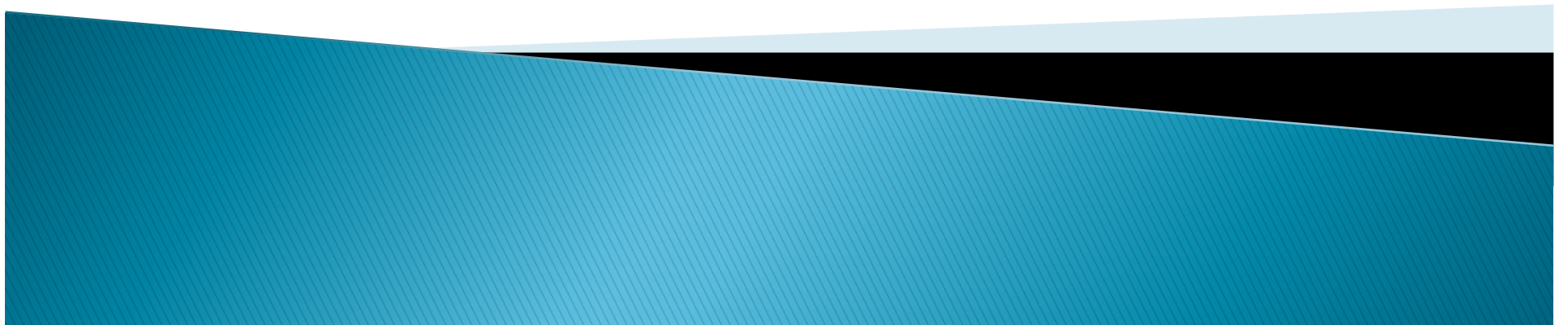
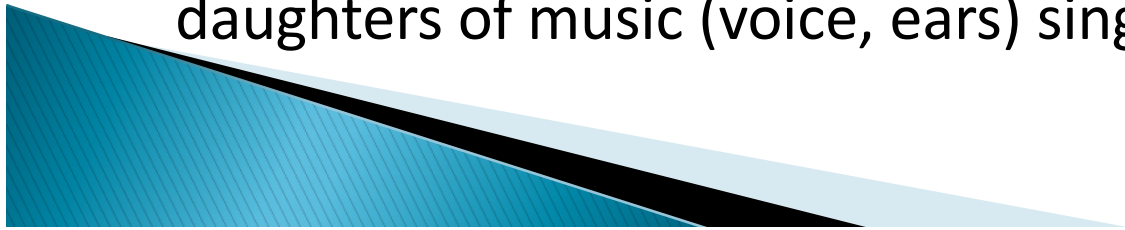


PAY NOW OR PAY LATER
Ecclesiastes 12:1-4, 6-7, 13-14


Woodland Park Church of Christ
9 October 2022



Remember [thoughtfully] also your Creator in the days of your youth [for you are not your own, but His], before the evil days come or the years draw near when you will say [of physical pleasures], “I have no enjoyment *and* delight in them”; ² before the sun and the light, and the moon and the stars are darkened [by impaired vision], and the clouds [of depression] return after the rain [of tears]; ³ in the day when the keepers of the house (hands, arms) tremble, and the strong men (feet, knees) bow themselves, and the grinders (molar teeth) cease because they are few, and those (eyes) who look through the windows grow dim; ⁴ when the doors (lips) are shut in the streets and the sound of the grinding [of the teeth] is low, and one rises at the sound of a bird *and* the crowing of a rooster, and all the daughters of music (voice, ears) sing softly. . .



⁶ ***Earnestly remember your Creator*** before the silver cord [of life] is broken, or the golden bowl is crushed, or the pitcher at the fountain is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed; ⁷ then the dust [out of which God made man's body] will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. . . ¹³ **When all has been heard, the end of the matter is: fear God [worship Him with awe-filled reverence, knowing that He is almighty God] and keep His commandments, for this applies to every person.** ¹⁴ For God will bring every act to judgment, every hidden *and* secret thing, whether it is good or evil. **Ecclesiastes 12:1-4, 6-7, 13-14**



BACKDROP


- ▶ Solomon's counsel is more relevant and critical now than at any other point in human history.
- ▶ Distraction from what is wholesome, diversion from godliness, and deviation from chastity and purity are at every turn.
- ▶ Seeking to devour, destroy and defeat our young people; and
- ▶ With it, tightening Satan's grip on the world.
 - Leading people to the "slaughter."



A man in a blue shirt is leaning against the side of a car. The text 'FRAM OIL FILTERS' is overlaid on the image. Below the text, there is a handwritten-style message: 'You can pay me now, or pay me later.'

FRAM
OIL FILTERS

You can pay me now,
or pay me later.



"IT IS EASIER TO
BUILD STRONG
CHILDREN THAN TO
REPAIR BROKEN
MEN."

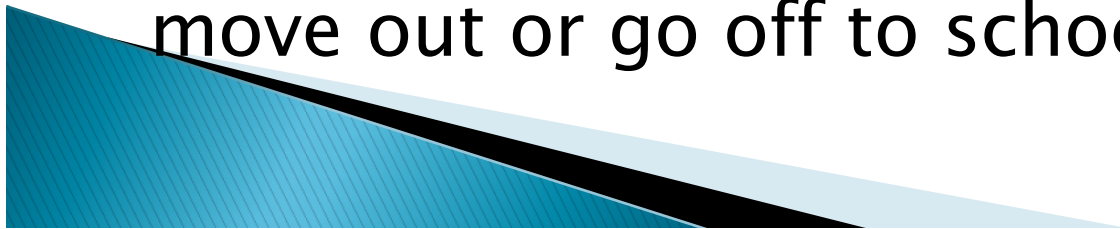
- Frederick Douglass


- ▶ Early Christian (spiritual) development and learned respect for God can dramatically shape and impact a child's character (their essence).
- ▶ **SURPRISE, SURPRISE, SURPRISE . . .**
 - Studies show that the earlier a child establishes a solid spiritual and moral foundation the more likely s/he is to retain it throughout their lives.

Train up a child in the way he should go [teaching him to seek God's wisdom and will for his abilities and talents], even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6 [AMP]

- ▶ In the event they stray, they have a moral compass to redirect their path!!

- ▶ The development of positive, stable character traits should flow directly from spiritual growth.
- ▶ Training a child to be a “good” will be relatively meaningless and not very successful if that child has no PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with God and no real appreciation for His principles, love, and justice.
- ▶ Children may say the right things and toe the line when they are under the watchful eye of Mom and Dad, but what happens when they move out or go off to school?

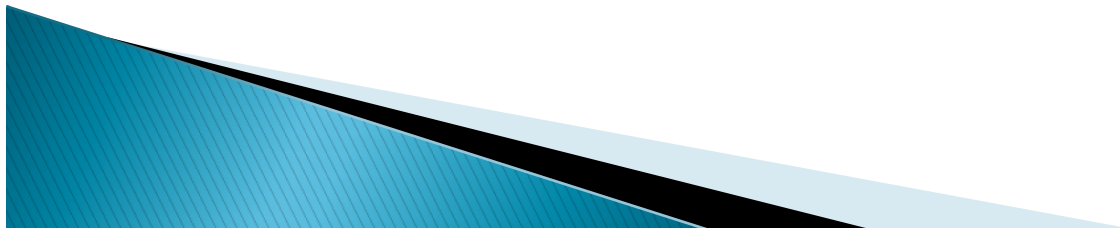


- ▶ They will find themselves having to make critical decisions.
 - ▶ Decisions that will impact them for the rest of their lives.
 - Do I establish a relationship with this person?
 - Do I attend this event or become a part of this organization?
 - How will I spend my resources and/or use my time?
 - How do I handle and behave on social media?
 - ▶ So, it is imperative that our children “remember God” and develop their own relationship with Him.
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This really highlights the importance of offerings like the annual Bible Bowl, Bible classes, and other activities that are intended to spiritually enrich our children.

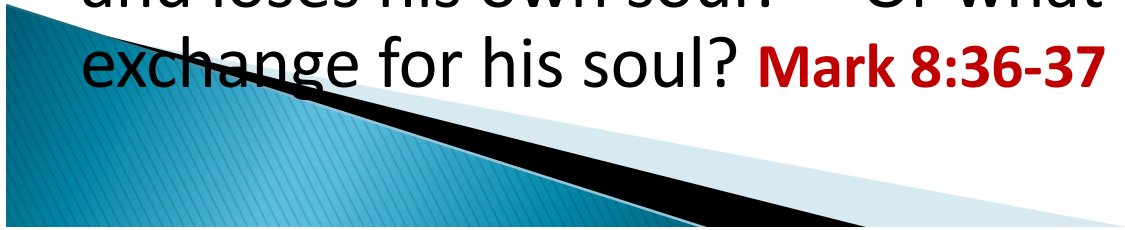
Simply put, we can **PAY NOW OR PAY LATER . . . BUT PAY WE WILL!**

Some may refer to it as reaping what we have sown.



- ▶ It is understood that the overwhelming majority of parents want to see their children succeed in their secular pursuits, and for good reason.
- ▶ I am no different – we still get excited and feel a sense of pride and satisfaction when we learn of our child’s athletic progress and academic achievement.
- ▶ However, we must keep the main thing the main thing.
- ▶ God is always preeminent – COMES FIRST!

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? ³⁷ Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? **Mark 8:36-37**



We should raise children who are well-adjusted and have balanced lives. For the Bible notes --

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven; Ecclesiastes 3:1

However, we cannot compromise when it comes to God's word and His place in our lives and the lives of our children.

The enemy will tell you – “You do not want to be strict because you will drive them away.” But lives and future generations hang in the balance.

Conversation with Minister Pitts.

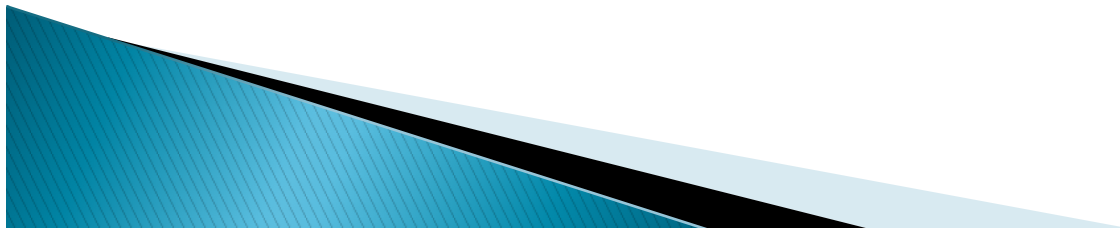
So, parents/guardians should --

1. Teach Values & Principles

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. **Ephesians 6:4**

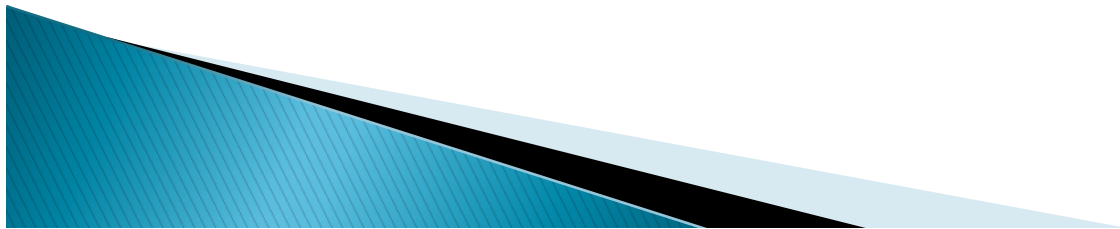
2. Clarify & Drive Expectations

The rod and reproof (godly instruction) give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. **Proverbs 29:15 [AMP]**



3. Model Acceptable Behavior

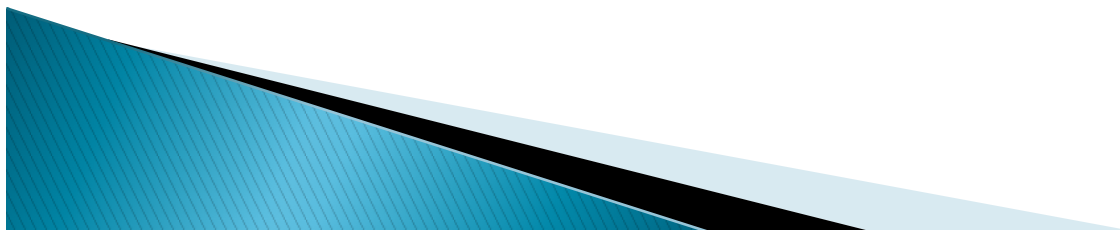
Paul in writing to Timothy . . . “[W]hen I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.” **II Timothy 1:5**



Remembering God and establishing respect for His principles prepare us for the issues we face in life.

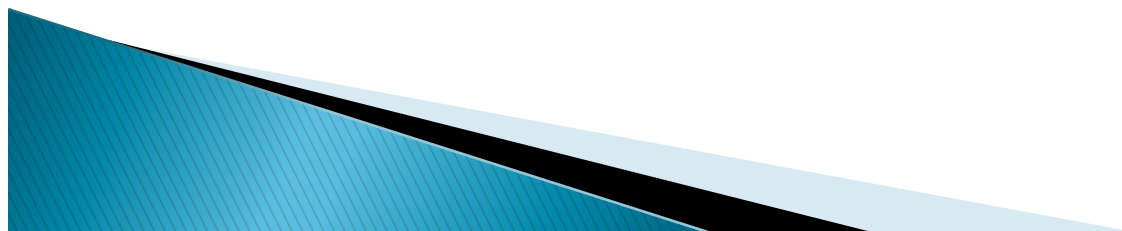
When we find ourselves at moral crossroads and intersections, we are armed to make the right decision or choose the right path.

Not establishing a relationship with God and being infused with His word, while trying to handle life's issues and make sound moral and ethical decisions is like going to war with an unloaded weapon -- nothing to really repel the enemy. **See Ephesians 6:17**



”**It is written**, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” . . . “**It is written again**, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’” . . . Away with you, Satan! **For it is written**, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ” **Matthew 4:4, 7, 10**

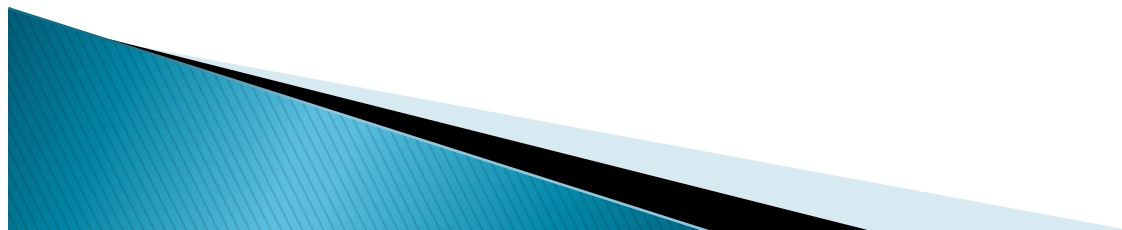
How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. . . ¹¹ **Your word I have hidden in my heart**, that I might not sin against You. **Psalms 119:9, 11**



Positive Traits Developed in the Lord that Serve Us Well throughout our Lives --

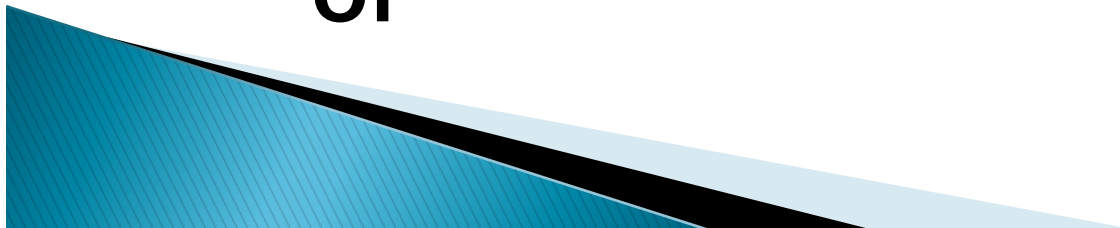
- ▶ Courage
 - ▶ Determination
 - ▶ Fidelity & Chastity
 - ▶ Honesty
 - ▶ Humility
 - ▶ Kindness & Friendliness
 - ▶ Love
 - ▶ Loyalty & Dependability
 - ▶ Orderliness & Cleanliness
 - ▶ Respect
 - ▶ Self-discipline & Moderation
- 

“Therefore **whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man** who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” **Matthew 7:24-27 [NKJV]**



Lord's Invitation Extended to All

- ▶ **Be added to the Lord's body**
Hear the gospel (Acts 15:7);
Believe the gospel (Acts 8:37, 15:7);
Repent of sins (Acts 2:38);
Confess Christ (Acts 8:37);
Be baptized for the remission of sin (Acts 2:38);
or



Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

- ▶ Be reconciled unto the Lord (1 John 1:8–9); or
- ▶ Desire prayer (James 5:16).

