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INNER TORTURE (PART ONE)

We live in a time when youth is celebrated, that even in spite of we are a “graying nation” It is a time when one can enter into a clinic, wrinkled and “broken in” and come out looking all bright eyed and bushytailed, so to speak. Technology is available to make it appear as though time not only stopped but spun it in a backward spiral.

For many it would seem as the greatest inner torture is that of growing old. It is fought kicking and screaming. For those thusly afflicted is far greater than anything mankind could possibly throw at them. Each glance in the mirror is a grim reminder of the passage of time. But there is no need that it should be so torturous. Aging is a natural process, it should not be feared but embraced to a degree. The author of the 90th psalms looks at the transitory nature of man and God’s plan for eternity. “So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom.”

It is time to awaken to the brevity of life, therefore enjoy the time we have been allotted and press on to the goal. That isn’t negative is it? Now what would be negative is for one to sit back and lament that life was passing by and not doing much. Agreed life is short (James 4:15; Psalms 90:10) embrace that fact and live.

As life progresses, we should be able to discern within self increasing inner strength and maturity. Along with increase in wisdom, there should then be greater clarity of those things that surround us, especially with respect to relationships. This coming as a result of having allowed self to be “fitted for service” (see Ephesians 2:21, 4:16) Correspondingly the recognition that there is something and Someone that is far and away grander.

Notice closely what Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes as follows. “*There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him? For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy...*” (2:24-26)



Solomon goes on to point out, “*Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head. Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given you under the sun; for*

this is your reward in life, and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.” (9:8-10)

Life is too short and eternity far too long to get caught up in the trap of looking at life in a dour fashion. We will all get old, so what! We will all face challenges, so what! Each segment of life will present special opportunities and yes, difficulties. But along the way, life itself will present to the one who is willing, new and innovative ways to be of service to others. We must be perceptive enough to see these opportunities.

True the blush of youth may have gone the way of the buffalo, but that doesn’t mean usefulness has to wane. In fact as one ages new doors of service open. Why do so many put self into inner torture, thinking they have so little to offer. The key is perception. Is the glass half full or half empty? As long as we have life we must ever press on to maturity (Hebrews 6:1) We all remain a work in progress until such a time as our days come to an end. (wbe)

[Part-Two will be in next week’s Bulwark]