

## Psalm 90:10-12

(10) The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. (11) Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. (12) So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

*King James Version*

It has become increasingly apparent to many who watch our culture that the age of maturity for the present young adult generation has climbed to about 30 years. The age of maturity used to be somewhere between 18 and 21—between graduation from high school and the legal drinking age—but it has steadily risen past college graduation to the threshold of a person's fourth decade of life.

The country has seen far more young adults living with their parents well beyond their college years. These same people are postponing marriage, preferring "relationships" that are free of commitment and responsibility. Employers find them undependable and rootless, willing to trade a steady paycheck for a night on the town.

These young adults grew up under the heaviest media onslaught in history, which continues today. Constant commercials, television programs, and movies have preached the doctrine of fun and irresponsibility throughout their lives. Beer commercials encourage incessant good times in the forms of parties, sporting events, and chic tropical beaches. In the main, TV and movies portray college-aged people as fashionable extroverts, carefree daredevils, or clueless pleasure-junkies. The kids who are serious about their studies and careers are degraded as nerds and out of touch.

The icons of the young adult crowd set the pace. Highly visible athletes bank upon their reputations of enjoying the nightlife, sending the not-so-subtle message that the pinnacle of success is capped by alcohol, dancing, and loud music. Not to be outdone are male and female singers who stretch the bounds of decency in their efforts to promote the counter-culture with its immorality and rebellion. Cinema and television stars of this age group do little to raise standards.

As in times past, we could blame this on reckless teenage rebellion against the standards of their parents. However, this facile excuse does not work in this case. First, these are not teenagers, and second, the standards of their parents in the '60s and '70s were little better! Much of the blame rests with these twentysomethings' parents, who instilled in their children neither a sense of responsibility nor a desire for adult life. In fact, the whole society has been geared to perpetuating the cult of youth.

In ancient Israel, the age of accountability was 20, the year a young man could join the army ([Numbers 1:2-3](#)). Levites, who managed the critical duties of the Tabernacle and later the Temple, entered service at the age of 30 ([Numbers 4:2-3](#); 23; 30, 35, 39, 43), which was also the age at which [Jesus](#) began His ministry ([Luke 3:23](#)). It was expected that at sometime in a man's third decade, he would settle down, marry, begin a family, and function as a member of the community. By the time he was 30, he was considered mature enough to take on the most important tasks of Israelite society.

It could be argued that we live in a different age, but that argument proves vacuous in the end. Modernity has not changed mankind's life as much as we think. We are still born, grow up, marry, reproduce, rear children, age, and die as the ancients did. The big questions of life are still the same. We must still relate to parents, siblings, spouses, children, friends, employers, authorities, and the public as men always have. We still answer to the same [God](#).

As [Moses](#) wrote in Psalm 90, our lifespan is still only 70 or 80 years, and that passes by in a flash. If we fail to mature before 30, we have wasted more than a third of our life on things that matter little or detract from God's grand

scheme. Paul enjoins us, "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" ([Ephesians 5:15-16](#)). There is no time to waste.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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