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## **The Adventures of Mike and Mandy**

### **Part 1 – Why Waiting is not Good for You**

Pastor Ted Cunningham

We welcome all of you who may be visiting from even out of town. We're grateful you're here. We're starting a brand-new series today called *The Adventures of Mike and Mandy*. We've never done it before at our church. We're speaking specifically to young adults, to parents of young adults, or parents who will one day have young adults.

We're going to introduce this today with *Why Waiting is not Good for You*. As we talk to 20 somethings primarily throughout this series or those who are just about to turn twenty or those who may be coming out of their 20s and still wanting to remain in their 20s... We're going to talk today about why waiting is not good for you.

I turned on Christian television this morning and it was a very charismatic preacher up there. He said this... which is the opposite of what I want to be sharing with you this morning. He said, "How you end is more important than how you start." I heard that and I thought, *I don't know if I want my 11 year old listening to that*. I thought, *I don't know if I want my young adult listening to how the start doesn't matter*. I know you can take that idea a lot of different ways, but I want my children to grow up understanding how you start is very important.

You don't need to wait until your 40 and wait until you're 50. My wife had a very vulnerable moment with me this morning. She shared very personally. She said, "Ted, when I was 16, 17, 18, I remember having the thought that I can wait for all of that." She wasn't a Christian at 16 years old. She became a Christian when she turned 18. She said, "I can remember thinking to myself that I'll get serious about God later. I'll get serious about this other area of my life later. I can get serious about work later. I can get serious about relationships later. I can get serious about my faith later."

Today we want to talk to you about why waiting for that is not good for you and why starting is important. You have to be thinking about starting and not just some time down the road.

We're going to start in Ecclesiastes 1 as we kind of talk about the generations a little bit. ***4 Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.*** Solomon uses the idea of generations as he uses word pictures from nature as well to say, ***7 All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full.*** ***5 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.*** He begins to paint this picture of the earth as a grind. You and I were born into it. You were born into a generation. You were born upon this earth. The theme all throughout all of Ecclesiastes is "under the sun." You were born; you'll be here for a little while and when you are gone, the earth will continue and new generations will pop up.

So, here's what we want to start this series clearly understanding as I look around my 9:00 service here and see a lot of gray hair. You're thinking, *Why am I at a church that's going to talk to young adults for six weeks?* Please understand if you're new to our church, we believe **every generation matters**. You go to some churches and you may hear this message too: It's all about the next generation. We don't believe it's all just about the next generation; we believe it's about every generation. And in a church like ours, we want every generation to play a part.

Let's look at these generations that come and these generations that go:

**Builders** – Born before 1945. Let me see all my Builders here and over at the chapel. Raise your hand if you were born before 1945. They survived the Great Depression. They went through World War II. This generation is called The Greatest Generation by some. But, this generation raised this next generation.

**Boomers** – Born 1945–1960 – Let me see the hands of all the Boomers. I was thinking about it this morning. How many Boomers remember when drive-thrus first started coming out and your Builder parents took you to the drive-thru. They would go through the drive-thru and they never asked you what you wanted. Now, I sit at a drive-thru for 10 minutes as we debate over these mega menus. The Builders didn't care. The Builders lived with this mindset as they raised their Boomer children: I didn't have it; you don't need it. Now watch how this works. Builders raised their kids saying, "I didn't have it; you don't need it." The Boomers came along and said, "We're going to change all that." My parents are Boomers and they raised me.

**Generation X** – Born 1961 - 1980 – I would be called Generation X. We were the first ones to be raised... Our parents heard, "I didn't have it; you don't need it." Our parents raised us with, "I didn't have it; now I have the money to give it to you." And they started to give us what their parents never gave them. And communication started changing. We were introduced to computers. I remember my mom took me to Office Depot to buy my first laptop. It was just one color and the screen was very small and it cost like \$1,400.00. It was expensive for this little thing that was basically a fancy typewriter.

**Generation Y** – Born 1981–1995 – Let me see Generation Y. We are targeting you in this series. We're coming after you. This is who we are really thinking about. As we go through this series, we want to be speaking to all the generations about how we can best minister to Generation Y and I also want this generation to be thinking about how you can best honor the older generations. How you can come after these generation and learn from each of these, rather than having contempt for the older generations.

**Generation Z** – Born after 1995 – I'm raising Generation Z. Do we have any generation Z in here? We're coming after you as well.

Let's just paint a quick portrait of the Mike and Mandy we want to cover through this entire series. Here's Mike and Mandy in that Generation Y, leading into Generation Z. **They are in their 20s. They grew up in a religious home or community.** This is very important. We know where we are in the country. Even if you are brand new to church, but were raised in Branson, you got a little bit of religion shared with you. If you've been to a Branson show, if you've been to a fireworks program... We have Amazing Grace at everything you go to in Branson: shows, fireworks, patriotic... So you do have some sort of background being raised in the Bible Belt. We kind of understand that.

**Mike and Mandy were raised in a kid centered home.** Your parents made your academic pursuits and your athletics and your activities a priority in the home. The home was centered around that. The schedule was centered around that. We went everywhere you needed to go and did everything you needed to do.

**Value Education.** Mike and Mandy understand that it's important to get an education. Maybe I don't need to get it all right now and this is different for a lot of us. A lot of us thought college meant you had to pack up a car and drive somewhere. Mike and Mandy are redefining the college experience. They're saying, I don't even have to go anywhere. I can stay home and do it all online. And you're seeing all the online colleges promoting their programs on Fox News. I'm sorry to bring up Fox News. It's been a rough week for my Fox News friends. You need to lighten up though.

**They won't lock into a life-long career.** This is where my Builder and Boomer friends are really growing weary with Mike and Mandy. They want Mike and Mandy to go get a job like many of you got and you worked 30 to 40 years for it. The problem is Mike and Mandy are sitting at your table, grandma and grandpa, listening to your concerns over whether or not your pension will live with you the rest of your days. They're just saying the carrot of retirement, the carrot of pension that was dangled in front of you is not available for them. There are not companies that are coming in and saying, "Give us your life for 30 years and then you can take 30 or 40 years off and go do your thing." Mike and Mandy... and this drives Builders and Boomers, especially Boomers, nuts. They want to keep their options open. They will switch from job to job if it means they are going to do better or their going to go into a new direction.

**They want to be a part of something bigger than themselves.** They want to go beyond with just what the norm or the status quo was for past generations.

**They are uncomfortable approaching 30 years old unmarried.** We know with a lot of 20 somethings... With the majority of them we talk to it's, "Marriage might not be my thing right now in my early 20s, but I kind of want to be married and settled down by the time I get 30."

As we talk to the generations throughout this series, here's what we want to avoid at all costs. It's the eye roll. I'm excited about the content this morning, but Amy has warned me to watch my tone because this can often be my tone. I'll be honest with you. We've hired a lot of Generation Y around our church over the years and it's been quite exhausting for me. I walk into a staff meeting ready to go because we've got stuff to do. I even get worn out sometimes when I see how they walk into the room. I want to try to hurry them up, "We've got stuff to do. We gotta get things going."

I remember hiring some early on that wanted to go to a wedding every weekend. I'd be like, "Oh, okay, let me help you here. We're a church. We meet on the weekends. We hired you to do a job that takes place on the weekend. You can't go every other weekend."

I was teaching this to my kids the other day. We told Corynn coming in today. I went to one friend's wedding after college. I flew all the way to San Diego because it was a dear friend. It was so funny. That was like 20 years ago. I said goodbye to him at his wedding and I haven't talked to him since. We

were close. I hope you're doing well, Craig. I'm just thinking the young people today are like, "We have to go and we have to do."

I have to guard myself every time I hear a story or I hear Mike and Mandy taking on life in a different way than I take it on. I have to guard myself from being like, "You've got to be kidding me!" Builders and Boomers, I just want to encourage you to guard your heart. Generation X, guard your heart during this series. We don't want the tone of this series to be "When I was your age..." Can I say that again? We don't want the tone of this series to be "When I was your age..."

Jim Sedlacek, one of our elders who is approaching 80, when he would sit down and do staff reviews with our millennials on staff, he would come out and I'd go, "Jim, how did that go?" "They are on a completely different planet than I am. Everything that came out of their mouth, I couldn't understand. I have no idea how they view the world."

That's why we are doing this series. If we are going to be a multi-generational church and we're going to have all these different generations represented here, we've got to be a church that loves and cares for one another without rolling our eyes.

I do want to say this. We are an equal opportunity offending church. I tell a lot of old people jokes. Right, Pat Kershaw? I pick on you a lot, so is it okay for me to pick on millennials just a little bit? Yes, I should. That's fair, that's honest, that's the no-spin zone. Sorry to bring that up.

Here's why we're talking today about waiting. If you have your Bibles, turn to 1 Timothy 4. We are going to actually look at a young man today between the ages of 35 and 40, but his story fits very well with what we are talking about today with not wanting to delay, not wanting to wait.

Here's how it kind of looks today in our culture. We have three seasons of life. We have **Childhood --- Adolescence – Adulthood**. I have two that are coming out of childhood and if we look at the textbooks, they would be entering into adolescence. Adolescence is a term that we created in 1904. It's pretty new; it's about 100 years old. For most of history, traditionally speaking and throughout the scripture, there were really only two seasons of life: childhood and adulthood. But, in 1904, we created this term *adolescence*. I used to argue against adolescence and encourage parents to send their kids from childhood into adulthood, and then the professional counselors started coming at my throat. So, I don't argue too much against adolescence anymore.

Here's what I do argue against: I argue against **prolonged adolescence**. You know this is a passion of mine around here, it's a passion of our church that the gap between childhood and adulthood is growing larger and larger. One UCLA professor wants to add a new gap between adolescence and adulthood called youthhood. If you've been here for any period of time, you know we have a better way of saying that around here. We don't call it youthhood, we say, "Grow up!" You should not be living in your parents' basement with Star Wars bedsheets when you are 30 years old! We have failed you if that's still happening! If you're still playing video games, working part-time at 30 years old, that is a problem! We clearly define that as a problem around here. You need to be working and producing and providing for other people, other than yourself. We do not want this gap to grow larger.

If you meet the prolonged adolescent in marriage counseling... When something hits their marriage and tough times come, they're like, "I don't know what to do. I don't even know how to handle this." That's because Mom and Dad never sent you out of the home as an adult. They sent you out of the home into prolonged adolescence and they said, "Go live by yourself and for yourself for another 10 or 15 years." Mom and Dad told you to go learn how to be independent. Let me tell you that I believe and I submit to you that independence is a socially acceptable term for selfishness. You really have to guard your heart. I want to encourage you as we go through this.

Today we are going to look at what you don't need to be waiting on. We're going to talk about your example, your focus, and your progress. In 1 Timothy 4, we have this older church leader talking to a younger church leader. He's going to talk to him about his example. He's going to talk to him about his focus and about his progress. He's going to be very clear with him about what he needs to be doing. I just want to encourage every Mike and Mandy in the place today to be thinking about this in their own life. Whatever your job is, whatever school you're in, whatever you're headed into, that you would leave here today saying, "I'm not going to wait on my example, my focus, and my progress; I'm going to get after it, starting today because how I start does matter."

### Your Example

I love this in 1 Timothy 4. **12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young...** Or because you are youthful. The term young in the scripture was used for pretty much anyone up to age 40. We believe Timothy was between the ages 35 and 40. This is Paul, an older believer, older church leader, older generation, talking to a younger generation, a younger church leader. He says be very careful. How do you keep someone from looking down on you because you're young? **The antidote to that is your life.** Let your life display in such a way that people can't look down on you because you're young. They'll say things like "You're wise beyond your years." **...but set an example for the believers...** We would probably also use the term reputation. Think clearly about your reputation. What are you known for? **...in speech...** This is in your conversation, in your daily talk. **...in conduct...** In your behavior. The way you live out what you believe. **...in love...** This is speaking of a love for the Lord, a love for God. **...in faith...** This moves from love to trust. Do you have a trust in the Lord?

**...and in purity.** Can I just say something here about purity because I've spent three Wednesday nights in a row with John and Cathy Jensen. They've been teaching our Dateable series at Woodland Hills. The next time Dateable is offered at this church, I cannot encourage you enough to go and be a part of it because we have learned a lot, we've had a lot of great conversations. It's hard hitting and it is clear on it. John and Cathy have raised two girls and they know what's going on. We talked about modesty on Wednesday night. For a long time, I've been thinking about opening a department store for teenage girls with clothing their dads approve of. I'm going to call this store... I think this is a great name for a store. It's called Go Upstairs and Change. "That is you're nightgown, not what you're wearing out in public."

It's interesting and it's sad for me, but parents have kind of given up the battle of modesty. It's sad for me. I haven't given up. I'm going to be the parent that it just ain't going to happen. I love what Cathy said. She said, "There are several things we cover. We cover our boobs, our butts, and our bellies." I shared that with my daughter walking through the Charlotte Airport. Probably not the best place to

share it with her, but you have to download whenever you get a chance. Parents today have kind of given up. They feel like their kids are going to do whatever they want. No, be the dang parent! Tell your kids "You're not going out in your panty hose. Get back up there and put something on over them. I see everything." You don't want to tell her what to do? She's 12! You are still in charge! That's all I have to say on that one.

But do you know a great question that came out of that? And we know what purity is. Let just be really clear here. Don't have sex, get married, enjoy the best sex of your life. That's as clear of a scriptural teaching as we've given thus far. Don't have sex, get married, have sex, the best sex of your life. One more time for 9:00. Don't have sex, get married, husband and wife, and then keep the marriage bed pure and have the best sex of your life.

Young people are saying, "We're going to do just the opposite." I'll be honest, Mike and Mandy, let's talk for just a second because you're saying, "I tell you what. We won't get married and we'll just have sex." You're doing the opposite. What do parents and pastors do when the biblical message is flipped? We get louder and we repeat like I just did right there. You have to think about this. You have to think about your conversation, your speech, your behavior, your love for the Lord, your trust in the Lord, and your purity, both in example, both in the way...

I was thinking about it this week. How many of you remember watching videos in school on PDAs, public displays of affection? It's like that's out the window now too. We walk by young people and I'm thinking, *I'm married and I don't think I would do that in public right there. Let's go ahead and separate the two of you just a little bit.* You have to be thinking about this.

I love what Cathy and John said. They asked this great question in the Dateable series. They said, "When the relationship ends..." Just so you know, 5% of high school relationships turn into marriage. So, 95% of you that are dating in high school, that's probably not going to turn into marriage. Here's the question you need to be asking yourself that comes out of the Dateable series. "How do you want to be known when that relationship ends?" Do you want to be able to go into Sunfest and see the girl or see the girl's family and be okay? I don't know if you've figured this out, but Branson is a pretty small town. You're going to see them again.

I didn't date in high school. I was kidding with the staff this week. That wasn't just my decision. There were hundreds of girls that participated in that decision. This is a true story and I probably shouldn't share too much of this. In college... Do you remember in college we would go to our mailbox and get our mail? It was my sophomore year and got a letter from a girl back home, breaking up with me. I remember my friend Jamie was standing next to me and he goes, "What do you have there?" I go, "Do you want to read this because I think she's breaking up with me." He reads it and goes, "She's definitely breaking up with you; what don't you understand." This was how clueless I was with dating at the time. I said, "I didn't even know we were dating."

That's pretty bad when someone is breaking up with you and you didn't even know you were going out. But, hey, I could still meet that lady in public today and have no problem because we never touched. I'm convinced you can date without touching and all the parents said... Amen. I'm convinced you can date without touching and all the Mike and Mandys said... Lord Jesus, help us in this series. The teaching

team is coming after you in this series. We love you and that's why we're coming after you. You've got to be thinking about your conversation, your behavior, your love for the Lord, your trust in the Him, and your purity. Let this be your example.

Here's what we know about Mike and Mandy. This is what they are telling me. I've just tried to make observations. I'm not assigning things to this generation. We're trying to observe this generation. Here's what we know. **Mike and Mandy want to be treated like adults.** This is what they tell us. "We want you to trust us." "We want you to believe in us." **What is the antidote to this?** How does this happen? Let us see it in your speech, in your behavior, in your love for the Lord, in your trust in the Lord, and in your purity.

I have a son who is 11 right now. He wants to be treated like an adult so badly. I dropped him off at Target. I love that the kids are at that age where I drop them off. Carson has a wad of money that he has earned doing stuff in his pocket and he has to go buy a charger for something at home. I had to run and get toothpaste or whatever. I went to the back aisle where he was buying the charger and he was getting a lecture from the senior adult who is checking him out.

My Bonnie Cunningham came out of me just a little bit. My mom would have been all over you if you went after one of her cubs. I walked up and Carson has that fake smile on his face that I've taught him to do when he doesn't like what's happening. He's just smiling, taking the lecture. I taught him not to talk back and just take the lecture. He looks at me with that fake smile. My Bonnie tone and everything came out. I said, "Do we have a problem? Is everything okay?" I'm trying to be kind, but I felt it bubbling up in me. The guy looks at me and says, "I'm just giving you son a life lesson. I don't like how he handed me money across the counter." This is good. I like this type of stuff. I guess Carson didn't put it in order for the guy or something. I do think...

Can I just help my Builder and Boomer friends? We have to stop looking at young people and automatically having this assumption that they are up to no good. We have to stop looking at Mike and Mandy as troublemakers every time we see them. They have more spendable money in their pocket right now... because their living at home. They've got more money... That was my first real Mike and Mandy joke. They've got more money than many of the adults.

Anyway, we walked away and I go, "Hey, I like how you handled that. You didn't talk back. You received it. I like that, Carson." We are all the way back up to the front by Starbucks there in Target and he still has that fake smile on his face. He goes, "I love being 11. I love being 11."

**Mike and Mandy also want their parents to trust them.** I get to speak at the Link Year at Kamp every year. At the Link Year, I talk to 18 and 19 year olds. When I'm just encouraging them with a lot of what I'm talking about in this series and I'm encouraging them to move forward with their example, I get this: "Man, we want to, but our parents won't let us." **What's the antidote to that?** Your conversation, your behavior, your love for the Lord, your trust in the Lord, and your purity. How can you say you want your parents to trust you and then they walk in on you and your girlfriend? You can't say, "You start trusting me, but I'm going to do whatever I want." No, may your example fit with the scripture and your walk with the Lord.

If you're working your example and your reputation toward that end, your parents will begin trusting you. You can't ask them to trust you when you're choosing to live outside of God's plan and God's best for your life.

We have to watch our tone and here's our tone. As we talk about looking down on those who are young and we don't want to be that church, we have to stop saying things like "You're too young." "You can't figure this out; you're too young." "You have your whole life ahead of you." This is another tone when we try to slow and delay the adulthood milestones. When a young person is trying to take off and become an adult, we start saying, "You don't need a full-time job. You're only 27; bring it back a notch." No, we have to stop that.

And we've got to stop with this. "When I was your age." When you were their age, there was no internet. When you were their age, you wrote letters to people you love. Now, they have technology. We've got to get over this idea of getting them off technology altogether. No, I want my children to be employable. I want them to be able to get a job and removing technology from them will make that pretty difficult because that's how we communicate today. Setting limits on it? Yes. Removing it? No. We have to quit saying "Let's take it back to those good ole days, 50 to 60 years ago." Fifty to sixty years ago, there were a lot of problems as well. We were overcoming a lot of challenges and difficulties 60 years ago. We've got to understand where Mike and Mandy are and move in that direction.

### Your Focus

Paul continues encouraging young Timothy. ***13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.*** Now he's speaking specifically to what Timothy is called to do in the church. Public reading of scripture is part of what we do as a church. Exhortation would be the preaching. This is challenging people's lives. We just did it a second ago. If your sleeping with your boyfriend, knock it off. That's clearly, as scriptures says, keeping the marriage bed pure. Marriage should be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure. That was called preaching. Preaching is exhortation. It's challenging your life and bringing it into alignment with the scripture.

Teaching would be doctrine. This is reciting the Apostle's Creed. This is saying we believe in God the Father, Jesus his son, the Holy Spirit. Teaching is explaining doctrine. He's saying, "Timothy, this is what you need to be focused on. This is what you need to be going after." ***13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. 14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy...*** Through the Holy Spirit. Paul did not give him his gift, but he was one of the body of elders who laid hands on him.

***...when the body of elders laid their hands on you.*** There were these elders, older believers in the church that came alongside him – we call this ordination – and they laid their hands on him. They didn't give him the gift; they recognized the gift. They didn't tell him what they wanted him to do; they recognized what God had already placed in him. He's saying, "Get focused. You don't need to be doing everything everyone has called you to. You don't need to be doing everything everyone thinks you should be doing. You need to stay focused and very specific.

If I could encourage Mike and Mandy for just a moment. You need to find older believers in your life that come alongside you and say, “Do you know what I see God doing in your life? Focus on that. Spend time on that. Pour water, pour fuel, pour into that; give yourself wholly to that”

**Mike and Mandy want to make a difference, but they’re not sure how.** They want their life to matter and count for something. Here’s what I love about Mike and Mandy. They’re generous. They want to be generous, but I don’t know if they fully grasp what generosity is. If I can just say this and this is where I’ve got to guard my tone just a little bit. Buying a pair of Toms shoes does not make you a generous person. Drinking Fair Trade Coffee does not make you a generous person. It may make you an aware person, but it doesn’t make you a generous person. Don’t allow drinking Fair Trade Coffee and buying Toms Shoes... I forget I’m in the Builders’ service here. Toms Shoes are a brand of shoes where when you buy a pair, they give a pair away to someone in need. I think it’s a great cause, but we’ve got to be kind of careful how we’re using causes for marketing today.

A couple of weeks ago, I saw a website that was, again, a cause driven business. I can’t believe they even put this on the bottom of their website. It said, “We donate 2% of our proceeds.” I was thinking you actually said that? I don’t think 2% of proceeds is what I would put in the generous category. I think we need to... That’s why we’re doing this series to help you with your focus and to help you say. “Okay I want to start, I’m not going to wait, I’m not going just let this ten years go by and just kind of take a vacation from it. I’m going to get serious about it and I’m going to surround myself with people who will speak into my life as the elders and as Paul spoke into Timothy’s.”

John Acuff wrote a book a few years ago called *Start*. In it, he outlines the generations and where they fit and what you need to be thinking about during different age groups. I don’t think we should see this list as gospel and he doesn’t even think that. He said, “You can start this anytime.” For you, these categories may be much shorter. They may not be ten years; they may only be two or three years. But it’s what you need to be thinking about as you think about your focus and where you need to be moving in life with the gifts you were given. You were created to do good works which he prepared in advance for you to do. We don’t want you to wait until you are 30 and 40 to get after those; we want you to get after them now.

This is what John Acuff lays out in the book:

**20s – Learning** – You’re reading, you’re studying, you’re going to college.

**30s – Editing** – I feel like I just came out of this season about five years ago. When you start a church and you surround yourself with this many people, there are so many different agendas represented in here. Part of growing up and part of moving into adulthood is editing your life. I heard somebody this week say, “I’m starting to love the sound of my feet walking away from things I shouldn’t be involved in.” They were not speaking there of sin; they were speaking of great opportunities presented to them that they now have to say “no” to. Do you know what you spend a lot of time in your 30s doing? Learning what to say “no” to. Learning to say, “I’m not good at that.” “I can’t do that.”

This week, I got to spend a Wednesday afternoon... My buddy Chad let me do fly fish guiding at Dogwood Canyon for the VIPs from the tournament. I would love to do that for living; you have no idea.

I actually got a \$20 tip Wednesday afternoon. I called Amy and I go, "I have proof of concept. I think I can do this." Anyway... But, I have to edit that out. Part of editing right now is determining what is a hobby and what is a job. Let me say that again. Part of editing is determining what is a hobby and what is a job. Even the US Government considers something you've done for three years and have made no profit at a hobby. Have a hobby. I love hobbies. I made 20 bucks fly fishing. I spent thousands gearing myself up for it, so I'm probably net zero on it.

**40s – Mastering** – Even in my 30s I was writing and speaking. I find myself now doing more speaking than writing. I've actually had some of you encourage me in this. I had one guy in the church... He moved to Florida now, but I remember the Sunday he came up to me after reading one of my books and he goes, "Hey, I just wanted to encourage you, Ted, you're way better at speaking than you are writing." I was like, "Well, thank you. You're way better at truth telling than encouraging." After you learn, edit, and master... That's focus. I don't think you need to wait for ever and ever; let's get after it.

**50s – Harvest** – In your 50s, after you have mastered, that's when you harvest. Those of you who built companies, you know this. You're looking at this in line of your company and now you're at the place where you're just harvesting and getting ready to turn the business that you've grown for 30 years over to your millennial children. Ha, ha, I absolutely love that. And let me tell you family businesses tend to not succeed. I think what we are talking about is a big reason why. There is a lot of eye rolling going on. You built your company toward a generation and now you're going to hand it over to a younger generation. And you don't like how they are going to build the company, you don't like how they are going to market the company, you don't like how they are going to hire for the company. But, guess what? They're in a new generation. You can't have the eye roll.

**60s – Guiding** – You're now coming alongside other generations and taking them through this process. I think about Pat Kershaw. Pat's been in this stage of guiding for years now. She's been a missionary her entire life and now she spends her days on email. She's been retired now... What are you at now? Probably 30 to 40 hours a week? What she is doing is guiding brand new missionaries who are starting in their 20s. They're learning and they're editing and they're mastering and they're moving forward.

Duffy, down there fishing at Taneycomo, is here. He loves when the young folks come down and he can teach them and he can show them. For some of you, this is a guidance counselor that's now wanting to guide you through the process. For some, it's your parents.

### **Your progress**

We've looked at your example, we've looked at your focus, let's end with this one. Paul continues with your progress. Are you somewhere different this year than you were last year? ***15 Be diligent in these matters...*** Get after it. ***...give yourself wholly to them...*** Invest in these matters. ***...So that everyone may see your progress.*** Everyone is all the adults around you. It's your mom and it's your dad. It's your grandma and your grandpa. If I can just say this, Mike and Mandy, very specifically to you, this isn't a "when I was your age." But, I think we need to get back to the place where you were very concerned with what you're doing with your family name. You were very concerned with how you're living your life. Is it a life your parents are proud of?

I was thinking about this as I went through the Dateable series. I never would have made out with a girl in front of my parents. Again, I wasn't the only one involved in that decision. Hundreds of women were involved in that decision. But, there was a level of respect there. Do you want people to see your progress, you want people to start taking you seriously in living your life like an adult? Let them see your progress. Show them with your life that you're working on your conversation, you're working on your behavior, you're working on your love for the Lord, your service to the Lord, your trust in the Lord, and the purity of your life when it comes to sexual conduct and also your thoughts. Let those around you see that.

***16 Watch your life and doctrine closely.*** In other words, what you say you believe, may you live it out. The biggest issue we deal with in the church today is our orthodoxy does not match our orthopraxy. We say we believe this, but then we live our life this way. May your life, Mike, may your life, Mandy, reflect what you say you believe. ***Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.***

**Mike and Mandy value awareness more than life-planning.** Life-planning was what the Boomers valued. You put your plan in place, you got your retirement going, you had it all set out. Let me tell you that that's not what's in Mike and Mandy's mind right now. I'm Generation X and that's not even really what's in my mind. Generation X doesn't place high value on retirement like the Boomers do. What that means is they are going to sign up for a mission's trip way before they sign up for Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People Seminar. They're not against goals; they're just not attacking them. They want to be more aware and they do; they have a high value for people, a high value for serving, a high value for caring.

Here this morning is why we don't want you to wait. According to Psalm 90: 10, ***Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures...*** This is Moses speaking. ***...yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.*** Again, this fits with what Solomon said. ***Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.*** Solomon said this in Ecclesiastes 12: 1 and this fits with the idea of the typical, ordinary life span being 70 to 80 years. ***Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them."*** Go after it. Don't wait.

Are your parents wearing you out right now? You're like "Yes, will you speak to them for the conclusion of your message?" Do you know why your parents may be wearing you out a little bit right now? It's because they're getting to the age where they say, "My days are getting more difficult. I'm getting older." This is probably your grandparents too. They are focusing on their health. They have to because their health is deteriorating. And they are looking back on their life right now. Your grandma is looking back on her life. Your grandpa is looking back on his life. And he is thinking about regrets. He is not like Elvis. "Regrets, I have few..." No, he may have a lot. He is seeing what you are doing right now and he is going, "I was there," and in his heart is this attitude of wanting to save you from that pain the he went through. "I was there. I'm at a different place in life right now and I have something called perspective." "If I could save you from this brief moment..."

What Solomon is saying is "Don't wait for that day. Don't wait for when you are old saying, 'I wish I would have.' Don't wait for a day..." We are all going to have regrets. We are all going to say things we

didn't mean. We are all going to do things we wish we never would have done, but what he's saying is while you're young, in your youth, focus on your creator. Get serious now, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you are old and at the end. Do it now.

Let me just summarize this whole thing. Take advantage of your age. Make the most of your age rather than a break from your faith, relationships, and work. Make the most of this time that you have. Build a foundation. How you start does matter. Your relationship with the Lord does matter.

Over the next few weeks, here's what we want to talk about and here's where the series is going.

**Don't wait on your relationship with Christ.** Get serious now, begin now. Remember your Creator now. Follow the scripture now. Give your life to Jesus now.

**Don't wait on your relationship with your parents.** It's funny that as you get older, your parents get smarter. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? Don't wait 10 or 15 or 20 years to look back... In 10, 15, or 20 years, you're going to start looking like your parents. I told this to Shay Robbins a couple of weeks ago. If you know who Rob Robbins is and who Shay Robbins is, every year, Shay looks more and more like his Rob. And guess what? When I hear him talk, he sometimes sounds like him. I'm starting to say things my dad said to me when I was a kid. I'm now saying them to my kids. I catch myself at Target becoming like Bonnie Cunningham. Don't go after one of my cubs.

Can I just encourage you? Part of remember your creator and taking advantage of your age says you don't wait until you're 40 to have a solid and strong relationship with your parents. Don't wait until you're 40 to listen to the wisdom of your parents. Listen to it now. Go to lunch after this or brunch after this and ask grandma and grandpa their opinions now. Receive them, challenge them.

I got a brand-new HVAC system two weeks ago. You can ask my wife. I was so excited to call my dad and tell him about it. He's an electrician and he loves that stuff. I was thinking, *I get to tell him. He's going to be so proud of me.* The choice that I made, don't wait until you're 43 to do that kind of stuff. Do it while you're young. Even if you don't have a great relationship with your parents right now. Trust me. Just trust me. Would you hear this from a heart of a pastor who loves you? When you're 50 and your parents are gone, you're going to wish you had a relationship with them.

**Don't wait on your relationship with the opposite sex.** Some of you are wondering if that's next week. It's a couple of weeks down the road. But, don't wait. You don't have to get it all figured out before you pursue marriage. You don't have to wait until 30. For some of you, maybe this series is a kick starter for you. Maybe you're not living your life right and you need to look at your boyfriend or you need to look at your girlfriend and go, "We're not doing this right; do we want to do this right?" For you, marriage... Marriage should be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure. Marriage is a next step for you. I'm saddened when... I met somebody this week. I asked how long they had been dating. They had been dating six years. Six years! That's a long time. Don't wait. You don't need to wait. I'm not telling you to rush. We're telling you to avoid the unnecessary delay.

**Don't wait on your responsibility at work.** You can get after it right now. This is where we are going to be going the next few weeks.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we thank you for our time. So much to cover today as we kind of introduce this. I'm going to start personally, Father, with leading off this series and pastoring and what I want that to mean. There is a lot in my heart that is not good with the generational conversation and a lot of mixed emotions. There is a lot that every generation can offer the other generations, but I'm asking for me to start and that you post a guard at my mouth with words that I want to say. Post a guard at my heart when that eye roll and contempt is about to show forth on my face. I pray that the Holy Spirit will convict me of that.

As one pastor said, it's hard to mobilize a generation when you're rolling your eyes at them. And that does not represent my desire in this series. That does not represent the heart of this church. We want this church to be a church where every generation matters. We want every builder in here to feel esteemed and highly valuable and sought after for their wisdom. We want every Boomer in here to be sought after for their wisdom. We want that sandwich generation of Generation X to be honoring those before them and leading well those behind them. I just pray for many in Generation X. We need to start stepping aside in some of our responsibilities in ministry to allow others in Generation Y and even in Generation Z to begin to lead. May that take place throughout this series.

For the young Mike right now who is not living a life in his speech and in his conduct and his love and his faith and in his purity that is chasing after you. May today be the day he repents and confesses his sin and forsakes it. That he turns from it and says, "This is not how I'm going to live anymore," and he thinks a lot not just about how he's going to end, but how he's going to start.

For Mandy right now, there are some Mandys in here who desire marriage and they want to be married, but they're having a hard time finding Mike. They don't think Mike is stepping up enough. They don't think Mike is growing fast enough. They don't think he's maturing. They don't think he can be the spiritual leader in the home. May this series be a catalyst to all of that. May they consider their relationship. May they move forward in purity and pursue a relationship that honors you.

We're grateful for what you continue to do here. Use this church during this time. I pray for the teaching team. We have many experts stepping up here and we trust in what they say. We're grateful for a team that really spends their entire life, their year working with Generation Y and Generation Z. I pray you give them wisdom. I'm looking forward to learning from them. I need to learn from them. I need to be rebuked in areas where the eye roll wants to pop out. May I gain greater understanding as I soak in the teaching throughout this series.

It's in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.