

Looking for a Sound Investment? Start Here

Allow me to put my student ministry hat back on, a hat I wore for 28+ years. I want to make an appeal to you:

Invest your life in a teenager.

One secular study found a common trait among students who became well-rounded young adults: those students had at least five adults who regularly spoke into their lives and spent time with them. This number included adults like a parent, relative, teacher, coach, rabbi, or Scout leader. Sure, students engage with teachers, coaches, and other adults frequently, but these were adults who invested time with them.



This was a secular study acknowledging the benefit of adults in general investing time in the life of a student. I applaud this, but I thought: who best to invest in the life of a teenager than someone who loves Jesus and can encourage the student to a deeper walk with Christ?

Don't think you're ready to sign up to lead a Bible study with teenagers? That's OK; that's not what I'm asking you to do (but leading a group of students in Bible study is an incredible experience, and your youth pastor would love you for it). I'm pleading for you to invest in an individual teenager.

Let me give you a sobering reason this is so needed. [A report from the CDC](#) noted that almost one-third of high school girls considered suicide in 2021. Mental-health related visits to the emergency room have risen sharply among teenagers and young adults. The worst part of it is a fivefold increase in the number of emergency room visits that were suicide related. Among girls, 60 percent of them said they felt sad and hopeless. I'm sure the pandemic isolation and the increase of bullying through social media are among the contributing factors, but rather than focus on the

causes, I prefer to focus on one way to lessen the loneliness and hopelessness that pervades their minds.

Invest your life in a teenager.

Two weeks ago in my own neighborhood, a sixteen-year-old student died. We later discovered he had committed suicide. I didn't know this young man; in fact, I didn't even know a teenager lived in that house, a house I can see outside my front door. But I was reminded how close hopelessness and despondency are to me.

We never know what may be in the minds of the students around us, but we can be a source of love and encouragement to the ones we know.

- Men, take a young man under your wings. Take him to a game, go fishing, teach me how to fix his car, or even just occasionally take him out for a burger.
- Ladies, find a teenage girl and take her out for lattes (or whatever teenage girls drink). Take her shopping. Teach her how to cook your favorite dish.



Listen. Ask questions. Pass on your love for Jesus. Read Scripture together. Pray *for* them and *with* them.

I'm asking you to be a friend. An encourager. A disciple. It's easier than you think. It just takes time.