

The Experience of Age

“We admire the strength of youth and respect the gray hair of age” (Proverbs 20:29)

In many cultures of the world, but largely excluding our own, older people are respected and their opinions sought. On the other hand, many Western cultures have special homes for the aged, who, in general, “don’t want to be a burden to anyone.”

Joice and I are old (not “getting old”) and have had experiences that we reflect upon and, when suitable and asked, share with others.

Our experiences have been in other countries and cultures, learning languages vastly different than English, and learning from our mistakes. We have benefitted from colleagues and friends that are wise and have loved us enough to point out our problems and weaknesses. One consistent prayer we have made over the years has been for wisdom and understanding. Sometimes that has come more slowly than we would have wished; nevertheless, God has often responded to our prayers and helped us with many important and difficult decisions along the way.

During the present Covid-19 pandemic we have observed how some people and institutions react to “the new normal.” There has been resentment towards government and health officials, disrespect for their laws and suggestions, and a general attitude of “let’s get back to the old normal.” Many churches congregations which, in general, are not subject to government orders or suggestions, have returned to the “old normal.” However, some retirement centers and “aged” facilities have been centers of sickness and isolation.

Within our society as a whole, there is also a general attitude that certain things need to change. A few law enforcement or other agencies, for example, have not shown respect for minorities and their rights, resulting in chaos and confusion. Historically, we note that such patterns of persecution have often persisted until forced to stop legally.

At the foundation of our nation’s troubles is a basic disregard for the laws of God. And yet these very laws—the bedrock of any stable society—cannot be taught or even mentioned in our secular schools. Further, they are ridiculed and relativized in many institutions of “higher learning.” We can openly carry guns (with permits, of course) and even have given them to teachers to “protect the students” but neither students nor teachers can openly carry Bibles to classes or pray in school. We have seen the moral qualities of our leaders, like disobedient children, go into hiding.

Covid-19 and the forthcoming government elections take up most of the space in publications and we need wisdom in dealing with each.

Our family has been very protective of us and we have tried to be careful as well. We realize that God knows when we will die and how we will die, but we don't want to run (or die) ahead of his time.

There are some ways that experience has helped us in this crisis (and others). We know, for example, that we will get through this. As Max Lucado prayed (in his book *"You'll get through this: hope and help for your turbulent times"*): "You'll get through this. It won't be painless. It won't be quick. But God will use this mess for good. In the meantime don't be foolish or naïve. But don't despair either. With God's help you will get through this."

We have gotten through a lot of difficult things, but there are other people who have gotten through much more. There are also many who still carry burdens and a cross each day. For Christians, in such cases, we have promises to rely upon in the Word of God and a favorite is: *"For in all things we have complete victory through him who loved us...there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:37...).

You don't have to be old to believe that!

Karl and Joice Franklin
Old but not yet out