

Haphazard Youth?

by Douglas Hill

The National Center for Health Statistics reports that by age 13, 1 in 12 kids is no longer a virgin. By age 15 a third of girls and 45% of boys have had sex. *By age 19, nearly 80% have engaged in sex.* (from the "Ladies' Home Journal")

The above statistics are shocking and very telling. It demonstrates the absolute necessity of teaching on this subject, especially trying to get the younger folks to see the dangers that exist today. "Peer pressure" alone is something that can influence people to do things they should not. Yet, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2). Yet, perhaps stronger than the temptation to "go with the flow" of the crowd, is the even more personal pleasures and allurements of sin. When young, our desires are in "high gear", as well as those of our friends and companions. If a situation "presents itself", do we heed the warning signs, or do we linger in the "danger zone." Paul told Timothy to "flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22). These things are not to be trifled with! They are deceitful, captivating and spiritually deadly! Don't think you can get caught? Then you are in more danger than you realize: Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Overconfidence can blind us to our real weaknesses.

Another recent study by Christianity Today and Campus Life shows that: 72% of U.S. teenagers had used alcohol during the past 12 months *compared to 15% of teens who claimed to be Christians.* And 36% of teenagers had smoked marijuana *compared to 4% who are Christians.* 66% of all teenagers had been involved in sexual intercourse *compared to 9% who are Christians.* (from "Your Church," October 2003)

Can you see the stark distinction between people who are raised with "Christian" beliefs and those who are not? Consider this in your personal life as you decide whether to live for God or not. And consider this in your choice of close friends, dates and marriage. Once you cross the line and give in, you can never undo this. And often there are more than just the emotional regrets and sorrow for sexual sins. Pregnancy and sexual diseases can also "sneak up" on those involved in this kind of behavior.

Consider also that 19 out of every 20 who become Christians do so before they are twenty-five.

- After twenty-five only one in 10,000
- After thirty-five only one in 50,000
- After forty-five only one in 200,000
- After fifty-five only one in 300,000
- After sixty-five only one in 500,000
- After seventy-five only one in 700,000

The longer you put off obeying the gospel, the less likely you are to ever change your mind! This shows how one tends to become hardened as time goes on. *There is danger in delay!* We hope you will see this and make the decision to be baptized today.

For those who have obeyed the gospel, these statistics still should be very educational. If you are a “hobby Christian”, give only minimal effort, hang with friends who are influencing you for evil, etc. - consider that the longer you follow this wayward path, the less likely you are to ever change! The Bible constantly warns us against being hardened in heart:

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation” (Heb. 3:12-15).

Beloved, **THINK** about your life before God. Yes, “Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; **BUT KNOW** that for all these God **WILL BRING YOU INTO JUDGMENT**. Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and **PUT AWAY EVIL** from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity. Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth” (Eccl. 11:9-12:1).