

THE IMPORTANCE OF THINKING AHEAD

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Some person, an older one I am sure, said, “Youth is wasted on the young.” Like other old saws this one is grounded in a degree of truth. Young people have strength, energy, ability and most of the time they have their health. Indeed, many young folks carry with them a sense of invulnerability that often serves to trip them up. When I was young I used to carry heavy objects of furniture around the store where I worked *on my head*. My neurologist informed me (as we looked at the MRI) that doing such a thing is stupid. This I know, *now*.

The problem young folks face is understandable. They don't have enough life experience to really know what they should do. I sure didn't and I am quite sure that not many of us did. And in many cases experience is a good and beneficial teacher. But many different and even tragic things can be avoided by the simple method of thinking ahead.

Now I realize that young folks want to find our on their own. Sometimes this works our reasonably well. But with life's most important issues it is necessary that we take advantage of the collected wisdom of those who've gone before us. Young people can be blessed if they listen to folks who've already walked many of life's paths.

Nowhere is this more important than in our spiritual lives. When it comes to questions of righteousness and sin we must think ahead. Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, “*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*” It is the greatest possible importance that we think ahead concerning any matter that may have an impact on our spiritual lives.

There are two areas of spiritual life in which young folks simply must think ahead. One area has to do with dating and marriage. Young people are attractive and attracted to each other. God made us this way. But He also made us with a brain in our heads that is able to understand His Word and the principles revealed therein. Young men and women must think ahead when deciding whom to date.

Cute and pretty wears off. Find out what kind of person you are dating. Ask yourself what you want out of the relationship. Are your desires and plans righteous or evil? What about the plans and desires of your date? We may not be comfortable with this level of self-examination nor may we like where such thinking ahead takes us. But doing so will help you avoid needless heartache.

The other area wherein thinking ahead will be of immeasurable help is our own salvation. My experience as a preacher had led me to conclude that if a young person does not obey the gospel and thus becomes a Christian soon after he or she reaches the age of accountability, it may be a while coming. As the teen years creep by it becomes a hard matter to convince a young person to do the Lord's Will. This happens because the young person is not thinking far enough ahead combined with the feeling of invulnerability I mentioned earlier. The young person may reason that they have plenty of time (this we never really know). They may think that they have time to do as they please (even sinful things) and that they will be able to "fix" it later. The trouble with this is that the consequences of sin may be so severe that one's life becomes horribly damaged. In such cases the heart often grows hard and interest in spiritual things is lost.

If you are a young person, I plead with you to think ahead about your salvation. Obey the gospel now and take advantage of God's great gift of hope. Not only will you enjoy Heaven's home one day, God will bless your life in the here and now. Such are the blessing of thinking ahead.

Bill Inby