

Grace to You :: esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time

Settle Down Don't lose your passion and energy; take charge of it

Scripture: Psalm 1:3–4; Luke 14:27–31; 2 Timothy 2:22

Code: B110823

The “restless” aspect of the Young, Restless, Reformed movement is something of a mixed blessing. Restlessness *per se* is of course no great virtue. But the energy, intensity, drive, and passion that underlie the restless tendencies of our young adult years are wonderful assets that hold great potential for good. They can be—and should be—harnessed and put to work for Christ's kingdom.

As a matter of fact, a lively enthusiasm for spiritual things is one of the best features of the YRR movement, and it is precisely what the church of Christ needs after a few generations of increasing indifference about sound biblical doctrine.

Apathy is malignant. It breeds lukewarmness, which is more despised by our Lord than either complete coldness or fiery fanaticism (Revelation 3:16).

So I'm grateful for the keen interest the YRR movement has shown in gospel-centered doctrine and preaching. I understand the value of the energy and enthusiasm young adults seem to bring to every conference and each conversation I have with them.

My encouragement to them is this: Don't squander your youthful vigor on mere restlessness. Apply yourself to humble service for the cause of Christ within the context of the church. Remember that “whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all” (Mark 10:43-44).

Meanwhile here are three crucial biblical virtues to cultivate. These will keep us from becoming unsettled and restless:

Steadfastness

One mark of spiritual health and stamina that gets far too little notice these days is *steadfastness*. Stability. Constancy. Firmness of heart.

Those are qualities Scripture repeatedly and emphatically commends. The righteous person “is like a tree planted,” while the wicked “are like chaff that the wind drives away” (Psalm 1:3-4).

Paul told the restless Corinthians, “Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58). In Colossians 1:23, he encourages believers to “continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.” Firmness of faith is a grossly undervalued quality (Colossians 2:5; 3:14).

To be sure, there is a variety of stubborn obstinacy that is carnal and sinful, but true steadfastness—unwavering commitment to the truth God has revealed in His Word—is high virtue.

Secular culture tells us that is not the case. In fact, one of the few remaining taboos our culture more or less universally insists on nowadays is the unwritten social ban against believing that the Bible really is the authoritative Word of God.

Sadly, even in the church, real steadfastness is a pretty rare commodity. I know a few Christian leaders who take pride in shifting their theological stance every few years or so, renouncing the very truths they formerly were best known for. One man who does this on a fairly regular basis published an article a few years ago, explaining that in his view the quintessential mark of true humility is a tendency to change one's mind. That is far from the biblical perspective, of course.

But it highlights one of my concerns about the current popularity of the YRR movement. Does this movement truly respect rock-solid convictions on the part of its adherents, or is it just another temporary fad? No less than [*Time magazine* cited "The New Calvinism" as one of ten ideas currently changing the world.](#) At first glance, that certainly seems a reason to celebrate. If, on the other hand, the current popularity of the YRR movement is merely a passing fad (like its immediate predecessor, the so-called Emerging Church movement), it could leave serious disaster in its wake. Such an outcome might have a negative impact on the health of the church for years.

Don't follow trends just because they are trendy. More specifically, don't affirm *any* doctrinal stance just because it happens to be in vogue. In fact, an appeal to what's stylish is a very good reason to regard a movement with the utmost suspicion. We're not to be blown about by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).

But hold fast to your confession of faith with rock-solid conviction and without wavering (Hebrews 10:23). If we truly believe as we should, when the truth of God's Word falls far enough out of fashion, we must be willing to die for our faith. That is precisely what Jesus meant in Matthew 10:38, when He said, "whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."

Seriousness

That reminds us what a serious business it is to serve Christ and be faithful to the gospel. Despite what you may have heard, Christ's call to follow Him is not an invitation to a party. Following in His steps is not a light-hearted jubilee—not on this side of heaven, anyway. He calls us to sober-minded maturity and serious self-sacrifice:

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? (Luke 14:27-31).

Scripture is full of commands to be sober-minded, circumspect, grown up in our thinking, mature in our understanding, and fully grounded in sound doctrine:

"Think with sober judgment" (Romans 12:3). "Do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature" (1 Corinthians 14:20). "We [should] no longer be children, tossed to

and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14). “Let us keep awake and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:6). “You ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child” (Hebrews 5:12-13). “Always be sober-minded” (2 Timothy 4:5). That is just a small sampling of texts that stress this truth.

Sobriety is counter-cultural nowadays. Even the most-watched “news” programs on television are those that parody everything. To follow that pattern in our thinking—much less our public ministry—is to disobey many clear commandments of Scripture.

Self-control

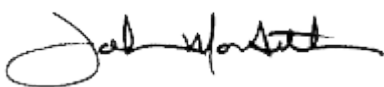
Finally, there is perhaps no more important or more valuable application for youthful energy than the pursuit of self-control. Scripture instructs us to flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22). That admonition includes an emphatic warning against every kind of sexual immorality, of course (1 Corinthians 6:18). But it is by no means limited to that. We are likewise commanded to flee the love of money (1 Timothy 6:10-11); flee idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:14); and flee every other kind of fleshly passion that wages war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11).

The reason Paul refers to such things as “youthful lusts” is that we never feel those passions more powerfully than when we are in that young-and-restless stage of life.

Postmodern Western society thinks it’s a good thing to indulge in youthful passions—particularly in one’s youth—and sadly that mentality has to a very large degree crept into evangelical culture. That’s the main reason so many church programs and activities aimed at students for decades now have emphasized fun and games at the expense of biblical teaching. Over the long term, that approach has been disastrous. It has stunted the growth and spiritual prosperity of the church.

One of the bright hopes of the YRR movement is that it presents us with a golden opportunity to see a true change of direction. Though the world expects and encourages people to indulge youthful lusts, we *know* that God demands something different.

May He empower *you* to live out such a difference.



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