

On Adolescence

by Art Katz

The church is presently in a state of adolescence, characterized by a desire for significance and recognition, and a struggle with authority, but the solution is a deepening awareness of spiritual reality and an intensive relationship with God and spiritual authority.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 4:14

Topics: "Authority in the Church", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

Art Katz discusses the spiritual parallels of adolescence within the church, likening its current state to the tumultuous teenage years characterized by self-centeredness, rebellion against authority, and a quest for identity and significance. He highlights the church's indulgence in superficiality and the rejection of substantial authority, mirroring the behaviors of adolescents who prioritize peer approval over parental guidance. Katz emphasizes the need for maturity and the dangers of remaining in this adolescent phase, which can lead to spiritual stagnation and chaos. He calls for a deeper understanding and correction within the body of Christ to foster growth and responsibility. The sermon serves as a wake-up call for the church to recognize its current struggles and seek a path toward spiritual maturity.

Transcript

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Generalities inspired by Eugene Peterson's devotional April 30, Adolescence is a Gift. At what stage is the church-at-large presently? Infancy is the discovery of itself in thumb-sucking egocentricity and fascination over its own body and that which supplies it. Adolescence is the awareness of 'deeper currents' from within biologically and the excitement of things without that gratify new longings. A new awareness also of a larger world and a desire for significance and recognition within it in the meaning of one's own person.

An intensive relationship with peers at the expense of parents whose authority now is questioned if not rejected, as is that of the adult world itself. A delight in one's own opinions and the ability to form them as constituting the truth of a matter definitively. A remarkable skill in 'lawyerly' argumentation that stupefies and silences parents and gives suggestion of a wit whose source is supernatural but is not God's. A time

of indulgence of appetites for 'junk' food and sweet things without regard for health or body which seem to them invincible and not wanting in energy.

Characteristically loud, lazy, undisciplined, self-indulgent, headstrong in enthusiasms, fickle and changing in affections and loyalties ('undying' in their inception), inexplicable in moodiness from depression to elation. Generally contemptuous of substantial authority figures while adulating the scummiest of subculture heroes as objects of swooning adulation and near worship. Supremely self-confident of driving skills and the ability to keep one's self morally leading to much 'wreckage', crippling and death.

Late hours, much sleeping-in, messy rooms, trails of towels and clothing left on the floor to be picked up by mother or climbed over to reach one's bed! Inordinate attention to one's complexion, hair, body and appearance. A studied and affected 'poverty' of ragged sloppiness whose factory-torn jeans and other accoutrements command an exorbitant price. Easily manipulated by current fads to the point where one would rather be seen dead than not be seen in them. Shallow and opinionated, with long intensive hours on the telephone to peers and no more than monosyllabic grunts to teachers or parents.

Capable of profuse emotion, sympathies, excessive kindness and cruelty. Self-justifying with a lawyer's acumen and ability with consciences only slightly disturbed to the repeating of past offenses. Incapable of reproof and admonition. More offended against than offending and 'victims' of the harangues of parents whose quieter admonitions were entirely ignored. Not disposed to receive instruction or correction. More disposed to talk than to listen. Easily hurt, offended, slighted, agitated, misunderstood, unfairly accused, and whose favorite phrase is "It's not fair."

Full of turbulence and discord with every petty thing heightened and exaggerated and every redemptive thing slighted, rejected or ignored. A painful season enough in teen years but tragic when protracted into adulthood. What is the spiritual correspondence to this as it is found in the body of Christ? What solution?

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/on-adolescence/>

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