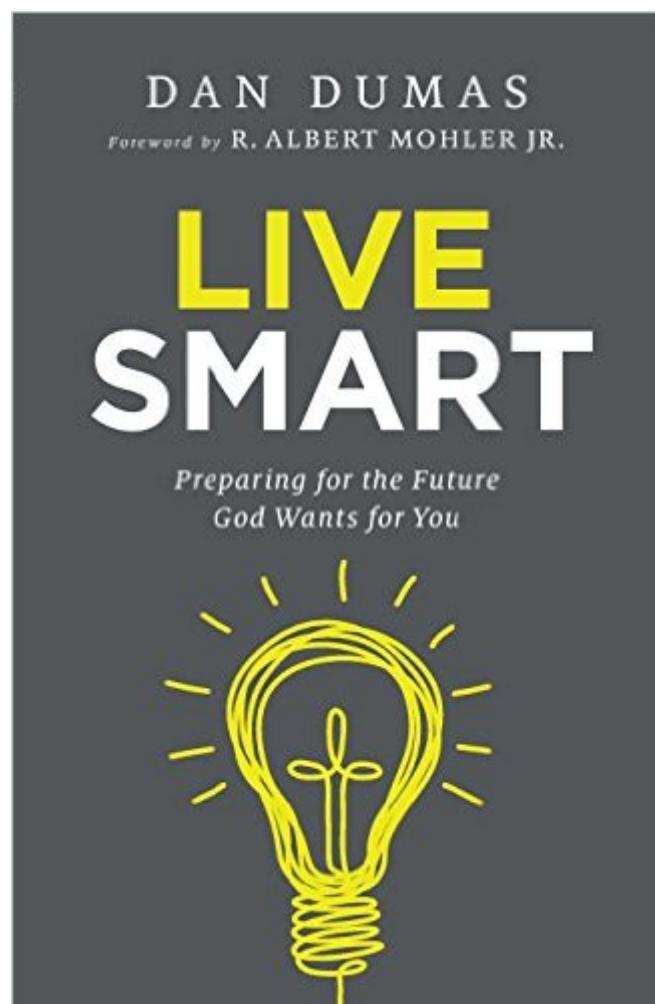


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# Live Smart: Preparing For The Future God Wants For You



## **Synopsis**

A Guide to Living Wisely While You're YoungAs a professor and youth director, author Dan Dumas has seen that young people have high expectations for themselves. They want their lives to matter, and there's no reason our expectations for them should be any different. This book presents practical tools and biblical advice to middle school and high school-aged readers so they can make the most of their youth. It covers everything from making the right friendships to how to think about education and how to invest in their relationships with God. The habits a person forms when they're young can last a lifetime--now's the time to make it count. This book is ideal for parents and youth pastors to give to young people to read on their own or study in groups.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Based on all the reviews I found, this book was supposed to be appropriate for kids as young as middle school age. However, do know that an entire chapter is devoted to sexual immorality. Had I known that, I never would've bought it for my child. I wish that were listed somewhere. The rest of the book seems very overwhelming for a new Christian. Maybe if you've been a strong one for years, the ideas in this book are a breeze. But depending on your current spiritual state, this could come across as a crushing burden. One could come away thinking, "wow, there's absolutely no way I can do everything in this book. Guess I'm not cut out to be a real or strong Christian." I was looking for something like 7 Highly Effective Habits for Teens, but from a Christian perspective. I wanted some tangible, easy to reach goals...not this deeply complicated, you've got to work to earn your faith stuff. Not for me or my kids.

Dan is a fantastic author and an even better practitioner. He has invested in countless lives throughout his time at Southern Seminary and has managed to distill his core principles into one, digestible volume. Buy this book.

I enjoy books that focus on teaching others on how to experience God from a biblical perspective and this book does just that. Simple chapters that revolve around life's questions and struggles while gently shepherding the reader to the biblical answer. Great for both youth and adults and a book to be read every year!

[Note: This book was provided free of charge by Bethany House Publishers in exchange for an honest review.] I must admit that I do not remember asking for this book, nor had I heard anything about its author beforehand, but this book was a very pleasant surprise and a book to warmly recommend and apply. With a mixture of self-effacing wit, confidence, and scriptural backing, the author has written a guide to practical Christianity for fairly young Christians with an eye towards encouraging them to be leaders in faith, service, friendship, and evangelism. Containing a blend of humorous personal anecdotes and a restrained but confessional honesty about his own personal background along with quotes from other Christian leaders (besides a goodly amount of biblical quotations and citations), this is a book that is written to be read, at less than 140 pages not including its endnotes, and applied. This book is the sort of book that would make for an excellent graduation gift for a young Christian leaving high school or college and looking for practical guidance on how to live life such that one can be useful for God's purposes, and this is a book that delivers the goods with blunt honesty but also a great deal of warm empathy as well. In terms of its structure and contents, the book is well-organized to make its points plain. Opening with a forward and an introduction about a bear, a lion, and the reader, the book immediately sets up a combination of personal and biblical stories. The book is divided into four parts and fourteen chapters. The first part, "You + God," examines such subjects as the fear of God, prayer and Bible study, and loving the Church. The second part, "You + Others," contains chapters on submission to authority, serving others, seeking mentors, and choosing friends wisely. The third part, "You + Yourself," encourages readers to take more risks, work hard, make improving character of pivotal importance, fleeing sexual immorality, and embracing correction. The fourth and final part, "You + The Gospel," encourages readers to know the Gospel and also to speak, defend, and spread it, before concluding with a note of encouragement for the reader to be willing to follow God into the

deep, and be focused on continual improvement. Although there is a great deal about this book that will likely strike many readers as very familiar, the book succeeds in multiple ways. For one, the book is written with a focus on instructing its readers, including on matters such as imputation. For another, the book is written with such a great deal of humor that the writer is able to overcome a great deal of latent cynicism on the part of readers so long as they are remotely receptive to his work. For example, when speaking about himself as a young man, he has this to say about respecting authority: "On December 26, 1984, I stepped off a bus and realized I was not as smart as I thought. That day was my first day of boot camp with the US Navy. It was still dark when I arrived, but I could see enough to know I was in a heap of trouble. See, I went into the military because I wanted to get away from my parents. I didn't like having them tell me what to do. Well, guess what happens when you go to boot camp? They told us when to sleep, when to eat, how long to eat, how to dress, where to stand, how to make our bed, how to shine our shoes, and everything else. This may surprise you, but they didn't use soft voices and kind words when they told us to do those things. Here I was, running away from authority structures, only to find myself in the most structured environment on the planet. Genius. (49)" Whether one is looking for a practical guide on how to live righteously and further the interests of God on this earth, or whether one believes that someone else may benefit from such shrewd and well-spoken advice, this is a worthwhile book to read, and one I would happily loan to any young person of my own acquaintance who wanted sound advice told with a gentle sense of humor, and that made its point quickly and without any unnecessary padding.

Still on the search for quality summer reads for your teen? I have already had a couple of teens I know ask if I am aware of any good books for them to read. I think the new book *Live Smart: Preparing for the Future God Wants For You* by Dan Dumas, might just be a summer "must read" for teens. Dumas has been a college minister and currently works for a couple of universities. His exposure to young people in that age range has given him some rather keen insights into the things that cause them trouble, questions they have and more. He divides the book into four main sections: You and God, You and Others, You and Yourself and You and the Gospel. Each section contains several chapters, breaking down the topic into several key areas. His advice is practical, straightforward, but he manages the trap of appearing condescending or "preachy". I tend to tab sections of books I think are particularly well written ways of communicating important information, so I can think on them further or quote them in my work. This book ended up with quite a few tabs. I loved that he didn't hold back as people often do when speaking to young adults, but was able to be

blunt without being ugly. Comments like "Reading your Bible and praying is not about doing something just because it's a luxury. It's about survival." "That's greatness: being willing to serve others, even when nobody else is." will give teens and young adults a lot to ponder. The biggest criticism I had was probably that in the service chapter, I think he underestimates the abilities of this generation. He includes a list of ways to serve others, which is fine, just a tad generic and simple for teens who have often been involved in service projects they created that impacted entire communities in major ways. For many, it's not the lack of time spent serving that is the issue, but the underlying attitudes of sympathy v. empathy, personal spiritual growth while serving others and hearing and meeting others felt needs and their need for God that need to be addressed. My other two concerns are minor. He refers to ministers as the leader of the church when scripturally it is the elders who God put in charge. Also, I noticed he put the scriptures in the body of the text, which I love, but for some reason chose to put where they are found in the notes in the back of the book. Although, not a huge issue for most, it makes it awkward for those who want to look up and read the entire passage or read it from a different version than the one quoted. If you have even a relatively young teen who is beginning to think about the future, I think this book has a lot of value. Older college students may find it a bit basic, but honestly I know some "really old" adults who could learn some important things from its pages. It's most definitely a great summer read for your teen. This book was given to me for free in exchange for my honest review.

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