

ISSUE

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BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

December 23,
2018

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Ryan Matney
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Cranky Old Men

By Kyle Pope

In 1993 a movie came out entitled *Grumpy Old Men*. I never saw the movie, but as a thirty-year-old (at the time) I could maintain the assumption that such a description couldn't apply to me—I was still young. Now the years have rolled on, and as David said, **"I have been young and now I am old"** (Psa. 37:25a). Sadly, far too often, as I look in the mirror or through the lens of self-examination, the phrase "grumpy old man" describes me all too well.

I don't like that! When I was a young preacher, many hours of discouragement came directly from the carelessness of cranky old men. How I pray that I will never be the



source of such discouragement to my younger brothers and sisters in Christ! I must recognize, however, that unless I am careful—unless we all are careful that is exactly what we can become.

Why Are Old Men Cranky?

They May not Know

Why. If I can look to myself as an example, the answer to this question at times may be “I don’t know!” Have you ever just awoke in the morning in a cranky mood? There is nothing that directly seems to trigger it. Nothing specifically has gone wrong—you just feel irritated at the whole world! That’s not just a problem with old men—sometimes “angry young men” grow into “cranky old men.” As Christians, however, we must never tell ourselves, “that’s just the way I am.” If my disposition is not what it ought to be I need to repent! If I can identify the problem I must change it, improve it, or learn to be content with it (Phil. 4:11-13). If I can’t identify it I must not allow it to take control of my life and discourage those around me. We men especially struggle with this. That is likely why Paul taught, **“Husbands, love your wives and do**

not be bitter toward them” (Col. 3:19). I’m sure there are *bitter* women, but more often we men just let ourselves simmer with a cranky attitude. Solomon wrote, **“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city”** (Prov. 16:32).

The Aging of the Body. Health can be a part of this. As the body grows older it is frustrating that things don’t work as they once did. The body aches when it didn’t before. The slightest effort, which the young man could do without a thought, leaves the old man exhausted. There isn’t a cure for this, it is just part of growing older. The wise man described this as when, **“the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’”** (Eccl. 12:1b). We should note, however, that just because these are **“difficult days”** that hold less **“pleasure in them”** does not grant Christians the right to wallow in misery and self-pity. Paul told Titus to teach older men to be **“sound in faith, in love, in patience”** (Titus 2:2b). I don’t show love and patience if I have a cranky and bitter disposition. Paul told the Thessalonians to **“rejoice always”** (1 Thess. 5:16). Peter urged all Christians in their faith to **“rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory”** (1 Pet. 1:8). I do not have **“joy inexpressible”** when I allow my heart to be dominated by crankiness.

A Changing World. Every generation observes changes in customs, morality, and attitudes with every passing year that are different from what they once were. The preacher of Ecclesiastes taught, **“Do not say, ‘Why were the former days better than these?’ For you do not inquire wisely concerning this”** (Eccl. 7:10). The reality will always be that some things improve and some things get worse, but change is never easy. This is especially true in technology. About the time I figure out how to use one device it is updated and becomes obsolete. That can be irritating! I don’t learn things as quickly as I once did. In spite of that, if I am not careful I can discourage the young if I make it seem as if “everything new is bad”—“the young are worse than my generation,”

or “there is no hope for the future.” As an older man I need to show those younger than me how to **“shine as lights”** in the **“midst of a crooked and perverse generation”** (Phil. 2:15). I won’t do that by crankiness or being overly critical.

Not Realizing How They Come Across. Several weeks ago I lost my voice. When it came back, for quite some time my voice continued to be rough and gravelly. During that time we had a home Bible study with the middle, high school, and college age kids. My wife and I joked that with my voice impaired the kids had a harder time knowing when I was joking. Things I said playfully sounded as if I was scolding them. Age can cause the same problems. An older man or woman may say something with the sweetest of intentions, but the voice seasoned by age, or impaired by poor health seems harsher than intended. This calls for consideration on both sides. I need to make sure my tone or manner doesn’t come across in ways that are destructive, but when I hear things that might seem harsh I need to give other person the benefit of the doubt. Paul taught that love hopes for the best (1 Cor. 13:7), as we act **“with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love”** (Eph. 4:2).

Grasping for Lost Respect or Influence. As we grow older, younger men step into roles we once held. That’s how it ought to be. In the church Paul told Timothy, **“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”** (2 Tim. 2:2). As our roles change in the workplace, in the home, or in the church it can easily cause us to feel unappreciated, neglected, or disrespected. If we aren’t careful this can lead us in some very childish ways to try and demand respect, assert influence, or regain some status we perceive to have been lost. That’s part of what happen to Saul. This once great leader

of Israel was so resentful and envious of the success of David that it moved him to petty jealousy and sinful efforts to regain respect (1 Samuel 17-31). Sadly, in many cases our respect and influence have not really been lost—we only imagine that they have. Yet, when coarse, selfish, childish, and abrasive actions are taken, that’s when we truly lose the respect of others. Snapping at a waitress in a restaurant, harshly criticizing the actions of a younger brother or sister, or throwing a fit when things aren’t done our way do not motivate respect. They destroy it. The young are commanded to respect those older than they are (Lev. 19:32; 1 Pet. 5:5), but we who are older are also commanded to act in ways that motivate respect. Paul commanded Timothy to teach that **“the older men”** should **“be sober, reverent, temperate”** (Titus 2:2a).

What I Must Not Do

When I was a young preacher, some of the discouragements brought on by those I perceived as cranky



old men concerned things they believed. In some cases, as the years have gone by, I have come to appreciate (and even agree with) some of the things that so troubled them. The wise man taught, **“Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise”** (Prov. 22:17). In other cases, what was so important to them proved to be nothing more than a pet opinion, personal preference, or peculiar perspective with no scriptural foundation. The wise man also said, **“Words of the wise, spoken quietly, should be heard rather than the shout of a ruler of fools”** (Eccl. 9:17).

I must be careful that in matters about which I feel strongly or in instances in which I choose to offer criticism to those younger than me I offer my thoughts **“quietly”** without anger, aggression, or assuming improper intent on the part of the one to whom I speak. I must make certain that when I choose to speak, I only push God’s word rather than my own opinions and preferences lest my words prove to be nothing more than **“the shout of a ruler of fools.”**

The wonderful example of Aquila and Priscilla teaches us so much about love and kindness. They did not blast Apollos publicly. They did not assume that he was deliberately avoiding teaching about Christ. **“They took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately”** (Acts 18:26b). If I must correct or rebuke a brother or sister in Christ, except in the most extreme cases (eg. 1 Tim. 5:20), I must not do it publicly. Souls can be lost by the thoughtless action of cranky old men like us if we are not careful! As we are so quick to win an argument, young and struggling souls may see our actions as hateful, mean-spirited, and contrary to the cause of Christ. Paul told Timothy, **“a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient”** (1 Tim. 5:20). While I must ever stand for truth, may God help me to always do so with love, and an encouraging tone, never allowing my own struggle with crankiness to harm a soul created in God’s image.



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