

Today, we live in difficult and trying times, with many reasons to be cast down. However, Ecclesiastes 11:9 calls us to rejoice in the Lord during our youth. It uses three commands: to rejoice, to walk and to know.

1. Rejoice. While we are to rejoice, there is a prescribed way to rejoice in our youthful days. And it comes with a precaution: take note of the consequences of our rejoicing. That is: What will be the aftermath of our rejoicing? May we follow Solomon’s guidelines (i.e. follow God’s Word) so that our life will be a blessed one in the Lord. We are to be happy and thankful knowing that we have received favours and blessings from our God (eg: strength, intellect, agility, wisdom to do things) in our youth. We must not question God on how He is leading us. Rather, God commands us to “*rejoice*” in His will for our life! We can rejoice not because of any good in us, but because we have received great grace to believe in Christ.

We are also taught to “*let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,*” i.e. allow all that we have received from the Lord to feed our heart, to remind ourselves of all the things we can delight in! The “*heart*” here involves the intellect. It gives us the reason and the motivation for our rejoicing. We must not feed our heart with things that depress and dampen our souls. As Christians, we have reasons to rejoice. First and foremost, rejoice in our salvation in Christ. Then rejoice in the privilege to serve Him. We are to “*cheer*” and motivate ourselves by bringing to mind all that God has done for us.

2. Walk. While we are to rejoice, feeding our heart with joy, we are also to “*walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.*” The “*heart*” we have must be a heart renewed by Christ, and must be complemented by what we see with our “*eyes.*” We must live not by lies, but rather have our eyes wide open to the truth, judging wisely. We must ask the Lord to open our eyes, not just to see, but to have discernment and righteous judgment, according to God’s Word! We cannot rejoice with our eyes closed. With our spiritual eyes open, we rejoice in the truth. Live a life guided by a chaste heart and spiritual sight.

3. Know. There are also limitations in rejoicing. We cannot rejoice in sin and in the evil ways of the unbelieving world, for they contradict scriptures. We must “*know...that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*” This knowledge is a sincere, experiential understanding. We must meditate on this truth, that the aftermath of our rejoicing will ultimately be the judgment by God. Will our rejoicing be gold, silver and precious stones, or wood, hay and stubble? Know in our mind and heart that every single thing (“*all these things*”) will be brought under the scrutiny of our all-seeing, omniscient God. He will judge us for our deeds, be it good or evil, fruitful or barren! At the end of our lives, we are accountable to God, not man! And He sees and knows all things, including our hearts, our wills, our hidden actions, etc, which no one else knows! May this thought bring forth within our hearts great fear of the Lord, as well as a greater desire to obey Him, that we may rejoice in the Lord and in Him alone!

Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon. He was given the privilege to build God’s temple. God gave him great wisdom, riches and prosperity. With his great pleasure and wealth, he had great reason to rejoice. But, at the end, he called life “*vanity and vexation of spirit*” (Eccle 2:11). Led by his idolatrous wives, Solomon worshipped other gods. Though he repented, he had already wasted many years of his life. Rejoice, but make sure to rejoice in the Lord. For that alone is true joy! God is good and has a plan for us, so let us rejoice in Him always.