



“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD”—Isaiah 58:13-14

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Positives for Older People: Appreciating Old Age, Part 2

By Graemme Marshall

If we live out our natural lives, one thing is sure: We will all get old. It's a 100 percent certainty with no exceptions other than for those who die prematurely. Aging has its trials, but it also has many benefits.



BIBLE HEROES WEREN'T ANY MORE EXEMPT from the traumas of aging than we are today. Isaac at 137 had eye problems. "Now when Isaac was old and his eyes had become clouded so that he was not able to see, ...he said, See now, I am old, and my death may take place at any time" (Genesis 27:1-2 Bible in Basic English). With his infirmities, Isaac thought his death was imminent; yet, in fact, he lived on for another 43 years (Genesis 27:1-2; 35:27-29).

Jacob had a portent of his death at 147, but held on until he saw his son Joseph and his grandchildren (Genesis 47:28, 33; 48:1-2, 10, 21; 49:33).

Much later King David, at only 70 years of age, was termed "very old" and had poor circulation (1 Kings 1:1).

His 80-year-old friend Barzillai said, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am today eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king?" (2 Samuel 19:34-35, New King James Version throughout, unless otherwise noted).

It is important to keep a positive, humorous outlook on aging because God designed the process.

Aging comes with its challenges—and they certainly aren't to be dismissed as of little consequence. They are a trial of life. But one that is part of God's plan.

What does God intend we learn by the aging process?

We try to counter aging effects by lighthearted banter. Popular anecdotes about seniors illustrate this: “When I bend down to tie up my shoes, I look around to see what else can be done while I’m down there.” Or, “These days my back goes out more than I do.” Or, “When I go down to the shops, I often wonder whether I’m coming or going.” It is important to keep a positive, humorous outlook on aging because God designed the process. And it’s not the act of a vengeful God.

Positives to appreciate

Aging brings maturity and mellowing, born from the crucible of experience. There is digestion of life’s experiences, an assimilation of loss and grief in life. We experience a loss of youthful vigor, appearance, health, career position and income through retirement. And there can be the death of a spouse, family members or loved ones. There is the realization of Job: “Naked I came..., and naked shall I return” (1:21). Paul explained, “For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 Timothy 6:7).



The aged have absorbed the “blows” and “wounds” of life. Some heal, some scar. The mature reassess their life experience. They often see they’re not going to reach their “dream.” But they also no longer feel they must protect some inflexible position. John the Baptist at a youngish 30 maturely concluded, “He has to become greater, while I become less” (John 3:30, BBE).

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The elderly know what works. They can make decisions with an economy of action. They can cut through much behavioral baggage by seasoned judgment developed from experience. Maturity means being less preoccupied with financial concerns and advancement. Maturity means composure, a lessening of the extremes of emotional highs and lows. There is less exuberance and less depression. The mature years bring a greater sense of being in control of life. Older people may want to *feel young*, but not *be young* again. They have too much self-control, ease of interpersonal relations and self-confidence to trade for a youthful age again.

Men in maturity

Older men become much more comfortable with themselves and their mates. Aging causes many men to accept their present place on the career ladder; it becomes “far enough.” They are at peace with themselves. A 60-year-old can comment: “I’m too old for politicking or infighting anymore, I just want peace and quiet.”



The shift of interest is toward developing skills and spending more time with friends and family. Mature men show more affection for their mates and value the part their wives have played towards the family. Romantic love can blossom and mature for many older people.

This is the beauty of committed love from a lifelong devotion. A lengthy partnership of love in facing good and bad times, means a husband and wife are real friends. Committed love over long years yields the highest return on this faithful investment. It becomes a marriage of advanced maturity. Looking back on child rearing, men attribute much of the teaching and nurturing to their wives, indicating they themselves were

too busy making a living. With less financial obligations they desire more companionship from their marriage relationships.

Women in maturity

While younger women are often vulnerable and dependent on their husbands, mature women are no longer weighed down by the responsibilities of family life. When children are grown up and leave home, older women have renewed energy to reassess and modify their lives. Many women look anew at the positives of their husbands and at their own personal appearance. They are more settled in what they like and dislike. They no longer feel the need to fit in with every fashion, knowing now what best suits them personally. Many develop careers for the first time, or pick up from where they left off when childbearing intervened. Grandparenting experiences bring pleasure without parental strains. Grandchildren are said to keep grandmothers young!



Physical positives

The benefits of regular exercise. People in their 70s and 80s can still build muscle by “pumping iron.” Loss of strength is often the reason why elderly give up independent lives. The human body was not made for a spectator role—it needs physical activity. With prolonged idleness muscles become atrophied, joints stiffen, bones become brittle, digestion is impaired and physical coordination declines. The Senior Games are testimony to people who late in life still actively pursue athletic and sporting competition. Exercise oxygenates the blood and helps release mood-elevating endorphins. Working on your health also signals to your mind an important psychological ingredient—that you have not yet given up on life and still have hope.

Pets. Because animals are age-blind and don’t answer back, they are ideal company. They aren’t a substitute for people but can lighten loneliness. Sometimes a dog, cat or parakeet might be a better alternative than a marriage to fulfil the need for companionship.

Generosity of spirit. Aging yields a greater self-mastery over emotions and attitudes and fosters an ability to forgive others. It allows more sharing of thoughts by letters, sayings and jokes—all things that help uplift other people. Old age should be a time that turns out better than you expected. A stage of life that you can truly say, yes, in many respects it is the best so far.

Inner peace from acceptance. Older people can be more comfortable with how life has worked out—perhaps having a greater calm about the things not achieved. Yet doesn't old age seem contradictory? Just when you've finally gained the competence to properly handle marriage, family and people relationships, you now don't have the health or energy to do so!

The Senior Games are testimony to people who late in life still actively pursue athletic and sporting competition.

We could be moved to ask God what's the point of it all? He might answer that your life is a preparatory stage for entering the Kingdom of God.

It's why the apostle Paul could disclose, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain... I am hard-pressed between the two; having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1:21-23).

Old age is the hope of a grand new beginning. And for the elderly the Kingdom lies just around the corner.

I Bequeath Thee—Hopelessness!

By Robert Berendt

The popular teaching of evolution reared its ugly head over a century ago. Of all mankind's efforts to deny the one true God, this was perhaps the most devastating because it robs mankind of a purpose in life and hope for a future.



CHRISTIANITY IS SUPPOSED TO BE BASED on the Bible, but many Christians have added to the confusion. A clergyman told me years ago that the first six chapters of the Bible were myth. Soon I found that theologians were removing whole sections of Scripture. Martin Luther is purported to have said that the book of James was a "book of straw" because it did not agree with his understanding.

Some Christians say that evolution can be accepted while still believing in a creating God—but that compromise means the denial and removal of many of the Holy Scriptures.

Wrong views

Wrong views of the Bible result in wrong views of science. Other Christians insist that the earth and universe are only 6,000 years old and that dinosaurs never existed, but scientific facts and finds of complete dinosaur skeletons say otherwise. And thus many searching for truth are confused.

Evolutionists are no less guilty. They took scientific fact and extrapolated it to the point of being preposterous. The denial of a designer in the face of undeniable evidence of the greatest perfection in the creation (such as the intricate DNA molecule) causes science to adopt totally illogical ideas.

For honest progress and integrity, Christians should not deny and reject objective facts and truths about the universe, just as scientists should honestly admit their biases and the limitations of their knowledge base rather than extrapolate dogmatically or insist upon their interpretation of the limited knowledge base we have.

Many scientists, however, acknowledge that the perfect creation proves a Creator as its source. Albert Einstein wrote, “My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.”



One modern generation after another has felt the pressure of this conundrum. The result is that many (especially in the West) just turned away from religion altogether. Paradoxically, many would say that globally there is probably a resurgence of religion. But popular religious beliefs are based less and less on the Bible. In the meantime, they “sort of” swallow the “scientific” statements of evolutionists and do not worry about God.

Three decades ago I taught high school chemistry, physics and math. I made a point of taking the biology text and reading the introduction to the students. Nobody reads the introduction to a science book it seems, but in this one it clearly stated that this book was written and based on the theory of evolution. I felt that students should know what a theory is and what the difference was between theory and law or fact.

True science is careful to search for facts and laws—and to distinguish between that and theories. This was not done throughout the book.

The biology teacher was irate and confronted me in the teacher’s lounge one day. He asked how I could teach science and not believe in evolution. I asked him how he as a scientist could teach from an unproven theory as though it were true science, law and a fact. The conversation ended abruptly.

The Bible does not teach evolution. It teaches creation. The Bible also does not teach that the universe and earth were created 6,000 years ago.

The Bible does not teach evolution. It teaches creation. However, the Bible does not teach that the universe and earth were created 6,000 years ago. There are many areas on which the Bible has little to say. Religious writers have made huge blunders in their comments. Paul directs Timothy to avoid vain babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge (“science” in the King James Version) because it caused people to stray from the faith (1 Timothy 6:20-21). Christians need have no fear in the study of science. It is in the area of speculation and “maybes” that we all need to exercise great care—both scientists and theologians. Honesty and humility are the best policy for all.

There has been an ongoing attempt to cause mankind to stray from the belief in the true God and Creator. We dismiss this invisible force and thus become disciples of the way that leads away from truth and from God. God’s Word is truth (John 17:17). Truth gives freedom and improves the quality of life (John 8:32). In John 14:1-7, Jesus tells us that He is the way and the truth—which leads to eternal life. God offers hope to mankind. This is the only hope that gives a purpose to life and a goal for mankind.

Evolution denies a future and a purpose. Where God offers hope, evolution offers hopelessness. It is amazing that mankind chooses to lean toward hopelessness. Fine minds in the humanist school of thought would have mankind accidentally arising within a vacuum of hope and purpose, and living a noble life simply for the sake of doing so.

The need for a hope

We do not seem to recognize the need for hope in a human being. Hebrews 6:19 proclaims hope as the “anchor for the soul.” God has provided much evidence to give us hope in His existence and in a future that He is providing for those who seek His ways and follow Him. Hopelessness is one step on the way to self-destruction. So many of our young people wreak havoc within their lives because they have no sense of destiny or purpose for existence—no hope in a future. (Please download or write for our free booklet [What Is Your Destiny?](#))

For honest progress and integrity, Christians should not deny and reject objective facts and truths about the universe.

Humans are deceived into thinking that they have true freedom when they have no Creator to look to, no set of laws to follow and no one to define right and wrong for them. That route has been traveled in various ways—with evolution being just one of those ways.

Each of us—once we are full grown and educated adults—has the responsibility to search and seek for the meaning in life. This pursuit demands a significant expenditure of our energy, attention and time. Optimally, parents and adults will pass their experience and insight on to the young, to make this search more successful. In this generation, the legacy that all too many have inherited is one of hopelessness and a sense of drifting with no future. That inheritance is oblivion in the final analysis. Your Creator tells you and me to choose life (Deuteronomy 30:19). Why would we ever knowingly choose hopelessness and death? That is the question for today.

Evolution bequeaths us hopelessness! God’s truth reveals the sure hope for eternal salvation!

Recommended reading

For more information, please request our free booklet [Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?](#)

Mercy

By David Myers

Mercy is not a word commonly used today and most do not understand it. But mercy is a word that should characterize a Christian and reflect the virtues of God and Jesus Christ.



THE DEFINITION OF THE WORD “MERCY” can refer both to compassionate behavior on the part of those in power (for example, mercy shown by a judge toward a convict) or on the part of a humanitarian third party (such as a mission of mercy aiming to treat war victims). Mercy is a term used to describe the leniency or compassion shown to one person by another, or a request from one person to another to be shown such leniency or compassion. Mercy is compassion or relief given to an undeserving recipient. One of the basic virtues of chivalry and Christian ethics, mercy is also related to concepts of justice and morality in behavior between people (Wikipedia online encyclopedia.).

Although the word is defined in our dictionaries, it is rarely practiced or understood. What does “mercy” mean? Most people only use this word with the word “no” in front of it. No mercy! Go for the jugular, show no mercy to them, etc. It is a challenge to understand mercy, but that is what we need to do.

God’s example of mercy

God shows us great mercy. The Bible tells us there will come a time of resurrection. We see that in Ezekiel 37:4-6: “Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD” (King James Version). Now this is mercy!

He resurrects dust, sinful dust. It says no breath was in them, but God gave them spiritual air. Verse 9 says, “Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind,



prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus said the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live” (KJV).

What does “mercy” mean? Most people only use this word with the word “no” in front of it. No mercy!

We need to ask ourselves if we reflect God’s character of mercy. If someone were to describe you, would they call you merciful? There are three essentials for us from Micah 6:8, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Merciful people will be taken advantage of, but merciful people know this fact and will allow it to happen anyway, knowing God will deal with the offenders in His time. So, to whom do you extend mercy? To everyone.

A few truisms of mercy

Mercy anticipates our response of repentance We extend it, hoping to generate repentance, but mercy doesn’t wait for repentance. While we are still sinners, God has mercy on us. Mercy comes first.

Recipients of mercy may not even know it has been extended to them. When you are cut off in traffic and do nothing, when you give no annoyed response, you are showing mercy. After leaving Egypt, the children of Israel continued to complain and carry on, giving no regard to their God. Yet God extended His mercy to them and does the same for us daily.

We never know what act of mercy might inspire repentance in others. We want to stand up for our rights, but who knows what small act of mercy can change someone’s heart?

Proper correction and punishment are acts of mercy. In the role of parents, a pastor, a supervisor or any other leading role, we need discernment. Discernment is an act of mercy. Sometimes we need to reprimand another; sometimes we don’t. Maybe as a parent you tell your son he deserves punishment, but instead, you say, this time you will not do so. This is mercy and teaches your child how to show mercy. The goal is to find the right balance.



The proper response to mercy is obedience. If we extend mercy to our children when they have shown disobedience, what do we gain? We gain not only their respect, but also the knowledge that through our mercy they learn the lesson of being merciful. For example: When our children tell us a lie and we ask them for the truth, when we receive it, do we fly off the handle and give them a harsh punishment? If so, they have just learned that there is no mercy in us. We will punish even when receiving a truthful answer.

Mercy is easier to extend to those who appreciate its value. It is better to err on the side of mercy. If we show mercy to someone who does not appreciate it, they may tend to shrug and feel us the fool for showing it. This can make it difficult for us. We may feel angry at such a response. Someone who appreciates its value will see that we are showing mercy and feel better about us for showing it.

We need to ask ourselves if we reflect God's character of mercy. If someone were to describe you, would they call you merciful?

In Proverbs 11:17-20 we read, "The merciful man does good for his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh. The wicked man does deceitful work: but to him that sows righteousness shall be a sure reward. As righteousness tends to life: so he that pursues evil pursues it to his own death. They that are of a fraudulent heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight."

God has given us a glimpse into His character. In Matthew 9:13 we see, "But go you and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.'" He wants us to have mercy and He is the one who has taught us how to use it.

From a sermon by David Myers, summarized by Lorelei Nettles.

Tuning Up Your Prayer Life

By Robert Nettles

Our lives can be an up-and-down adventure; but just as we make the time for checkups and maintenance on our automobiles, we must also take the time to assess and maintain our prayer lives.



WE ALL GENERALLY HAVE A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP with our cars. They are necessary tools in almost all people's lives. We like them to be clean and comfortable, to function properly and to take us from here to there without any worry. We make sure of this by having timely inspections of our engines, having regular oil changes and keeping up with general

maintenance checks. We always want the right tire pressure, coolant levels, etc. Basically we want our car to be working at it top efficiency.

In the same way that we're concerned about our cars, we also want to look over our prayer lives. We need to do a sort of inspection, as it were. An eight-point inspection would be helpful. You can conduct the inspection yourself. I will simply be identifying the areas and scriptures that can help you in your inspection.



Inspections points

Point 1: How often do we pray?

Acts 6:4: "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." What does "continually" mean? It means that we keep God and His will in our hearts and minds always and that we take the time to pray daily. The Bible tells us that it was David's and Daniel's practice to pray three times a day without fail (Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10).

Romans 12:10-12: "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer."

In the King James Version that reads, "Continuing instant in prayer." We should be continually in prayer. In whatever situation we may face, "instant" means that it should be our first instinct to turn to God.

Point 2: Where are we when we pray and what position are we in when we pray?

Whenever we can, we should seek a private place for our personal prayers. And being in reverent position helps us to worship God. Kneeling, standing and lying, preferably face down, are positions mentioned in the Bible. But knee problems and other health problems can make it impossible or unwise for many people to kneel. What is most important to God is our attitude of heart.

Daniel 6:10: "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days."

Daniel prayed on his knees three times a day, but I am sure that these were not the only times he prayed. Often we find ourselves in a crowd, stuck in traffic, at our workplaces or in some other situation where kneeling would not be appropriate.

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While it is ideal to get on our knees and show our respect for God, it is not unacceptable to pray when we are out and about in life. It would be impossible to be continually in prayer, as mentioned before, if we could not pray where we were at any given moment.

With this said, we must understand that prayer is a private thing. While there is group prayer, such as opening and closing prayers in church services, prayer is a conversation between you and God. It is not necessary for the world to see you pray or for your friends and family to know you are leaving the room to talk to God. Look at what it says in Matthew about prayer.

Matthew 6:5-6: “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Point 3: Are we praying specific prayers?

The Bible compares prayers with incense. The fact that incense needs to be ground into fine particles to burn well teaches the lesson that our prayers need to be broken down into details (Leviticus 16:12; Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4). It's logical that God would want us to go into detail.

When we repent to God, are we repenting for our specific sins or are we just generalizing? We need to speak on specifics when asking God forgiveness. It's too easy to get lazy and just ask for overall forgiveness.



God does not want to hear things like, “Please, God, forgive all my sins.” That's pretty generic, but if we ask God to forgive us for the lie we told our wife, the way we treated our children, the words we had with our neighbor, then we are getting specific. God wants to hear us express what it is we have done wrong. It's a confession of what is true and what we know we need to work on.

Mark 11:25-26 “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

We cannot have our trespasses forgiven, if we are not specifically telling God what we have done.

Many of David's prayers are good examples of how we should pray. We can also see this through the Psalms, where David sings praises to God for answered prayers. People in Bible times knew how to talk to God. From Moses right on up to Christ and His disciples, there are prayers throughout the Bible and we should be looking at them and learning from them.

Point 4: How much faith do we include in our prayer?

James 5:13-15: “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And *the prayer of faith* will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

Are we doubtful that God hears us? This is a lack of faith. We cannot doubt God and trust Him too. Faith comes through the Word of God, and we must study the Word of God to understand Him and also learn how to pray.

Point 5: Do we pray for our enemies, those who are spiteful toward us?

This can be a difficult thing to do, but it is something God asks us to do.

Matthew 5:44-45: “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Point 6: Are we asking that God’s will be done and not our own?

1 John 5:14: “And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

John 9:31: “Now we know that God does not hear sinners: but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.”

Matthew 6:10: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

God wants us to understand how important this is. God knows we are inclined to do our own will and not His. This is why we must ask for His will to be done and not pray according to our own wishes.

Matthew 7:7: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

Obviously, this does not mean that if we pray for a new house or a million dollars, God will give it to us. Remember John 14:13 says, “Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, *that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*” This is the key. If what we ask for is not helpful to us in spiritual growth, physical welfare and/or in glorifying the Father and Son, then it is not worthy of an answer. We may ask that our Volkswagen Bug become a BMW, but would it happen? We cannot expect selfish or self-centered prayers to be answered.

While it is ideal to get on our knees and show our respect for God, it is not unacceptable to pray when we are out and about in life.

Point 7: Are we including ourselves too often in our prayers?

Be sure to spend a lot of your prayer time praying for other people as well as for yourself.

While it is important to pray for our illnesses, our families, the needs of our friends and for other special issues we may have, it can be a problem if we are focusing on the wrong areas of our lives. For instance, some may pray to win a game they are playing. Some may pray that God will find them a job while they sit at home on their couch. When their prayers are not answered to their

satisfaction, they continue to pray for the same things, expecting, waiting and possibly even getting angry that God is not answering them.

There may be some few who do not pray enough for themselves because they feel it is too selfish. They do not understand that sometimes we must let God in on the trying times in our lives. The problem is not in praying for some of our own issues, but for the expectations and vain prayers people often offer up.

There is an article in *Virtual Christian Magazine* from January 2001 called [“How to Spice Up Our Prayers”](#) by Gregory Dullum. In it he uses the acronym of JOY. He lists it as follows: J=Jesus first, O=Others next, and Y=Yourself last.

Point 8: Do we take the prayer requests of others seriously?

Are we specific when we offer up prayers for others? It is too easy to ask God to heal the entire world and not focus on the specific needs of others. When someone asks for a prayer, we shouldn't just use a blanket request. We must not only give lip service to someone either. When we say we will pray for them, we must.

2 Thessalonians 1:11: “Therefore we also pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power.”

Prayer is our connection to God the Father. He is not a stranger to us; He tells us exactly who He is and what He expects from us in His Word.

This is a wonderful way to remember where our hearts and prayers should lie. Prayer is our connection to God the Father. He is not a stranger to us; He tells us exactly who He is and what He expects from us in His Word. We must not allow our discussions with Him to become mundane, ritualistic ramblings each day. God loves us and want to hear from us daily. We cannot pick up the phone and call our Father long distance, but what we can do is even better. We can humbly come before Him from anywhere we happen to be—we can open our hearts to Him and we can confide in Him.

There is no one truer than God in our lives. He will not tell our secrets, laugh in our face or take our fears lightly. God knows us better than we know ourselves, and we can trust that He will always be there for us through any kind of trouble.

So, take the time, do the maintenance checkup, and keep your prayer life tuned up.

Women: The Young, the Old and the Blessed

By Louise Owen

There are women who have lived and learned much in their lives—and count their blessings. Here is a thoughtful, almost poetic, message from one of them.



HERE I AM, A SENIOR CITIZEN—do you know what that means? It means I was once young. There is often talk about bridging the generations, but when you are my age, you do that within your own skin.

Whether we are young, middle-aged or elderly, we all share a common source and a common destiny: our Eternal Creator and His eternal Kingdom.

Firstfruits

As women of God, we are all potential “firstfruits,” but individually we are all so very different, with various heritages, experience and different daily activities. As women, our gender both binds and frees us to function within the unique framework of femininity.

My situation in this period of my life is one of advanced age, beyond caring for a husband and young children. But I am betrothed to another who will be my Husband—One we all share. And I also have many children of different ages within the Church. I happily anticipate the birth of others, and I hope their mothers will think to bring their babes near me to see them on their first time out in the world. I hate to admit what is obvious to all those around me, but it has become downright hard for me to get around at this point in my life. My legs no longer function in the way they once did. Still, I am grateful that our Father sustains my life. Life

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is still sweet and I have opportunity to learn, and to do those things, that are pleasing to Him. As His Word tells us in John 13:17, “Happy are you if you do them.”

Meeting the needs of others

Perhaps I will be with you next year, but one day I will not be here with you. I hope to leave feeling confident that you will continue to love and help one another, to guide and protect one another. I hope you will sustain others and address their needs when you are asked to help.

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A need of my own, which I am addressing at this stage in my life, is to read what comes to my mind. With prayer over each paragraph, I read; and with frequent re-reading, I have progressed thus far. I have written out what I would like to tell each of you face-to-face, and plotted out on paper what I fear could be totally lost. What shall I say? What can I say to reach you?

It strikes me that to be old is my best service to everyone who knows me. I am one of the “widows” the Church needs. They permit others to have opportunity to express care for those whom our Father so plainly cares for. Blessed are those who greet, assist and cherish the widow. I am also rather infirm. Blessed are those who hug me when my arms are occupied with my footing, who clear my path, who greet me as I maneuver my way to my chosen seat in church or who on occasion have saved that very seat for me.

I treasure those who honor my gray head with smiles of greeting, who give me kisses expressing pleasure in seeing me again, or who toss off a wave acknowledging that I am once again among them. Thanks to those who show me affection and respect when services are over and once again we depart out into the world, (or as much of that world as we carefully inhabit.) Thank you all for your love—to do so is my privilege. And my gratitude will bring its own blessing to me, so I thank you once again.



It strikes me that I should acknowledge the blessings I have received from others in my congregation other than women—their spouses and sons, who are our brothers. I offer a heartfelt thanks to all of these men in my life.

The gift

Our loving and generous Father gives us so much more than the widow and the infirm for whom to love and provide care. He gives us all each other in a spiritual sense. This is the gift of godly friendship, and there are yet needs in the physical realm that can sadden the heart or gladden it when those needs are met.

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The gifts of concern, encouragement, conversation and companionship all benefit the physical and the spiritual. Transportation to services is a physical act of great spiritual value. I have benefited by such service for many years of my life. My gratitude must also be extended for the many months a dear sister brought me sermon tapes on a weekly basis, sustaining me through a difficult time when I could not attend services.

I will never be able to repay in kind, as I do not drive. My husband once tried to teach me, but I found controlling a car interfered with my being able to window shop! There are opportunities we miss and opportunities we intentionally pass on. There are many such things that can be done for one another.

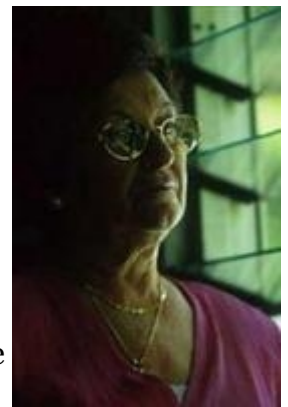
Taking the time

Some ladies I know tell me they seldom get cards or telephone calls. How much more delighted they would be by an offer to take them marketing or clothes shopping on occasion. Another well-loved woman I know has frequently invited members from church to her home, but was told it was just too far away. Hope deferred finally gives up. How many invitations can be refused before no more are extended? Striking while the iron is hot is a good way for “iron to sharpen iron.”

What would you like to do some afternoon or some evening? Skipping over the “dearly beloved” or “best friend” that you regularly socialize with, inviting someone you generally just casually greet or converse with would be a wonderful gesture. Keep in mind any reasons why your invitation is not accepted so that such objections can be worked around another time. Finally, be grateful to the person who accepts one of your invitations, and just have a good time!

As a senior, I am at one end of the bridge, and there are also others who stand by me, other widows. There are widows in deed and widows by circumstances. I should like to point out that there are younger women, with or without children, who can also benefit by efforts to broaden and deepen relationships with one another. They are often just as much in need of contact beyond church services, as are any of us “old gray heads.”

Let all of us grow closer as we bridge the generations with our friendship.



Letters to the Editor

[“Rekindle the Flames of Fellowship”](#)

This article, [“Rekindle the Flames of Fellowship”](#)—I want to print to send it to another church member. Do I need your okay to do it? Do I have a copyright problem here? I don’t think so.

— Lowell Elzey

You are certainly free to do that! We have no problem with anyone printing out our articles. If you wish to reprint our articles in other publications or Web pages, please contact us for permission.

“Was Christ Really Born on Christmas?”

Thanks for this article—very interesting. The whole Christmas time is a weird time for Christians! When we should be taking time out to worship the Lord, we are mad busy getting church carol services or Sunday school concerts organized. Then, of course, there are the Christmas presents, cards, visits, etc.

Keep up the great work

— Barry

“Positives for Older People, Part 1”

Thank you for part 1. I’m really looking forward to part 2. Some of these same things have crossed my mind as I age. As time runs out, have I done enough, etc.? A wonderful article, thank you.

— Lois

“The Law Mirrors God’s Character”

I have very much enjoyed *Virtual Christian Magazine*. The articles and thoughts are very good.

Tonight I found a mistake in the scripture quoted in [“The Law Mirrors God’s Character.”](#) It quotes Proverbs 7:23, but the correct scripture is Proverbs 6:23. I just wanted to let you know so that a correction could be made. These articles that you have given to us to read and study are great. We come home after Sabbath service and study them for many hours. I use the teaching that I received from Herbert W. Armstrong to “prove all things.” He told us to blow the dust off our Bibles and read it from our own Bible. That is how I study and is also why I found the error.

Thanks again, and keep up the good work.

In Christian love.

— Lowell Elzey

Thank you for the note and your keen eye. We have made the correction.

Some feedback messages are edited for space and/or clarity