

With the energy given to us in our youth, let us play our part in God’s work. Like Jeremiah, who wrote Lamentations, he expressed his sadness when he saw the sorry state of Jerusalem with its temple and city walls destroyed. Yet, he still proclaimed, *“It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness”* (Lam 3:22-23). Jeremiah was called to be a prophet to warn the nation of Judah against idolatry. But Judah would not take heed nor repent, resulting in God’s fulfilment of His promise of destruction. This is the context in which God used Jeremiah to write Lamentations 3:27: *“It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”*

The “yoke” refers to a burden, usually placed on animals used in agriculture. These animals would try to avoid having a yoke placed on them. Hence, farmers would begin training their animals when these animals were still young. It would take months or years to train them to be useful burden-bearers to plough the fields. Young animals were easier to tame, and would be available for a longer period of service. What about us? How should we bear the yoke in our youth? We must be under the guidance of the LORD!

1. It is good to be born again when young. Just like a wild beast which has to be tamed to be able to bear burdens, we require an attitude change in order to be able to bear the yoke in our youth. This attitude change is the regeneration and change of heart as a result of being born again. It is a privilege to be saved at an early age, for we will then be taught God’s wisdom.
2. It is good to serve from young. What a privilege it is to serve the Lord. We must not wait, knowing that God has a place of service for us, even in our youth. While memory and strength permit, while passion burns, while the heart is still not weighed down by responsibilities, we must serve the Lord! Instead of thinking about what the world has to offer, we must use our time for the Lord today, given the privilege of having more years to spend for Him. Rev Dr Jose Lagapa was saved when he was thirty years old, and he heeded God’s call to the full-time ministry at forty. Give ourselves unto the Lord in service, to encourage and build up others, and surely we will not regret the time doing so! Jeremiah the prophet was young when he was called, and had said, *“Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child”* (Jer 1:6). However, he heeded God’s call, and served as God commanded him to.
3. It is good to read and learn God’s Word from young. Jeremiah knew that God would judge, and he understood why. He considered God both faithful and compassionate, even though Judah was razed to the ground. He knew God from his youth, and was much acquainted with God’s will for His people. Thus, he was able to say, *“It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed”* (Lam 3:22), and he knew that soon God would restore His people. This restoration is seen in the return with Zerubbabel, and the subsequent returns from Babylon.

Knowing God’s Word from young, Jeremiah neither questioned God’s will nor murmured against His punishment of Judah. Because he knew God’s Word, and he knew God, he submitted to God and His will. Likewise, we too must read and study His Word to know who God is, and to have a personal relationship with Him, that we too may obey and follow His leading. In studying His Word, we shall gain heavenly wisdom.

In light of Christ’s soon return, may we youths make all effort to bear the yoke of service, so that we may be ready to meet Him in the clouds of glory!