



What I take away from the death of Prince and Michael Jackson.

OK, I admit it. I listened to both Prince and Michael Jackson as a teen. I have always enjoyed their music. They are both superb artist and musicians that are very talented. However; when I made Jesus Lord of my life and surrendered my Life to him, I gave up their music for music that was more edifying to me as a Christian and would help me grow spiritually instead of feeding my fleshly desires and lust. Prince's music was awesome but his lyrics were just nasty and full of sexual perversion that is not biblical. But, that is not the point of this article.

It seems that rumors are now coming out that Prince might have been addicted to high powered pain killers and had overdosed on them. We all know about Michael Jackson's addiction to drugs and have heard how Elvis took a strange concoction of uppers and downers to function and keep up with the lifestyle. This ultimately led to all of their early deaths.

There is a pressure in our society to stay young and not to age because people will not accept us anymore. Because of this famous people often get hooked on drugs to keep up with the lifestyle that they feel their fans expect. Just to be honest a 50 to 60-year-old cannot dance and move like they did in their 20's. Because these people feel the pressure to keep doing what they always did on stage they turn to drugs to try and keep up. Why can't we just let people age naturally and except that they are not still 20 yrs. old? They still have talent that we all can enjoy. I'm not sure any of us would actually say this but, our society has put this pressure on all of us.

This same way of thinking has crept into the church and it is worldly. There is a pressure that once we become a certain age we are no longer able to minister to children and teens and we must drop out of ministry or move on to ministering to adults at a certain point. Many churches have fired their middle aged children's pastors in favor of a younger person with more energy and are able to relate better. However, there is a tradeoff that many are ignoring. Many of the younger more energetic people that are being placed in ministry positions have no bible training and very little ministry experience. I am not against using young people in ministry. I praise God that someone gave me an opportunity when I was young without much experience. What I am saying is why would you get rid of a mature well-grounded person that has years of experience in ministry for someone that has little biblical knowledge and no

ministry experience. The bible plainly says in 1 Tim. 3:6 do not put a novice in a place of leadership lest they become prideful and fall. Yet this is what we do many times instead of putting a younger person alongside an older more mature leader that can speak into their lives and train them in the things of God. Or sending them to bible college then putting them in an internship program where they can be trained, we throw them straight into ministry and set them up for failure sometimes.

Often times for older more mature children or youth pastors that are still effectively ministering to children or teens, there is this pressure that they will be let go soon. No job security, you're getting OLD. You need to move on soon. I have seen many youth pastors step out of their calling into an adult pastor position because of this. They were very successful ministering to youth and was able to grow a very large youth ministry. But when they moved on, they never had the success they had in their calling. Children and youth ministry are looked at as a stepping stone many times. If God has called someone to youth or children's ministry, they need to stay there until God says to move on. If, he ever does say move on.

Many times I have had people in the world ask me what I do for a living. I reply with I'm a minister. To that they reply what church do you pastor? To which I answer, I'm a children's minister. The answer is very commonly Ohhhhhhhh. Like some day you will get into real ministry. Let me say this! Children's ministry is as real as it gets folks! Many times when ministering alongside adult ministers we see more people saved and touched by God than the big name minister that is ministering to the adults does. I don't say this to lift myself up but, children are more receptive to the gospel than adults are.

If you are in children or youth ministry you are called and anointed to be there. You have that part of Jesus ministry while he was here on earth.

Eph. 4:9-13 says, " Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: "

When Jesus went back to heaven to be at the right hand of the father, He gave parts of his ministry to his body. Jesus was the Apostle, The Prophet, The Evangelist, The Pastor, The Teacher. He gave those parts of his ministry to different parts of the body of Christ for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Now if you're like me you're probably wondering where children's ministry is listed there. Well, let's ask another question. Did Jesus minister to children in the Bible? We most defiantly see that he did in the following scriptures.

Jesus raised the 12-year-old daughter of Jairus from the dead Mark 5:22-43 He cast devils out of 2 children in Matt. 15:21-28 & 14-18 He taught kindness to children is rewarded by God Matt. 10:42 He taught His disciples to respect children and not to offend them. Matt. 18:1-6 Jesus took children into his arms and blessed them. Matt. 19:13-14

So, we see here that Jesus defiantly ministered to children in the bible. Well he must have left that part of his ministry to someone. That someone is you if you are ministering to children. I personally believe that some are called to children's and youth ministry for life. Ron Luce was pushing 60 and was still effective ministering to youth with his Acquire the Fire events. He surrounded himself with younger people, but he was still effective. I think of many of my friends that are in their 50's and 60s that are still going strong in children's ministry. Now they surround themselves with younger energetic people, but they are passing the torch on to the next generation. If we get rid of all the seasoned and mature children's ministers who will be left to pass the torch on?

I personally know of 6 seasoned, qualified, mature children's pastors that were still very effective in ministering to children let go because of this worldly thinking that has crept into the church. Many of them wrote their own curriculum instead of using one of the many pre-fabricated curriculums' available today. Nothing against curriculum but let me ask you this? When your head pastor goes to write his sermons for the adults, does he use a curriculum or does he study and let God speak to him about what he is to minister on? I believe that some Children's Pastors are called like an adult pastor to come up with and give the children in our churches messages straight from God instead of always looking to something someone else wrote. Now if you use a curriculum there is no condemnation here. I realize that there are different levels of ability and callings. I also realize that because of time and other responsibilities and lack of resources that not all are able to write their own curriculum. The last 2 churches I was a Children's Pastor at I used a curriculum and made it my own for the simple fact that I was part time and could not do all the things Jubilee Gang Ministries require of me and have time to write curriculum from scratch. At my first church I was Children's Pastor at I wrote all my own curriculum from scratch and had a support team of teachers to back me up with skits and other things. I realize that this is not always available or even practical to do.

I guess I said all this to say Let's not think like the world in this area. America has an infatuation with staying young instead of celebrating maturity. I realize that there are things that younger people can do that older people cannot do, however there are things that older people can do that younger people cannot. Older ministers need to surround themselves with younger more energetic people that have creativity. They need to not think like an old fogey, if they want to stay relative.

Prince was 57 Michael Jackson was 50. Gene Simmons of Kiss is 66 years old and still does concerts and puts makeup on and no one questions his ability to relate to his audience or looks down on him for doing what he does. Why should the church tell people when they become a certain age they cannot relate to children or youth anymore? Now if you have let yourself think like a grandma or grandpa and have become a grumpy old person that does not like to be around kids maybe it is time to move on. But age in itself should not be the determining factor. Let's run our race to the finish line and hear our heavenly father say "Well done my good and faithful servant." Let's do what God has called us to do without giving into the pressure of the world and this crazy infatuation American culture has with staying young.

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