

Do Hard Things
"Believing a Lie"
Wk. 1

Have you ever had an unusual pet? Most of us have dogs or cats, maybe a fish or a bird. Becky had a ferret growing up and my mother in law, who grew up in Ecuador, and had some crazy pets, a nocturnal monkey. You know the kind that's only up at night. Can you imagine the trouble and mischief that monkey got into? She also had a real talking Parrot, which would actually learn talk and repeat what you said. (example)

But what if you could have an elephant as a pet, some of us would be like that's a lot of pooh to clean up. Imagine though if you like in Kindergarten, you're in class and your comparing pets to with your friend. One friend is like my dog's huge, and another kid is like my dog can bark louder than yours, and another kid is like my dog's stronger than yours. And then you have the privilege of saying, 'why don't you guys bring over your dogs, so my elephant can sit on them?' Talk about not being able to top that, you'd have the win and be like king of playground when it comes to having the best pets. Elephants are pretty cool animals, some countries in Asia still use them to farm and even some countries celebrate elephants with festivals and competitions. They'll have a 100 men do a tug of war with an elephant and the elephant will win every time. Why, because they are huge and their strong, so what happens if you have an Elephant as a pet and they want to go see their family? You can see why their size might make it difficult for you or I to have them as a pet. However people who work with elephants will tell you that there is a simple solution for keeping Elephants from leaving. When they are young they shackle the elephant's leg up to a post so that no matter how hard it pulls the shackle just digs in deeper. Eventually the elephant gets older and understands that the harder it pulls the more pain it feels, so it stops. By the time the elephant is an adult all that holds it is a piece of twine and a stick, because as soon as it feels resistance, it stops pulling. When the elephant was younger the shackle would physically keep it from wandering, but as it got older it was no longer the twine that kept the elephant from wandering but rather the belief that the twine was a shackle and that it could physically hold the elephant back.

The reason I bring this up is that many times and from many directions we hear people and most likely adult's say that your youth years are meant for enjoying life and doing whatever you feel like. Take whatever risk you want and don't worry about the consequence. It's all over the media, seeing it in movies and television; hear it in music and many times from your friends, teachers and adults in your life. The overall thought being that at your age you can't handle responsibility and therefore the expectations have been lowered. It's kind of like the elephant thing, all of you are smart, you have strengths, and hold amazing potential. But the kicker is, is that too many times we believe in what we've been told or seen, like the elephant believes the rope can hold him back. We end up believing lies and we don't have too.

Throughout history there has been young people, your age who have accomplished great things (p31-32), but the term teenager wasn't even invented until 1941. The reason it was invented goes back to child labor laws which were installed in the early 1900's. Children were being forced to work in factories and missing out on education, etc. As a result these laws were put into place to protect children's safety and rights. But as a result a 3rd group of people was invented, "adolescence", which literally means as you grow up. The meaning of the word is not the issue, it's the modern understanding that comes with it. By allowing and encouraging you guys to act like children much longer than necessary it holds you back from what you could do, what God created you to do, and even what you might want to do.

Scripture is pretty clear on the role of teenagers, there isn't one. Scripture holds to only two groups of people, children and adults. Let's check out the following verses;

1 Cor. 13:11, *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.*

Notice Paul doesn't say that he gave up his childish ways to become a teenager. He says to become a man, therefore putting his childish ways behind him. When you get your license you are expected to drive like a licensed driver. Now if you've ever played any racing video game, what happens when you crash? You keep going, sometimes you get a whole new car other times their minor damage. But the reality is what, if you drove a Ferrari 180 miles an hour and hit a guard rail or jersey barrier you're care would be wrecked. Now children don't really understand that, and honestly they don't really care. Why, it's a game and it's fun. But when you're licensed you're expected not to drive like you're playing a video game. You're expected to drive as an adult not as a child. Are there things in your life where you're acting more like a child than an adult? Are there areas in your life where you throw a tantrum when you don't get your way, when you should be accepting responsibility or consequences for your actions?

I know that some of you are ok with being children, but there's two things about that. The first is that you're not living the way God created or intended for you to. You're coping out and missing out. The second thing is that you're choosing to believe a lie. Like the elephant you've accepted that the twine which is currently being used as a copout is actually a shackle. It's not worth living that way.

(Below is the following which we may or may not have time to cover on Sun. Morning. You may want to use it in the small group on Sun. PM)

It's interesting because do you know that a good chunk of our environment tells us what to do. Phrases like, "Obey your thirst" and "Just Do It" tell us *what* to do. So we buy it, and what culture tells us becomes our standard. Scripture tells us just the opposite though...

Rom. 12:2, *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

As culture and environment tell us what to do, scripture tells shows us how to combat it. Don't conform, don't do what everyone else is doing just because they are doing it. Be transformed by allowing God to renew your mind, allowing God to change the way you think. Notice that God changes the way you think, but you decide what to think. That's why in scripture tells us,

1 Cor. 14:20, *Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.*

Little kids need to be told what to think, commands like wash your hands, say thank you, etc. But in order to be an adult we need to understand how to think. We need to ask questions of culture, why should I obey my thirst, is it somehow it charge? Why should I "just do it"? What's at stake and what are the consequences if I do it or don't do it. Culture or environment cannot be the standard that we adhere to, because they can't accurately answer those questions and questions like those. There empty, what is't empty though is God's word. God's word does answer those questions, but those answers aren't for adults who want to act like children. They're for those who want do and be what they were created for, do you?

Most of the time we don't like to admit it, but many times children really don't mind being told what to do. Why, because the child has no responsibility when someone tells them what to do. The responsibility falls on the adults. The kicker is, just like those David, Clara, and George (Pg 31-32) you can handle that responsibility, because like the elephant your smart, strong, and have an amazing amount of potential the bigger question is do you want to use it and become part of what God's doing or are you going to believe the lie?

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is the difference between knowing "what" to think and "how" to think?
2. What are some areas in your life where you are currently acting like a child?
 - a. Do you want to keep them?
 - b. List out some of the pros' and con's
3. What are some areas in your life where you are currently acting like an adult?
 - a. What happens when you act like an adult?
 - b. What happens when you've failed?
4. What is it about responsibility that scares us? (Consequences)
 - a. Is it ok to fail (yes), think about some biblical characters that God used despite their failures
 - i. Examples
 1. Moses (Ex. 2:11-3:7)
 2. Paul (Acts 9:1-22)
 3. Peter (Mt. 26:31-33, 69-75, Acts 4:1-13)