

CHAPTER 27

"IF I WERE 21 AGAIN ..."

I. SOME VALUES AND VIRTUES YOUNG ADULTS SHOULD KEEP IN MIND AS THEY BREAK HOME TIES, GO OUT INTO THE WORLD AND EMBARK ON THEIR LIFE'S CALLING.

1. Keep in good health.

- A. Success in life and the acquisition of material possessions are of little value if you don't have good health to enjoy them.
- B. God wishes above all things that you may prosper and be in health (III John 2).
- C. Principles of health.
 - (1) Get plenty of sleep.
 - (2) Take some form of vigorous exercise every day.
 - (3) Watch your diet and choose the best foods whenever possible.

2. Make walking with God your highest ambition.

- A. Deut. 13:2-4 = "Cleave unto God and love Him with all your heart."
- B. I Peter 1:14-16 = "Be ye holy for I am holy."
- C. I Cor. 10:31 = "Do all things to God's glory."

3. Set realistic and attainable goals.

- A. Three types:
 - (1) Short range
 - (2) Intermediate
 - (3) Long Range
- B. Create a game plan of objectives in order to reach your goals.
 - (1) Start with what resources you already have available.
 - (2) As you set your mind to analyzing, thinking and searching, you'll attract to yourself the answers you need.
- C. How do you generate enthusiasm and drive?
 - (1) Through thought — strong mental discipline.
 - (2) There can be no lasting drive without thought. Thought is the basis of every noteworthy achievement.
- D. What does thought engender?
 - (1) Desire.
 - (2) Desire is produced through thinking.
 - (3) Think about your goals in terms of having reached them — see them in their finality.
 - (4) Do this until you have painted a clear mental picture of what you're searching for in life.
 - (5) Desire will automatically follow.
 - (6) Desire is the fire that ignites enthusiasm.
- E. The formula:
 - (1) Thought begets desire.
 - (2) Desire breeds enthusiasm.
 - (3) Enthusiasm leads to action.
 - (4) Action when persistently applied leads to success.
 - (5) Success produces confidence which leads to greater SUCCESS.

4. Keep the overall purpose of life in view.
 - A. Consider the end (Deut. 32:29).
 - B. Make certain God is at the center of things.
 - C. Remember that each must stand in the judgment and give an account of his life.
 - (1) Eccl. 12:13-14 = "God shall bring every work into judgment."
 - (2) II Cor. 5:10 = "... all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."
 - D. Allow no ambition or goal to crowd out God's Kingdom.

5. Develop the habit of making quick and sound decisions.
 - A. This takes courage — we're afraid of the consequences or too lazy to think.
 - B. Get wide counsel and think things through.
 - C. You'll succeed in life only as far as your decisions reach.
 - D. You either decide to fail or to succeed.
 - E. Master the art of decision making and you will have acquired an indispensable tool of success.

6. Discipline yourself.
 - A. Flex your muscles, tighten your belt, call up the forces of your mind and say "NO."
 - B. Keep on the course you have charted.
 - C. You may have to forego some fleeting pleasure and experience some pain — but this discipline will suddenly turn into pure joy.
 - D. Think of your goal — the end result. Reflect on this until you get your bearings again.
 - E. On the human side, you're responsible for your actions and are the master of your fate.
 - F. Luke 9:23 = "He who will be my disciple, let him deny himself."

7. Don't let discouragement get you down — face it head-on.
 - A. Get to the bottom of what's causing it.
 - B. Quit feeling sorry for yourself — start looking for solutions and answers.
 - C. Let discouragement itself be a catalyst to propel you out of the pit of depression and despair, to greater heights.
 - D. Decide to become stronger than it is.
 - E. Joshua 1:5-9; 18 = "Be strong and of good courage."
 - F. I Cor. 16:13 = "Be strong like men."

8. Steer your life by certain bedrock principles and unwavering absolutes.
 - A. King David said that regardless of his trials, he would never say anything negative against God so as to shatter the faith of Israel.
 - B. A few may be:
 - (1) Keeping morally pure.
 - (2) Defending the reputation of others who are falsely accused.
 - (3) Being honest and upright in all your business transactions.
 - (4) Giving others credit where due, instead of taking it unto yourself.
 - C. Are you rock-solid in your convictions, or are you like a piece of dough easily changed or squeezed out of shape because of political expediency or out of plain fear of others?

9. Try to achieve one splendid success in some worthy realm of human endeavor.
 - A. Become really good at something — a true, recognized expert.
 - B. Strive toward professionalism — perfection in one single thing.
 - C. It may be:
 - (1) Mastering a musical instrument.
 - (2) Painting.
 - (3) Writing, poetry.
 - (4) Sculpturing, macrame.
 - (5) Wood working.
 - (6) Speaking.
 - (7) An authority on some subject.

- D. Make this your trademark.
 - E. Put your finest creative effort into achieving it, albeit it may take weeks, months and years to reach your goal.
10. Study and try to be an original thinker.
- A. Do not take "things for granted" — take them for what they are worth.
 - B. Think your way through prejudice, precedent, custom, convention, style, fashion and all the forms of modern day folly and get at the heart of things.
 - C. Some customs you'll want to keep because they're based on Bible principles — other things you'll want to discard.
 - D. Square all incoming knowledge with the truths of God's Word.
 - E. Study until you grasp concepts — internalize them. Don't rest with weak, superficial answers until your mind is put at ease.
11. Put quality into every thought, word and deed.
- A. Conscientiously practice Eccl. 9:10 = "*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.*"
 - B. Do it better — go the extra mile.
 - C. Don't settle with mediocrity — go all out and give it your best effort.
 - D. Don't be discouraged if you fail to achieve perfection overnight.
 - E. Achieving quality takes time — like a good vintage wine.
12. Live in the light of every grand experience and opportunity.
- A. Some brilliant experiences only happen once in a lifetime.
 - B. Don't pass them by even if it means rearranging your game plan of life temporarily.
 - C. It may be:
 - (1) An unexpected free trip to Europe.
 - (2) A dinner out with Mr. Armstrong.
 - (3) A flight on the G-II.
 - (4) A date with someone you'd like to get to know.
 - D. Don't mistake grand opportunities with insignificant frequent distractions.
 - E. The key is to experience the bigness of life with all its richness and rare opportunities.
13. Spend a little time each day in the realm of the beautiful.
- A. Drink in of your environment and all of creation.
 - B. Enjoy the beauty of flowers, the flight of birds, a golden sunset, the passing of clouds in the sky.
 - C. Reflect on life and all that you see — take a few seconds or moments to look, hear, taste, smell and feel the beauty and richness of God's creation.
 - D. If you're too busy to do this, you're too busy.
 - E. You should develop your senses until they become highly sensitive and discriminating.
 - F. Heb. 5:12-14 = "*...exercise your senses to discern between good and evil.*"
14. Cultivate two or three close friendships among people who are older.
- A. People who are forty or fifty or even among those who are elderly.
 - B. These individuals can be of great help to you in a time of great duress or crises.
 - C. Job 32:7 = "*Days should speak and multitude of years should teach wisdom.*"
 - D. Prov. 16:31 = "*The hoary head is a crown of glory....*"
15. Keep a notebook of ideas.
- A. Capture and record concepts, ideas, insights and sudden thoughts of inspiration while the iron is hot.
 - B. Unless you record them while they're fresh in your mind, you may lose them forever.
 - C. Review this notebook on a regular basis until these ideas have been incorporated into your everyday mentality.

16. Develop a "David-like attitude of respect and humility" and give yourself to the service of mankind.
 - A. Become people-oriented — aware of their presence.
 - B. Learn the kindly arts of tact and diplomacy and develop a keen sensitivity to their needs and feelings.
 - C. Gal. 6:10 = "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men."
 - D. I Pet. 2:17 = "Honor all men."

17. Crowd at least one act of kindness into every twenty-four hours.
 - A. It's not difficult to find an opportunity — everybody you meet has problems. Some more urgent than others.
 - B. Kindness when habitually practiced transforms itself into dignity and greatness.

18. Look to Christ as your supreme example and model of life.
 - A. Read the four gospels at least once a year.
 - B. Broaden, expand and stretch your mind to comprehend the meaning of everything He did and said.
 - C. Spend plenty of time in reflecting and thinking on the way He lived, His general approach to life.
 - D. Dedicate yourself to emulating His lifestyle.
 - E. Yield unreservedly to His will and be the kind of instrument in which He can live His life anew.

NOTE: Some of the above material taken from "The System Bible Study" section on Character Building, pages 744-747.

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