

The Issue at Hand

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Have you ever thought, “If I only knew then, what I know now?” Or, “If I had a chance to go back and talk to my younger self, I would have done quite a few things differently!”

It is impossible not to look back on our lives and have regret and sorrow for our behavior when we were younger. Proverbs 22:3 teaches us that that the “prudent *man* forseeeth the evil, and hideth himself...” implying that it is more likely for a young person or child to see the evil, but then to plunge headlong into that evil. Never an excuse, but a command for progression of spiritual life.

As we age there must be visible growth in our spiritual life. Is there anything more tragic than an older person living and acting as if they were still in their 20s, someone who is never able to say, “when I was a child” because they still act like that child? Looking back on our younger days we can and should identify those sins and weaknesses that we exhibited, so we can repent and turn from them. If you are still merrily walking in the same sins you did ten years ago something is terribly wrong. And we should learn from the wise words of those who have walked this path before us.

The letters you find in this issue of *Beacon Lights* were written by a wide variety of saints, but they all have a common theme. They write about the things that they have learned with the passage of time that they would tell their younger self if they had the chance.

A letter to our younger self adds nothing to God’s word, nor does it seek to fill a void found in the Bible, which is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

Rather, what you find in this issue is obedience to the command found in 1 Thessalonians 5:11 to “comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also you do.”

Reader, in this issue you will find letters that are written ultimately not to the authors’ younger selves, but to you. The goal is that you would be edified by the honest confessions of aging saints. Read this issue carefully, as in it you will “hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end” (Prov. 19:20).

God’s people should not morbidly dwell on the past, always beating our breasts about the sins of our youth. With the apostle Paul we do not look backwards, but forwards. “But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13–14).

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