



## School Is Out!

*You who are young make the most of your youth. Relish your youthful vigor. Follow the impulses of your heart...live footloose and fancy-free—you won't be young forever. Youth lasts about as long as smoke (Ecclesiastes 11:9-10, The Message).*

*Aaah, summer—that long anticipated stretch of lazy, lingering days, free of responsibility and rife with possibility. It's a time to hunt for insects, master handstands, practice swimming strokes, conquer trees, explore nooks and crannies, and make new friends (Darell Hammond).*

**T**he final days of the month of May is a time of the year that most school children look forward to with great anticipation. May is the month, at least for some students who study in public schools here in Southern California, when school lets out for the summer break. There are no more tedious hours of homework to complete. There are no more tests to take. The final bell has sounded across the empty schoolyards for another school year, and all the fun and freedom of summer vacation has begun, at last!

I am quite fortunate, as a parent, to be experiencing all the excitement around the final days of May for a second time in life. I have two stepsons now as a result of my recent remarriage. The boys are ages ten (nearly eleven) and fourteen, and believe me, they both embody the seemingly limitless energy and intense anticipation around being set free for the summer. I remember clearly the same excitement, although somewhat less so, as expressed by

my daughter, years earlier. It is a beautiful reality to re-live the **School Is Out!** excitement all over again. I believe that excitement serves in its own way to help keep me young, at least young at heart.

Can you remember that excitement around the feeling of **School Is Out!?** That unmistakable feeling of boundless energy and eager anticipation in knowing you had the entirety of the summer immediately ahead of you? I remember those days as if they were yesterday—days of nothing but fun and freedom. I must

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admit, I have seldom experienced such a carefree sense or feeling since.

As adults, well beyond our school days, we live full lives. We all have many demands upon our time. Rarely, if ever, do we experience that **School Is Out!** feeling of carefree fun and freedom, in the way we did in our youth. The truth is, life often sees to it that **school is never quite out** for us. Life just keeps coming, and we never seem to be short of things to attend to, as it does.

The wisdom we find in the book of Ecclesiastes celebrates youth. The poetry of the book encourages the living of life to the fullest. The humor of the book seems to say, *do so while you can, because someday, you will want to live life to the fullest, as you once did as a young person, but you may find doing so has become much more difficult.* In terms of the timeline of our physical lives, who cannot relate to that?

In terms of the timeline of our spiritual lives, **school is indeed out!** Our lives in Christ Jesus can be just like a summer break, if you will. Our lives in him can be truly fun, and filled with a carefree freedom, as we keep our eyes on him. Jesus, our teacher, has completed our homework and taken our tests. As the result of his saving work, we live free in him.

As Christ-followers, we do have many demands upon our time, and many things yet to learn as we live our lives in him. Christ Jesus is the one at work within us; transforming us into his image for his good pleasure.

As he does so, we can still live our lives physically from our once youthful vigor, living footloose and fancy-free in him. We can follow the impulses of our hearts, for in our hearts is where Christ Jesus lives.

As I experience watching my two stepsons relish the end of another school year, and the fun and freedom that comes with the final days in May, I celebrate the broader and deeper spiritual lessons. Although my body does not make it easy anymore to hunt for insects, master handstands, practice swimming strokes, conquer trees, or explore nooks and crannies in nature together with them, I am grateful. I am grateful that spiritually, **school is indeed out!**

I can live my life from the limitless energy of Christ Jesus within, and the eager anticipation of an eternity with him. I can live my life from the place of deep peace and true joy he provides. And fortunately, I can still do some of the fun physical summer activities with the boys. Thanks be to him for that! □

—Ed Dunn