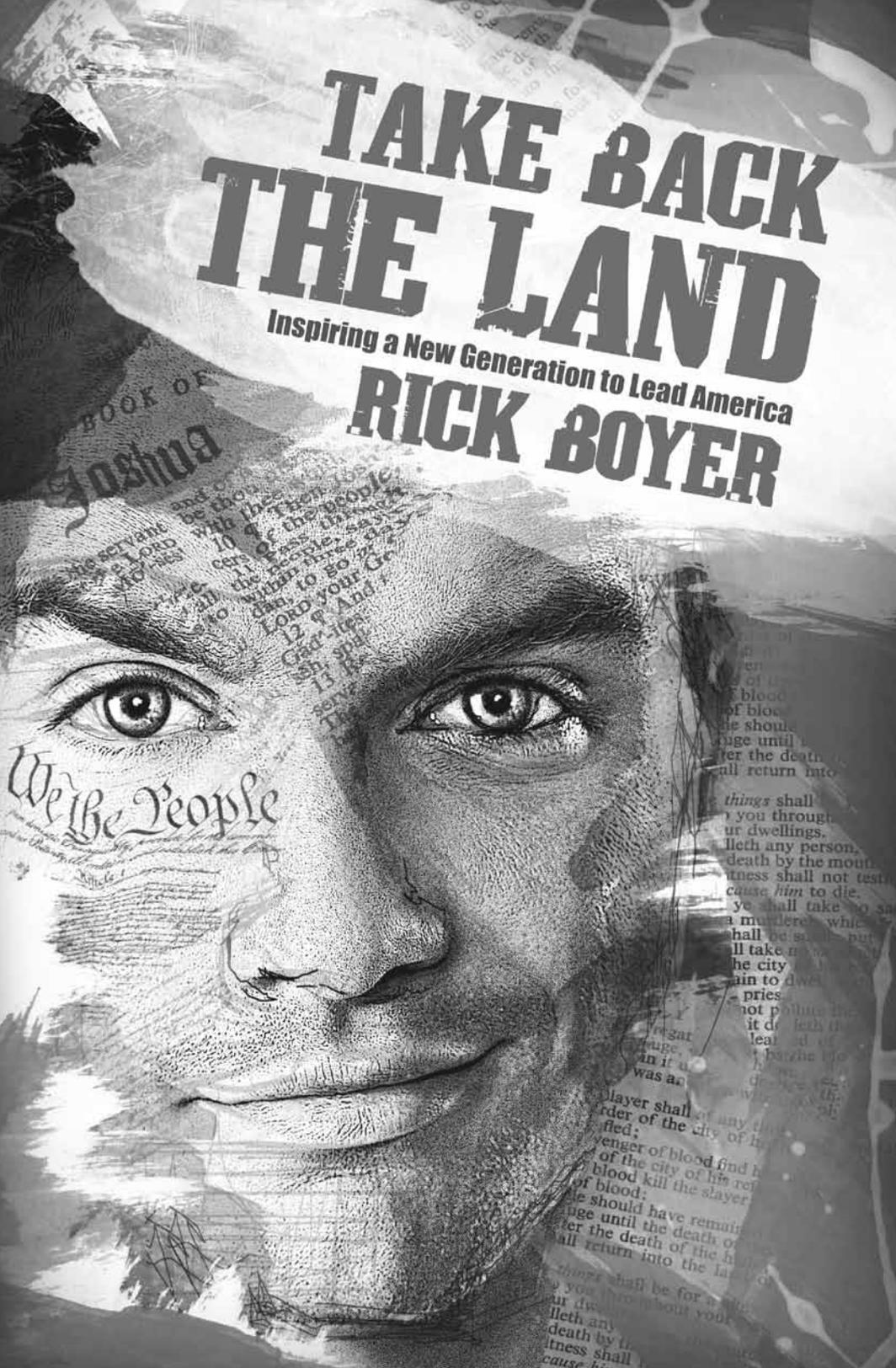


# TAKE BACK THE LAND

Inspiring a New Generation to Lead America

## RICK BOYER



BOOK OF  
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*Dedicated to the memory of Chris Klicka, my best friend and a mighty warrior for Christ. Chris, we were going to write this book together but the Lord had other plans. I promised you I'd finish it and I promise I'll keep up the fight.*

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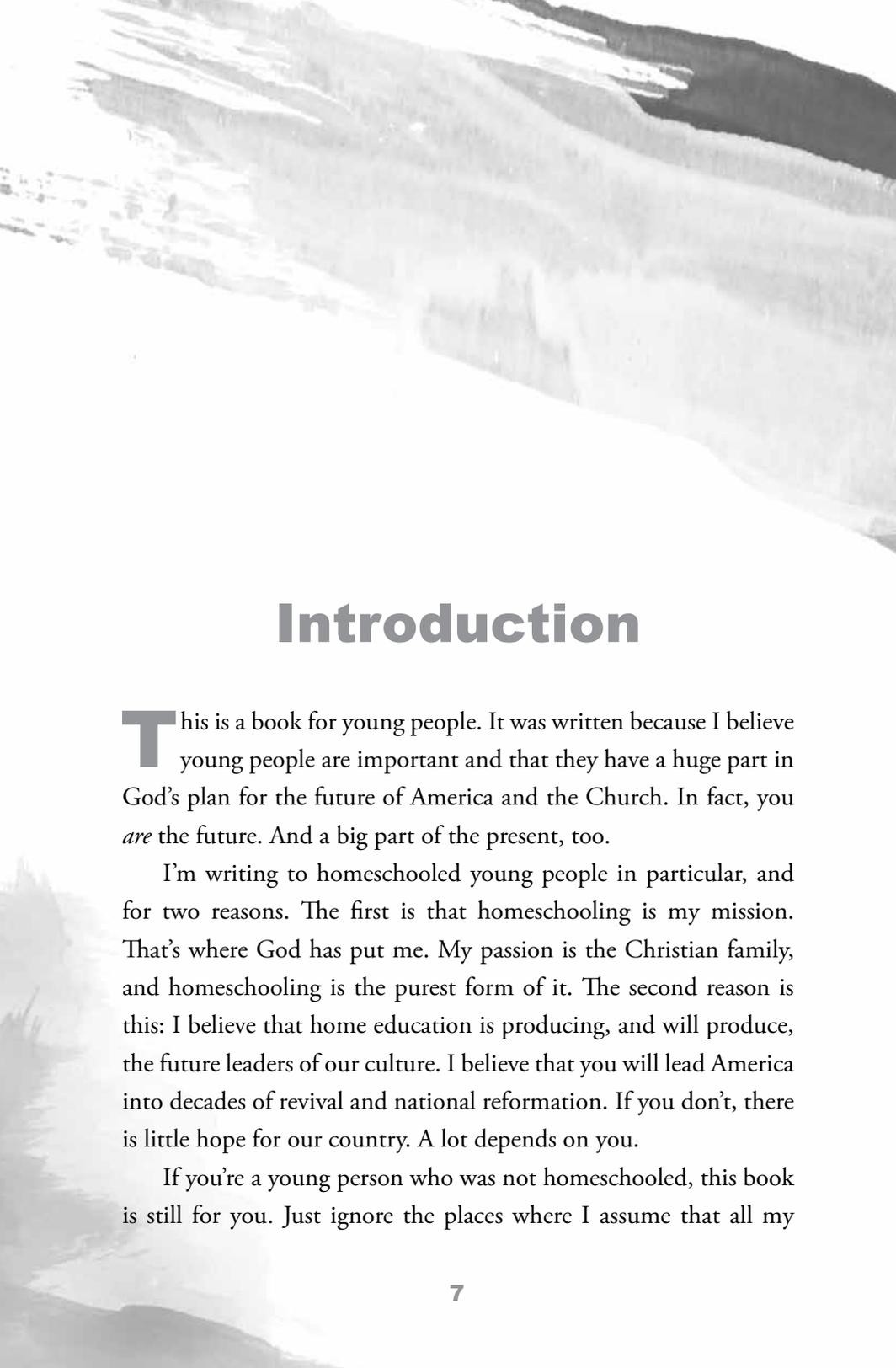
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# Contents

Introduction.....	7
1. Don't Waste Your Youth.....	11
2. The Joshua Generation .....	25
3. Leadership: The Key to Victory.....	39
4. Principles of Reformation .....	57
5. The Challenge.....	79
6. Education .....	123
7. The Media .....	155
8. The Arts.....	173
9. The Family.....	183
10. The Church .....	193
11. The Courts.....	227
12. Where Do I Start?.....	245





## Introduction

**T**his is a book for young people. It was written because I believe young people are important and that they have a huge part in God's plan for the future of America and the Church. In fact, you *are* the future. And a big part of the present, too.

I'm writing to homeschooled young people in particular, and for two reasons. The first is that homeschooling is my mission. That's where God has put me. My passion is the Christian family, and homeschooling is the purest form of it. The second reason is this: I believe that home education is producing, and will produce, the future leaders of our culture. I believe that you will lead America into decades of revival and national reformation. If you don't, there is little hope for our country. A lot depends on you.

If you're a young person who was not homeschooled, this book is still for you. Just ignore the places where I assume that all my

readers are homeschoolers. The message is still intended for you. I hope that one day you will consider teaching your own kids at home, but for now come on along for the ride. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, your calling is to change the world around you, regardless of your educational background.

I hope your parents will read this book, too. They are critical to God's plan for your life, and it's important that you and they are singing on the same page as you look toward His life mission for you. But I have already written several books for homeschooling parents and there are lots of good books written for them by others. I don't know of any book written especially for their sons and daughters, and there is a lot I want to say to you.

Actually, this book grew out of a speech I made to a group of young people. It was a graduation speech I presented at the Iowa statewide homeschool commencement service in May 2008. On that sunny Saturday afternoon, I told 106 bright, beaming young men and women some of the things I'm going to tell you in this book. I gave them a challenge — a challenge to worship a big God and attempt big things for Him because that is our purpose in life.

My talk got a standing ovation that day (which doesn't happen *every* single time I speak). Of course the audience's appreciation is always heartwarming to a public speaker. But the thing that blessed me the most was the fact that it was the graduates themselves who were on their feet first. They had liked what I said.

As I reflected later on the speech and the grads' response, it came to me with jolting clarity that those grads weren't hailing a brilliant speech. They weren't responding to eloquence or genius or exceptional good looks (in fact, I'm pretty sure about that last one). They were simply thanking me for a high compliment.

There are, after all, different kinds of commencement addresses. Some are apologies. “Here’s the world we’re leaving you, lots of luck. Our generation has messed it up thoroughly and it’s a pretty rotten place, so . . . hope you can do better.” Other graduates hear speeches full of flattery. “Oh, you young folks are so wonderful. Those video games have just made paragons of virtue out of you. We know you’ll go far.”

But I simply offered them a challenge: Grow up. Now. Get busy. Take responsibility to change this world for God, because that’s exactly what He expects you to do.

With all my heart I believe that those young people were just saying thank you. Thank you for believing that our lives matter. Thank you for saying that we *must* change the world, because that tells us that you believe we *can* change the world. Thank you for reminding us that God has big plans for us and that this ceremony marks not the end of our youth, but the first day of the rest of our lives. And that God wants to make those lives great.

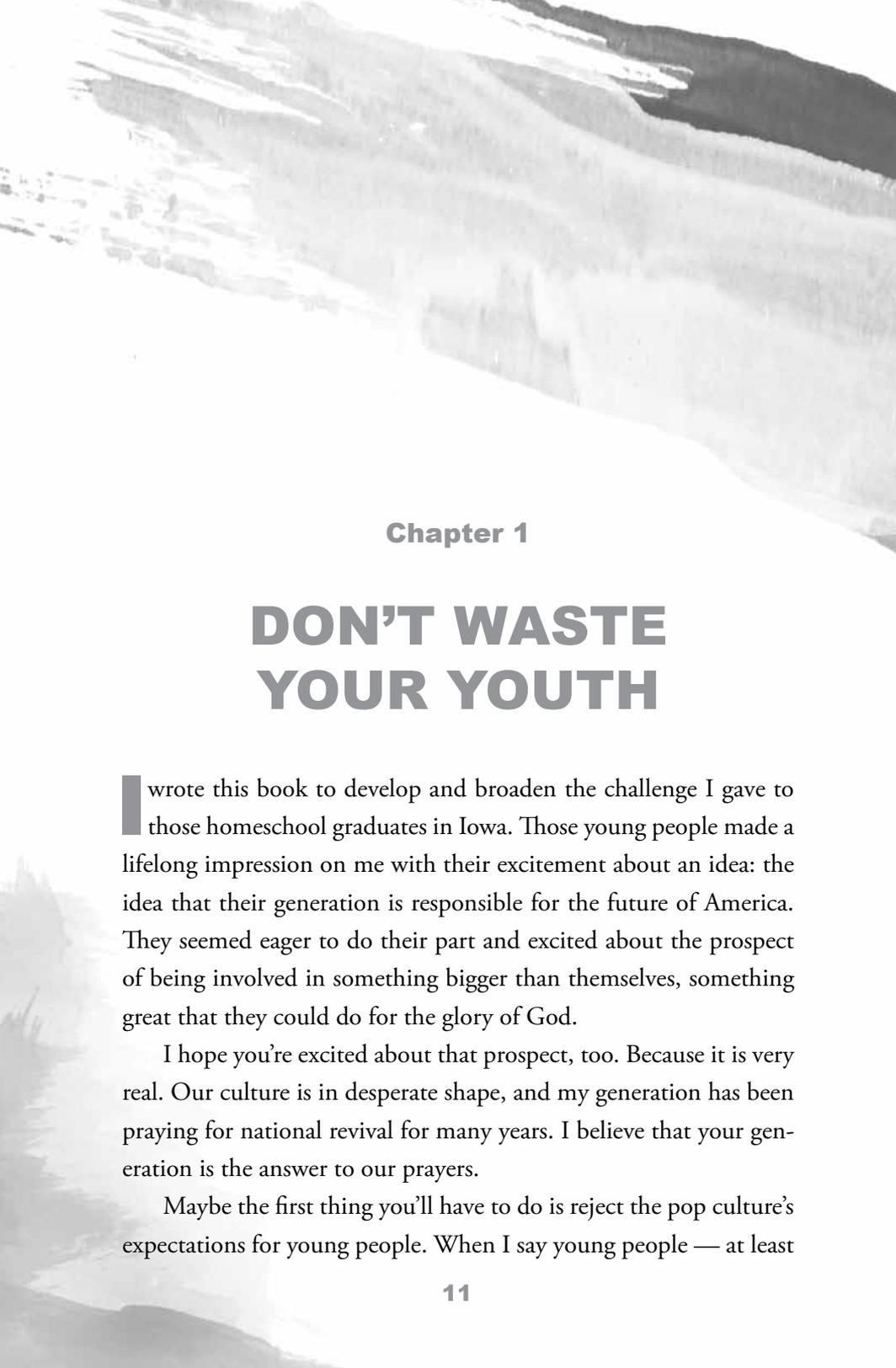
In fact, I was a little tough on those young men and women. I communicated very high expectations and allowed for no excuses. But looking back, I think that was exactly what they turned on to. You guys really don’t want life to be easy, you want it to be worthy. That’s the kind of life I will offer you in this book.

Pioneer missionary William Carey once said, “Attempt great things *for* God. Expect great things *from* God.”

My young friend, God is calling you to greatness.

No excuses.





## Chapter 1

# DON'T WASTE YOUR YOUTH

I wrote this book to develop and broaden the challenge I gave to those homeschool graduates in Iowa. Those young people made a lifelong impression on me with their excitement about an idea: the idea that their generation is responsible for the future of America. They seemed eager to do their part and excited about the prospect of being involved in something bigger than themselves, something great that they could do for the glory of God.

I hope you're excited about that prospect, too. Because it is very real. Our culture is in desperate shape, and my generation has been praying for national revival for many years. I believe that your generation is the answer to our prayers.

Maybe the first thing you'll have to do is reject the pop culture's expectations for young people. When I say young people — at least

for the purpose of this book — I mean people of the age usually associated with middle school, high school, and college, maybe 12 through the middle twenties. If I meant someone younger, I might use the word child or children. If you are through puberty, I consider you an adult. A young adult, a less experienced adult, but absolutely an adult, nevertheless.

That's radically different from the pop culture model, which assumes that at least through your teen years you will be goofy, silly, unable to handle responsibility, and only interested in things of little importance. You won't care much about grown-up issues like politics, economics, faith, and community service. You'll want to spend all your time hanging out at the mall, flirting, wasting money, gabbing on Facebook, watching TV, and listening to music. You'll be looking for fun, not achievement.

I say that's hogwash. I know any number of young folks, including my own sons and daughters, who are living a different way. They are doing real things in the real world, facing real challenges and meeting real needs. And they're loving it.

So let's cut to the chase. I'm an old guy writing to young men and women. I'm here to tell you that the world is in a mess and it's your job to change it, beginning with the culture you grew up in. I will address you as adults and expect you to consider what I say and — agree or disagree — respond as adults. I respect you that much and I hope you respect yourselves. After all, God made you — very specifically (see Psalm 139) — and He does not make junk.

I will make no attempt in this book to be cool. I won't bother to use the contemporary teen lingo because I know you're just as capable of understanding plain English as your parents are. I don't normally use the phrase "like, totally" so I won't use it here. And I will make no effort to remember to address you as "dude." If you attend one

of our Take Back the Land conferences, you won't see me dressed in shredded jeans and sneakers, trying to pretend I'm up on the latest youth fashions and fads. I'll be in a suit and tie. Why? Because I love a choke string around my neck? No. I hate ties and never wear one to the office. It's because I respect you and don't consider you a group of dumb kids. I figure I'm talking to future presidents, Supreme Court justices, pastors, CEOs, business owners, authors, etc., so I dress appropriately. I would wear a suit if I was invited to the White House, so I'm going to wear a suit when I talk to you at a conference. You are somebody and I'm going to show you respect.

I'm also not going to knock myself out to convince you of how understanding I am. I'm not going to try to sound "relevant," whatever that worn-out term is supposed to mean. What's really relevant in life is not what's relevant to the bogus youth subculture of the last several decades (yes, believe it or not, youth culture is not that new) but what's relevant to the eternal Word of God and the lessons of several thousand years of human experience. What's really relevant to life is a lot of very old-fashioned values that speak of things like decency and respect and diligence and wisdom and responsibility. The kind of things that my parents tried to teach me, and which I was too cool to pay much attention to.

I trust you're smarter than I was at your age. But if you've bought the tired notion that you're coming of age in a new era of history that requires different music, different dialect, different clothes, etc., forget it. That's what my generation thought 40 years ago. There's really nothing new under the sun. Nearly everything that is pawned off on each new generation of young people is driven by mass marketing. And it's not marketing done by young people, either.

So don't write off my ideas because I'm old and you think I can't understand you. I understand enough. I've been young. I've lived

with a lot of young people, too, watching several of my 14 children who are now in their thirties, right from the get-go. And to the best of my knowledge hormones haven't changed, peer pressure hasn't changed, and zits haven't changed. You'll get much better mileage if you stop worrying about whether I understand you and start trying to understand me. I'm four decades past high school and this ain't my first rodeo. If you would just learn from all the mistakes I've made you'd hardly have to make any of your own.

So don't look for older people to understand you. Instead, apply yourself to understanding them. Watch them, get to know them, learn all you can from their experience, both positive and negative. A lot of them would be delighted to share the wealth of their many years of wisdom with a young person who has sense enough to want to hear it.

Most people have low expectations of young people these days. A symptom of that attitude is the fact that most churches hire 20-somethings as youth ministers. We assume that young folks don't have an adult level of interest in spiritual things, nor an adult attention span. They can't handle adult instruction in Christian living; they have to be entertained constantly. If you send them on a short-term missions trip, make sure it's near a beach. They can do some useful work, but they have to spend at least half of each day swimming. They need their own brand of music; songs that have stood the test of time for centuries are over their young heads. The youth director has to know the latest teen lingo and is even cooler if he sports a couple of tattoos. If you want to reach young people you have to come "down to their level."

Aren't you a little insulted by the assumption that your "level" is "down"? I think all that is ridiculous, so I won't be attempting to come down to anybody's level. I was young once, and I wasted those years doing the same stupid, empty things so many people

expect you to do now. It makes me sick to look back and see what I cheated myself out of. So no, I won't be coming down to your level. I'm inviting you to come up to mine.

Come on up. Come on and join us. The greatest adventure known to man is waiting for you; it's the cause of being a soldier for Jesus Christ. Fighting His battles for truth, righteousness, and the salvation of men. In our country it's also the battle for human freedom, as an army of Christian patriots rise up once again, as in 1776, to stand for the freedom of "we the people."

If you haven't done so yet, it's time to graduate from the "youth group" mentality. Stop thinking of yourself as a second-class citizen in the Church and community just because you're under voting age. Consider yourself a full-fledged member of the Body of Christ and an American citizen. Depending on your exact age, there may be some privileges you can't yet take advantage of. That's fine; to everything there is a season (see Ecclesiastes 3), and your time will come for full participation. But there is much you can do now. You can make a huge difference if you will reject the labels society tries to paste on the young and get on about the business of serving God and the other people around you.

Okay, so I'm inviting you to start living the adult life now. What do I mean by that? What does it look like to be an adult rather than a "teenager" or an "adolescent"? Well, here are some of the marks of adult character as I see it.

**An adult has his own real relationship with God.** He doesn't expect to enter heaven on his parents' faith. He has repented of his sins, accepted salvation through the blood of Christ, and walks daily in fellowship with God through prayer and the reading and study of the Scriptures. He understands that he is responsible to grow spiritually for the rest of his life.

**An adult takes responsibility for his own actions.** He does what he should do, regardless of whether he's being supervised or not. He doesn't go around inventing excuses for underperformance or complaining about how bad conditions are. He does what he can to make conditions better and to make the most of things as they are. He admits it when he's been wrong.

**An adult has decided to be a giver rather than a taker.** Usually by the end of puberty, this decision has been made and it is evident to others. An adult sees himself as more of a producer than a consumer. This is simply the natural manifestation of the choice to do as Jesus commanded, to serve rather than be served. This attitude affects every major decision in life. An adult is not shackled with the constant concern of "What's in it for me?" This also affects our outlook as we decide how to spend our time. Rather than thinking, *What would be a fun way to spend tomorrow?* he thinks, *What would be a worthwhile way to spend tomorrow?* The underlying question for an adult is, "How can I spend tomorrow so that I will look back on it with thankfulness rather than regret?" An adult knows that his time on earth is limited and he wants to spend it on things that matter.

**An adult lives with a conscious sense of duty.** Duty is a word that's not used very often anymore, and it's a shame. It's related to the idea of being a giver rather than a taker, and it's pretty much the opposite of the popular idea of looking out for Number One. Duty means taking responsibility for the world around you, looking more to your responsibilities than to your rights, whether as a family member, a friend, an employee/employer, or a citizen. As Americans, we have wonderful rights protected by law. Unfortunately, we live in a selfish time when many Americans are majoring on their rights and minoring on their responsibilities. Everybody wants his

“entitlements” but few want to know what their duties as citizens are. That’s a very dangerous state of affairs, because tyrants often rise to positions of power in government by promising people more entitlements and less responsibility.

A duty-conscious person is looking for ways to be helpful in his family, his church, his employment, his community, and his country. Dutiful people volunteer for extra housework, look for ways to make their employers and employees more successful, join the rescue squad, and work the polls on election day. Contrast this to people who spend all their free time watching TV and playing Xbox.

Now please don’t hear what I’m not saying. I’m not saying that pleasure is evil or that there is no place in life for rest and recreation. I’m talking priorities. Everybody needs some rest and some fun. But we need to understand that the best rest comes after we’ve worked hard enough to do somebody some good. The best fun is found in the good times we have, knowing that we’ve done our duty and it’s time now for some well-deserved play.

In modern American culture we have our priorities backward. We work as much as we have to in order to survive. But we’re usually much more excited about our fun than about the contribution we’re making to the rest of the world. That’s the reason the entertainment industry is one of the very biggest businesses in the country. We worship pleasure.

Let me illustrate. Do you know who Brett Favre is? Sure. He plays football. Tiger Woods? He plays golf. Mick Jagger? He plays music. Sort of. Tom Cruise? He plays other people in movies. These people all *play* for a living, and we all know their names.

But do you know these names: Christian Barnard, Jonas Salk, Alexander Fleming?

Dr. Christian Barnard performed the first successful human heart transplant. Jonas Salk created the Salk vaccine that stopped the crippling plague of polio. Sir Alexander Fleming developed the antibiotic penicillin, saving millions of lives.

Now how many Americans know the names on the second list? How many teenagers have posters of those guys on their bedroom walls? Yet which of the two lists contains the names of the people who have contributed more to humanity? I think you see what I mean. We have become a nation that is more defined by our play than by our work. That's what happens when several successive generations seek their pleasure rather than their duty.

This fun-and-games society has conditioned many adults to take their childishness with them right into adulthood. It used to be the other way around. If we weren't so ignorant of our own history (partly because we spend our free time watching the tube instead of reading) we'd know that it wasn't so long ago that kids actually wanted to be adults. They didn't waste a lot of time in the process of growing up.

Our sixth president, John Quincy Adams, drilled with the Massachusetts militia during the Revolutionary War. He was 8 years old at the time. At 11, he served as secretary to his father, John Adams, who was the American envoy to France at the time. At 14, Congress appointed him secretary to America's envoy to Russia.

Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb, didn't wait forever to grow up either. At 12, he was working on the Grand Trunk Railroad. He was also publishing a newspaper on a castoff printing press he had rebuilt himself. He printed it in the baggage car and then sold it to the passengers. His career on the railroad was cut short because some chemical experiments he was working on in his spare time caught the baggage car on fire.

David Farragut, the first admiral in the U.S. Navy went to sea as a midshipman when he was nine years old. Years later in the War of 1812, his ship fought with and captured a British warship. Farragut was given command of the prize and ordered to sail it from the west coast of South America all the way back to Boston. He was 12 years old at the time.

On another ship in another war, another young man distinguished himself. Calvin Graham, Seaman First Class, was a part of the crew of the USS *South Dakota* in World War II. In the naval battle of Guadalcanal, the ship was hit by Japanese artillery and caught fire. Graham was seriously wounded. Despite that, he not only took part in the fire control efforts but also rescued several wounded sailors who otherwise would have been burned to death. Graham was given a Purple Heart for his wounds, a Bronze Star for his heroism, and a discharge for lying. During his recovery it was discovered that he had falsified his enlistment papers. He was only 12 years old.

Benjamin Franklin — statesman, diplomat, scientist, philanthropist, and too many other titles to mention — went to school for only two years. Most of his remarkable education he took for himself in his limited spare time after working 12-hour days as a printer's apprentice. By the time he reached middle age he was one of the most successful and famous men in the English-speaking world. Much of his fame was due to the success of his *Poor Richard's Almanac*, but his publishing career started much earlier when, under a pen name, he anonymously slipped his articles under the newspaper editor's door in the middle of the night. He was in his mid-teens then.

All these guys lived a good while ago, but they don't have an exclusive claim to early achievement. Do an Internet search of the phrase *child prodigy* and you'll come up with more info than you

care to read about kids who did adult things at very young ages. Early maturity was certainly much more common early in our history than it is now, but it's not because human nature is different now. Rather, it's the way children are being brought up.

You see, maturity and responsibility are two sides of the same coin. This whole book is my plea to you to take on responsibility in order to develop maturity and demonstrate maturity by taking on responsibility. People who take responsibility early grow up early. Some people, like me, don't really grow up until they get married because they manage to avoid responsibility during their teen years. It's not until they get married that they find themselves with responsibilities they can't wiggle out of. Then they tend to grow up pretty fast, if the marriage survives.

But a hundred years ago, young people routinely carried serious loads of responsibility long before marrying age. Most of the country lived on farms or in small towns. Everybody had their chickens, hogs, and cows for meat, eggs, and milk. Everybody had horses for transportation. Children grew up caring for younger children — the average family had seven — and a collection of animals who depended on their human benefactors for their very survival. Both kids and critters had to be taken care of in all kinds of weather, at various times of day or night, and whether it was convenient or not. Young people learned early in life that the world didn't revolve around them. And they learned they could handle it.

But the social engineers in and around government viewed all this self-sufficiency and independence with disapproval. Independent people think for themselves, which makes them hard to govern. They tend to think of the citizenry as the bosses and the elected officials as public servants. Independent types also tend to be self-employed, which limits the supply of candidates for assembly-line

workers and labor union members. Not to mention the fact that these people tend to have close families in which values are passed down from generation to generation. That was unhandy for other social manipulators who were concerned with changing public opinion in favor of socialism or secularism or whatever “ism” they happened to believe in.

That's why the process of growing up changed so much in America in the last century. Lots of people wanted to control the rest of the population, so they had to make people childlike and irresponsible. Childhood had to be artificially extended so that the citizenry was easier to lead (and mislead). Friedrich Engels, early Communist leader and friend of Karl Marx, author of *The Communist Manifesto*, once said that if you could remove a people from their roots, they could be easily swayed to your point of view.<sup>1</sup> Of course, he meant persuaded to give up their freedom in exchange for socialism (communism).

Engels was right. The correctness of his statement now has a hundred years' worth of proof. That's about how long the statist (people who believe the government should control the citizens instead of vice versa) have been using compulsory school attendance to reduce the amount of time kids spend with their parents and siblings. The result has been less parental influence on kids, less loyalty of kids to parents, less bonding between brothers and sisters, less passing on of family values and traditions. There has been increasing peer dependency and a slowing of maturity as kids spend less time with adults and more time with people their own age. It's ironic that we adults put our kids into so many same-age activities and expect them to grow up. How can they, when we surround them with immature social models? A 13 year old already knows how to be a 13 year old.

Another way social engineers have segregated young people from the maturing influence of adults is through child labor laws. Starting around 1900, attempts were made to use the rough conditions in many workplaces to convince lawmakers to pass bills protecting young people from them. (You'll see this method in frequent use even today as we are constantly being sold the need for more government regulation — which, translated, means less personal freedom — for the sake of “protecting” somebody from something). The assumption is that kids and their parents are too dumb to decide how old a person should be when he starts working or what jobs are too dangerous for young people. The social engineers took advantage of the fact that there were some young people being abused in workplace situations to convince lawmakers that the problem was huge and required solutions on a national level. (Watch for this ploy as you educate yourself about the political system — a problem faced by a tiny minority will often be inflated to persuade legislators to pass laws affecting many millions of citizens, and for a totally different reason.)

It worked. It took a long time, but the statisticians have been so successful that most of the public now accepts as normal an American youth lifestyle that keeps kids locked up in schools for most of their productive hours and away from the challenging environment of real work. It also keeps them surrounded by people no more mature than they are themselves most of the time. The result? It's taking years longer to grow up than it did a century ago.

I heard a great illustration of this phenomenon in a speech by a career counselor. This guy was an older gentleman who had been in the business for probably 40 years. He said, “When I was starting out in the business, people who came to me for advice usually had a pretty good idea of where they wanted to go in life by about age

20. Now, it's more like age 30. I don't know exactly why that is, but it's a very clear pattern." Wow. He's saying that it's taking people 50 percent longer to decide on a career direction than it did just four decades ago.

I think I know why it is. We're not growing up because we're not hanging around with grown-up people, doing grown-up work, reading grown-up books, and thinking about grown-up issues. We're not getting out into the adult world while we're still young and finding out what's available to us and what we're suited for. What we find fulfillment in doing. We're spending our youth in an artificial environment instead of the real world of home, community, church, and workplace. We spend the most energetic, creative years of our lives separated from the business of the real world. No wonder it takes so long to find our place in it when we're finally turned loose.

Once I was looking through some old magazines and I came across a photo of a 14-year-old guy walking to school in the winter. He was wearing a coat and tie, an overcoat, and a style of hat that I think is called a fedora. (I'm not a hat guy, except for the John Deere cap I wear here at the farm.) The photo must have been taken around the 1930s or 40s. The thing that struck me about the boy was that he was dressed like an adult man. He must have looked just like his dad on his way to the office.

I've since noticed the same thing in many old photos. The little kids are dressed like little kids, the girls in ruffy dresses and the boys in knickers and long socks. But from about middle school age on up, they were dressed just like their parents. Kids used to want to look like adults.

I've now learned enough to know that back then kids wanted to act like adults, too. They wanted to be adults. They wanted to grow up and take their places in the real world. A creature called a teenager

was unknown in the early 20th century. There were children and there were adults. Some of those adults were in their teen years, many still living in their parents' homes and under their authority, but carrying their own load of responsibility in the family and often in the family business or farm. There was no intermediate category called "teenager." You were a child or you were an adult.

Today, you can be a child, you can be an adult, or you can be a teenager. Sometimes we extend the pre-adult category to adolescent, which seems to include teenagers and 20-somethings who still aren't supporting themselves. In our culture, an adolescent seems to be defined as a human creature who has all the freedom of an adult to do what he pleases, but the light responsibility load of a child. Sounds like a pretty good deal. But all is not as it seems. One would think an "adolescent" has it made in the shade, but evidently it's not so. America leads the world in opportunity for adolescents, yet suicide is the third leading cause of death for Americans ages 15 through 24.<sup>2</sup> It appears that freedom from responsibility isn't all it's cracked up to be.

So I'm offering you a different way to go. I'm suggesting you just skip adolescence. Decide to grow up now and take responsibility for your life. Take responsibility to do all the good you can do in the world around you. That doesn't mean you're no longer under your parents' authority. It just means you're accepting responsibility for your actions. It means you're determined to amount to something, rather than playing your youth away. I believe you're up to the challenge. That's why I speak to you as an adult, rather than an adolescent.

Like, totally, dude.

#### Endnotes

1. [http://www.onthewing.org/user/Edu\\_Dewey%20-%20Father%20of%20Modern%20Education.pdf](http://www.onthewing.org/user/Edu_Dewey%20-%20Father%20of%20Modern%20Education.pdf).
2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teenage\\_suicide\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teenage_suicide_in_the_United_States).