



Acting Like A Youth!

There are many aspects of youth that are undesirable, like a lack of insight, lack of wisdom for life's many challenges, lack of direction, and overall lack of responsibility. But there are things that are quite desirable. For instance, lots of energy, flexibility, freedom from heavy pressures, carefree attitude, positive attitude and all the positive aspect of a youthful body. As an adult, you can and should try to maintain the attitude of "acting like a youth."

Far too many of us get so burdened down with the pressures of life, that the next best things often seems like the grave. I know that sounds



morbid, but isn't it true? Think about it. Sometimes, daily, you feel so pressured with your problems with no way to escape. You feel that you will NEVER get relief, so wouldn't the grave offer you a sort of freedom that, otherwise, you couldn't attain? I bet that some of you have even considered suicide just to relieve your pains.

Some of you fall back on the statement, "He's coming back," referring to the return of Jesus Christ. While that's well and good, it often doesn't provide any

real and lasting relief. What would provide the relief you so long for, so desire? I'll tell you what would. Acting like a youth.

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. 1 Timothy 4:12

What does "acting like a youth" really mean? It doesn't mean, going to the mall and shopping in Forever 21. It doesn't mean, making your kids friends your best friends. It doesn't mean, enrolling back in High School or some other way of reliving the past. It means, acting as if the Return of Jesus Christ has already happened. That's right! Instead of ONLY

Acting Like A Youth!

looking forward to this, you can embrace some of the reality of it right now.

Before I go on, you're probably wondering why I picked this topic. Well, the answer is quite simple. This morning, I was reading Philippians and was really captured by the two verses about leaving the past behind and pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Philippians 3: 13-15

Then I asked myself, how do you press? How do you reach forth? It has something to do with our actions and thoughts, but what actions and thoughts? Well, initially, it has mostly to do with being "perfectly minded." *You can't get more perfectly minded than thinking about the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* This is certainly a present day reality, but it is also something to come. That which is to come is the new body, eternity, the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and so forth. Think of how you will be then. You'll be happy, healthy, free in Christ, full of joy, filled with great foods and things to drink, in the presence of God and His Son Christ. Gosh, what more could you ask for? I'll tell what you can ask for, AND DO! You can start acting as if some of these things have already happened.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4:8

For instance, you can start acting happy. Oh, but you say, Jerry, you just don't understand. If only you knew what I am going through, you'd change that to "maybe you might be able to start acting happy." No, I won't. Don't you think you deserve happiness? Well, sure you do. Then start acting happy. Those days, when you feel down and out, start acting happy. Do happy things. Hang out with happy people – after all, not everyone is down and out all the time. Look around and you'll find one or two or more. On the other hand, stop hanging out with unhappy people.

Acting Like A Youth!

Give `em a chance to change, but draw a line and don't cross it.

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Ephesians 5:11

Acting happy isn't an end all. It is a means to an end. Ultimately, you want to enjoy and relish what is to come. Why not start now? You're not the only one who has faced something like this. Martha and her sister went through this.

But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken

away from her. Luke 10: 40-42

Jesus addressed the cause, which was how Martha was thinking. The simple solution was for Martha to change her thinking, thereby being able to change her actions. He told Martha to choose the better way and told her that her sister was a great example to follow.

What about acting healthy? Boy, do I feel the resistance on this one. Now, settle down a bit. Even though you might be sick, you can still shrug some of it off, can't you?

Sure you can. *When I am sick, I still try to act as if I'm not.* Ask my wife.

In fact, she's the same way. We seldom talk of our physical woes.

What about you? Do you spend lots of time dwelling on sickness?

If you do, it's time to change. Start acting like you are healthy, even if you are not. I often teach on this. I say, "if you are sick, then you'll know. If you're not sick,

don't act like you are." How do you know if you are sick? When you can't move, can't work, can't do much of anything. Recently, this happened to me. It was a very rude awakening. I simply couldn't get out of bed. I was too sick to move. I couldn't move. What had happened was I had an allergic reaction to something, and boy, my body gave me what's what! Well, it took nearly 4 days to recover, but I did, and when I could get out of bed, I DID!

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. Acts 3:6

That's what you have to do. Rise up and walk. Start acting like you are healthy and then you'll know when you're sick – when something puts you in bed for a couple of days. Until then, you don't have the need, or right to

Acting Like A Youth!

pretend. I guarantee you, that if you don't start acting better, you won't get better, even if you are perfectly healthy!

More important than the physical is the spiritual, especially your freedom in Christ!

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Galatians 5:1

How many of you feel so depressed or down in the mouth that you aren't realizing any spiritual freedom?

How many of you feel as if you haven't been free for years, as if you are trapped into some sort of fuzzy middle-ground where you're not quite enslaved, and not quite free?

I call that the "gray" area of life. With Christ, there's no gray. I say, "There's only black and white."

Either you are free or you're not. Which one are you? It's time to start acting like you are free, and your freedom will come. Why, in fact, this whole teaching is an exercise in acting out your freedom. You've been given the RIGHT to freedom. Take it! Don't settle for anything less. If you don't yet realize your freedom, you are still involved in acts of slavery. What still enslaves you? Think about it, get clear on those things, and start doing something about them. Years ago, a well-known phrase was, "go to California to get your head together." It was all about changing location in hopes of finding a better feeling, a better life. I've got news for you. You don't get more spiritual freedom by going to California. You get more spiritual freedom by acting out the real freedom you now have.

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption

into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Romans 8:21

I often tell my kids to "pretend" things. Pretend you are happy, pretend you are healthy, and pretend you are spiritual. After if you are free, and you are pretending you are free, you're almost there. The last step is to make it a way of life.

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. Proverbs 15:24

If you are still enslaved to worldly things, get rid of them. If you hang out with people who enslave you somehow, stay away from them. Put some real value on your freedom and fight for it. No one has the right to take away your freedom, not even you!

Once you start catching a glimpse of these wonderful attributes that only a Christian has access to,

Acting Like A Youth!

you'll notice a special something deep within your soul – JOY!

Whom having not seen [Jesus Christ], ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 1 Peter 1:8

Yes, that's right. You'll start to feel a bubbling from deep within. When you do, you'll be experiencing joy. Don't become alarmed when you do feel this. It is one of the fruits of the spirit, and it is rightfully yours. Don't allow anything to squelch your joy. That means that you'll have to really take a stand on some issues, especially the ones I just presented. *You'll have to become fearless about confronting issues and people so that you can stand in life according to your God given rights.*

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 1 Peter 5: 6-9

But you can do this. You can start acting more youthful. Don't you think that if you were happy, healthy, and free with tons of joy, that you would appear more youthful? I do. So you don't have to go back to High School, make your kid's friends your best friends, or shop only in Forever 21. You can live the life of an eternal youth starting right now, even if you start out pretending. Pretty soon, it will become a way of life – a very

youthful life!

Love in Christ,

Jerry D. Brown