CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Intro.
A. Usually young people like a challenge.
   1. In any type of game or sport, young people become very competitive.
   2. Put before young people a challenge and you have an incentive to move them.
B. Sometimes the challenges which are put before young people are evil.
   1. A good example of this is the things sometimes required of college students in order to get into a fraternity.
      a. There have been some deaths resulting from young people trying to do some wild, ridiculous thing to get initiated into a fraternity.
C. In this lesson we suggest some worthwhile challenges for young people, or one could call these, "worthwhile goals" for young people.

II. THE CHALLENGE OF RESPECTING AUTHORITY.
A. There seems to be a tendency among young people today to disregard and disrespect authority.
   1. They desire to be free, with no restraints or restrictions, and no one telling them what to do.
   2. There seems to be a stage in the teen-years wherein most want to rebel against authority.
B. Young people must learn that all their lives they will have someone to whom they must give account: parents, school officials, employers, policemen, judges, income tax officials, etc., and God.
   1. Young people should seek to obey God in all things. Eccl. 12:1(NKJV) - 1 Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, “I have no pleasure in them”:
      a. Ephesians 6:1-3 (NKJV) - 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: 3 “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”
      b. Colossians 3:20 (NKJV) - 20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
   2. They need to learn to obey their parents for this is right and good. Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20
      a. Brother Ervin Lee once said that he still obeys his parents although they have long since been dead. He said he still knows what they would want him to do.
   3. They need to obey the laws of the land. Rom. 13:1(NKJV) - 1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.
      a. What may seem as harmless fun to some, may put them in jail.
      b. While it might be fashionable to some to rail at law enforcement officers and government officials, and to openly defy the laws of the land, young Christians will have no part in such, nor will they sympathize with those who do those things.
      c. Young people, don't follow a crowd to do evil. Ex. 23:2(NKJV) - 2 You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.
         (1) Even a pack of dogs will do things that one would not normally do.

III. THE CHALLENGE OF BECOMING RESPONSIBLE.
A. Learn to work hard. Hard work is good for you. Lam. 3:27(NKJV) - 27 It is good for a man to bear The yoke in his youth.
   1. Young ladies, learn to work. This will help you later to be a responsible wife and mother.
   2. Young men, learn to work. This will help you later to hold down a job and will probably make
you the best laborer on the job.

B. Those who work hard will make good in life. The lazy will have much trouble.

1. **Prov. 6:6-9** (NKJV) - 6 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, 7 Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, 8 Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest. 9 How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? -- An armed man overpowers the victim who is unprepared.

   a. **Prov. 10:4; 12:24; 13:4,11** -- Young people, get a job that you enjoy and work hard at it. This is the only way to survive in this world.

      (1) **Proverbs 10:4** (NKJV) - 4 He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

      (2) **Proverbs 12:24** (NKJV) - 24 The hand of the diligent will rule, But the lazy man will be put to forced labor.

      (3) **Proverbs 13:4** (NKJV) - 4 The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

      (4) **Proverbs 13:11** (NKJV) - 11 Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, But he who gathers by labor will increase.

   b. The writer of Proverbs had many hard words against the lazy -- **Prov. 10:5,26; 12:27; 15:19; 18:9; 20:4**

      (1) **Proverbs 10:5** (NKJV) - 5 He who gathers in summer is a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.

      (2) **Proverbs 10:26** (NKJV) - 26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy man to those who send him.

      (3) **Proverbs 12:27** (NKJV) - 27 The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, But diligence is man’s precious possession.

      (4) **Proverbs 15:19** (NKJV) - 19 The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright is a highway.

      (5) **Proverbs 18:9** (NKJV) - 9 He who is slothful in his work Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

      (6) **Proverbs 20:4** (NKJV) - 4 The lazy man will not plow because of winter; He will beg during harvest and have nothing.

2. Also, in the N.T. people are encouraged to work. **Rom. 12:11; 1 Thess. 4:11-12**

   a. **Romans 12:11** (NKJV) - 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

   b. **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12** (NKJV) - 11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

   c. Remember Paul's strong words to **those who will not work**. **2 Thess. 3:10**

      (1) **2 Thessalonians 3:10** (NKJV) - 10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

   d. Remember, too, that while physical labor is important, there is a labor that is much more important—the work of the Lord. **1 Cor. 15:58**

      (1) **1 Corinthians 15:58** (NKJV) - 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

      (2) Usually, those who are diligent workers at their jobs, in their homes, etc., are also the hard workers in the Lord's kingdom.

      (3) An older brother once said, "Making a living is like chopping weeds." He said, "we need to chop the weeds out of our own garden, but we don't need to chop all weeds everywhere. Likewise, we need to work to make a living, but we don't need to take advantage of every
money making opportunity. We need to spend some of our time in serving the Lord."

IV. **THE CHALLENGE OF GAINING WISDOM.**

A. The main endeavor of youth in the early years is secular education.

1. Young people should look at education as a challenging opportunity and do their best.
2. Some consider education as a useless drudgery and waste away their opportunities.
   a. This is bad because we are **rapidly moving into a society where good education and specialized training are necessary to survive.**
   b. To many young people, those early years are wasted years in which they don't learn anything.

B. In spite of this, we should not make education a goal in and of itself.

1. Many seek after higher education to the sacrifice of their faith and spiritual growth.
2. In much wisdom is much grief. *Eccl. 1:18* (NKJV) - 18 For in much wisdom is much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.
   a. A knowledge of many things brings worries of all kinds, e.g., watching the news on TV can be depressing.
3. In the end it amounts to much weariness of the flesh. *Eccl. 12:12* (NKJV) - 12 And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.
4. It will be a wasted and wretched life if in the end we are a genius, but die and go to torment.


1. **Proverbs 23:23** (NKJV) - 23 Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.
   a. **2 Peter 3:18** (NKJV) - 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.
   b. **Luke 21:34** (NKJV) - 34 “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.
2. **Ezra 7:10** (NKJV) - 10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel. --There are four things mentioned in this that Ezra sought to do:
   a. He **prepared his heart.** This is where it all begins; there must be a willing heart to know God and His will.  1 Pet. 2:2; 1 Pet. 1:13
      (1) 1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV) - 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,
      (2) 1 Peter 1:13 (NKJV) - 13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
   b. He **prepared his heart to seek** the law of God. *Eph. 5:17; Rom. 12:2*
      (1) **Ephesians 5:17** (NKJV) - 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
         (a) **Romans 12:2** (NKJV) - 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
      (2) In college, young people will be studying many books, but there is one book that is a thousand times more important than all.
         (a) College books will initiate you into the work place--industry, the business world, etc., but the Book of God will lead you to heaven.
   c. Ezra **prepared his heart to do** the law of God. We all should seek to know the Lord's will and to do it.
   d. Ezra **prepared his heart to teach** the will of God. Notice, too, that Ezra had the proper order
of things. Not like some who want to teach before they learn the law, and before they are willing to do it. 1 Tim. 1:7 (NKJV) - 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

D. It is the spiritual wisdom that will lead you to eternal life. Prov. 4:7; 2 Tim. 3:15; James 1:21

1. Proverbs 4:7 (NKJV) - 7 Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.
2. 2 Timothy 3:15 (NKJV) - 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
3. James 1:21 (NKJV) - 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Concl.
A. In this lesson, we have placed before young people the challenges of respecting authority, becoming responsible, and gaining wisdom--especially spiritual wisdom.
1. In the future lessons, we want to consider these challenges: gaining experience, rejecting worldliness, and growing spiritually.
B. Young people, we hope that you rise up to meet all these challenges.
1. By meeting them, you can have a happy life here in this world, and in the world to come, eternal life.
C. A great challenge before all young people is obeying the gospel and becoming a Christian.
2. Repent of all past sins. Acts 17:30
3. Confess before men that Jesus is Lord. Rom. 10:9
4. Be baptized. Mark 16:15-16