. But young people do not get that because they imitate what they see. You are not me. You are not a man who is 60 years old, who is fulfilled and has a successful ministry. People will take it from him because he has got some water behind him. He has got some things that he has done coming out of the chute and just saying out there, your first sermon and clobbering everybody because this is the way Bob does it or the way I heard somebody else do it. That is what young people do. That is why I am saying, they do not have any light. They just do not.

The truth of it is, that is why so many kids fight with their parents. They do not know anything. "I am a man. I am a woman. I smoke. I drink. I fornicate. I am 16, 17, 18, and 19. Nobody is going to tell me what to do." But you are not a man. You are not even a good imitation of an adult. You have no idea what your parents do or what a real adult does or what it takes to be like a real adult. Most kids growing up today live in a fantasy world. They really do. You play fantasy football. I am not against it. You play fantasy football. You play fantasy basketball, I guess, I do not know. You sit on a TV with your Xbox or X2 box or XT box or whatever it is, and you play war games, and people come around the corner, and you kill them, and you shoot them. There were boys in World War II who lied about their age at 15 and fought on Iwo Jima and Okinawa that saw some of the bloodiest battles on this planet and saw horrors of war that you and I could never grasp. It was not on an Xbox. It is fantasy. It is no wonder when you get hit with the real world, you fold up like a broken accordion because all your life up to a certain point has been fantasy. You spend endless hours watching TV, crying over a movie where somebody died, and they were in love, and they died, and you weep and cry, and you sit there. The reality is they are at the bank counting their money that they made in the movie, alive, fat, and happy. It is not even real. Yet somebody can die and go to hell with Israel and spend an eternal lake of fire. Some of your very friends, and there are no tears shed. You know why? Because young people's lives are a fantasy.

So a kid gets to be 16 or 17, 18, 19 years old, and he does not listen to his parents. He has got all life down. "I am an adult." You have no idea. You stay up all night. You sleep all day. You do not lift a finger around the house. You wear your pants halfway down your rear end. You dress and wear it. Julie, like a woman. You run around with a crowd. You cannot take a stand for anything. You want to act like an adult, but you do not want any accountability or responsibility. You want to get tattooed like some sideshow freak and walk around and say, "Look at me. I am a man. I am an adult." You are out of your mind. You do not even know what it is. Your mama washes your clothes, probably works eight hours a day. She fixes your meals. She takes care of you when you are sick. You lay around all day long. Your dad works his tail off many times to drive to keep you in food. He has running water and lights, and he has provided all the comforts of life for you. When you got a car, he probably helped you get it and probably helped you pay your insurance, but you know all about life, and I will stop right there. You know why? Because I could preach that message 24/7, and you still will not get it. You know why, kid? Because you have no light. You cannot get it. You have no clue what it takes to be an adult and what it means to be an adult.

I told you the story before I bought my kids their first car. I think it was Kelly. I think we went into the car thing, and I am looking into a used car lot. I cannot find her. Guess where she is at. I did not say anything. I just kind of gingerly looked at this one, and I know, and it was typical,

and I laughed, and I used it as an instruction many, many times because it is true. She went into that thing. We looked at a car, and she was looking at the color. She was looking at the interior. She was looking at how fast it would go. Yeah, we do not know about that. She checked everything on that car except one thing: the price tag. But that is the way kids are. That is the way young people are. But in spite of all that, God can use you.

But that is the way it goes in ministry with young men. Most of the time, every once in a while, you find some that are quite an exception to it, but not very often. That is why Paul is talking to Timothy about ministry. He talks about in 1 Timothy 3:6, he says, "Not a novice." You have to get some principles under your belt. You have to get some things together. In your preaching, many of you went down even down with the mission. You imitate what I do or what you have heard somebody else do, and then you wonder why they get mad and do not want to listen to you. I like to sit up there for one reason, not because I like to sit up on a thing. I like to watch the exact moment they shut you off because you can see it. That is just the way it goes. You have not earned the right. I have never preached on mission in our time, but if I did, I would preach totally different than I preach here. I have not earned the right down there. So Paul knows all these things. That is why he says, "Let no man despise thy youth." He is telling Timothy, "You need to be smarter than the problem." But he says, "Be thou an example of the believer in word." You have to know it in conversation. That is how you say what you say. In charity, you have to have that in all that you do. In spirit, that is not God's Spirit; that is man's spirit. That is how you preach.

Job 26:4

To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?

You have to live what you preach, and you have to be smarter than the people that you preach to. You have to know your crowd. We are going to deal with this next Saturday in our time for the young men. There are four key words in Proverbs that are what everybody needs who is going to do ministry. I do not know if you have noticed it or not, but they are all addressed to a young man.

- Discernment.
- Discretion.
- Wisdom.
- Understanding.

Understanding is the key to the other three because understanding is your ability to use the first three.

V. Challenges from Older Christians and True Leadership

That is why he says, "Now the second aspect of this that you want to know is why Paul warns the Church of Corinth." Some older Christians will reject you as a young person moving past them in your spiritual growth. You have to know these things. Paul knows the Church of Corinth is a bunch of spiritual babies. He has told them that three or four times. We have also seen they have

a very bad power structure, do they not? Very selfish, very prideful. I guarantee you they will squash anybody who tries to move up the spiritual ladder to grow with God. All my life, I have seen this happen with older Christians sandbagging younger Christians, holding them back. The reason for it is because they are threatened themselves. They are insecure. They really do not have a relationship with God. They have a little power thing, and when they see you moving past them or you getting better than them... I have seen it with pastors. I have seen pastors surround themselves with some of the most god-awful preachers you ever heard of in your life. They could not preach their way out of a wet paper bag. They are the worst speakers, the worst preachers that you have ever heard of in your life. But that is who the pastor gives the jobs to when he has five or six other guys who can "haul the mail." Do you know why he gives the job and responsibility to those idiots who cannot speak? Because he will never let anybody get in that pulpit that speaks better than he does. Because he is insecure. It threatens you. The last thing he ever wants to hear is you are standing there and shaking hands with the pastor, and he is standing there with you, and one of your people comes up and says, "That was a great sermon, Pastor! Why do you not preach things like that?" That is the last thing you want to hear. You are done right then. My advice at that point is, get that little black capsule that they put in those things and swallow it and die peacefully because you are done. You are done. I have seen it. I have seen it with deacons and leaders. They have a little power base, and boy, you are not going to shake that.

Real biblical leadership has to be free from that kind of hypocrisy. Nothing holds a church back more and in time kills its zeal than the inability to build leaders and give them the ability to surpass anybody in that church. There is no "good old boys club" in this church. You can do whatever you want to do, and you can have whatever you want, but you have to go through the process, and that is just the way it has to be. Real leadership is not just leading, but knowing how to build leadership and then letting them lead. You never lead to be popular. That is another mistake that young men make because we do not want to make enemies. I do not want to make enemies, but I would rather have you as my enemy for preaching the Word of God than God as my enemy for not preaching the Word of God, and that is where it lays. You do not lead to be popular; you lead to be biblical. You are not going to be perfect. I am not perfect. I make so many mistakes, and I make mistakes in judgment and all of those things. But the bottom line is, I am human like anybody else, but you do not lead to be popular. You do not. You never lead to be popular; you lead to be biblical. As a young person, male or female, you have to understand it. Be prepared. You cannot stop it. It is always going to be there, but you have to be smarter than the problem. It is a fact of life, and you want to remember, people who do nothing will always resent those who do something, and you just have to deal with it.

So he says, "Let no man despise thy youth." He says, "Let no man therefore despise him, that he may be with you without fear." Paul is telling Timothy, "You are going down there, and you have to be smarter than the problem. You cannot go in there because you have been hanging out with me, and you see me writing these letters and dealing with these people. You cannot go down there that way. You are just a young guy. You have to be smarter than that problem." So he is telling Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth," and he is telling the church, "Do not you despise him either. You give him a chance." That is what you are dealing with. You are going to deal with young people whom God wants to use. They are tremendous. They have an absolute

incredible impact in the ministry. They are what makes a church alive and viable and working and keep going and growing. But everybody has to understand their limitations. A young man or a young woman needs to know that there are certain things that they can say, and there are certain things that they cannot get away with. A young man needs to know that in any church, there is going to be somebody that is going to try to hold you back, and that is just what it is. The job of any church is to give you the structure and the tools for growth. The job of any Christian is to take those tools within that structure and work through your limitations, and then build that discernment, that wisdom, and that discretion, and in time, you get understanding. This is what the Bible calls in Ephesians 4, "perfecting the saints."

Ephesians 4:12

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

VI. Synergy of Generations in Ministry

How does that work for me? My plan is simple. I am not under any illusion. My plan with young ladies and young men is simple: I will give you my light. You give me your strength. I will put it all together. I will teach you, I will show you, I will help you, walk you through the process. You have the energy that I do not have anymore. There was a time in my life when I would go to youth camp, and I would have run those camps, and we would have 60, 70, 80 kids down there, maybe 120, and it was a five-day marathon. You got no sleep at night. You are up running all day long, and they are dealing with every problem that came up, and by the end of that week, it took me probably two or three days to recover after that thing. It is like a football player; these young guys who go out there and play, and they are in their 80s and their 20s, they can have a hard football game, and they bounce back the next day. Guys who have been playing 10, 15 years probably take a week. You do not bounce back as fast, and I could not do those things anymore today. There was a time when I would preach so hard that people thought I was going to have a heart attack. I preached that hard. Now I would have a heart attack. You just cannot do it anymore. That is the way it is supposed to be. I have the light that you have, you have the energy that I need, but I have the light that you need, and that is why we work together. That is what makes this church click.

I am old school in many things. I do not go into this modern mindset much. I do not say this for any other reason than to make my point, but I am just telling you, and you are probably not even aware of this, that 99.9 percent of the pastors in this city, if they started a program like Restart, you would not see them down there. They would send you down, and they would stand in the pulpit and brag about what a great job we are all doing, but they were not going to be down there. To me, that is... I was not trained that way. I am just not. I was taught differently. I was taught a commander leads, and he leads from the front, not from the rear with the gear. A leader, first as a pastor, particularly, whatever he does, he has to be the first boots on the ground and last boots out, just that simple, because that is what leadership is, and leaders have to follow that same pattern. The problem with most churches is that the pastor will not be the leader. He kids himself into thinking he does lead, but he does not because he is not there to lead. So the thing

goes into chaos, and it is a deal where you, as young men and young ladies, make up the body of this church. You are the key, and that is why you have the energy I do not have. I have the light you do not have. When we work together in ministry, I can impart my light to you and let you get the energy done, and that is how things happen.

But you have to work within your limitations. You have to be smarter than the problem. You have to be smarter than the people you are preaching to. You have to be able to look at your crowd and understand and size it up. You have to be able to look at any given situation. Do not look at what appears. Look from experience what you know is going to appear that you just cannot see. Do not look at any situation as it appears. Look at the situation as it really is. You just cannot do that at this point. That is why some of you have a great idea, and I will say, "Well, I really appreciate that, but that will not work, and here is why." In other words, I am not discounting your idea. It is the fact that I have tried that idea 25 years ago, and it did not work, and it will not work 25 years later, but I appreciate the idea. That is what I want. But now let us take what is good of the idea and make it work in a workable way.

This is what he is saying, and this is why he says to Timothy, "Let no man despise you, Timothy. You will be smarter than the people you are going down there. You are going down there for me. I cannot get there. You are going for me. Be smarter than the people that you are going down to." Then he says to the church, "Look, I am sending my son in the Lord down there. He is my helper in the ministry, and he is going to be my replacement. Do not you give him any grief. I know you are a bunch of spiritual babies, and you have a little power structure down there, but I am telling you right now, do not let anybody despise him, and do not let anybody give him any reason to be afraid of you guys. He is doing for me what I cannot do right now. Cut him some slack." It is a two-way street. These are great things to learn. They are great things to learn right now because where we are at, the older folks in here that have the stability that has been around for a while, they will always be the anchor. They will always be the one that everything runs from. They are the anchor. They are the ones that have known life, been through life, have the wisdom of life and the principles of life, and they may not even have all the Bible down yet, but understanding life in general with common sense is a great value. There will always be the anchor, and we do not have the energy to go out there. You do. So we take our light, your energy, mix it into a marriage, into a church, through the Spirit of God. Get the job done. That is how it works. Let us pray. Give you five minutes when we are done.