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## Kids These Days!

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# Kids These Days!

How many times have you heard that phrase, or said it yourself? As we approach middle age and beyond, we are often disturbed about the apparent failings of the younger generation. This can feel overwhelming to parents, grandparents, teachers and pastors.



▲ Alina M. Baltazar

Those who are “older and wiser” worry about the behavior of youth. Starting in the teenage years, or earlier, adults may become concerned about what music, movies, games and styles of dress interest our youth. There is a concern those interests may lead them astray and away from God’s plans for their lives. In addition, youth are known to take more risks and not always think about how those risks will affect their future. This leads those who care for them to become fearful because we know how a one-time mistake could have life-altering consequences.

These fears have not changed over the centuries. Even Ellen White was worried about the youth in her time. Human development is still the same. As we age, we tend to forget the risks we took and how foolish our parents and grandparents thought we were. The mistakes we made when we were young led to lessons we remember more than what we learned in school or from our parents.

There are some actual generational differences that have been noticed by researchers. Usually these changes are influenced by the environment in which each generation grew up. The youngest generational cohort, those born between 1995–2012, have been called iGen.<sup>1</sup> Although Millennials, those born between 1980 and 1994, grew up in the age of computers, the Internet didn’t become commercially available until they

were in their teens. The iGen generation, named after the iPhone, grew up with smartphones in their hands as children. As a result, they are: 1) in no hurry to grow up, 2) using the Internet excessively, 3) communicating less in-person, 4) less religious, and 5) more accepting of diversity.<sup>1</sup>

Each generation has its strengths and weaknesses that are reactions to changes in society. In turn, each generation has influenced societal changes: think about the Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964. What we need to do is to appreciate the challenges young people are facing today and try to bridge the gap by remembering what it was like when we were young. It helps to listen in order to learn about teens’ challenges so we can help guide them to the path the Lord desires for them. The Lord knows the changes our society is dealing with today; remember, He is in charge. He wants us to train our young people to hasten His kingdom.

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!” (E.G. White, *Education*, p. 271). ■

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1. Twenge, J. (2017). *iGen: Why Today's Super-connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy — and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*. New York: Simon and Schuster.