

Growing Older

Introduction

Growing old seems to catch up with us before we know it. But listen to this story of a man's family situation that seemed to make him feel old in a very strange way. He says:

"A few years ago I met a young widow with a grown-up daughter and we got married. Later, my father married my stepdaughter. That made my stepdaughter my stepmother and my father became my stepson. Also, my wife became the mother-in-law of her father-in-law. Then the daughter of my wife, my stepmother, had a son. The boy was my half-brother because he was my father's son, but he was also the son of my wife's daughter, which made him my wife's grandson. That made me the grandfather of my half-brother. This was nothing until my wife and I had a son. Now the sister of my son, my mother-in-law, is also the grandmother. This makes my father the brother-in-law of my child, whose stepsister is my father's wife. I am my stepmother's brother-in-law, my wife is her own child's aunt, my son is my father's nephew and I am my own grandfather, and you think you have family problems - I have grown old in a hurry!"

- 1. Christianity is adapted for all rational beings regardless of sex, national origin, or age. Emphasis has been put on discrimination in any of these areas. In Christ, there is total non-discrimination.**
- 2. "Let none despise your youth" would one day turn to "you younger submit to the older" (1 Timothy 4:12 -- 1 Peter 5:5).**
- 3. There is a place for everyone in the church who is willing to serve God acceptably. He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11).**
- 4. But let's focus on growing old in Christ. Here are some things to consider.**

Age Required in Some Instances

1. **Aged women are to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5).**
2. **Eliphaz, answering Job recognized the worth of aged men:**

Job 15:10 Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, much older than your father.

3. **Aged men should become a stabilizing element in the church.**

Titus 2:2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

- A. **The very term "elder" means an "older man." (Vine).**
- B. **The term "Presbytery" (1 Timothy 4:14) means: "An assembly of aged men." (Vine).**

Age Is Helpful

1. **In overcoming the world.**
 - A. **Note the contrast in**
1 John 2:13-14
 - 1) **Fathers: "you have known Him who is from the beginning."**
 - 2) **Younger: "you have overcome the wicked one."**
 - B. **Time is required to forge strong metal.**
 - C. **Growing old in Christ, overcoming the world, is the process of maturing**
(2 Peter 1:5-11 - Christian Characteristics)

2. In Overcoming temptations.

A. Temptation is the common lot of man.

James 1:13-15 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

B. The longer one resists, the stronger one becomes.

C. The Bible makes the distinction in age by reference to "youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22).

3. In Learning how to live closer to God.

Hebrews 5:12-14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

A. The longer God's word abides in our hearts, the closer we live to God.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

B. The Longer we serve the Lord, the nearer the relationship of parent-child becomes.

Things in the Maturing Process to Avoid

1. Departing from the Lord

Hebrews 3:12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

2. Faith that grows static and cold.

A. Note Peter the young man

Luke 22:32 "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

B. Denied Jesus

Matthew 26:34-35 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

Matthew 26:74 Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" And immediately a rooster crowed.

C. We later see Peter as the more mature man

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

D. He was an apostle, inspired to write.

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ

3. **Growing old in heart.**
 - A. **There are some young people who grow old inwardly.**
 - B. **Some old people grow old inwardly.**
 - C. **Some old people only grow old chronologically -- but are renewed every day**

2 Corinthians 4:16-5:4

4. **Allowing physical disorders to discourage.**
 - A. **For the aged Christian, the theme is "Sweeter as the Years Go By."**

Conclusion

1. **There is a different definition to Youth and Old Age.**
2. **In conclusion, please consider the following called "youth":**

Youth

Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over love of ease. This often exists in a man of fifty more than a boy of twenty.

Nobody grows old merely living a number of years; people grow old by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair, these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust.

Whether seventy or sixteen, there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement of the stars and star-like things and thoughts, the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing child-like appetite for what is next, and the joy and game of life.

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

In the central place of your heart there is a wireless station; so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage, grandeur and power from the earth, from men and from the infinite, so long are you young.

When the wires are all down and the central place of your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then are you grown old indeed and may God have mercy on your soul.

-- **Anonymous**

- 3. May God help us all to live our days in the service and praise of the Master, once having put our hand to the plow, never look back.**
- 4. To my younger listeners now: Don't waste the strength you have in the service of Satan. The sooner you begin your life with God the sweeter it will be at the end.**

