

“PULL YOUR PANTS UP”**I PETER 1:13****INTRODUCTION**

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THE NUMBER OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES WHO NOW WEAR THEIR PANTS BELOW THEIR WAISTS?

IT SEEMS TO BE A GROWING CONCERN IN OUR COMMUNITY SO MANY YOUNG MEN FIND IT FASHIONABLE TO DRESS IN A MANNER THAT IS SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE, BORDERING ON INDECENCY.

ACROSS THE NATION, SENIORS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY ARE SHAKING THEIR HEADS AS THEY BEMOAN WHAT IS HAPPENING TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN YOUNG MEN.

SOME ARE TEMPTED TO REACH OUT TO EVERY YOUNG MAN, GRAB HIS PANTS AND SAY, “PULL YOUR PANTS UP.”

IT’S CALLED “SAGGIN” AND IT IS A GROWING CLOTHING TREND AMONG THE HIP HOP GENERATION.

YET IT IS NOT EXCLUSIVELY A “BLACK THANG” BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY WHITES WHO HAVE EMBRACED THE STYLE AS WELL.

SAGGING BEGAN A WHILE BACK; SOME SAY IN THE 80’S WHEN GROUPS LIKE KID ‘N PLAY, GROOVE B. CHILL AND OTHERS BEGAN TO APPEAR IN MUSIC VIDEOS WITH THEIR PANTS SAGGING.

SINCE THAT TIME THE GANGSTA TREND HAS MADE THE “JAIL HOUSE” LOOK OF SAGGING PANTS EXTREMELY POPULAR TO YOUTH WHO WANT A WAY TO GIVE ADULTS AN “IN YOUR FACE” RESPONSE TO NORMALCY.

BEFORE ADULTS GET TOO SELF RIGHTEOUS ABOUT CLOTHING FADS THAT HAVE SHOCKED THE PREVIOUS GENERATION, TRUTH REQUIRES THAT WE NOTE THAT THE

SAGGING PANTS IS NOT THE FIRST CLOTHING TREND THAT SHOCKED ADULTS.

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, IT WAS CONSIDERED UNTHINKABLE FOR WOMEN TO WEAR DRESSES THAT REVEALED THEIR ANKLES.

IN THE 1920'S THE FLAPPERS WORE SHORT SHIMMY DRESSES THAT LABELED THEM AS LOOSE AND IMMORAL.

REMEMBER THE JAMES DEAN REBEL LOOK OF THE 50'S WHERE BOYS APPEARED WITH THEIR SHIRT TAILS OUT, LEATHER JACKETS AND TEE-SHIRTS WITH ROLLED UP SLEEVES.

BOYS WHO WORE THESE CLOTHES WERE CONSIDERED GANGSTER AND THUGS.

THE BEATLES SHOCKED AMERICA WITH THE MOP HAIR STYLES AND THE JACKSON FIVE SHOCKED AMERICA WITH THEIR HUGE AFRO'S, THEN CONSIDERED A SYMBOL OF REBELLION.

THE MINI-SKIRTS WERE SO SHORT WHEN TINA TURNER AND IKETTES SHOWED UP ON AMERICAN BANDSTAND THAT THE CENSORS ALMOST BANNED THEM FROM THE AIRWAYS, BUT NOT BEFORE INSPIRING A WHOLE NEW FASHION TREND AMONG THE YOUTH.

WE WERE TOTALLY CROSSED OUT WHEN CHILDREN STARTED WEARING THEIR CLOTHING BACKWARDS, A STYLE POPULARIZED BY THE GROUP KRISS KROSS.

THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN FASHION TRENDS IN EVERY GENERATION.

WHAT'S TROUBLING ABOUT SAGGING IS THAT IT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE A PASSING TREND THAT WILL DIE AS THE GENERATION MATURES.

IT SEEMS TO REPRESENT A MODE OF THINKING THAT REJECTS RULES, ESTABLISHED ORDER AND TRADITIONAL.

IT'S BEEN AROUND FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS AND INSTEAD OF FADING INTO FASHION TREND HISTORY, HAS ASSUMED A LIFE OF ITS OWN WITH NO END IN SIGHT.

SAGGING PANTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH A "SAGGING MINDSET."

THE SAGGING MINDSET IS ASSOCIATED WITH LOW SELF ESTEEM, SHORT TERM GOALS, A SUBCULTURE LIFESTYLE AND A SERIOUS IDENTITY CRISES.

SUCH A MINDSET IS DESCRIBED IN THE BIBLE AS A "REPROBATE" MIND.

IT IS NOT THE UNIQUE PROVINCE OF "SAGGERS" THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE SAGGING PANTS BUT THEY DO HAVE A "SAGGING MINDSET."

THE WORD OF GOD CHALLENGES EVERYONE NOT TO CONFORM TO THIS WORLD BUT TO BE TRANSFORMED BY THEIR RENEWING OF THE MIND.

THAT'S THE GOAL. WHEN THE MINDSET CHANGES AND STARTS LOOKING UP; THE PANTS WILL FOLLOW.

AS CHRISTIANS, OUR GOAL IS TO KEEP LOOKING UP TOWARD OUR GOD. IF WE KEEP OUR EYES ON HIM AND REACH UP; OUR PANTS WILL FOLLOW.

EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT

IN THIS TEXT, PETER ENCOURAGES BELIEVERS TO RAISE THEIR MINDS TO A NEW LEVEL OF THINKING AS THEY PREPARE FOR THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY.

IT WAS TRADITIONAL IN BIBLICAL TIMES FOR MEN AND WOMEN TO WEAR LONG ROBES.

WHENEVER THE MEN HAD TO MOVE QUICKLY OR MOVE FREELY WITHOUT ANY HINDRANCES THEY ROLLED UP THEIR ROBES AND TUCKED THEM IN THEIR WAISTBANDS OR BELTS.

PETER USED THIS EXAMPLE AS HE URGED BELIEVERS TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THE CHRISTIAN STRUGGLE BYO “GIRDING UP THEIR LOINS” OR ROLLING UP THEIR ROBES – OF THEIR MINDS:

THAT IS PREPARE THEIR MINDS FOR W HAT LAY AHEAD.

ANYTHING THAT WOULD SLOW THEIR PACE, HINDER THEIR MOVEMENT OR DISTRACT FROM THE SERVICE OF GOD WAS TO BE ROLLED UP TO GIVE PLACE TO GOD’S SERVICE COMPLETELY.

THE GREAT BIBLICAL SCHOLAR MATTHEW HENRY INTERPRETS THE PASSAGE THIS WAY, “GATHER IN, AND GIRD UP, THEIR LONG AND LOOSE GARMENTS, THAT THEY MAY BE MORE READY, PROMPT, AND EXPEDITIOUS IN THEIR BUSINESS, SO DO YOU BY YOUR MINDS, YOUR INNER MAN, AND AFFECTIONS SEATED THERE: GIRD THEM, GATHER THEM IN, LET THEM NOT HAND LOOSE AND NEGLECTED ABOUT YOU;

RESTRAIN THEIR EXTRAVAGANCES, AND LET THE LIONS OR STRENGTH AND VIGOR OF YOUR MINDS BE EXERTED IN OUR DUTY;

DISENGAGE YOURSELVES FROM ALL THAT WOULD HINDER YOU, AND GO ON RESOLUTELY IN YOUR OBEDIENCE.”

THUS BELIEVERS ARE REMINDED RAISE THEIR THINKING AS THEY PREPARE TO SERVE GOD.

THERE ARE MANY AREAS IN WHICH BLACK YOUTH CAN UPGRADE THEIR MINDSETS TO HELP ACCOMPLISH THE WILL OF GOD:

I. TIGHTEN UP THE REBELLIOUS SPIRIT.

A. EVERY GENERATION HAS FACED THE REBELLIOUS SPIRIT OF ITS YOUTH.

- 1. THE YOUNG SEEM TO HAVE FUN RUBBING THEIR SENIORS THE WRONG WAY.**

2. **CONSIDER THIS QUOTE: “YOUTH TODAY LOVE LUXURY. THEY HAVE BAD MANNERS, CONTEMPT FOR AUTHORITY, NO RESPECT FOR OLDER PEOPLE, AND TALK NONSENSE WHEN THEY SHOULD BE WORKING.**

a. **YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT STAND UP ANY LONGER WHEN ADULTS ENTER THE ROOM. THEY CONTRADICT THEIR PARENTS, TALK TOO MUCH IN COMPANY, GUZZLE THEIR FOOD, LAY THEIR LEGS ON THE TABLE AND TYRANNIZE THEIR ELDERS.”**

3. **IF THAT QUOTE SEEMS TO DESCRIBE TODAY’S YOUTH, THEN CONSIDER THAT THOSE WORDS WERE SPOKEN BY THE PHILOSOPHER SOCRATES, THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO, DESCRIBING THE YOUTH OF HIS TIME.**

B. WHILE REBELLION IS NOT NEW, YOUTH CAN TIGHTEN UP.

1. **THEY CAN SHOW MORE RESPECT FOR THEIR ELDERS.**

2. **WHILE NO ONE EXPECTS THEM TO CLONE THE PREVIOUS GENERATION, THEY CAN ALSO WORK TO DEMONSTRATE A LEVEL OF RESTRAINT THAT HOLDS THEIR REBELLIOUS SPIRIT IN CHECK.**

3. **IN THAT RESPECT, YOUTH SHOULD TIGHTEN UP THEIR REBELLIOUS SPIRIT SO THAT THEY CAN DO GOD’S WORK.**

II. OPEN UP TO RECEIVE OPPORTUNITIES:

A. GOD HAS CREATED MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR TODAY’S YOUTH, BUT THAT CANNOT BE RECEIVED WITH A “SAGGING MINDSET.”

1. **YOUTH MUST PULL UP THEIR ATTITUDES TO RECEIVE GOD'S BLESSINGS.**
2. **HIS WORD WILL ONLY BE GIVEN TO SANCTIFY AND ENDORSE THOSE DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS WHICH ARE ACCORDING TO HIS WILL AND PURPOSE.**
3. **OPPORTUNITIES BECOME AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO REFLECT GOD'S WILL AND MINDSET.**

B. SAMSON WAS A YOUNG MAN WHO RECOGNIZED EARLY THAT HE HAD SPECIAL PHYSICAL GIFTS.

1. **HOWEVER, SAMSON HAD A FASCINATION FOR WOMEN OF THE PHILISTINE RACE OR OFF-LIMITS TO THE MEN OF ISRAEL.**
2. **SAMSON HAD BEEN GIVEN STRENGTH BUT THE STRENGTH WAS TO BE USED IN WAYS THAT PLEASED GOD.**
3. **BECAUSE SAMSON CHOSE TO USE HIS SPECIAL GIFT OUTSIDE OF THE WILL OF GOD HE AWOKE ONE MORNING TO FIND HIMSELF WITHOUT HIS SPECIAL GIFT.**
4. **HE BECAME JUST AS EVERY MAN NO MORE OR NO LESS.**
5. **SAMSON'S SITUATION LETS US KNOW THAT GOD GIVES US SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT ALLOWS US TO ENJOY THEM AS LONG AS WE USED THEM IN WAYS THAT PLEASED HIM.**

C. YOUTH TODAY SHOULD BE AWARE THAT WE PLEASE GOD WHEN WE LIVE OUR LIVES THAT ARE ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.

1. **THEREFORE EACH YOUNG MAN OR WOMAN SHOULD ASK GOD FOR GUIDANCE TO DETERMINE HIS WILL.**
2. **IF WE LIVE ACCORDING TO HIS WILL WE WILL OPEN UP TO GREAT OPPORTUNITIES.**

III. YOUTH SHOULD LISTEN UP:

A. A LARGE PART OF THE REASON SO MANY YOUNG MEN ARE “SAGGING” IS BECAUSE THEY BEEN LISTENING TO THE WRONG PERSON, SATAN.

1. **FOR THE MOST PART “SAGGING MENTALITY” IS BEING PROMOTED BY ENEMIES OF OUR COMMUNITY WHO PROFIT FROM MARKETING TO US AT OUR EXPENSE.**
2. **THE IDEA IS TO PROMOTE THE WEAKNESSES AMONG US AS EXAMPLES THAT REPRESENT US ALL.**

B. OUR YOUTH SHOULD LISTEN TO THE RIGHT VOICES.

1. **WHO TOLD THEM THERE WERE NO BLACK MEN?**
2. **WHY DID YOU BELIEVE IT WHEN YOU LOOK AROUND AND SEE MEN DRIVING CABS, BUSES, WORKING IN OFFICES, HOLDING POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT, WORKING IN HIGH FINANCE AND MAKING LIFE AND DEATH DECISIONS ACROSS THIS NATION?**
3. **WHO TOLD YOU THERE WERE NO BLACK MEN?**

4. **WHO TOLD YOU THAT A BLACK MAN AIN'T NOTHING?**
5. **WHY DID YOU BELIEVE THAT WHEN THE LEGACY OF NEARLY EVERY BLACK FAMILY INCLUDES STORIES OF FATHERS AND GRANDFATHERS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES ON FARMS, SERVING AS PULLMAN PORTERS, BUTLERS, JANITORS, TEACHERS, PREACHERS AND PROFESSIONALS TO KEEP THEIR FAMILIES TOGETHER?**

C. WHO TOLD BLACK YOUTH THAT ALL THEY NEED TO SUCCEED IN LIFE IS ATHLETIC SKILL?

1. **WHY DO YOU CONTINUE TO BELIEVE WHEN YOU KNOW NEARLY EVERY NBA OR NFL SUPERSTAR HAS A COLLEGE EDUCATION AN EVEN THE RAPPER MASTER P, WAS ON OF THE SMARTEST STUDENTS IN HIS HIGH SCHOOL CLASS?**
2. **YOUTH MUST LISTEN UP TO HEAR THE VOICES THAT WILL RAISE THEM UP TO A HIGHER LEVEL THAT CAN NOT BE ACHIEVED WITH THEIR PANTS DOWN.**

IV. WE MUST LIFT UP EXPECTATIONS.

A. A NEW COUNTER CULTURE HAS DEVELOPED OVER THE CALLED HIP HOP.

1. **IT IS A MUSIC DRIVEN VOICE OF YOUTH REBELLION THAT REFLECTS A LANGUAGE, CULTURE, FASHION AND HAIRSTYLE THAT IS COUNTER TO MAINSTREAM INFLUENCES.**

B. THE NEW COUNTER CULTURE ATTEMPTS TO TEACH YOUTH TO GO AGAINST MAINSTREAM CULTURAL STANDARDS.

1. **IF, FOR EXAMPLE, BOYS ARE EXPECTED TO WEAR THEIR PANTS FITTED ON THEIR WAISTS, HIP HOP URGES THEM TO WEAR THEM LOOSE ON THEIR HIPS.**
2. **INSTEAD OF WEARING SHIRTTAILS IN, HIP HOP SUGGESTS THAT THEY WEAR THEM OUT.**
3. **INSTEAD OF BUCKLING BELTS, HIP HOP SUGGESTS THEY BE WORN UNBUCKLED OR NO BELTS AT ALL.**
4. **SINCE IT IS EXPECTED THAT MEN DO NOT WEAR EARRINGS, HIP HOP SUGGESTS THE MEN WEAR EARRINGS.**
5. **RATHER THAN TAKE HATS OFF IN THE BUILDING, HIP HOP SUGGESTS THAT THEY KEEP HATS ON, AND TURN THEM BACKWARDS.**

C. THE CIGARETTE AND ALCOHOL HAVE TARGETED AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH AS EASY PREY AND HAVE FINANCE MANY SEGMENTS OF THE HIP HOP MOVEMENT.

1. **ALCOHOL COMPANIES WHO INFLUENCE YOUTH TO DRINK SECRETLY BACK MANY OF THE RAPPERS.**
2. **THE RAP GROUP 8-BALL IS BACKED BY EIGHT BALL OLD ENGLISH 800 MALT LIQUOR;**
3. **ICE CUB WAS PROMOTED BY ST. IVES MALT LIQUOR,**
4. **AND IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN SNOOP DOG STARTED SINGING ABOUT THE JOYS OF “GIN AND JUICE” THAT PACKAGES GIN AND JUICE**

BEGAN SHOWING UP IN LIQUOR STORES
AROUND THE COUNTRY.

- D. EVEN SADDER, HUNDRED OF THOUSANDS OF YOUTH ARE GRADUATING FROM HIP HOP TO LEVELS IN WHICH THEY MUST PROVE THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING TO PROVE THAT THEY HAVE THE "JUICE" OR ULTIMATE COURAGE.
1. THIS INCLUDES, DRUGS, PROMISCUITY, EVEN MURDER.
 2. SATAN HAS A GRIP ON MILLIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PRESENT AGE WHO ARE CAUGHT UP SO TIGHT THEY CANNOT TURN LOOSE.
 3. YET WE ARE BEING CALLED TO GIRD UP OUR LOINS AND LIFT UP OUR MINDS SO THAT WE CAN MOVE TO A HIGHER LEVEL BEYOND WHAT THE HIP HOP WORLD IS OFFERING.

CONCLUSION

- A. FINALLY, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT AS WE PULL UP OR GIRD OUR LOINS; WE GET CLOSER TO GOD, REGARDLESS OF OUR AGE.
1. WE ARE NEVER TOO YOUNG TO PULL UP OUR PANTS OR TO GET CLOSER TO OUR LORD.
- B. THERE ARE MANY YOUTH WHO LIVE WITH A PANTS DOWN MENTALITY, BUT MOST CHRISTIAN YOUTH ARE TRYING TO LIVE UP AND LOOK UP TO JESUS RATHER THAN LOOKING DOWN ON THE GROUND WITH THEIR PANTS DOWN.
1. THE CHRISTIAN YOUTH IS AN EXAMPLE IN CHRISTIAN CONVERSATION IN THE WORDS THEY USE AND JOKES THEY TELL.

2. **THE CHRISTIAN YOUTH IS WILLING TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP OTHERS OUT OF LOVE WITHOUT ASKING “WHAT AM I GOING TO GET OUR OF IT?”**
3. **THE CHRISTIAN YOUTH IS GUIDED BY WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED ABOUT GOD FROM SUNDAY SCHOOL, BIBLE STUDY AND PERSONAL DEVOTION.**
4. **WHEN IT COMES TO LIVING THE GODLY LIFE, HIS MIND IS UP AND HIS PANTS ARE UP!**
5. **WHEN IT COMES TO PRAISING GOD FOR HIS GOODNESS, HIS PRAISE IS UP AND HIS PANTS ARE UP.**
6. **YOUTH WANT TO GIVE GOD PRAISE FOR KEEPING HIS HAND ON THEIR PLANS.**
7. **IF YOU HAVE MADE ADVANCEMENTS IN EDUCATION, IT WAS GOD’S HAND IN THE PLAN.**

C. IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO PULL THEM UP.

1. **IF YOU HAVE MADE CAREER ADVANCEMENTS, IT WAS GOD’S HAND IN THE PLAN.**
2. **IF YOU HAVE MADE ACHIEVED FAMILY GOALS, IT WAS GOD’S HAND IN THE PLAN.**

D. WHEN GOD’S HAND IS IN THE PLAN...

1. **THE WORLD MAY KICK YOU DOWN, BUT GOD WILL PICK YOU UP!**
2. **THE WORLD MAY STRIKE YOU OUT, BUT GOD WILL GIVE YOU A HOME RUN!**
3. **THE WORLD MAY THINK YOU ARE A LOSER, BUT GOD WILL MAKE YOU A WINNER!**

4. **THE WORLD MAY THINK YOU ARE WEAK, BUT GOD WILL MAKE YOU STRONG!**

E. WHEN GOD'S HAND IS IN THE PLAN THE IMPOSSIBLE BECOMES POSSIBLE!

1. **WHEN GOD'S HAND IS IN THE PLAN, THE IMPROBABLE BECOME PROBABLE!**
2. **WHEN GOD'S HAND IS IN THE PLAN, THE UNTHINKABLE BECOME THINKABLE!**
3. **IT'S THE SAME HAND THE CARRIED AN OLD RUGGED CROSS TO CALVARY ONE DAY!**
4. **THE WORLD INTENDED IT FOR BAD, BUT GOD HAD A HAND IN THE PLAN...AND EARLY SUNDAY MORNING, HE AROSE FROM THE GRAVE WITH ALL POWER!**
5. **ALL POWER IN HIS HANDS!**