

SAINTS OF ADVANCED AGE

A. The Lord's kingdom is a perfectly suited to anyone who will obey Him.

Gal 3:28 – There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus**.

1. So we are no better off for being male or female; American or Chinese; or being age 15 or 80.
2. His laws apply to everyone, yet some of His laws apply specifically to our gender, marital status &—yes—even our age.

B. I want to make 3 points about those in the kingdom who are of an advanced age.

1. The need for them in the body.
2. The benefits of reaching an advanced age.
3. The warnings peculiar to that stage of life.

1 Tim 4:12 – Let no one despise your youth, but **be an example to the believers** in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

1 Tim 5:1-2 – **Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father**, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.

1 Pet 5:5 – Likewise **you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders**. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, & be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Lev 19:32 – **You shall rise before the gray headed & honor the presence of an old man**, & fear your God: I am the LORD.

Prov 16:31 – **The silver-haired head is a crown of glory**, if it is found in the way of righteousness.

{Job 15:7-10}

[We are very fortunate to have in this congregation members who are not ashamed of their silver hair & who are excellent examples to the rest of us as to how we are to live our lives on this earth in the kingdom of Christ.

I must add that these very special people often go unnoticed among us, because they are quiet leaders who perform their service to Lord without any fanfare, without any need of special attention from others.

We may not often stop to think of the tremendous sacrifice they make just to be among us at assembly times.

May God bless them & may their tribe increase.

Our fervent prayer ought to be, that we may one day fill the shoes of our aged godly members.

Let us move on to the main points of this lesson.]

I. ADVANCED AGE IS A MUST IN THE KINGDOM

Titus 2:1-2 [Qualities of a Sound Church] – But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: 2 that the **older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;**

Titus 2:3-5 – the **older women likewise**, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things -- 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

1 Tim 4:14 – Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the **[presbytery: an assembly of aged men] eldership [Paul dispensed Timothy's spiritual gift (2 Tim 1:6), but the elders appointed Timothy to his work with Paul (1 Tim 4:14).]**

Acts 20:17, 28 – From Miletus he sent to Ephesus & **called for the elders of the church...**28 Therefore take heed to yourselves & to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

1 Tim 3:1-7 – This is a faithful saying: **If a man desires the position of a bishop [episkopos: superintendent or overseer], he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be** blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach & the snare of the devil.

This service of aged men is a good work.

Titus 1:5-9 – For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should **set in order the things that are lacking, & appoint elders in every city** as I commanded you -- 6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort & convict those who contradict.

This service of aged men completes what is lacking in a local church.

[**These** verses emphasize the fact that aged saints are vital to the life of a healthy local church.

Advanced age is a prerequisite for some very important work in the Lord's kingdom & vineyard, & the church is sadly lacking without this class of godly men & women.]

II. **ADVANCED AGE IS HELPFUL**

A. **Overcoming the world**

1 John 5:4 – For **whatever is born of God overcomes the world**; & this is the victory that has overcome the world -- **our faith**.

1 John 2:15-17 – Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16 For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, & the pride of life** -- is not of the Father but is of the world. **17** And the world is passing away, & the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

1 John 2:12-15 – I write to you, **little children**, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. – I write to you, **fathers**, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, **young men**, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, **little children**, because you have known the Father. **14** I have written to you, **fathers**, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, **young men**, because you are strong, & the word of God abides in you, & you have overcome the wicked one.

1. The “little children” of faith had learned enough to respond to the gospel as an offer from their Father for the forgiveness of sins.

2. The “young men” of faith—by the power of the word of God—had overcome their lusts & their pride to follow the Lord.
3. But the “fathers” of faith had long experience with God & His will & its application in their lives.
4. The rest of us need that kind of wisdom & insight.
 - a. Overcoming temptation (1 Cor 10:13) & living closer to God (Heb 10:22; Jas 4:8).
 - b. It is sad that so few Christians seek the counsel & guidance of aged saints, because we need their advice (the advice of my father before I began preaching, “Speak to some older preachers”. I’ve known young parents to seek the counsel of older married couples who had raised their families.)

[**The longer** “the word of Christ dwells in you richly in all wisdom (Col 3:16),” the nearer & dearer your relationship is to Him. **That is the advantage** of being an aged Christian, & that is why they are capable of helping us.]

III. ADVANCED AGE HAS ITS PITFALLS

A. Contentious & argumentative

1. This can be caused by mental disorder, or by the stress of physical breakdown
 - a. This is a time in life when they must be handled respectfully & patiently.

B. Praise of men over the praise of God

1. Some will believe they're not getting enough respect or attention by contending for the faith (**Jude 3**), so they will make decisions that make them popular with the weak & unstable majority (**Jn 12:42-43; Exo 23:2**)

C. Fall completely away from the Lord

1. This is an indication that they did not use their time wisely.
 - a. That they did not give themselves to prayer & study, but allowed their love for the Lord & His church to grow cold.
2. Keep in mind that the aged Christian has not only had more opportunity to mature in the faith, but they've also had more time to resist the faith.

3. To prevent this from happening in your sunset years, incline your heart to God ([Matt 6:33](#); [2 Jn 9](#)).

[**Do not set aside** “the word of Christ” for less important things if you hope to avoid the pitfalls of advanced age.]

CLOSING

“Of Jesus love that sought me, when I was lost in sin;
Of wondrous grace that brought me back to His fold again;
Of heights & depths of mercy, far deeper than the sea;
And higher than the heavens, my theme shall ever be.
Sweeter as the years go by, sweeter as the years go by;
Richer, fuller, deeper, Jesus’ love is sweeter,
Sweeter as the years go by.”

A. **We would all like to be able to sing that song.**

2 Cor 4:16-18 – Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet **the inward man is being renewed day by day**. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding & eternal weight of glory, 18 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.

B. **May God help us live our days in the Lord’s service, having put our hand to the plow, never to look back.**

C. To our younger listeners the message is don't waste your youth on the Devil's senseless pleasures.

1. The sooner you begin your service to the Lord the sweeter will be your victory at the end.

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 eyesight's growing dim?
I still can see to follow Him
Who sacrificed His life for me,
Upon the cross of Calvary.

Why 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 my tongue refuse to talk?
What though I falter in my walk?
I still can tread the Narrow Way
I still can watch, & praise, & 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 his life's short span,
Shall perish & 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, & rise
To seize the "everlasting prize" --

I'll meet you on the street of gold.
And prove that I'm not growing old.
-- John E. Roberts