

SAGE ADVICE

Matthew 23:34-5 ... “Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth...”

Today’s word is “sage,” not the seasoning you might use when you cook, but in terms of wisdom. The dictionary defines a sage as a person who is known and honored for his or her experience and wise judgment. Men and women who have lived many years and acquired wisdom through experience, are a treasure we should honor and listen to. Their knowledge is worthy of being passed on to others.

Foolishness is a trademark of children in every generation since creation. When children become teenagers, they suddenly believe they have all the knowledge and experience necessary to live wisely. Adults laugh at the silly attitudes of teenagers. However, the span of years between age 13 and 20, is usually when young people make the most devastating decisions of their lives, decisions that are often irreversible and life-threatening. This is the period in which many become addicted to drugs, alcohol, and smoking. They often experiment sexually and terminate their dreams through avoidable disease and unplanned childbirth. Teenagers take dangerous risks in driving and other activities, become unequally yoked with others in disobedience to God, and treat their parents and elders shamefully.

Jesus accused the corrupt leaders of the Jews of rejecting his instructions and guidance by rejecting the wise men, prophets and teachers he sent to them. He told them their rejection of truth and wisdom would result in righteous people dying and that they would be responsible for that. How might this apply to our young people who reject the wisdom of the parents God gave them? First, we must remember that our sins affect more persons than just us. When a teenager rejects the sage advice of his parents and elders and becomes addicted to a drug or alcohol, he puts other people at risk and his behaviors while under the influence can injure or kill others. Second, becoming pregnant before marriage forces children to grow up without the parenting God designed, and that often leads the children born in those circumstances, to make the same decisions when they become teenagers. Third, the sins of children often create stress that produces illness or early death by their parents.

Who is this message for? All of us. Parents need to remember their own period of rebellion when they were young and temper their words, so they don’t push their children away more than the children are already pulling away. Young people need to hear that what they are experiencing – the sudden conclusion that their parents are ignorant – has been felt by generations of young people before them. We all need to hear the words of Jesus that caution us against rejecting the wisdom of those he has sent to guide us to righteousness. The Holy Spirit should be the one we AND our children depend upon for wisdom, and parents are responsible for teaching this to their children.

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