

THE BIBLE'S MOST DANGEROUS WORD: WHY "TOMORROW" IS DEADLY FOR GEN ALPHA'S FAITH

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"Tomorrow" sounds so reasonable, so responsible, even so wise. Yet, it's the word we use when we're sincere about spiritual growth but not quite ready to act, not quite ready to trust God with the mess of right now.



The plague of frogs had done its work. Pharaoh's palace reeked with the stench of amphibian invasion, his servants were at their wits' end, and Egypt's king finally cracked. "Plead with the LORD to take away the frogs from me and from my people," he begged Moses, "and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD" (Exodus 8:8).

Moses's response seems almost theatrical: "Be pleased to command me: when shall I plead for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses?" (Exodus 8:9). In other words, "Name the time. When do you want relief? When do you want God to move?"

Pharaoh's answer reveals everything: "Tomorrow" (Exodus 8:10).

Not today. Not now. Not immediately. *Tomorrow.*

Here was a man surrounded by the consequences of his rebellion, face-to-face with the living God's power, given the opportunity to experience divine intervention immediately—and he chose to spend one more night with the frogs.

This story illuminates something we may not recognize in our own lives and ministries: how easily spiritual focus and progress gets deferred to tomorrow. It's a pattern that shows up everywhere—in our own discipleship, in our parenting, in our youth ministry approaches. "Tomorrow" sounds so reasonable, so responsible, even so wise. Yet, it's the word we use when we're sincere about spiritual growth but not quite ready to act, not quite ready to trust God with the mess of right now.

And without realizing it, we often pass this tomorrow mindset to the next generation.



THE DANGER OF “TOMORROW”

The Cultural Currents Pushing Teens Toward “Tomorrow”

Today’s adolescents face unprecedented pressure to defer spiritual activation. The “tomorrow mindset” isn’t just a personal failing—it’s reinforced by powerful cultural forces:

Perfectionism and platform culture have convinced rising generations that they can’t step forward until they have it all figured out. When their peers’ highlight reels scroll endlessly before them, when one misstep can be screenshot and shared, when vulnerability is commodified for likes, the idea of messy, imperfect faith feels dangerous. Better to wait until you’re “ready”—which, of course, never comes.

The professionalization of ministry has created a spiritual consumer class. Churches often position teenagers as recipients of ministry rather than agents of it. Youth groups become entertainment venues where teens are served rather than equipped. The implicit message: real ministry happens when you’re older, more trained, more credible. Tomorrow.

Therapeutic culture’s emphasis on healing before serving can paradoxically delay kingdom work. Yes, mental health matters deeply. But the constant message that you must be fully whole before you can be used by God contradicts the biblical pattern where God works through broken people in real-time. Moses had a speech impediment. Gideon was hiding. David was a shepherd boy. God didn’t wait for their tomorrow.

The extended adolescence of modern Western culture has stretched the transition to adulthood well into the twenties. When society doesn’t expect adult contribution until after college (or grad school, or the right job), when development is prolonged and responsibility delayed, young people internalize the message that their faith, too, can wait.

The Hunger Beneath the Hesitation

But here’s what’s remarkable about Gen Z and Gen Alpha: beneath these pressures to postpone, they’re demonstrating a profound hunger for immediacy, authenticity, and agency that we must not miss.

They demand action on issues that matter. This is the generation insisting on climate action today, not tomorrow. They’re building businesses in high school, launching podcasts before they can drive, organizing movements around causes they believe in. They have less patience for institutional delay and bureaucratic excuses than any generation before them. When they see injustice, they want to address it now. When they identify a problem, they want to solve it immediately.

They crave unfiltered authenticity. Gen Z can smell inauthenticity from miles away. They don’t want polished performances; they want real people wrestling with real issues. They’re skeptical of institutions but hungry for genuine mentorship. They’ll dismiss slick marketing but lean in when someone vulnerably shares their actual faith journey—struggles included. This generation doesn’t want to wait for the “perfect” version of themselves or their leaders; they want honest engagement today.

They’re builders, not just consumers. Give them tools, and they create. Give them platforms, and they speak. Give them responsibility, and they rise to it. They’re making films, writing code, starting nonprofits, organizing fundraisers. The entrepreneurial instinct runs deep—they don’t assume they need permission or credentials to start something meaningful.

They hunger for transcendence and purpose. Despite growing up in an increasingly secular culture, Gen Z shows surprising openness to spiritual questions. They’re exploring meaning, wrestling with purpose, asking big questions about identity and significance.

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Mental health struggles have made this generation acutely aware that material comfort isn't enough. They're looking for something—Someone—worth living for.

This hunger is profoundly spiritual. When given genuine opportunities to wrestle with Scripture, to serve meaningfully, to lead authentically, teenagers rise to meet them. They don't want to be entertained; they want to be transformed. They don't want to spectate; they want to participate.

The tragedy is when the church fails to channel this hunger toward kingdom purposes—when we offer youth group games instead of discipleship, when we ask them to wait for “someday” instead of equipping them for today.

The Biblical Call to Active, Discerning Obedience

Scripture pulses with a tension we must hold carefully: the urgency of responding to God today alongside the wisdom of patient, discerning obedience.

Paul writes, “Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). The writer of Hebrews repeatedly warns: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 3:15). The repetition of “today” throughout Hebrews 3-4 is striking—God's invitation is always *today* because delayed response becomes hardened resistance.

But this urgency isn't recklessness. Biblical “today” obedience doesn't mean impulsive action disconnected from wisdom, community, or God's timing. The Scriptures are full of people who waited on the Lord—sometimes for years. David didn't seize Saul's throne the moment he was anointed. Paul spent years in preparation before his missionary journeys. Jesus himself waited thirty years before beginning public ministry.

The difference is this: **they were actively waiting, not passively postponing.**



David served Saul faithfully while waiting. Paul was learning, praying, being disciplined. Jesus grew “in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). None of them said, “Someday I'll get serious about what God has called me to.” They were responsive to God's voice *in the present*, even when that voice said “not yet” for certain things.

This is what we want for teenagers: not frantic activity or impulsive decisions, but active engagement with God today. Listening for His voice today. Growing in wisdom today. Serving in age-appropriate ways today. Wrestling with Scripture today. Building the spiritual disciplines today that will sustain a lifetime of faithfulness.

The tomorrow mindset says, “I'll get serious about my faith when I'm older, more mature, less busy, more settled.” Active, discerning obedience says, “Lord, what are You calling me to today—even as I seek Your wisdom for tomorrow?”

Activating Faith Today

How do we help teenagers—and ourselves—escape the tomorrow mindset and embrace active obedience?

Model urgency in your own spiritual life. Teenagers are watching. If you model “someday I'll get serious about that Bible reading plan” or “eventually I'll deal with that pattern of sin,” you're disciplining them into tomorrow. When you hear God's voice—through Scripture, through wise counsel, through conviction—respond today. Let them see what it looks like to be actively seeking God, even when growth is slow. Share how you're wrestling with obedience in real-time, not just the polished testimony of what God did years ago.



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Create space for immediate, meaningful contribution. Don't just tell teens they'll lead the church someday. Let them lead today, in age-appropriate but genuinely significant ways. Give them real ministry responsibilities with real stakes. Let them serve, teach, create, organize, counsel peers. Yes, they'll make mistakes. Equip them, walk alongside them, debrief with them—but don't prevent them from attempting kingdom work because they're “not ready yet.” Faith grows through active use, not passive waiting.

Ask different questions. The questions we ask shape the futures teenagers imagine. Instead of “What do you want to do when you grow up?” ask “How is God calling you to serve right now?” Instead of “What are you learning in youth group?” ask “What are you *doing* with what you're learning?” Instead of “What do you want to be?” ask “Who is God shaping you to become today?” These questions shift focus from far-off tomorrow to present faithfulness.

The Opportunity Before Us

For this generation facing unique pressures and possessing unique hunger, the stakes feel particularly high.

They're being told to wait, to postpone, to perfect themselves before stepping forward—while simultaneously craving action, authenticity, and purpose. They're capable of remarkable things but often held back by a culture that underestimates them. They're spiritually curious but increasingly disconnected from churches that fail to take them seriously.

The tomorrow mindset doesn't protect teenagers; it prevents them from developing the faith muscles they'll need for a lifetime of following Jesus. It teaches them that spiritual growth is theoretical until some undefined future moment when they're finally “ready.”

But God is speaking today. He's calling this generation today. The question is whether we'll help them hear His voice and respond—with wisdom, with patience, with discernment, yes— and also with the conviction that today matters, that young faith is real faith, that God uses people in the process of becoming, not just people who have arrived.

Pharaoh chose to sleep with the frogs one more night. Let's not make the same choice for our teenagers—or for ourselves.

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