

# Do Our Teen-agers Have Responsibility?

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When we listen to some of our parents make excuses for the behavior of our young people, it seems as if the youngsters do not have any responsibility. To hear some of the teen-agers talk, we get the idea they do not feel any responsibility for their behavior. Some say, "they are young and they are going to sow their 'wild oats,' so let them alone." The apostle Paul said we must reap what we sow. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7). If "wild oats" are sown they will be reaped.

Some may feel that the young people now are worse than ever, but I doubt it. "Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners and a contempt for authority. They show disrespect for elders; love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants and not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, gobble up their food, and tyrannize their teachers." (Socrates). This was written almost 2,000 years ago but the world still stands. This shows that youth now, like that of those of us who are older, has not changed too much from generation to generation.

I affirm that our young people are responsible to God for their actions, and must be made to realize they have souls made in the image of God (Gen. 2:7). When we reach the age of accountability we are responsible for the outcome of our souls. Jesus shows us that our souls are worth more than anything else in

this world (Mk. 8:36,37). I am afraid teen-agers have the wrong conception of what is valuable because of the bad examples set by their elders along this line. Parents sometimes live as if this world were worth more than the world to come.

We have been led to think that we owe the teen-ager certain things. Churches have been put in the recreation business and other projects with the cry, "We have to do it or lose our young people." It is true that we as parents sometimes fail to teach and provide wholesome entertainment but that is no excuse for the church to provide what God has not authorized. Does the teen-ager owe God anything? Does he owe his parents, community and country anything? Why not teach him his responsibility and use the proper discipline in order to make a man out of him who will be an asset to his God and his country.

The teen-ager needs to learn that he can be **lost** in hell just as surely as any adult on earth. If he lives ungodly he will be lost if he dies in that condition. God does not handle the teen-ager with kid gloves any more than he does the adult. In the Old Testament the stubborn child was stoned (Deut. 21:18-21). He did not have special attention then; nor should he now. . . . .

We all have responsibility—even the teen-ager. "And now my little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." (1 John 2:28).  
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