

**NO FREE  
PASS**

## NO FREE PASS

January 15, 2012

**Sermon in a sentence: Here is reality: everything we do has consequences, whether we are young or old.**

**Scriptures: 1 John 2:1-17; Num. 32:23; 2 Kings 2:23-24; 2 Cor. 6:11-18; 1 Tim. 4:7-12; 1 Sam. 18:5,14,15,30**

**1 John 2:1-17 (NASB) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. 3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. 7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. 8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. 9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. 12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the**

**beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.** I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. **I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.** 15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

**In June of 2011, there was a nasty riot in Vancouver after the 7<sup>th</sup> game of the Stanley Cup finals as people smashed windows, looted stores and burned police cars, inflicting heavy property damage on the downtown core. An accomplished 17-year-old athlete who was on one of Canada's national teams was caught on camera, seemingly trying to set a police car on fire and actively joining in the mayhem of the night. From all accounts, including his own, he was very well raised, living in a beautiful home with loving parents, with every advantage a young person could desire. Some described him as a 'model citizen', very respectful and a joy to be around.**

**In the aftermath of the riot, he was suspended from the national team, lost the athletic scholarship he had been offered to attend university, and had to endure the shame of being 'outed' on Facebook by friends who recognized him on YouTube.**

**He made a public apology, stating he had no explanation for his actions. He had just gotten caught up in the hysteria of the moment and acted totally out of character. However, the actions of the moment have now made a lasting, indelible impression upon his life.**

**There is no free pass! The things we do bear consequences and there is no youth exemption.**

**(Although this message is not *only* to the young, it is primarily to the young.)**

**We often take risks, even well into our later years. Acts of omission, acts of commission. Things we do on 'holidays' that we don't think others will see or know about. Things we do when nobody's looking. Little lies, little thefts, "harmless" little encounters.**

**But these "little" sins and indiscretions *do* have a way of coming to light when we least expect them to.**

**Numbers 32:23 (NASB) "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and **be sure your sin will find you out.**"**

**The Bible brings us a striking and disturbing example of our topic today from the life of Elisha, recorded in two short verses of 2 Kings chapter 2:**

**2 Kings 2:23-24 (NASB) Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!" 24 When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the**

name of the Lord. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of their number.

[Physically, Elisha had reason to fear this mob. These were not just mischievous eight or ten-year-old children as the KJV text may suggest. The noun used here: “*na ‘ar*”, is most often translated “boy”, “servant”, “young”, “young man” etc., referring to people at least in their teens: Joseph at 17 (Gen. 37:2); Benjamin – at least in his early 20s (Gen. 44:22); David volunteering to fight Goliath as a “boy” or “youth” (1 Sam. 17:33).]<sup>1</sup>

This very large gang of young men recognized Elisha as he was going to Bethel and began following him, ridiculing and taunting him on a couple of fronts:

- “Go up”: i.e. If you are the prophet, the new ‘Big Man’ in town, ascend into heaven as your predecessor Elijah has done.
- “Baldhead”: a derogatory term in their day to indicate a lack of power. Men with hair were considered strong and virile, bald men (as Elisha was) were considered weak and undesirable.

They were ridiculing God’s man, God’s power and God’s acts.

Some speculate about other political and religious aspects of this encounter between Elisha and the gang

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<sup>1</sup> John Kohlenberger III, James Swanson, *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 1093

that we are not fully aware of.<sup>2</sup> However the crucial point to observe is that God held these young men accountable for their words and actions and sent His judgment upon them. Their youthfulness provided no protection against God's judgment.

**God's desire is for young people to use their strength and power for the purposes of His kingdom, not to engage in immoral, illicit or illegal acts, thinking they can 'get away with it' just because they are young!**

Doing "favours" for somebody can land you in jail with a record for drug possession, drug trafficking, possession of firearms, etc. ("Just hold this for me for a couple of days." "Just drop this off to so and so for me.")

Providing "benefits" to your friends can leave you pregnant and/or diseased and totally destroy the plan you (and/or God) had for your life. Sex for fun comes with a price tag.

You have probably already seen how the desire to "fit in", dressing, walking and talking like the people you currently admire has led to some of your friends being seriously hurt, arrested or even killed as a result of mistaken identity. (As a killer on a public transit bus said in a text message to his leader: "I did the wrong guy".)

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<sup>2</sup> For example, see notes to 2 Kings 2:23-24, Zondervan NASB Study Bible

**Could you be next? “Of course not” you say, (which is the response of most young people I’ve ever spoken to).**

**The truth is, I don’t know who’s next and neither do you.**

**Decisions you make today do have long-term consequences!**

**Ecclesiastes 8:11 (NASB) Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.**

**Because of God’s grace and mercy, we may have been lulled into a false sense of security that we have “gotten away with murder”, so to speak.**

**Ecclesiastes 11:9 (NASB) Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that **God will bring you to judgment for all these things.****

**Thank God for His grace and mercy, but they do not give us a free pass from consequences.**

**The apostle John exhorts us:**

**1 John 2:15a (KJV) **Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world....****

**The apostle Paul pleads with the Corinthians:**

**2 Corinthians 6:11-18 (NASB) Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. 12 You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in**

your own affections. 13 Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also. 14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

What you do today *is* important. Bad things *can* happen to the young as well as to the old. God's judgment *can* fall on the young just as it does on the old. There is no 'youth exemption'!

As young people, the Lord actually expects us to be leaders and examples of good, not followers of evil.

1 Timothy 4:7-12 (NASB) ... discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. 10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. 11 Prescribe and teach these things. 12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

**Let us live with wisdom and understanding as David did (1 Sam. 18:5,14,15,30). He behaved wisely and prospered. He had great victories with God's help. He didn't fall into the folly of his youth.**

**We have no exemptions, no 'mulligans'. Everything we do counts. There is no free pass. Let us live with this reality in mind.**

***(Show YouTube clip:***

***<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjBYyLIVB5E>***