

Thoughts for Young Men
by J.C. Ryle

Study Guide

One of the continual themes in the book of Proverbs is the "end of the matter" and the importance of obtaining wisdom early in life. God is glorified by living according to his word so that in the end we can look back on a life satisfied and full of fruitful serving.

Much of what Mr. Ryle will teach on in this excellent book is how we can live our lives with minimum consequences and regrets due to youthful sin. At the same time he shares how we can maximize our fruitfulness and fulfillment of God's purpose for our lives by seeking biblical wisdom at a young age.

In talking about those qualities that lead to a life of usefulness and fruitfulness, Peter says, "I will always remind you of these things..." (1 Pe. 1:12). Much of the questions in this study guide will cover the same issues and arrive at basically the same answers. The purpose is similar to Peter's in that repetition is one of the main ways of learning, remembering, and emphasizing what is important.

Try completing one chapter per week to finish by the date below.

I hope you find this helpful. Love, Dad

Starting Date _____

Date Completed _____ Signed _____

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Preface - Sinclair Ferguson

1. What did Mr. Ferguson wish he had come across when he was a teenager?
Why?

Thoughts for Young Men (Introduction) - J.C. Ryle

1. What scripture does Mr. Ryle use as the purpose for his writing this book? (Write out scripture and reference).

2. What does this scripture exhort young men to be?

3. Though growing old at the time of this writing, what time period does Mr. Ryle remember so well?

4. What are some of the things he remembers during this time?

5. What does Mr. Ryle say he would be very thankful for as a result of writing this book?

Chapter 1 - Reasons for Exhorting Young Men

1. What is the first reason Mr. Ryle gives for exhorting young men?
2. What does he say about these "few young men"? (pg. 3)
3. What is the second reason the author gives for exhorting young men?
4. When do most young people plan on thinking about preparing for death and judgment? (pg. 7)
5. Based on Proverbs 27:1, what mistake are young people making when they think this way? (pg. 7)
6. What is the third reason for exhorting young men?
7. How is a young man deceived when thinking about serving God at the end of his life? (pg. 10)
8. How is God mocked by such deceptive reasoning? (pg. 10)
9. What does Mr. Ryle mean by the force of habit? (pg. 12)

10. What is meant by "habit is the nurse of sin"? (pg. 13)

11. When is the acceptable time to prevent the hardening effect of habitual sin? (pg. 13)

12. What is the fourth reason for exhorting young men? (pg. 13)

13. What are some of the devil's tactics to snare young men and make them his servants? (pg. 14)

14. What will the devil say about serving God at the beginning and at the end of your life? (pg. 15)

15. What is it that makes Mr. Ryle afraid for young men? (pg. 15)

16. In the previous question, what does he say such a condition is like? (pg. 15)

16. What are three characteristics of the devil a young man should be

aware of? (pg. 16)

18. What exhortation does Mr. Ryle repeat at the end of numerous paragraphs that a young man must take to heart? (pgs. 15, 16)

19. What is the fifth exhortation given by the author?

20. Fill in the blanks - "_____ is the mother of all _____, and no sort of _____ appears to give a man so much _____ and _____ as the _____ of his _____." (pg. 17)

21. What are some of the sins of one's youth that the author mentions? (pg. 17)

22. What are three "bitter cups" that Mr. Ryle mentions that old men "drink" in the latter hours of their life? (pg. 17)

23. In Job 13:26; Job 20:11; and Psalm 25:7, what does Job and David mention as being so painful to them in their old age? (pg. 18, 19)

24. Fill in the blanks - "What _____ sows, _____ must reap?" (pg. 19)

25. Mr. Ryle's exhortation to spare us sorrow in our old age is mentioned in the following lines. Fill in the blanks - "Give not the _____"

_____ of your _____ to that which will not comfort you in your
_____. Sow to yourself in _____: break up your
_____, sow not among _____. (pg. 19)

26. Fill in the blanks - "_____ may go easily from your _____ or run
smoothly off your _____, but _____, you and _____ will
meet again before too long, however little you may like it." (pg. 19)

27. What is said to "keep a dear school"? (pg. 20)

28. Who is said to learn in no other kind of school? (pg 20)

29. What has affected you the most from this chapter and how can you
apply it to your life?

Chapter 2 - Dangers Facing Young Men

1. What does Mr. Ryle says is the first special danger facing young
men?

2. Fill in the blanks - "_____ makes us rest _____ with
ourselves, thinking we are _____ as we are. (pg. 22)

3. Fill in the blanks regarding pride - "It closes our ears against all
_____, _____ the _____ of Christ, and turns everyone to his
_____. (pg. 22)

4. What does Mr. Ryle says, "_____ never reigns anywhere, powerfully
as in the heart of a young man"? (pg. 22)

5. How does pride in a young man express itself toward older person and

his relatives? (pg. 22)

6. How does pride in a young man display itself in regards to manners?
(pg. 22)

7. How did Rehoboam express pride in his life? (pg. 23)

8. What were the consequences of Rehoboam's pride and folly? (1Kings
12)

9. How did the prodigal son express pride? (pg. 23) (I know that you
know what his consequences were :-)

10. Mr. Ryle says, " Two things are very rare sights in the world."
What are they?

11. List at least three things we should not be proud of? (pg. 23)

12. What two things does Mr. Ryle mention as being the pedestal of
pride? (pg. 24)

13. What excellent quality of spirit does the bible set before us that should characterize our lives? (pg. 24)
14. Write out two verses on how Jesus displayed humility. (pg. 24)
15. In 1 Kings 3:7,8 how was humility the beginning of Solomon's wisdom? (pg. 25)
16. What does Proverbs 26:12 about one who is wise in his own eyes? (pg. 25)
17. What exhortations does Mr. Ryle give to the young man in light of these scriptures? (pg. 25)
18. "_____ and _____ are two beautiful _____ in young people. Never be _____ of being a _____." (pg. 26)
19. At age 12, how did Jesus display the quality of being a learner when he was found "sitting in the midst of the teachers..." (pg. 26)
20. The wisest of men would tell you they are always what? (pg. 26)
21. The same wisest of men would tell you they are always humbled by what? (pg. 26)
22. What is the last warning that Mr. Ryle gives for the young man who wishes to be wise and happy? (pg. 26)

23. What is the second danger facing young men?

24. What aspects of youth cause a young man to be given to pleasure?
(pg. 26, 27)

25. Lust is a very strong desire for something. What does 1Peter 2:11
say we should do in regards to fleshly lusts and why? (pg. 28)

26. In regards to 1Peter 2:11 what does Mr. Ryle say such lusts will do
to our soul? (pg. 28)

27. Mr. Ryle speaks of what is preeminently "the young man's sin". What
commandment is he referring to and what does he say to beware of? (pg. 29,
30)

28. What is the third danger facing young men?

29. What will happen to young men who don't reflect on the end of their
present course and ways? (pg. 31)

30. What do young men know little of and as a result are heedless in how
they walk? (pg. 31)

31. Mr. Ryle says young men "...hate the trouble of sober, quiet thinking, and so you form wrong decisions and run their heads into sorrow." How does this apply to Esau's life? (pg. 31,32)

32. What do many young men say when they run into sin and why do they say it? (pg. 32, 33)

33. Fill in the blanks, "_____ always seems _____, _____, and _____" at the time of commission. (pg. 33)

34. In response to this statement the author says, "Oh get wisdom, get discretion!" He then points to Proverbs 4:26. What is the wisdom that this verse tells us? (pg. 33)

35. What is the fourth danger facing young men?

36. What does it mean to have contempt for religion? Give two examples of how contempt is expressed in a young man? (pg. 34, 35)

37. What does the author state he is "...never surprised to hear..." (pg. 35)

38. What is the fifth danger facing young men?

39. What does Proverbs 29:25 say about this danger? (pg. 37)

40. How is the fear of other's opinions characterized in a young man's

life? (pg. 37)

41. What thought and fear "... prevents many a good habit from being taken up"? (pg. 38)

42. What caused Saul, Zedekiah, Herod, and Pilate to do what was evil in God's sight? (pg. 38)

43. Fill in the blanks - "Young man, I want you to be _____ from this _____. I want you to care _____ for _____, when the _____ of _____ is _____. Believe me, it is a great thing to be able to say "_____!"

44. Mr. Ryle tells us to "consider how unreasonable the fear of man is." Share one point why it is unreasonable. (pg. 39)

45. The author also states, "...how thankless is this fear!" What does he mean by this? (pg. 39)

46. Who will the world respect most? (pg. 39)

47. In Matthew 10:28, who are we to fear and why? (pg. 40)

48. In the same verse who are we not to fear and why? (pg. 40)

49. Fill in the blanks, - "Young man, be of _____. _____ What the _____; you will _____ be with the _____ always." (pg. 40)

50. Fill in the blanks, - Can man save your soul? _____. Will man be your judge in the great and dreadful day of account? _____. Can man give you a good conscience in life, a good hope in death, a good answer in the morning of resurrection? ___! ___! ___! Man can do _____ of the _____. (pg. 40)

51. In light of the above statement, what does Isaiah 51:7,8 tell us? (pg. 40)

52. What saying of the good Colonel Gardiner does Mr. Ryle exhort young men to call to mind? (pg. 40)

53. What has affected you the most from this chapter and how can you apply it to your life?

Chapter 3 - General Counsels to Young Men

1. What is Mr. Ryle's first general counsel to young men?

2. What are three things the bible says about sin (give bible references as well)? (pg. 41)

3. What is one "awful change sin has worked on all our natures"? (pg. 42)

4. Describe in detail the "cost to make atonement for sin, and to provide a pardon and forgiveness for sinners". (pg. 43)

5. Give one example of what sin has already done upon the earth. (pg. 43)

6. Give three characteristics of the "misery and sorrow that sin has caused". (pg. 44)

7. What is the second general counsel given? (pg. 45)

8. What does the author say we must know otherwise all his "warnings and advice will be useless"? (pg. 45)

9. Mr. Ryle says he does not want to be misunderstood about something. What is that? Also, what does he want us to understand? (pg. 45)

10. When are we "armed for the battle of life"? (pg. 46)

11. What is the third general counsel?

12. What does the author say about friends and the concern we should have for our souls? (pg. 48)

21. What is the fifth general counsel?

22. What challenge does the author lay before the young man? (pg. 54)

23. Mr. Ryle talks about three ways to read the bible. What are they?
(pg. 54, 55)

24. Regarding what we are to believe when reading the bible, Mr. Ryle say, "Read it reverently, as the word of God, not of man, believing implicitly that what it _____ is _____, and what it _____ is _____." (pg. 54)

25. Describe the difference between Jehoiakim and Josiah's response when they read the word of God. (pg. 55)

26. How will regular reading of scripture benefit the young man? (pg. 55)

27. What does Psalm 119:11 say about why we should hide God's word in our heart? (pg. 55)

28. Further benefits of storing up God's word in our hearts is mentioned in Proverbs 6:22, - "When you roam, they will _____ you; when you sleep, they will _____ you; and when you awake, they will _____ with you." (pg. 56)

29. Mr. Ryle speaks of the honor we are to give the bible by saying, "Young man, give the bible the honor due it _____ you live. Whatever you read, read that _____." (pg. 56)

30. The author tells us to beware of bad books because of the unsuspecting harm they can have on our souls. Mr. Ryle says that we should take heed to what we read. He goes on to say, "Value all books in proportion as they are _____ to _____. Those that are nearest to it are the _____, and those that are farthest from it, and most contrary to it, the _____." (pg. 56)

31. What is the sixth general counsel?

32. "Never be _____ with the friendship of anyone who will not be _____ to your _____." (pg. 57)

33. What does Mr. Ryle mean by "...creatures of imitation..."? (pg. 58)

34. How are our likes and dislikes affected by people we are drawn to? (pg. 58)

35. How do friends play as a connection to the wife you will one day choose? (pg.59)

36. What kind of friends does Mr. Ryle recommend we choose? (pg. 60)

37. "He who _____ with _____ men will be _____; but the companion of _____ will be _____." Pr. 13:20 (pg. 60)

Chapter 4 - Special Rules for Young Men

1. What is the first special rule?

2. "Nothing darkens the eyes of the mind so much and deadens the conscience so surely, as an _____." (pg. 61)

3. How does Mr. Ryle compare a little allowed sin to the danger of a small leak and a small spark? (pg. 61)

4. Do wicked men ever mean to be so wicked at their first beginning? What characterizes their first beginnings? (pg. 62)

5. When should we resist sin? (pg. 62)

6. In matters of truth and honesty, Mr. Ryle says, "Make _____ of the most seemingly _____." (pg. 63)

7. What does Luke 16:10 say will happen if we are faithful in what is least? (pg. 63)

8. What does Mr. Ryle say are the two ways of going to hell? What is the most common? (pg. 64)

9. In talking about the progress of sin in a man, Jeremy Taylor says, "First, it _____ him, then it becomes _____, then _____, then _____, then _____, then _____, then _____! then the man is _____, then resolves _____ to _____, and finally he is _____." (pg. 64)

10. What is the second special rule?

11. "He who would be safe from the acts of evil, must widely _____ the _____ of it" (pg. 65)

12. Why should idleness be avoided?

13. What are two ways in which worldly amusements can injure our souls? (pg. 65)

14. What does Mr. Ryle mean when he says, "He must look upon his heart as a keg of gunpowder..."? (pg. 66)

15. What is the third special rule?

16. "_____ things are naked and _____ to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account." Heb.4:13 (pg. 69)

17. What kept Joseph from sinning when approached by Potiphor's wife? (pg. 69)

18. What Psalm does Mr. Ryle recommend memorizing? (pg. 70)

19. In regards to living in the sight of God, Mr. Ryle says, "_____ nothing you would not like God to _____. _____ nothing you would not like God to _____. _____ nothing you would not like God to _____. _____ to no place you would not like God to _____ you. _____ no book you would not like God to say, "_____ it to Me". Never spend your time in such a way that you would not like to have God to say, "What are you _____?" (pg. 70)

20. What is the fourth special rule?

21. "Be _____ in going to the house of _____, whenever it is open for _____ and _____, and it is in your _____ to _____." (pg. 70)

22. What is one argument Satan will use to keep you from going to church? Why is this argument bad? (pg. 72)

23. Why should a young man regularly hear the preaching of the gospel? (pg. 72)

24. How can the preaching of the gospel help someone even if they don't become a Christian? (pg. 73)

25. What does Mr. Ryle say a young man should be jealous about? (pg. 74)

26. "Once you give up caring for the _____, in the end you will give up caring for your _____. The steps, which lead to this conclusion, are easy and regular. Begin with not honoring God's _____, and you will soon not honor God's _____; cease to honor God's house, and you will cease to honor God's _____; cease to honor God's book and ultimately you will give God _____ _____. Let a man lay the foundation of having _____, and I am never surprised if he finishes with the top-stone of _____." (pg. 74)

27. "Young man, you may be thrown among companions who forget the honor of the Lord's day, but _____, by God's _____, that you will always remember to keep it holy. Honor it by _____ where the gospel is _____. Settle down under a faithful ministry, and once settled, let your place in church never be _____." (pg. 75)

28. What is the fifth special rule?

29. Mr. Ryle says that prayer is the life breath of what? (pg. 76)

30. "The feeling that we must cry to God for mercy and grace is a mark of _____; and the habit of spreading before him our soul's needs is an evidence that we have the spirit of adoption. And _____ is the appointed way to obtain the relief of our spiritual necessities. It opens the treasury, and sets the fountain flowing. If we have _____, it is because we

_____ (James 4:3)." (pg. 76)

31. What, says Mr. Ryle, is the way to procure the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts? (pg. 76)

32. "And here it is, I say it with sorrow, here it is that men fall short so miserably. _____ indeed are to be found who _____; many who go down on their knees, and say a form perhaps, but _____ who _____; _____ who _____ unto God; _____ who _____ upon the Lord, _____ who _____ as if they wanted to find; _____ who _____ as if they _____ and _____, _____ who _____, _____ who _____ with God _____ for an answer, _____ who give him no _____, _____ who _____ in prayer, _____ who _____ unto prayer, _____ who pray _____ without _____, and _____ not. Yes: _____ pray!" (pg. 76)

33. Mr. Ryle says we must pray in order to resist what three things? (pg. 77)

34. "Young man, be sure no time is so well spent as that which a man spends on his _____. Make _____ for this, whatever your employment may be." (pg. 78)

35. When did David pray (Ps. 55:17)? (pg. 78)

36. How often did Daniel pray (Dan. 6:10) (pg. 78)

37. Mr. Ryle said that he would gladly have all the words of this book to be forgotten if only what...? (pg. 79)

38. What affected you the most from this chapter and how can you apply it to your life?

Chapter 5 - Concluding Remarks to Young Men

1. Mr. Ryle now appeals to our conscience in regards to the many things he has said in this book by saying, "Are they not true?" What will happen to us if we resist the voice of our conscience? (pg. 82)

2. What happen to the Athenians who said to Paul, "We will hear you again on this matter..." (Acts 17:32) (pg. 82)

3. What affect will you have on your parents, relatives, and friends if you take Mr. Ryle's counsel? (pg. 82)

4. How did sons like Esau, Hophni, Phineas, and Absalom affect their parents? (pg. 82)

5. What does Proverbs 10:1 say about a wise son? (pg. 82)

6. "Think of the instrument of _____ you may be to the _____" (pg. 82)

7. When did the most notable of saints in scripture begin to seek God? (pg. 82)

8. God seems to delight in putting special honor upon what kind of

servants? (pg. 83)

9. "Young man, in this present day, _____ are _____ for _____."
(pg. 83)

10. A wide field of usefulness is open before you if you are only what?
(pg. 83)

11. "The harvest is _____, but the laborers are _____. Be _____
for good _____. Come, come to the help of the Lord's cause against the
mighty forces of _____ mounting everyday." (pg. 83)

12. "This is, in some sort, to be like God, not only good, but _____
_____ " (Ps. 119:68). (pg. 84)

13. This is the way to follow the step of your Lord and Savior: "He went
about _____. This is to live as David did; 'he _____ his own
generation by the will of God'" (Acts 13:36). (pg. 84)

14. And who can doubt that this is the path which is most _____ to a
never-dying soul? How did people feel about Josiah when he died? How did
they feel about Jehoram when he died?

15. Mr. Ryle says the young man should, "Think, finally, of the
happiness that will come to your own soul if you serve God..." Where or
what places will we experience this happiness? (pg. 85)

16. "There is a genuine satisfaction in knowing that however great your
unworthiness, you are complete in Christ, that you have an _____
_____, that you have chosen that _____ part which shall not be taken

from you"(Luke 10:42). (pg. 85)

17. What happens to the path of the worldly man every year that he lives? (pg. 85)

18. What happens to the path of the Christian every year that he lives? (pg. 85)

19. The sun of the Christian "is just rising when the sun of the worldly is..." doing what? (pg. 85)

20. Mr. Ryle says that for the Christian, "his best things are all beginning to blossom and bloom forever, when those of the worldly are..." doing what? (pg. 85)

21. "Young man, these things are _____". (pg. 86)

22. What affected you the most from this last chapter and how can you apply it to your life?

23. Finally, after reading this book, describe in a few sentences how you feel this book has helped you the most and will help you in the future.