

## Growing YOUNGER while you get OLDER: A Biblical Perspective on Aging

### Introduction:

- Sixflags video
- How many of you have ever worried about aging or getting older?

Illustration: One older man once said, "Tennis is a game for young people. Until age 25, you can play singles. From there until age 35, you should play doubles. I won't tell you my age, but when I played, there were 28 people on the court -- just on my side of the net.

→I've got some good news for you about old age—Old age is always 15 years older than you are!

### *Benefits of getting older—*

One woman was asked the benefits of living to the age of 102. After a pause, she answered, "No peer pressure!" - Win Arn, Arcadia California

John Fetterman, rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Madison, Wisconsin, told of an elderly woman who died. Having never married, she requested no male pallbearers. In her instructions for her memorial service, she wrote, "They wouldn't take me out while I was alive; I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."

Henry Durbanville in his book *The Best Is Yet To Be* he wrote, "I feel so sorry for folks who don't like to grow old...**I revel in my years. They enrich me**...I would not exchange...the abiding rest of soul, the measure of wisdom I have gained from the sweet and bitter and perplexing experiences of life; nor the confirmed faith I now have in the...love of God, for all the bright and uncertain hopes and tumultuous joys of youth. Indeed, I would not! These are the best years of my life...**The way grows brighter**; the birds sing sweeter; the winds blow softer; the sun shines more radiantly than ever before. I suppose that my outward man' is perishing, but my inward man is being joyously renewed day by day.

Robertson McQuilkin wrote, "God planned the strength and beauty of youth to be **physical**. But the strength and beauty of age is **spiritual. We gradually lose the strength and beauty that is temporary so we'll be sure to concentrate on the strength and beauty that is forever.**"

### *Some Aging Mysteries in the Bible:*

→Sarah was so attractive at 89 years old that the King of Gerar-Abimelech-wanted to marry Sarah (see Genesis 20)

→Two people in the Bible never died—Enoch & Elijah

->Moses died and was buried by God Himself...but Moses somehow defied the aging process:

Deuteronomy 34:7 (NIV); Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone.

**Application:** This is just spiritual speculation, but could it be that Moses didn't age like the others around Him because He spent so much time in the glory and presence of God?

### *Big Picture Perspectives:*

→We are to see our present lives here on the present earth as temporary, not permanent.

1 Chronicles 29:15 (NLT); We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a passing shadow, gone so soon without a trace.

I Peter 2:11; Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims....

→We are to view our bodies as a temporary tent, not as a permanent palace!

2 Corinthians 5:1-5 (NIV); For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. <sup>2</sup> Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup> because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

WOW: When someone is getting ready to die, they are not being swallowed up by death, but they are being swallowed up by life...life forever...life everlasting...life eternal!

**Look at the person next to you and say... I am not growing old...but I am be swallowed up by life!**

→From an eternal perspective being with Jesus in glorious perfection is infinitely better than dwelling here on earth in a fallen body, living in a fallen world, and not being home yet with Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:6-7 (NIVV); <sup>6</sup> Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. <sup>7</sup> For we live by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup> We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Philippians 1:21-23; <sup>21</sup> For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. <sup>22</sup> But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup> For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is far better.*

**WOW: If you are a Christian, you are not in your sunset years; rather, you are in your golden years—you are getting closer to God every day and each day is one day closer to living in the place where the street is made of pure gold!**

*Is it possible that I have the wrong perspective on aging?*

## **2 Corinthians 4:7-18 (NKJV); Cast Down but Unconquered**

<sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. <sup>8</sup> *We are* hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—<sup>10</sup> always carrying about in the body the dying of **the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.** <sup>11</sup> For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, **that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.** <sup>12</sup> So then death is working in us, but life in you.

<sup>13</sup> And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, <sup>14</sup> **knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.** <sup>15</sup> For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

### **Seeing the Invisible**

<sup>16</sup> **Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.** <sup>17</sup> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, <sup>18</sup> while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

### **7 Paradigm Shifts About Aging:**

- 1. True treasure is on the inside, not the outside (v. 7).**
- 2. As we age, we learn that true hope is in that which lasts forever (v. 8-9).**

Psalm 73:25-26; <sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven *but You?*

*And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.*

<sup>26</sup> *My flesh and my heart fail;*

*But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

3. True life and lasting life are found in Jesus not in myself (v. 10-12).
4. The closer I get to the end, the closer I get to the beginning (v. 13-15).
5. The older I get on the outside, the younger I can grow in the inside (v. 16).
6. A moment of pain is worth an eternity of glory (v. 17).
7. I can stay young inside if I refuse to focus on the temporary and fix my focus on the eternal (v. 18).

## Okay, so I get the focus on the eternal, is there any hope for me NOW in the PRESENT?

1. Stay hungry, curious, fresh, and keep bearing fruit in your latter years.

**Illustration:** F.B. Meyer once confided to his friend F.A. Robinson of Toronto, "I do hope my Father will let the river of my life go flowing fully until the finish. I don't want it to end in a swamp."

Psalm 92:12-15- <sup>12</sup> The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,  
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

<sup>13</sup> Those who are planted in the house of the Lord  
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.

<sup>14</sup> They shall still bear fruit in old age;  
They shall be fresh and flourishing,

<sup>15</sup> To declare that the Lord is upright;  
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

2. Allow the Holy Spirit to help you dream again like you were young again!

Joel 2:28; And it shall come to pass afterward  
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
Your old men shall dream dreams,  
Your young men shall see visions.

3. Reframe your age: God has given me a long life for a purpose-To declare God to the next generation(s).

**Story:** The great evangelist George Whitefield was relating the difficulties of the gospel ministry to some friends. He said that he was weary of the burdens and was glad that his work would soon be over and that he would depart this earthly scene to be with Christ. The others admitted having similar feelings -- all except one, a Mr. Tennant. Noting this, Whitefield tapped him on the knee and said, "Well, Brother

Tennant, you are the oldest among us; do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand when you will be called Home?"

The old man answered bluntly that he had no wish about it. When pressed for something more definite, he added, "**I have nothing to do with death. My business is to live as long as I can, and as well as I can, and serve my Savior as faithfully as I can, until He thinks it's time to call me Home.**"

Whitefield accepted that word as a gentle rebuke from the Lord, and it helped him go on with his work calmly and patiently.

Psalm 71:18- Now also when *I am* old and grayheaded,  
O God, do not forsake me,  
**Until** I declare Your strength to *this* generation,  
Your power to everyone *who* is to come.

**4. Live each day with passion and purpose because life is short, and our days are numbered.**

Psalm 90:10-12; <sup>10</sup> The days of our lives are seventy years;  
And if by reason of strength they are eighty years,  
Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow;  
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.  
<sup>11</sup> Who knows the power of Your anger?  
For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.  
<sup>12</sup> So teach us to number our days,  
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

**Illustration:** That's getting old in the worst way -- ceasing to live before we die. History records that many people made some of their greatest contributions to society after the age of 65. **The Earl of Halsburg**, for example, was 90 when he began preparing a 20-volume revision of English law. **Goethe (Ger-ta)** wrote Faust at 82. **Galileo** made his greatest discovery when he was 73. At 69, **Hudson Taylor** was still vigorously working on the mission field, opening up new territories in Indochina. And when **Caleb** was 85, he took the stronghold of the giants (Josh. 14:10-15) (My Daily Bread).

**5. Look to God to give you renewed strength and vitality when you are weak and weary.**

Isaiah 40:29-31; <sup>29</sup> He gives power to the weak,  
And to those who have no might He increases strength.  
<sup>30</sup> Even the youths shall faint and be weary,  
And the young men shall utterly fall,  
<sup>31</sup> But those who wait on the Lord

Shall renew *their* strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint.  
Psalm 103:4-5; <sup>4</sup> Who redeems your life from destruction,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,  
<sup>5</sup> Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*,  
**So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.**

**Illustration:** I have read of different methods that different types of eagles have to shed their old feathers. One method I read was that of the eagle plucking out every feather on his body until he is completely bare. He stays in a hiding place until he has grown new feathers, then he can come out.

Another method I have read about is when an eagle will shed his old cumbersome feathers by entering into a body of water. At that point the old feathers are shed. The eagle then stays close to shore protecting himself and eating what food he can, waiting for new feathers. Once he has his new feathers, his strength is renewed, and it is compared to his youth being renewed (confidence and joy.com).

→If you want to experience renewed vigor and youthfulness, you will need to shed some old feathers that are keeping you from flying...

--The bad attitude feather; The complaining feather; The comparison feather; The good ole days feather; The woe is me feather; The critical spirit feather.

**WOW: If you want to soar with the eagles, you will need to get rid of those turkey feathers!**

**6. Embrace this promise: God is always with me and will always take good care of me all the days of my life.**

Isaiah 46:4 (NLT); I will be your God throughout your lifetime--until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you.

**Illustration: I Am Not Growing Old!**

"Not Growing Old"

**Poem by John E. Roberts**

They say that I am growing old;

I've heard them tell it time untold

In language plain and bold-

**But I'm NOT growing old.**

This frail old shell in which I dwell

Is growing old, I know full well-

**But I am not the shell.**

What if my hair is turning gray?

Gray hairs are honorable, they say.

What if my eyesight's growing dim?

I still can see to follow Him

Who sacrificed His life for me

Upon the cross of Calvary.

What should I care if Time's old plow

Has left its furrows on my brow?

Another house, not made with hand,

Awaits me in the Glory Land.

What though I falter in my walk?

What though my tongue refuse to talk?

I still can tread the narrow way,

I still can watch, and praise and pray.

My hearing may not be as keen

As in the past it may have been,

Still, I can hear my Savior say,

In whispers soft, "This is the way."

The outward man, do what I can

To lengthen out this life's short span,

Shall perish, and return to dust,

As everything in nature must.  
The inward man, the Scriptures say,  
Is growing stronger every day.  
Then how can I be growing old  
When safe within my Savior's fold?  
Ere long my soul shall fly away  
And leave this tenement of clay;  
This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise  
To seize the "everlasting prize."  
I'll meet you on the streets of gold,  
And prove that I'm not growing old.

**Illustration:** Hermit Crab's shell

#### 7. Wear your crown because you have earned it!

- The crown of children and grandchildren:  
Proverbs 17:6- Children's children *are* the crown of old men,  
And the glory of children *is* their father.
- The crown of grey hair:  
Proverbs 20:29- The glory of young men *is* their strength,  
And the splendor of old men *is* their gray head.

**Illustration:** Just as Jesus kept the best wine until the end, the same can be true for you. I want you to believe today that Jesus often saves the best part of your life (from eternity's standpoint) in the last part of your life!

#### 8. Encourage yourself by remembering that knows the number of your days—and He has the power to extend them if He so desires!

- God gave Hezekiah an extra 15 years to live after God had told him he was going to die through the prophet Isaiah (read 2 Kings 20:1-11).
- Honoring your parents can extend your life (read Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 6:2-3).
- The fear of the Lord can prolong your life (read Proverbs 10:27).

**Illustration:** I shall grow old perhaps, but not today, not while my hopes are young, my spirit strong, my vision clear, because life has a way of smoothing out the wrinkles with a song.

I shall grow old, perhaps, but not today, not while my dreams remain a shining shield, my faith a lance, and 'neath a sky of gray, my colors wave upon the battlefield.

I shall grow old, perhaps, but not today, not while this pen can write upon a page, and memories turn Winter into May, shall this stout heart be brought to terms by age'

I shall grow old, perhaps, but not today, and scorning Time who would enlist my tears, I stand convinced there is a better way, of occupying all the coming years.

I shall grow old, perhaps, but not today, in my own style and in my own sweet time, no night so dark there does not fall a ray of light along the pathway that I climb.

Just say of me, when my last hour slips like one bright leaf to softly rest among the others...

"Life was Summer to the heart, of one who died believing she was young."- Grace E. Easley

**Paul's words in Philippians 1 prove us with a great way to view life and death:**

Philippians 1:19-25; <sup>19</sup> For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <sup>20</sup> according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup> For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. <sup>22</sup> But if I live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup> For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. <sup>24</sup> Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. <sup>25</sup> And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith

**Great prayers to pray to keep you growing younger while you get older:**

✚ Lord, help me to die at a good old age, having enjoyed long life, your blessings, and help my children's life to exceed my life.

I Chronicles 29:28 (NLT); He died at a ripe old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth, and honor. Then his son Solomon ruled in his place.

✚ Lord, help me to die **young as late** as possible! Grant me aging grace like you did Moses, Sarah, and Hezekiah!

**Illustration:** This poem was written by a 14 year old...

It was spring, But it was summer I wanted,

The warm days, And the great outdoors.  
It was summer, But it was fall I wanted,  
The colorful leaves, And the cool, dry air.  
It was fall, But it was winter I wanted,  
The beautiful snow, And the joy of the holiday season.  
It was winter, But it was spring I wanted,  
The warmth, And the blossoming of nature.  
I was a child, But it was adulthood I wanted,  
The freedom, And the respect.  
I was 20, But it was 30 I wanted,  
To be mature, And sophisticated.  
I was middle-aged, But it was 20 I wanted,  
The youth, And the free spirit.  
I was retired, But it was middle age I wanted,  
The presence of mind, Without limitations.  
My life was over.

But I never got what I wanted. --Jason Lehman

Take Home Truth: My goal is to die YOUNG as LATE as possible living every day for God's glory and fulfilling my purpose, potential, and destiny during my lifetime.