

“G” IS FOR GRAY (AND GLORY)

by Carl McMurray

Ecclesiastes is believed to have been written by Solomon *after* he learned the mistake of following self in his younger years. The picture he paints of old age in chapter twelve, describing them as “evil days” is not a pretty one. He speaks of dimming vision, stooping shoulders, trembling hands and hearing loss. The same writer, however, penned Proverbs 20:28 where he says, *“The glory of young men is their strength, and the honor of old men is their gray hair.”* Again, in 16:31 he writes, *“a gray head is a crown of glory; it is found in the way of righteousness.”*

The Bible seems to indicate that although accompanied by physical deterioration, old age (a gray head) should be a time of glory and honor. Age should be a crown indicating the wearer is worthy of respect. I say “should” be a crown because the truth is sometimes there is nothing honorable about it. Criticism, complaining, nit-picking, and fault finding is not honorable in a person just because they are older. Why does age become a burden for some while it is an honor for others? The answer is found above in Proverbs 16:31. The glory is found in the way of righteousness.

When one spends his younger years gratifying self and then loses the love of those things later in life, he/she is left with nothing. No container is more empty than one’s soul. When one spends his/her time in finding fault and criticism, they should not be surprised to come to their later years without friends or comforter. To have friends one must prove themselves friendly. Sadly, many show very little concern for others during the major portion of their lives, then cannot understand why no one comes running during their need in their later years of physical problems. Some older folks wonder why no one ever listens to their opinions or takes their comments seriously. They can’t seem to see that their comments are usually negative and people tire of always being put on the defensive.

It doesn’t have to be this way. When one walks in righteousness he will spend his life in spiritual growth, 1 Peter 3:18. When he speaks, his words will carry the experience and wisdom of years. This is much different from one who has spent his years dwelling on the mistakes of others. Others listen because they expect to hear something insightful and uplifting. They pay attention because they have seen the care and concern that has been exhibited for others. Love comes back where love has been freely given. They are asked for advice because they have shown themselves to be committed to defeating Satan.

Respect and glory and honor comes because of what has been done and said in the past. Simply getting old carries no inherent honor. That happens to fool and follower alike. Growing old under the direction of God’s Spirit however, leads one to wear a crown of glory. Give honor to whom honor is due, indeed.

