

# YOUTH



**DISILLUSIONED AND VULNERABLE TO EXTREMISM**



# YOUTH IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

More than half the people in Muslim-majority countries today are under the age of 30. A young person's experience in life will depend on so many things: was she born into poverty in Pakistan or wealth in Saudi Arabia? Was he displaced by war, or is he living on land owned by his family for generations? Do they live in a village or a city? Do they have access to education?

Young Muslims are often at the center of political reform movements in their home countries, while others face the challenge of finding their way when they immigrate to the West. Many young people are struggling to simply find jobs: the unemployment rate for the Arab region of the world is nearly twice as high as global averages. Radical Muslim groups like Islamic State take advantage of this discontent and recruit frustrated youth with promises of higher purpose.

There is a sense of disillusionment with Islam among many Muslim young people today. They are resistant to their parents' traditional values. In turn, Muslim parents worry that as their children let go of their traditional values, they will become alienated from their families.

Other parents have high hopes for this generation of youth and see them as the future of Islam. Either way, the Muslim world is experiencing rapid change, and young people are changing along with it.

# WHAT DOES ISLAM TEACH ABOUT YOUTH?

When Islam emerged in seventh century Arabia, a teenager was considered an adult and would usually marry before the age of twenty. This is still true in parts of the Muslim world today. Islam encourages youthful devotion. The Quran commends young people who “believe in their Lord” (18:13) and assures them that Allah will have mercy on them if they worship only Allah (18:16).

The recorded words and actions of Muhammad (hadith) note that if a man “passed his youth in the worship and service of God” he will be “sheltered under the shade of God on the Day of Judgment” (al Bukhari 1:356:629).

Another tradition says that a man will be asked five important questions on judgment day: “How did he spend his life? How did he utilize his youth? How did he earn his wealth? How did he spend it? And, how did he practice what he learned?” (Sunan al-Tirmidhi).

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. — Joel 2:28

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. — Psalm 119:9

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. — 1 Peter 5:5-7

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. — Jeremiah 31:13

Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. — Ecclesiastes 11:9

My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us ambush the innocent without reason." — Proverbs 1:10-11

My son, fear the LORD and the king, and do not join with those who do otherwise. — Proverbs 24:21

My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. — Proverbs 3:11-12

Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice. — Ecclesiastes 4:13

# PRAYER POINTS

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“IF YOU ASK ME ANYTHING IN MY NAME, I WILL DO IT.” JOHN 14:14

- ❖ Pray for those disillusioned with Islam to initiate a search for Truth.
- ❖ Pray for Muslim students around the world to hear the Gospel from believing friends.
- ❖ Pray for youth to find their true identity in Jesus.