

Listen to Older Men

I heard from some secular radio broadcast that there is a website of young thinkers who continually post their thoughts. One of the major concerns they have is that they feel the older part of society is not listening to them.

A while back, I was traveling with some preachers when a statement was made that shocked me. "It bothers us younger preachers that we are not listened to by older preachers."

I have heard this kind of thinking in the secular world as well as in the ministry.

A few thoughts come to my mind.

Proverbs 19:20 "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end."

The Proverbs are written to:

vs. 3 "To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;"

vs. 4 "To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion."

vs. 5 "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:"

vs. 6 "To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings."

Most of Proverbs can be outlined following the words, "My son." In other words, the younger needs to listen to the older.

I remember when I left for Bible college, I was like the hungry bird seeking the words of these wiser, older men with a passion.

That hunger continued as I literally hung onto the words of my pastor, former pastor, and any older preacher with whom I could associate. The wisdom of age is irreplaceable.

One of the sad things about the recent years in my life is that there are fewer and fewer older men I can go to. I want to sit at their feet; I want to listen to their advice on how to deal with changes in America; I want their years of wisdom to guide me through the difficult issues. The older men are getting soft, quitting, or dying, and that leaves me with a void.

Rehoboam was a young man who listened to the advice of young men. 1 Kings 12:8 "But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:"

Listen to Solomon as he pleads with God.

1 Kings 3:7 "And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in."

vs. 8 "And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude."

vs. 9 "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

What was it that pleased God so much? Solomon wanted help in understanding; he was not self-confident.

I have sat at meals with great preachers -- every one a success -- and was not surprised that the younger preachers, though in their 50's, sat questioning and listening as the older preachers spoke.

This younger generation that seeks to be heard has bought into the foolishness of the devil. This is not new thinking. The devil had mini skirts in the 70's, then again in recent days. He just keeps using the same ideas that ruin lives. The crowd in the 60's won as they demanded to be heard -- they burned administration buildings and American flags; they staged "sit ins;" they protested the involvement with Viet Nam, the draft, rules, cleanliness, hair cuts, and obedience. They also gave us the rock-and-roll church and the entertainment ministry rather than preaching. That younger generation was not all wrong, but without the wisdom of years, they also gave us LSD and pot, the acceptance of divorce and abortion, moral depravity, and welfare. They now run our politics and courtrooms.

Sure, young people have some information: they are not stupid, but to seek to be heard when the world is filled with men and women who have "been there and done that" is absolute vanity.

Listen young preacher -- listen and learn.

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