

CLASSIC

STATE OF MIND

Hi. I'm Ken Jones, and this is A Classic State of Mind, with a word about "Waking Up."

I will tell you about the day I took *Jacob* to the doctor. Just he and I. A trip from the East Bay where I lived at the time, across the Bay Bridge and into San Francisco. I drove Jacob because he didn't see too well in those days. He still drove himself places, occasionally. But, he probably shouldn't have. His eyes were failing, and so were his reflexes. Jacob was the father of my wife, and one of the men I most admired in all the world.

And Jacob had old hands, because Jacob ... was ninety years old.

Jacob's age is important to this story, because as we drove to the doctor in San Francisco, I *noticed* his old hands. And my noticing prompted me to ask him what I thought was a witty, 'ninety-year-old question.'

Actually, what I asked him was, "When you go to sleep at night, since you're ninety years old, do you assume you'll wake up, or do you occasionally think you might *not* wake up?" With an impish grin on his face, he said, "One way or the other, I *know* I'll wake up. I'll either wake up here, or I'll wake up "There."

As we drove along, I sensed Jacob might be willing to share some of his life with me, so I tried to extend the conversation. I asked Jacob about the hardest thing he'd ever done, or tried to do. And the old man told me about a season in his life when he was younger; a season when he and his wife were raising 6 small children, while he held down a full-time job and at the same time was the director of the Penial Mission in San Jose. He worked five days a week, and was at the mission virtually every night for ten years. He said his wife often cooked wonderful soups and baked bread for those men who lived on San Jose's lonely streets. Jacob said he often took his kids to the mission with him, too; they would sing special songs for the men at the mission, or play instrumental numbers on the accordion. Jacob said he and his entire family were away from home almost every night for the better part of ten years. "That's probably the hardest thing I ever tried to do," he said.

I remember thinking, “*No wonder his hands look so old,*”. Ten years of labor. Ten years of sacrifice. Ten years of Jacob asking the Lord to ‘bless the work of his hands.’ A difficult work, indeed.

As we drove along, I began to mention lots of other stuff to Jacob. Not witty things. Not even profound things, I suppose. But important things. I told him that he was a most influential man in my life; that I had watched him and admired his humble walk with God. I told him I’ve known a lot of ‘good men’ in my life, but there are only a handful I would characterize as ‘great’ men. I told Jacob he was one of those.

I told him the sorts of things I wanted him to know about *me*, too, just in case, well, you know, just in case he perhaps might go to bed here one night and wake up ‘There?’

I will never forget the conversation I had with Jacob the day I took him to the doctor in San Francisco. I will never forget the day I asked him about being old, and whether he ever thought about ‘not waking up.’ If there’s anyone who needs to have a conversation about “waking up” in life and noticing what *really* matters ... it’s me.

I’m Ken Jones, and that’s a Classic State of Mind. My email address is: kenjones@classicstateofmind.com. If you’d like a free download of today’s thought, you can visit our website; ClassicStateofMind.com and you can download the printed copy there. It’s free. We’d love to hear from you, and thanks for listening.