

# Ecclesiastes 12 1

by Mack Tomlinson

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of remembering our Creator, especially in the days of youth, highlighting the fleeting nature of life and the need to surrender our hearts to Jesus Christ. It urges young people to seek wisdom, avoid the pitfalls of sin and worldly influences, and make Christ the center of their lives to shape their future. The message calls for a radical commitment to Christ and a willingness to surrender all to Him, acknowledging His sovereignty over our lives.*

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 12:1, Proverbs 23:26, Luke 18:16, Psalms 1:1, Proverbs 22:6, James 1:5, Psalms 2:1, Luke 18:17

**Topics:** "Remembering Our Creator", "Radical Commitment to Christ"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of remembering our Creator, especially in the days of youth, highlighting the fleeting nature of life and the need to surrender our hearts to Jesus Christ. It urges young people to seek wisdom, avoid the pitfalls of sin and worldly influences, and make Christ the center of their lives to shape their future. The message calls for a radical commitment to Christ and a willingness to surrender all to Him, acknowledging His sovereignty over our lives.

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## Transcript

Ecclesiastes 12.1, there Solomon says this, remember now your Creator in the days of your youth before evil days come not and the years draw near when you shall say I have no pleasure in them. Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth. We didn't have a children's sermon this morning because this is it.

The days of your youth. A New Year's sermon to our young people is what God has given me. I remember I was sitting about middle on this side when Philip and Megan came down the aisle and it hit me suddenly came over me.

I will not be at many of these young people's weddings probably and I won't get to see them grow up. Same way with most of my grandchildren probably. So the lives of the young have become increasingly real to me.

Especially as you lost children out on the sea of life in their own boat. Some of you parents have never seen them get out of your boat and they're in their own boat on the ocean. We kind of experienced that this week as we saw our son Richard graduate and we were at the airport Friday morning as we were flying to Texas and he's flying to California and it's a big goodbye.

We don't know how often we'll ever even get to see him nor what the future holds. So this morning I want to speak to those who are from ages 3 to under 40. How about that? Because you know if you're in your 30s you don't quite believe it but you are still young.

Where's Josh Young? You're young forever but you're not chronologically young for long. So those who are from the three year old into their 30s you are in the days of your youth right now and you're living them and you'll never have them again when they're gone. I want you to listen closely children to me today.

All you young young'uns if you're under 40 listen close. Your your pastors and your deacons and your parents and your church family love you so much beyond words can say beyond feelings can convey and here is one specific personal word from God to every young person. Remember your Creator Jesus Christ in the days of your youth in the days of your young life.

Now the days of your youth are a few years and they are fast years. They are fast years. The acceleration gets faster.

Really the days of your youth are 20 to 30 years but for some they're five years or ten years and their life is gone. Life is cut short. No one can die too early from a divine perspective because God numbers our days.

They can die much sooner than we want and desire but what are the days you young people what are the days of your youth? What are they? Do you think about them? Do you view them with maturity with perspective with wisdom and not just in the moment of what you like what you're enjoying what you want? What are the days of your youth? Early life. The days of early life. Growing days.

Learning days. Enoch's probably learning more right now in his brain than I am. They're learning days.

Discovery days. They're days you mess up. When we use the word days it means a time period.

The days of youth are when you mess up and you you blow it and you kind of have to start over again with mom and dad with situations. They're learning days. They're days of curiosity.

Curiosity about bad things which you never want to go there. Curiosity about good things. Your mind is learning and discovering.

You want to know. They're days of gaining and developing and being shaped in your life in your character and in your choices. Your choices are making you who you are to become who you're supposed to be that you were created to be.

God himself made you as a young person whether you're three or 39. God made you. He determined your life from eternity past and when he would bring you into it being through whom he would bring you into being and he set you in the era and in the geography and in the place you were supposed to be for his glory and for your good.

You're exactly who you are to be and you're exactly where you are to be and don't include in that exactly who you are to be. Don't include the sin stuff because that's not who you're to be. If that's true then the verse of Solomon here tells you whether you're 4 or 24 what he wants of you right now.

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth. Who is your Creator? Jesus Christ. Evolution didn't make you.

Mother Nature hasn't brought you along the way. Evolution is a lie. Jesus Christ made every one of you for himself to know him and to glorify him and he puts you with the parents and family you were to have.

However wonderful that's been, however hard that's been, God allowed you to have what you've had for his purpose to shape you to bring you to this moment today. To become who he wants you to be. God is calling through this verse to all of you.

He's calling to you young people. He's calling to your heart. And what's he calling? Surrender.

Remember your Creator. That word remember is all-encompassing. He's saying you're mine.

I made you. I'm calling to you whether you're 5 or 8 or 15. It matters not.

God your Creator is calling to you in life through this verse about your life being meant to know him and love him and serve him from your youth not later. Now not later. How will you young person, young lady, young man, what will you do with what God is saying to you this morning? Like so many pastimes, is it possible you've ignored the message, you've disregarded it, you procrastinate, you in your heart you shut your ears and you say I've heard it but I don't want it.

I've heard it but I'm not going to do it. I've heard it maybe later. What are you going to do this morning? To remember your Creator in the days of your youth means you realize that he made you for himself.

So when you're young, don't play with life. Don't gamble and presume. Don't waste any years.

As one old Christian said, if you want God's mercy and help later in harder years in your older days, you should love and serve him in your younger good days. How long will you be young? Not long at all. Pat, do you remember when you were 18? Kind of.

We do. Baker, right? Baker graduated from basic training in the Marines. You remember the days of youth.

And yet, look how these years fly by. They're gone. They do pass quick.

The great reality is the days of youth show us the value and the priority and urgency of having one shot in living your younger life, of living your days well and right. It's so important. Far beyond what you realize right now as a boy, as a young lady, as a young man.

Far beyond. You don't realize yet how important these years are for you. Some of you are longing to be 15.

And when you're 15, you're longing to be 18. And when you're 18, you're discontent. You want to be 22.

I'm preaching to you now. You know, I'm right. I remember.

I was 18 with a full head of hair once. This is true. The days of youth are so important.

Far beyond what you realize now. So this morning, I have three exhortations for you. Number one, what you have now as a young person.

You have some things now. What you have now. Number two, what you don't have.

And number three, what you should do. So listen up. All young ears turned here.

Some wonderful things you have. Number one, you have God's good providence concerning your life. Do you ever wake up, young man, young lady? Do you ever wake up and just sit back and think, look how good I have it.

Look at the house I live in. Look at the care of people around me that care for me. Look at what I have.

Look at what I've been given. Look at the opportunities I have. I have a comfortable bed and pillow.

I have food every day to eat. I have clothing. I have so much God's good providence with your life.

Starting out, you as a young person are a unique gift of God to your parents. And you have to process that where you are in your situation. And you should.

God planned your life. Here's the good providence. He planned your life.

He created you where you are and when you came into this life. And he gave you your parents and your family. He has maintained your life to this day.

And he does to this moment. He maintains your life. Young people, you wake up every morning with a beating heart and with lungs that breathe and a mind that works because God has maintained you.

He's done that. He is keeping you and teaching you and shaping you and blessing you. Controlling all things in your life and for your life.

Dad, listen, listen. Dad and mom aren't in control of your life. They can't be, ultimately.

And they know that. They're shaping you, guiding you, teaching you, loving you, providing for you. They're tutoring you until the day you launch off.

But they aren't in control of your life. Christ is in control of your life. Whether you realize it or not, whether you're submitted to his control or not, he is reigning and controlling your life from the time of being a youth.

God is working out his plan for your life. Now think about it. You have a good family around you, meaning regardless of what bumps and bruises you've had with family life, you have family that love you.

You have good family life. I want you right now, young people, I want you to think right now. I want you to describe to yourself what family support you have and what your situation is like.

Think about it. You have friends that love you. You have good health.

You have a good mind. You live in a good house. You have abundant provision and many, many, many good things.

All of that is God's plan working for your good. Children and young people should praise God for his good providence in their life. Do you do that? Are you grateful? Do you see God's good providence? You also have number two, family blessing.

Children, just think today of these great facts. The Bible says the righteous, your parents, if they're believers, the righteous walk in their integrity. Blessed are their children after them.

You are blessed because you have godly parents and people around you that love you within your family. The righteous walk in their integrity. Blessed are their children.

Parental discipline and correction is a blessing. Have you learned that yet? Where would you be without it? Not near as far along as you would be without it. Parental blessing and discipline can rescue and save you, the Bible says.

Do not withhold correction from a child for it can deliver and save his soul from hell. What a blessing and help, young people. Listen, when your parents correct you and they discipline you, it is for your good because they love you.

And it shapes you. Illustration, what our son went through in basic training was some of it's unbelievable what they have to do and what they have to endure. It's just incredible.

And we were told by several out there this week, some things I just didn't think I could make it through. I didn't think I could do it. And I was able to.

And I'm so glad I did. I'm so glad the discipline and the correction and the drill sergeants did what they did and said what they said and and shaped us. You have discipline and correction, and it is such a blessing for you to have correction from your parents.

You also have parents love. Titus says that mothers are to learn how to love their children. It doesn't take a lot for mothers to learn that.

You know, dads love too, but moms major on it in some real ways. You children have mothers who love you, however imperfect they might be, however controlling sometimes they may feel how much they do for you. They is driven by love.

Your parents love you deeply and you're blessed with that family blessing. You also children have true teaching about the Lord. All of you do.

Paul said to Timothy, from a child you have learned the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation. You young people in your life, providentially in families here and there and in Providence Chapel, you have been taught the truth. Do you realize how many young people in this world are born into much worse than you are? They're born into cults.

They're born into false religions. They're born into atheism. They're born into complete secularism that doesn't even acknowledge God.

Many young people, unlike you, have bad parents, mean parents, parents that are in prison, who don't care, who don't provide, who hurt their children. You in this room are in a real minority. You have been chosen by God to be among those who are especially blessed among those who have the days of their youth, who are under the gospel in loving homes with good parents.

What else do you have? A you have been blessed by being in Providence Chapel, not because of any one person, but because God has brought you here for your welfare. You have families all around you here that love you and would do anything they could do if it was needed to have your back and help you. Your pastors and your deacons love you and are committed to your care for your life.

You have the best kind of friends here within your church. Those are the things you have. So reminder in review, what did I just say? You have God's good providence, family blessing, parental correction, teaching and love, true teaching about the Lord, a loving church, loving church families, many, many other things I could say that you have.

But here's the pause. I want you to stop and realize all that and let it soak in and what you have now that is so wonderful. You should stop as a young person and you should humble yourself before God.

And you can say, Lord, I just want to see and acknowledge how much you've blessed me. I've taken it for granted. I presumed on it.

I think sometimes I deserve it. I don't make the most of it. That's what you have.

But then there's some things you don't have. Let's talk about that. If you're at least in your 30s and under, there's some things you don't have.

First, wisdom. Philip knew I was going there. I bet you don't have wisdom.

I don't even know if I if I really got any mature wisdom until I was almost 35. I don't know. I'm not a good judge for that.

But listen, you still lack wisdom if you're a young person. Now, some of you don't believe that you think you're the brightest, sharpest cookie God ever made. You do think you're smarter than everybody around you, but the wisdom you lack comes from longer life experience.

It's going to equip you to live on your own. You said that sounds so great. Being on my own.

Call me when you're out on your own about six months into it. You lack life wisdom about how to live out in this world. And you must gain that wisdom.

You don't have it yet. And you gain it through the Scriptures, by the Holy Spirit, with your church, from your parents. I've told young people before, if you want to have a successful life, meaning spiritually successful with reality, and you don't want to mess up and be damaged, do this one thing.

If you believe your parents love you, listen to what they say and seek their counsel about every major decision, if they're godly. And don't go against their counsel. And you won't make a mistake.

God has put them over as a covering over you until you're married, to protect you from stupid decisions. And you don't have the wisdom to not be stupid at times. Yet.

William, you could still be. I think you're a wise young man. You're getting there.

But listen, young people, you aren't as wise as you think you are. Humble yourself before the Lord and admit that. You don't know as much as you think you do.

Longer life's hard experiences haven't touched you to the extent that they will. Who's tested in the NFL? The first round, first highest drafted guy or Tom Brady? Who's tested? You hadn't even been drafted yet. If I was going to trust somebody fully about landscape architecture, my son graduates from Texas Tech, God willing, this spring in that.

Do you think I'm going to trust David Tomlinson or Philip Neeley more? Testedness. Young people, you don't have the goods yet to know how to view life, to to make fully mature choices without the wisdom that comes from your church and your parents and the scriptures and through true counsel. Some of us face decisions now how to view things and your parents go to get counsel about things when they don't see things fully in the right way.

You're always going to need new wisdom. You've always got to be gaining it and it's only going to come through the testedness of growing into life. Joseph, the Bible says, the Word of the Lord tested him.

The Lord Jesus Christ as a young man was tested in the wilderness. The testedness he had to go through. I remember when I was 19, I went to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado to do summer missions all summer.

I had never lived out of my home. I had never been away from my friends and my new Christian friends. I was surrounded by friends.

We hung out. We loved being together and having fellowship. And I drove in my 1972 Volkswagen Beetle to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

Thankfully, I didn't have car trouble. I got there and I had the whole summer there alone. Lived in a room that was 8 by 12.

Had to take all my meals at a restaurant. Didn't know anybody. Didn't have any friends.

I was doing ministry evangelism. I was serving. I got lonely and homesick in about two weeks.

I wanted to go home. All the mountains were pretty, but they weren't as pretty as a Texas panhandle to me in that moment. I wanted to go home.

I couldn't. I had to depend on the Lord. I had to read my Bible for some encouragement.

I had to learn to pray. And that summer, I learned that Christ was sufficient and that I didn't have to have people always as my first dependents. I had to mature.

And when I drove out of there, I remember streams of rain flowing down the back windshield of my car. And it kind of represented to me, I'm sad leaving here. I don't even want to leave here because of what God has taught me and how He's met with me here.

And it was on to a new day. Because that summer equipped me to go off to college and live life better and more maturely. Young people, you don't know what's ahead of you.

And you don't know yet how to view or handle the hard things that come in life. You must have experienced wisdom. And you will gain that.

As you learn to do one thing, remember your Creator in the days of your youth. As you walk with Christ, decade after decade, and you live another 10 years, 20, 30, 50. If anyone lacks wisdom, let him walk.

Ask God. Young people, you ought to make it a daily prayer. Lord, give me wisdom that I don't have.

Teach me Your ways. Cause me to see what I don't see. Show me what I need to see.

Let me learn what I need to learn. Because I will blow it and mess up my life without you. Do you believe that? As a young man, 10 years from now, how old will you be? 20 years from now, young ladies, how old will you be? Think about your life.

Do you want it without the Lord? You want it on your own? Or do you say, these are the days of my youth and I must have Him to be kept by Him. Or I will blow it. You know what else you lack? You lack the promise of a certain future and a long life.

You don't have a promise long life. You could die early. Before you're 20, before you're 30.

We don't know. But don't presume on life. The only answer for that is to remember your Creator in the days of your youth.

Life is a vapor. You have no idea, right now you have no idea what your future life will be or how long you'll live. You're only safe and secure with the Lord Jesus Christ as your shepherd.

You're only safe and secure with Christ as your shepherd. You don't have a knowledge of God's future will. And your parents and your pastors don't know what God's will is for you fully.

They don't. We don't. We cannot know that or bring about God's will for you.

Only Christ can. Then also, you do not yet have a mature view about sin, this world, and the devil. You don't have a mature view yet.

Sin will destroy, the choices of sin will destroy any future that's good that you might have, that you could have. This world, becoming like it, following it, will corrupt and deceive you and hurt you, and it will damage, change, and eliminate everything good that you desire and want. This world will chew you up and spit you out in the gutter.

You will never find any peace there. You'll never find any fulfillment there. You'll only find danger and damage out in this world.

But you don't fully know that yet. Are you fully persuaded of that yet? Some of you are so young, you can't even understand what I'm saying. But this world out there is dangerous if you let it get you.

Don't let it get you. Do not let it get you. That's why as a young person, the foundations you lay now, and the choices you make daily and weekly, will determine what you are in the future.

The foundations you lay in your life, and the choices you make daily and weekly, will determine what you are the rest of your life. David was the king he became, in a very real way, because in his youth he did what? He became a worshiper. He was a shepherd faithful with some sheep.

He was a servant, even to his brothers that didn't like him. And he was equipped to defeat Goliath and all of Israel's enemies by going against a lion and a bear. The practice rounds in his youth, he learned to manage.

He learned to stand. He learned to be a courageous. He was equipped with the right view in his youth.

What you become, young people, in the next five years, ten or twenty, will be who you are the rest of your life. Now you may flatter and romance yourself with great dreams of what you want in life, but it'll only be

dreams if you don't believe and do our text today, Remember Your Creator. You can dream and fantasize all day about the glorious life you want to have, and what you want to accomplish.

It will only be a dream and a fantasy that will go away unless you remember Your Creator in the days now of your youth. So if this verse is true, if you have those good things that I pointed out, if you don't have the things I pointed out, then what should you do? Here's what you ought to do. Everybody ready to hear? Young man, young lady, young person, this morning stop.

Stop your life. Put it in neutral. Stop and surrender your soul and your heart to Your Creator right now, today.

Stop going on without God. It's not going to end well. The bridge is out.

Turn around. Stop and surrender your heart and your soul and your will to Your Creator. Today as a five-year-old, you can give your life to Jesus.

You get older, it gets harder, you get more proud, you think, I don't want anybody to know. Stop and surrender for the first time. Or maybe if you are a believer, surrender all over again.

Abandon today all sin, all rebellion, all disobedience, all wrongdoing. If the world is calling you and if it's getting you, flee and turn from it. Turn around.

Walk away and walk back to Christ. You don't want the world to get you. There's people in this room today who were damaged by this world and they would plead with you in tears, do not let this vile world get you.

If it's calling you and wooing you and getting you, turn. Don't do it. If worldly people, if ungodly people, if proud and arrogant people in this world are bringing you into their group and they want you, don't do it.

Have the courage to not sin against your conscience. Don't sin against the truth. Don't go with them because their end is bad and their destiny is separation from God.

Don't go with them. Proverbs, I'm sorry, Psalm 1 says it. Psalm 2 says it.

Proverbs also says it. Children and young people, all those who are under 40, Christ calls you, Proverbs 23, my son, my daughter, give me your heart. Proverbs 23, my son, my child, give me your heart.

That's the call that Ecclesiastes 12, 1 is talking about. That's how you remember your Creator. Luke 18, Jesus said regarding all who are young, let them all come to Me.

Just let them all come to Me. Today, do that. Stop, surrender, yield, and come.

Trust Him, remembering your Creator more than ever today. Don't waste one day or one hour on this world. Don't waste your young life on trivial, foolish, worldly pursuits which only distract and damage you.

Be all out for Christ. You've got to be all in or not in at all. Be all in for Christ.

Radically, fully, like Jim Elliot, like William Borden, like Amy Carmichael. Young people read those biographies this year. Amy Carmichael, William Borden, Jim Elliot.

Be all out for Christ from your youth like they were, like Joseph was, like Daniel, like David, all for Jesus. Today, what does your heart say to the Holy Spirit saying to you today, remember your Creator now in the

days of your youth? Why would you refuse Christ today, your Creator? Don't. I want us to pray.

Let's just bow our hearts, and I want you to be before the Lord, and I want you to be honest with Him in these moments. I challenge you, I encourage you to have the courage just to go to Him in prayer and pray back to Him what He's spoken to you in these moments. Tell Him where you are.

Tell Him what you think and feel, and tell Him with all your heart, Lord, here I am. I want to remember my Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ, with my life, with my heart, with my surrender. I'm coming.

I want you to pray to Him in these moments what He's spoken to you. You can respond to the Lord Jesus right where you are, just as you are in these moments. And if you know the Lord is dealing with your heart, and you need to pour things out with someone, with your dad, with your mom, with one of your pastors, one of your deacons, one of the ladies here, one of the brothers that you would trust.

Today, if you hear His voice, no longer harden your heart. Father, we thank You for the truth of all that verse means when Solomon first wrote it. It's still true today that we're called to remember our Creator in the days now of our youth.

So would You minister the reality of this to every heart. Grant us this blessing for the glory of Your name, we pray. Amen.

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