

## REFLECTIONS

*Thoughts on nature and the Christian faith - 9/30/19*

***"Wisdom is with the aged, and  
understanding in length of days."***

***- Job 12:12***



While I was photographing bears in a meadow in Minnesota, this black bear walked slowly closer and closer to me until we were separated by only a few yards. He was quite large and could have done me a great deal of harm had he chosen to do so, but I really felt no fear. Respect for his power and ability to inflict pain? Of course. But over the years I have learned a lot about these basically gentle creatures. I have learned the fears of my youth were based primarily on my own misunderstandings. There are signs to be aware of and situations to avoid, but I have learned that these bears are live-and-let-live animals, not killing machines to fear. We fear what we don't understand and seek to destroy what we fear. Wisdom and understanding should come with age if our hearts want to understand. I spent quite some time photographing and observing this bear. The bear approached me, I didn't approach the bear. He was curious and showed no fear of me, so I felt at ease to reciprocate. Do animals sense fear or danger? I think they do. Maybe the Golden Rule applies to more than human interactions. As we age, we learn that many of the barriers we have erected in our youth need to be removed. At least, that is the way it should be. Christians, of all people, should model this. Racial, political, ethnic, and social walls need to be breached by those who follow the One who lived a life ignoring those walls, and the life of Jesus was revolutionary because of this. It is puzzling to me that today the young seem to understand this better than those of us who are older. Wisdom and understanding should increase, not decrease, with age. So, what are we older people to do? It's really simple. Find a wall built on misunderstanding and then determine to destroy it. - John