



The Vanity of Aging – Ecclesiastes 11:8

Our culture chases youth with an absolute passion. So many products are marketed with the sole purpose of reminding us that we need to fight against the aging process. From skin creams to hair dye to a variety of weight loss and exercise programs, we put up a tremendous effort to avoid aging gracefully.

8 So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity.

My father began losing his hair before I was born. As a child, especially in my pre-teen years, I was not particularly kind to him with regard to his hair loss. At some point, however, the thought occurred to me that I might face a similar fate. Genetics being what they are, experiencing early greying similar to my maternal grandfather, has been received with joy as I would rather have grey hair than no hair. This is vanity to the core.

We all have our points of vanity. I could find hair dye for my beard especially, but would that really fool anyone? I'm not sure that grey hair is what Solomon had in mind when referring to days of darkness, but the decline of our physical selves is but a part of the darkness brought on by sin. Live life long enough and you are likely to experience many regrets and failures. Many dark days will pile up as we move ever forward to the end of our days.

Yet, in the midst of the darkness, a light still shines. Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). If we follow Jesus, we will not stumble in the darkness of the darkest of our days. Notice that there is no promise to eliminate those dark days, but rather that the light of Christ will allow us to see our way through as we follow our Savior.

Further, it is worth noting that despite the perception of youth that walking in that light may mean that we give up a chance to enjoy life, we know at a deeper level that the wisdom of the Creator of the universe is given to us not to dampen our fun, but rather to guide us to make choices that will benefit us in the long run rather than merely give us immediate enjoyment. A walk in the light may not seem as exciting, but stumbling in the darkness can do us lasting harm.

Thoughts for Reflection

How have you seen our culture's infatuation with youth ignore the wisdom God teaches us as we mature?