

WEEK 3 DAY 4 - WHO ARE YOUNG PEOPLE?

1 JOHN 2: 13-14

¹² I am writing to you, dear children,
because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,
because you have overcome the evil one.

¹⁴ I write to you, dear children,
because you know the Father.

I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,
because you are strong,
and the word of God lives in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.

EPHESIANS 6: 11-17

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Read 1 John 2: 13-14

What are the characteristics of young men?

- They overcame evil
- They are strong

- The Word of God lives in them

One of my children, while still in kindergarten, came home crying. One of the high school students had damaged his drawing. I was not going to let him get away with what had happened. I ran out of the house, across the street, then three more blocks, found the boy and talked to his parents. I wanted to make sure it didn't happen again.

When children are small, they need protection. But as they get older, they need to learn to resolve conflicts on their own. Mom and Dad will not be able to help if they are overprotective of the child. It's part of growing up to learn to stand up for yourself. "Mom, I can do it myself" - these are the words of growing independence.

The young men are ready to go out into the world. They have energy. They are not afraid to do the impossible and often learn quickly. The best athletes are usually in their teens or early 20s. They are at the peak of coordination and speed. Armies are usually composed of young men. Testing your strength, challenging work, and proving your courage go hand in hand with maturation. At the same time, lack of experience can lead them to unreasonable decisions. And sometimes they just want to be frivolous, eat everything in the refrigerator and sleep a little longer.

Likewise, spiritual "young men" and "girls" have already outgrown the stage of childhood in the Christian life and have already acquired the scars from battles with the enemy. He or she wants adventure and is ready to test their growing spiritual muscles. If this is you, then you need to do something in the kingdom, otherwise you will be bored. Father's protection works differently than when you were babies in Christ. It doesn't run to the playground every time you get scratched. It also allows you to take on a lot of responsibility in order to develop strength of character. But He provides "for all things that are necessary for life and godliness" (2 Peter 1: 3). He will give you spiritual weapons, but you must use them. His sword is within your arm's reach, but He will not do what you can do by relying on His presence. And like a good father, He knows when you need to "play" or "sleep."

Young men overcome evil using the Word of God. It starts with areas of temptation in their lives. Someone once said, "You cannot win battles on the outside until you win them on the inside." You can refer to this as a weakness in their life. Satan uses another name for this - strongholds.

John Wimber once said, "God wants to do in you what He wants to do through you. God will teach you to defeat evil, then He will use you to help others - but it all starts with you."

A stronghold is a fortified place where power controls. This is usually a small but very well guarded area. The word is used 18 times in the Bible, referring to the conditions of battle when armies were hiding in strongholds.

It is also used to describe the inner state in which Satan has the power to control part of a Christian's life. This can be a sin such as pornography, jealousy, or gossip. It can be an unhealed wound from the past - violence, neglect, harsh criticism - around which unforgiveness has formed and how we try to cope with our condition. It can be an addiction or participation in occult practice. Christians in the "adolescence" stage overcome strongholds in their lives through spiritual discipline and the help of others. Dealing with strongholds is the central theme of this course.

Read Ephesians 6: 11-17. What weapon does God give us to stand?

Discuss: Think of spiritual weapons. How can this weapon help you? Think about how each one is used in battle. What would happen if you didn't have a shield? Or a sword? Talk to your Mentor about this at your next meeting. Share with him or her the "strongholds" that you want to conquer in your life.