



Sad Combination

Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days. (Proverbs 19:20)

I wince a bit when I see young girls whose parents encourage them to dress like grown women... when an 8-year-old is made to look like a 21-year-old. I also wince when I see a grown man

attempting to dress like he is in his teenage years...a 50-year-old trying to look like a 19-year-old. To me, such things are sad combinations, things that don't go together; or at least they shouldn't go together.

(Yes, there is a sense in which age is a state of mind, but propriety and decorum are timeless. Act...and look...your age.)

Back to the point...Getting older without getting wisdom is also something painful to behold, a sad combination that reveals in one's later years what did or did not take place in earlier days. We've all beheld it, and it is especially difficult to countenance in Christian communities. A person who has walked with the Lord for decades, and yet they lack wisdom. They say and do things you would expect of a new believer, of an immature Christian. Yet here they are, years and years into their Christian journey and they act like they just started.

Painfully aware as I am of my own struggles in this area, I recognize a few things at work when one that should be mature isn't. There is likely a pattern of failing to receive counsel and direction along the way of their Christian journey. As "life happened" to them, they chose to ignore or contradict the wise teachers God sent into their lives. Rather than hearing and learning, the one who has known Christ for many years but lacks the wisdom that ordinarily attends a long journey with the Master has often listened but not heard, received instruction but not learned.

Further, there is usually a string of broken relationships and jumping into and out of different churches...the erratic pattern of a malcontent that has yet to

learn the freedom and joy that comes only from mutual submission and stubborn persistence in staying put. Thus, after a long walk along this type of self-indulging, rebellious road, the outcome is sadly obvious—a person in their latter days who is not yet wise, who has not listened to counsel nor received instruction—a Christian with years in their calling who does not seem to have heard much.

What are we to do if we know unwise older saints? What if we realize we are (or are headed toward becoming) an unwise older saint? Well, remember that our Lord is gracious. He delights to give what is undeserved. His heart beats with unconditional love, and He is the God of second and third and fourth chances.

So, I pray for the unwise older saint, and I pray for myself as I sometimes recognize that person in me. I pray that there will develop in us the ears to hear counsel and the heart to receive instruction, and that God will still see fit to kindly and graciously crown us with the signs of His wisdom in our latter days.