

The Fruit Of Selfishness And Self-Indulgence

I don't know how or when it happened, but somewhere along the path to eternity I have found myself being classified as an elder statesman. That is what a friend called me the other day. My reaction was mixed...honored that someone recognized and respected my wisdom...but saddened that somewhere along the path I had become old.

I sure don't feel old, but I would have to agree that trekking the trail that has been my life has gnarled my fingers in such a way that, crooked though they be, they still point more directly at Truth than they did twenty years ago.

As a wise man once said to me, life would be lived much more correctly were it done in reverse order. If only I had embraced the colonels of wisdom laying like pebbles along my life's journey perhaps so much of my life would have been spent in more productive endeavors. Sometimes life is wasted on the young.

Both of my parents have passed and as I head towards third base in my journey around the diamond I often wish for an opportunity to sit down with them and let them know how sorry I am that I did not honor their wisdom.

It wasn't purposeful...or malicious...it was simply that life and the education system had systematically convinced me that I was so much smarter than they. My father gave everything he had to his factory job as my mother did all she could to ensure a better future for the five children that they sacrificed so much for. Only now do I so clearly see how much they gave so our lives could be richer.

I wish I had a week with each of them to let them know that I now understand their struggle and the great sacrifice that

they made that our lives would be better. I wish I had just one week to publicly give them the honor that they deserved.

Children do not honor their parents any more. You see it everywhere you look. Many of my baby-boomer friends are suffering through a period of loneliness as we journey together through the retirement years. My wife and I don't say much because we understand the unspoken pain, but nonetheless we are saddened by what a selfish, ungrateful generation of Americans is waiting in the wings to fill our shoes.

We have lost the idea of honor.

[Webster's defines honor](#) as *"To reverence; to manifest the highest veneration for, in words and actions; to entertain the most exalted thoughts of; to worship; to adore."*

The Fifth Commandment reads *"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."*

I find it illustrative that the commandment doesn't speak of love, or veneration, but of honor. It is so sad to watch the way in which our now grown-children so ignore this great expression of love. HONOR your parents. My how we need to teach that once again.

Somewhere along the line we have reversed the equation. The fruit of the self-centered infatuation that we have fanned in the lives of our own children have elevated them to a position that Our Creator never intended for them to occupy. Children were to be loved, trained, nurtured, disciplined, and guided...but never to be honored. A well lived life was to be rewarded with a quiver full of grand-children sitting at the knee of Grandpa. It was the crowning achievement of our life lived on this earth.

Proverbs 17:6 *"Children's children are the crown of old men;*

and the glory of children are their fathers."

A crown denotes honor. A crown is something that a king wears. Children are the crown of old men and women. It is a sign-post on the road to eternity...recognition that this thing called life lives on long after our days are spent. Grandchildren are the jewels in that crown.

Look around you and notice how many of your senior-citizen friends do not have grandchildren. In our attempt to create a better life for our own kids we have robbed them of the desire to show honor to their parents. The children of baby-boomers are not having children.

This is the fruit of the selfishness and self-indulgence that the fawning over our own children has borne. We dressed them in the finest clothes, put them in the finest schools, and went out of our way to make sure that they knew how "special" they were. We taught them to LOVE but not to honor.

So many of our faithful friends have been wonderful parents and they have sacrificed everything for the future of their own children. But now, as they cruise slowly into retirement, they are a cloud of sadness hovers as their own grown children have eschewed the idea of child bearing. Too busy living the self-centered life that we trained them to live; they are robbing their mother and father of the honor that they are due. A nation will not long survive the sin of self-centeredness.

Michele and I are expecting two new grandchildren as both of our daughters are due around the first of the year. My happiest days are spent on the back porch with a grandchild on each knee. It makes me feel like a King. It helps me touch the future.

I feel bad for my friends. They deserve so much more. There is no greater gift than that of a grandchild. It is sad to watch selfish children deprive their Mom and Dad of the honor

they deserve. We are witnessing the death of honor and we have no one to blame but ourselves.

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