

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them."
(Matthew 18:19,20)*



SECTION 1 - LESSON 10

A HEBRAIC PERSPECTIVE

Elders, Our Father's Representatives

The Importance of Older Women

Growing Wise And Remaining Teachable



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Section 1 Lesson 10

A Hebraic Perspective:

Elders, Our Father's Representatives The Importance of Older Women Growing Wise And Remaining Teachable

A Hebraic Perspective:

Elders, Our Father's Representatives

***"They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green"*** (Psalm 92:14).

The Hebrew Bible proclaims the value of wisdom that's gained through years of experience: *"Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?"* (Job 12:12). The Bible emphasizes the spiritual, psychological and mental maturity of those who are older and have walked in obedient trust.

The Hebrew community of Bible times certainly didn't hold to today's estimation that the elderly outlive their usefulness. One thing the wise recognize: *Those who don't remember the past are condemned to repeat it.* How important for the young in particular to seek the wisdom and perspective of the older and wiser. Otherwise, the pits of sin that trapped the previous generations will cause them to stumble as well.

The *"counsel of the elders"* referred to in Ezekiel 7:26 was prized and eagerly sought after. Elders sat at the city gates, accessible to all who entered or left the city. There they made decisions for the welfare of the entire community. They also "parented" the Hebraic faith communities.

Even in biblical times divorce shattered families. God hated the severance of marriage covenants as much then as He does now (see Deuteronomy 24:1; Malachi 2:16). But everyone in the com-

munity realized that marriages couldn't make it on their own. A troubled couple could turn to older couples for help through problems they couldn't resolve. (This is a key feature of the Hebraic-style home fellowship—a sense of commitment to the well-being of all the families in their midst. This sense of interconnected community must be restored if we're ever to see a decline in the divorce rate among Christians.)

Were *all* older men respected and sought after in the Hebraic society? Not at all! Then, how did a man become a *zaken*, a true biblical elder? In his book, *The Masculine Journey*, Robert Hicks presents an insightful and practical Hebraic understanding of the six stages of male development. The first five stages prepare a man to be our Father's representative in caring for His children, if and when he achieves the final stage, respected elder.

Manhood is reflected differently throughout the adult life cycle. "Adult life is not static," writes Hicks. "It is a journey [a pilgrimage], and while on the journey the landscape is constantly changing... We expect our jobs, our marriages, even our faith to mean the same things as we get older. When we see changes in ourselves we think something is seriously wrong, rather than recognizing this is a normal part of the journey."¹

If you ask about a man's state of being, his answer will depend on what stage he's

in. Six distinct Hebrew words connoting “man” appear in the Older Testament—specific life intervals through which a man progresses **IF** he learns the lessons God intends for each stage.

The first stage, the **Creational Male** (Hebrew *adam*), connotes **mankind in general**, both male and female. Having been made in the image of God, humanity is distinct from the rest of creation. We are able to design, invent and produce that which began as an abstract idea and brings forth a tangible result. Due to man’s sin nature, however, our abilities can be used for evil as well as for noble purposes.

The next stage of male development is the **Phallic Male** (Hebrew *zakar*). In this stage a man responds to **the innate sexual drive** that impels and motivates him toward an intimate relationship. Biblical admonitions constrain him, however, to confine his expression of that sexuality to his wife.

In fact, a man’s true worship of God begins by *fleeing* lust (1 Corinthians 6:18) and saving himself for the woman he will take in the covenant of marriage. It’s through *not* giving in to lust that a man begins to learn true responsibility to God by denying himself for the sake of obedience to His Lord.

Men in this stage need help! This is where guidance and accountability to a godly mature man comes in. Pornography and lewdness in general are all too available to arouse desires that lead to sinful actions.

Males have 10 times more testosterone than women have. In order to stay pure and holy before God so he can serve His purposes, he must fight off one of the greatest biological urges in his life. The degree to which he learns responsi-

bility in this stage affects his ability to act responsibly in succeeding stages.

When the term *gibbor* is used in the Hebrew Scriptures, it refers to the third stage of a man’s life development, the **Warrior Male**. A man in this stage seeks to excel and to conquer. He’s **known by what he does**. In our culture this would generally represent a man in his twenties and thirties, and even into his forties. He’s heading for the top in his occupation, scurrying to acquire the trappings of material success and recognition.

During this stage a man is often so consumed with his work that he spends little time interacting with and enjoying his family. He may be deriving “attaboys” from work or church leadership for his effort, but his own wife and children are yearning for intimacy and connection that he has no time for. He may even grow angry toward them, thinking they’re ungrateful. He’s bringing home the bacon from his job and filling in activity slots in his congregation. Isn’t that enough?

Hellenist-influenced ministry relies heavily on this stage of development for its recruits. (Sometimes it even reaches back into the Phallic stage for youth workers to “identify” with young people and attract them.) Warrior males within religious systems bring the same aspirations of worldly success into the congregation: the “nickels and noses” mentality that impels corporate America to attain prestige and acclaim.

Warriors are to be found among the majority of clergy, among men who lead Promise Keepers cells and similar groups, and among leadership of most parachurch ministries. The Warrior Stage induces men to scramble for prestige — to seek to be “top dog.” Directing and

controlling the affairs of organizations are the norm, rather than leading through Christ-like humility and servanthood. The trademark of Hellenism—rationalization—justifies copying the world’s ways of success.

Eventually a man becomes a **Wounded Male** (*enosh*) during which season **God completes the wounding** that wasn’t accomplished in earlier stages. Only through wounding can a man be humbled enough to learn to trust in God in ways he couldn’t have imagined in prior stages. Through the trials and disappointments he faces in wounding, he truly begins to understand the needs of those around him.

Often a man goes through the *enosh* stage in his forties or early fifties, but we’ve encountered those even in their sixties *still fighting* to be warriors. Sadly, they’re bludgeoning those around them like old bull elk, trying to shore up their diminishing physical capabilities. To renew his flagging self-image, he may take up with a younger woman. He ignores the instructional wounds our Father is inflicting to build his character.

The wounding he’s undergoing creates deep-seated confusion and frustration. He loses the purpose, meaning, ego satisfaction he had in the Warrior Stage. In this culture, this misunderstood and mis-termed, “mid-life crisis” leaves him feeling isolated, as though no one understands his misery. All he knows is that his marriage seems unfulfilling, his children don’t seem to need him, his job isn’t satisfying, and his body is starting to fall apart.

Mired in a pit of self-pity and isolation, he’s unable or even unwilling to reach out to those who could help him see God’s purpose for this wounding. Many men lose their marriages at this time.

The *enosh* stage is like going through the “**valley of the shadow of death.**” And it *is* a death experience! During this time he must learn to die to his old inclinations and goals and practices. That’s the only way he’ll garb himself with humility. And, it’s an essential part of our Father’s design to raise up *humble* older men of wisdom who will shepherd His children.

God has designed that the wounded stage develop a man who is *totally dependent* on Him. It’s only when the total dependence on his Lord is complete that a man emerges from the Wounded Stage.

The severity of the wounding depends on:

1. How much sin the man tolerated in his past, *and*
2. His personal access to older role models in the faith, or lack thereof, in earlier stages.

The Hebrew term *ish* defines the **Mature Male**. This reflects a man who has passed through his wounded period to become a person of **dignity and integrity**. At this stage of his life, a man is known by his character, by **who he is**. No longer is he known by *what he does*. The competitive spirit and desire to achieve that once drove him has been exchanged for *love, mercy, compassion*. He’s now a reflection of our Father’s heart.

The Mature Male senses a renewal of life purpose. No longer a warrior, he’s able to cooperate with other men with a servant’s heart. His humility enables him to coordinate with others in service to Jesus. Paul’s words have special meaning for him: “*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves*”

(Philippians 2:3). This is the true understanding of humility.

At the same time, his dependence on his Lord empowers him to confront foolishness and practices that aren't of God. A courage to represent the interests of the Father grows inside him, culminating in the next stage, Sage/Elder.

If his marriage has endured through the wounding process, he finds his love growing to new dimensions toward his wife. His appreciation for her deepens, and they can at this stage be a highly effective team to help younger couples.

In particular the Mature male recognizes how our Father has always wanted to use his wife to teach him meekness. For a man to love his wife as Jesus would love her requires absolute humility. She is called to give deference to him as to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22,23), *but he is never to lord it over her.* This calls for mutual loving respect and cooperation between the two of them!

The final stage, which not all men achieve because they've acted foolishly in prior stages, is a man addressed as a *zaken* (zah-KEN) or **Sage/Elder**. *Zaken* means "gray-bearded wise man". He is a willing and available mentor, **revered for his wisdom gained through life experience**. Even his past mistakes and sins, and subsequent repentance, have been used to teach him wisdom.

An Elder is a man who has truly tasted our Father's mercy through forgiveness. And this understanding is what enables him to represent our Father in caring for His children with compassion. The apostle Peter is a striking example of a man who was fully aware of his past shortcomings, yet learned the wisdom of humility through them (see 1 Peter 5:1-5).

A *zaken's* guidance and understanding allow him to bring practical application to God's Word when others ask. As we noted in Lesson 9, in biblical times Hebraic elders who shepherded God's people passed along wisdom in the *practical* realm, not the theoretical. They provided skillful advice for solving current problems facing the community. [See our book **Christian Halakhahs: Loving Jesus Through The Way You Apply His Word**; and **Pastoring By Elders**].

The importance of an elder's ability to extend wise counsel and instruction is found in Paul's parameters for elders: *"Now the overseer [elder] must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, **able to teach**"* (1 Timothy 3:2).

These qualities took years to develop! The fires of testing transformed selfish motivation and personal gratification into selfless humility that cared for the interests of others and regarded others more highly than himself (Philippians 2:4).

A *zaken* taught through **interpersonal discussion** with those who sought his wisdom. What a contrast to today's expository preacher sequestered behind a pulpit as he carries on a one-way monologue to a captive audience! (Incidentally, the 4th century Hellenist convert, John Chrysostom, introduced the pulpit and sermon concept to church practice. From a Hellenist standpoint, only an educated "holy" man could speak forth the Word of God.)

In biblical times, arrival at the stage of *zaken* represented the culmination of a life worth living. God has always used faithful elders to lead His people. From Sinai He commanded Moses to call the elders together to convey to them God's plan to free His people from slavery. This

pattern of elder leadership continued in the establishment of faith communities in the Newer Testament. Elders were, and continue to be, our Father's means to shepherd His children.

Yet the entire functioning of the people as a body was not to be dependent on any one man's efforts or role. There was a *plurality* of leadership as each walked in his particular gifting. The apostle Paul anchored the foundational ministries of the Church, which were already part of the Hebraic stream of Judaism centuries before the coming of Jesus.

*Furthermore, He gave some people as emissaries, some as prophets, some as proclaimers of the Good News, and some as **shepherds** and **teachers**. Their task is to equip God's people for the work of service that builds the body of the Messiah, until we all arrive at the unity implied by **trusting and knowing the Son of God**, at **full manhood**, at the **standard of maturity** set by the Messiah's perfection (Ephesians 4:11-13,CJB).*

Through the interconnectedness of these functions, the body of Christ was being built up into the fulness of Christ—that is, *until* the Hellenist philosophers entered Christianity and exerted influence to establish a priestly class of educated professionals.

The Hellenist system of clergy hierarchy is called "**Nicolaitanism**". It produced a spiritual predominance of a priestly or ministerial order. The men who appeared to possess the greatest natural ability dominated. Younger academics considered "untainted by the world" were set apart to represent the people before God. No longer were older men who gained wisdom through life experience esteemed or called upon for life counsel.

Daily life and "religious" life were compartmentalized, with the former designated vulgar and profane, and the latter as holy and sacred. The Hebraic early Church, however, considered "sacred" a life which was walked in obedience to God, no matter what the occupation.

With the loss of the Hebraic roots, dependence on the Lord through His Spirit was replaced by dependence on the clergy to approach God for them. God's verdict on this switch of allegiance and trust is full of grief and anger over the loss of intimacy with His children.

Nicolaitanism, which means "**to conquer the people**", places an intermediary between God and those with whom He desires fellowship. We would all do well to heed the apostle's warning:

*But you have this in your favor: You hate the **practices of the Nicolaitans**, which I also hate... Likewise you also have those who hold to the **teaching of the Nicolaitans**. Therefore, turn from these sins. Otherwise, I will come to you very soon and make war against them with the sword of My mouth (Revelation 2:6,15,16).*

[For more on this very current topic, please see our Hebraic Article: ***I Hate Nicolaitanism***].

Centuries later, in order to undergird the Hellenist clergy/laity distinction, translators of the *King James Version* of the Bible used Bancroft's Rules of interpretation and inserted the word "*pastor*" in the sense of a clergy position in Ephesians 4:11. Most subsequent translations of the Bible have done the same.

Had the Greek word used by Paul, *poimen* (poy-mayn), meaning "shepherd", been translated as such, this pas-

sage would have kept continuity with the understanding of *zaken* in the Older Testament. The other Newer Testament passages that refer to the shepherding role of the elder, *presbuteros* (prez-boo'-tair-oss) would also have reinforced the biblical role from the Older Testament of elders as compassionate, self-sacrificing shepherds.

The inaccurate translation creates a false distinction between the Greco/Roman *ecclesiastical position* of “pastor” and the Hebraic biblical role of *zakenim*—“shepherding elders.” This manmade interpretation has maintained the clergy/layman distinction even in evangelical communities—certainly a division not intended by our Lord Who called for the priesthood of ALL believers!

As we've stated, a *shepherd* (Hebrew *zaken*/Greek *poimen*) was a gray-bearded wise man of leadership who imparted wisdom and counsel to a specific interconnected group of people. Before the Hellenist philosophers convinced the Church leadership to install young educated men as “pastors”, the earliest faith communities were shepherded by older men of wisdom. These men who had experienced God's forgiveness and mercy represented the Father's compassionate heart for His children.

The extent of elder leadership was limited only to those the shepherd *knew personally*. Never were elders intended to control and direct large impersonal groups as so many clergy do today. Biblical spiritual shepherds intimately *knew* their flock, and led through *role modeling* a lifestyle that glorified God.

Every man who aspired to lead the Father's children was called to personally role model the way of life others were to live. This required intimate ongoing contact with each among the flock.

Again, the crucial limiting factor of a man's leadership was the number of people for whom an elder *zaken* could personally render account to God. The Book of Hebrews affirms the interconnected responsibility between elders and their extended spiritual family:

*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they **keep watch over your lives**, as people who will have to **render an account**. So make it **a task of joy** for them, not one of groaning; for that is of no advantage to you* (Hebrews 13:17).

The shepherds of a faith community were the best role models of representing Christ to their extended spiritual family. An elder's marriage and family represented character qualities you yourself wanted (see 1 Timothy 3:1-5).

Yet these qualities didn't come via something he read about. Our Hebraic forefathers understood that a man is changed:

- **by intimate access to role models.**
A man changes by what he esteems in others he respects and doesn't want to let down.
- **by being confronted.**
Confrontation is an essential part of the shepherd-disciple relationship. That's why Paul directs, “*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are working hard among you, those who are guiding you in the Lord and **confronting you in order to help you change***” (1 Thessalonians 5:12, CJB).
- **not at all by education.**
Education only permits a man to acquire more facts. Yet, education is the method of Bible teaching that the Hellenists introduced—impartation of

concepts and facts. That's why so few Christian men truly *participate* in their faith by walking in loving obedience in a Christ-like manner.

Remember this key distinction:

The Hebraic-based Church that our Father is restoring depends on the wisdom of wise biblical elders to shepherd His children.

Writers' Note:

If today's church is going to regain the relational warmth of its past, believers must seek out and reactivate the role of older, wiser men as shepherds. A sufficient number of sociologists over the years have stated that when the U.S. forsook the three-generation family in the home, *i.e.*, grandparents, parents, and children, the destruction of the American family began. It has become an atomistic society.

[See Lesson 3, *Hellenist Christianity in the U.S. Today*, for more on the atomistic culture.]

Even Christians today in the United States are consumed with fear of growing old. Although statistically the elderly have increased in number in the decades since World War II, the 300,000+ congregations in the US reflect a paucity of seniors in influential positions of leadership and direction.

Christianity in the U.S. has lost its reliance on the wisdom and experience of older people. Because of the influence of our scientific, technically advancing society, many Christians don't realize how emotionally naked they are, nor do they perceive their need for the *character development* that the counsel of older people provides.

The magnitude of destroyed relation-

ships in Christendom is too great to grasp. The process has happened in such an insidiously subtle way since World War II that we are like the frog put in a pot of cold water and slowly brought to a boil. We were cooked without knowing what happened.

The Church lost much by forsaking its Hebraic roots. The people whose wisdom is needed the most right now are not in our congregations, nor even in our homes. They've retired and moved away to warmer climates to pursue leisure, leaving younger believers helpless and bereft of the wisdom of experience. Christians desperately need what their Hebraic predecessors had going for them. That's the only way they can stop assimilating the foolish, wicked ways of the world.

If you're a man, in what stage do those who know you well think you are?

If you're a younger man, what relationships do you have in place that are sources of mentoring for your life?

If you're an older man, have you made yourself accessible to a younger man or couple to share the life lessons you've experienced?

**A Hebraic Perspective:
The Importance of Older Women**

***“Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among
the elders of the land.***

***She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.***

***She speaks with wisdom, and
faithful instruction is on her tongue.***

***She watches over the affairs of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her”***

(Proverbs 31:23, 25-28).

The role of the elder’s wife was wonderfully articulated in Proverbs 31:10-31. These were qualities to which younger women aspired. With the guidance of older women, the younger could, over time, grow in them.

Older women were also expected to model for younger women the godly activities that would bless the needy, as did Dorcas, “*who was always doing good and helping the poor*” (see Acts 9:36; see also Proverbs 31:20).

The value of the older Christian woman from a Hebraic standpoint is found in Titus 2:3-5:

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.

The young Hebraic wife and mother was not expected to have all the answers for raising her children; she needed the

warm wisdom and counsel of an older woman. Young wives and mothers today need to set aside time to spend with those who have life experiences to share of their successes and failures with their families. Why burden your children and husband with mistakes you could have avoided had you heeded someone who has already “been there”?

You can easily recognize that the admonition found in 1 Timothy 5 is counter-cultural to today’s society. But this wisdom is key to rebuilding your home:

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and thus repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.

The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help... No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well-known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds (vv. 3-5,9,10).

These elements may seem inconvenient and time-consuming, but they give practical impetus to your faith. And it’s never too late to ask our Lord to change your heart to be available for these services that so please Him! Your acts impelled by loving faithfulness are the visual images that your children will remember as they establish their own homes and seek input from wise elders.

As a younger woman, what relationships do you have in place that are sources of mentoring for your life?

If you're an older woman, have you made yourself, and your home accessible to younger women to share the life lessons you've experienced?

Writers' Note:

A gradually increasing number of Christian homes are re-establishing the three-generation family and being blessed mightily in so doing. Some followers of Jesus live close enough to their own parents that they're able to interact regularly. Others who have moved away are finding surrogate parents for themselves and grandparents for their children within Hebraic home fellowships—extended families with older people mentoring the younger ones.

Most Christians, however, have yet to experience restoration of the importance of the elderly *within their faith communities*. If anything, it appears that congregations have become even more youth-oriented.

A Hebraic Perspective: Growing Wise and Remaining Teachable

***“A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct,
but a man of understanding
delights in wisdom”*** (Proverbs 10:23).

The goal for every follower of Jesus is to grow in wisdom and understanding to walk in His ways. But at what point should you realize that the truths and wisdom you desire to minister are being ignored, mocked, or used against you? Dr. Marvin R. Wilson has written incisively about the various meanings for the word “fool”—those who are *not* wise:

“In biblical wisdom literature the pupils of the sages and mentors are the unwise, often termed ‘fools’ (Proverbs 1:7) or ‘simple one’ (1:22). In wisdom literature the different kinds of fools, both young and old, revealed the *type of soil* on which the sages had to work. Perhaps as much as anything else, the term fool is descriptive of an attitude, bent of mind, or direction in life *which needs correcting*.”² (emphasis added).

Since there are more than one hundred references to fools in Proverbs alone, Hebraic thought revolved around discerning that which was pleasing to God (wisdom) and that which was abhorrent (foolishness).

Wilson has categorized five Hebrew words for fool according to their distinct characteristics:

The **Simple Fool** (*peti*) found in Proverbs 1:4 denotes an ignorant or immature person who is vulnerable to error but *still teachable*. The *peti* who is willing to seek help should be welcomed when he sees his own need for correction and is willing to learn and apply wisdom to a certain area of his life.

A *kesil*, or **Hardened Fool**, is stubbornly set in his ways: “*As a dog returns to its vomit, so a kesil repeats his folly*” (Proverbs 26:11). This type of fool so enjoys his evil ways that intervention by a wiser person would probably prove

futile. He may come to you time and again for advice, but never put it into practice. The *ewil*, similar to the *kesil*, adds insolence and anger to his unwillingness to change (see Proverbs 29:9) and will probably respond with quarreling and wrath if you try to correct him.

The **Mocking Fool**, or *letz*, is described in Proverbs 21:24: *“The proud and arrogant man—“Mocker” is his name; he behaves with overweening pride.”* This fool disrupts the discussions of righteous men and women and heckles people of wisdom. His arrogant pride keeps him from admitting his need for correction. You’d be wasting your time and effort on such a person.

The *nabal* is the **God-denying Fool**. *“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’”* (Psalms 14:1). His disdain for holiness closes off any opportunity for you to admonish or correct him. (Incidentally, this type of fool is no atheist. Rather, he has created his own concept of what he wants God to be, perhaps a god who holds no one accountable for sin, or who is so “loving” that every desire will be met.)

It’s evident that as an elder or mentor you must exercise discernment toward those whom you choose to guide toward holiness. How easy it is to be distracted and worn down by those who keep voicing their problems over and over and yet have no real desire or intent to change! It’s as though they want only to “empty their garbage” another time but have no real desire to keep their “pail” from refilling with sinful attitudes and actions.

Your heart’s desire might be to impart wisdom to try to change the hurting and/or disobedient. But if they’re deter-

mined to remain in their folly, your words will fall on deaf ears: *“Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding him like grain with a pestle, you will not remove his folly from him”* (Proverbs 27:22).

Jesus certainly understood the issue of dealing with fools. He constrained His disciples from dealing with the Hardened, Mocking, or God-denying fool by warning, *“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces”* (Matthew 7:6).

As you attempt to come alongside to minister to people, remember the practical Hebraic focus of imparting wisdom:

- “Simple” fools can be taught and are worthy of your time and wisdom.
- The “hardened”, “mocking”, “angry”, and “God-denying” fools must be cut off until they repent of their depraved ways of thinking and desire wisdom in order to change. In essence, they desire to hold onto their sin and refuse to listen.

The principle found in Matthew chapter 18 applies here: *“But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector”* (vv. 16,17).

It’s the responsibility of the person being mentored, the one seeking wisdom, to make it pleasant for a wiser person to invest his time in him. Otherwise, both should reevaluate the nature of their relationship. *“He who walks with the*

wise will become wise, but the companion of fools will suffer” (Proverbs 13:20).

What type of fool do those who know you consider you to be? What type have you been most often during your life?

Describe the older people of wisdom who have had an impact on your life. What character qualities drew you to them? How were you changed by your relationship with them?

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