

Pk's Perspectives... Growing Old

I've been around long enough that I'm beginning to see how eerily similar are the early and late stages of life's journey. Think for a minute of all the times you were given, as a budding teenager, words of wisdom/caution/rebuke similar to these:

- “What were you thinking?”
- “Were you even thinking?”
- “You need to consider the consequences of your choices.”
- “Do you realize the world doesn't revolve around you?”
- “Just because everyone else is doing it, wearing it, thinking it...”
- “You don't like it when someone does that to you. Why would you do it to someone else?”
- “Choose friends wisely. They can bring you down or lift you up.”
- “Bad habits are hardest to break.”
- “Sometimes you don't get to do it your way.”
- “Don't wait until the last minute...”
- “You might want to drop that attitude before you come in the door.”

Are you smiling? Can you remember those conversations? Can you remember rolling your eyes because your parents/grandparents were truly clueless and by golly, you'd never speak such drivel to your future children? Yeah? Remember?

Fast forward twenty or so years. You're now the parent, the guardian of wisdom, the shaper of young humans. You're now speaking to your budding teenager – ***where are these words coming from?!?!?*** – and you sound a lot like your parents/grandparents! Humans haven't changed much over the centuries...the tendencies of adolescents are fairly consistent from one generation to the next. Which is why the instruction passed along to adolescents is fairly common.

Here's the thing I'm beginning to learn from experience. I'm just 3 years shy of my 60th birthday and I can already see the symptoms of what I call “Senior Adult Adolescent Syndrome.” Okay...that's not a real thing you can read about on WebMD. But I'm noticing that there are times when someone needs to love me enough to remind of the very same lessons my parents were teaching me 40 years ago! My boys help me keep my heart and mind, young and alert. They challenge me to think; to try something new, something different; to consider a different way of seeing; to stubbornly resist becoming the curmudgeonly old geezer who is so set in my ways I insist everyone revolve around my sun. The younger voices on our church staff remind of the wisdom my parents poured into me during adolescence. Hanging out with students helps keep my attitude from becoming self-centered. Hiking across a mountain ridge in North Georgia softens the rough edges of my personality.

Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Albert Einstein once said, “Do not grow old, no matter how long you live. Never cease to stand like curious children before the Great Mystery into which we were born.” Cya in Sunday School & Worship, PK.