

GOD'S GRACE *in* AGING

*"Even when you are old,
I will take care of you."
Isaiah 46:4*

RICK HUGHES



Rick Hughes
EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

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CONTACT

rickhughesministries.org
rick@rickhughesministries.org
PO Box 100, Cropwell, AL 35054
800-831-0718
Facebook & Instagram

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GOD'S GRACE IN AGING

*“Even when you are old, I will take care of you.
Even when your hair turns gray, I will support you.
I made you and I will continue to care for you.
I will support you and I will deliver you.”
Isaiah 46:4*

RICK HUGHES

RICK HUGHES EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES
P.O. Box 100, Cropwell, Alabama 35054-0100
rickhughesministries.org 800.831.0718

PREFACE

Many folks are discouraged by the difficulties that accompany aging, even to the point of hopelessness. The reality is, God has designed a tremendous way for you to live and it gets even better as you age.

God's plan is to bless you abundantly through your spiritual life. He wants you to live content and happy regardless of your circumstances and to reflect His grace to others.

In this book we will look at Biblical priorities and impact for the aging Christian. It's all about the attitudes you develop and the trust you place in God as you absorb His Word into your soul and apply it in your daily life. Learning to think with the mindset of Jesus Christ will give you the advantage.

Even though this book is addressed to the older believer, the principles are applicable to Christians of all ages. The younger you are when you begin to avail yourself of the living grace assets God provides, the better you will be prepared for your latter years under aging grace.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God
is the strength of my heart and my portion
forever. (Psalm 73:26)

If you have accepted Christ as your Savior, be sure that you are empowered to study God's Word by naming any unconfessed sins to God the Father. This ensures you are in fellowship with God and filled with the Holy Spirit, who is the teacher of spiritual

matters. *“If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [known, unknown and forgotten sins]”* (1 John 1:9). The term we use for this living grace provision is Rebound. You can’t live the spiritual life without using this divine resource. It is essential to be filled with the Holy Spirit to learn and understand the Word of God.

If you have never believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior, the issue is not your sin but *“What think you of Christ?”* (Matthew 22:42). God extends His love to you through the finished work of His Son on the cross. *“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved”* (Acts 16:31). This is saving grace.

Salvation is God’s grace gift to you. Please consider this now and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. This is a decision you alone must make.

You will either spend eternity with God in heaven or separated from Him forever in the agony of the Lake of Fire. *“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not believe in the Son will not see life but the wrath of God abides on him”* (John 3:36). To express your faith in Christ in silent prayer simply say, “Father, I believe in Jesus Christ and I accept Him as my Savior.” *“Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved”* (Romans 10:13).

This book is written especially for the aging Christian to encourage you to prioritize your spiritual life and thereby overcome the difficulties of aging. By using God’s grace provisions, you will be content, live with purpose as you fulfill God’s plan, and most importantly, glorify Jesus Christ.

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INTRODUCTION

A few years back, we produced a book called “Life’s Toughest Years” which is geared toward teenagers. When the book came out many of my older friends told me, “That’s not right. Old age is life’s toughest years. Aging is a lot harder.” At the time I was in denial; now I embrace it.

Let’s take a look at Ecclesiastes 12:1-5:

“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no delight in them;’

Before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain;

In the day that the watchmen of the house [arms and hands] tremble, and mighty men [legs and knees] stoop, the grinding ones [teeth] stand idle because they are few, and those who look through windows [eyes] grow dim;

The doors on the street [social life] are shut as the sound of the grinding mill [digestion] is low, and one will arise at the sound of the bird [insomnia], and all the daughters of song will sing softly [deafness].

Men are afraid of a high place [loss of balance] and of terrors on the road [vulnerability]; the almond tree blossoms [hair becomes white], the grasshopper drags himself along [loss of physical strength], and the caperberry is ineffective [loss of sexual desire].”

This paints a pretty grim picture, doesn't it? These verses describe some of the infirmities of growing old. Certainly for most people, aging brings on escalating physical and cognitive challenges. But if you age with a soul soaked in God's Word, use His divine resources and trust in His amazing plan, you become confident, content and strong. As the body declines, the strength and beauty of the soul will be magnified.

Adversity is inevitable - Stress is optional

Well, old age and physical deterioration are also inevitable. It's how you handle them that makes aging either the best time or the worst time of your life.

This is what "God's Grace in Aging" is all about. It's not about the difficulties associated with aging; it's about the inner strength and tranquility of soul God designed for you to have now, and in aging. Hopefully this book will inspire you to glorify God with the unique opportunities you will have in this stage of life.

My prayer is that you will use your aging years to be a tremendous witness as you reveal the sufficiency of God's grace.

**My grace is sufficient for you,
for power is perfected in weakness.
(2 Corinthians 12:9)**

PERSPECTIVE OF TIME

We live in the perspective of time. Time is how we organize our life here on earth. Before there were clocks or calendars, people measured the passing of time by the movement of the sun across the sky and seasonal changes. Now we plan our activities by the calendar and by the clock.

Time is finite for us. It has limits and it has boundaries. This life is governed by time. But eternal life is timeless! There are no clocks in heaven. We will never ask, “What time is it?”

God is logical, but He is not chronological. God is not bound by time. He invented time for us to live by, not for Himself. Solomon verifies this, “*There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven*” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). God’s viewpoint is timeless, eternal, outside of the boundaries of time and space, and so shall yours be soon enough.

**Time doesn’t shout - It just runs out
sooner than you think**

As a maturing believer, you must control time rather than letting time control you. If you live under the fear of loss of time you won’t take advantage of God’s amazing grace resources.

**Age consciousness can be a prison for you
if you don’t control time**

If you become consumed by the thought of aging, you will be maladjusted to the Creator of time and lose the capacity for living. You are not running out of time; you are just getting closer to being called to the Home Office, a place without time.

The question is not how much time do you have left, but what will you do with the time you do have? This is a prayer about time that R. B. Thieme, Jr., my pastor, prayed many years ago:

“Heavenly Father, we consider it an honor and a privilege to spend time, in time, which You personally have invented for our frame of reference, and we have the opportunity of receiving from You time, and then giving it back to You as part of our worship. And therefore, in fulfillment of the Word of God, we are obeying Your mandate, that command, to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together to spend time learning Bible doctrine, recognizing that You are the truth, and the only way we can adjust to You is through learning truth.”

Now is the time to prepare for old age

If you're already in old age and believe you aren't spiritually prepared, don't despair. God's grace and provisions are abundant and you can catch up. Make growing spiritually your number one priority. Put your emphasis on developing your soul, not on how your body is falling apart.

God gives you time, time to orient to Him, time to know and understand Him, and time to glorify Him. You are given this time for your soul to manifest the Lord Jesus Christ. As you get older, you have to switch gears to less concern about the body and more devotion to the soul.

Time is a gift from God

Time is an invaluable asset. God allots to each one of us time to enrich our soul with divine wisdom. *“Teach us to organize our days so that we can attain a heart of wisdom”* (Psalm 90:12). We do this by acquiring the mind of Jesus Christ.

Stop being conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Think with sound judgment, as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from His Word.

(Romans 12:2-3)

“Renew” means to renovate, to change. We are to change our way of thinking from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint. We do this through the consistent study and application of God’s Word.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ left us the pattern for this unique way of thinking and it is recorded in the New Testament. *“We have the thinking of Christ”* (1 Corinthians 2:16). God talks to us, guides us, and encourages us through the Bible. This is why studying it is so important.

You’re never too old to stop learning God’s Word

Jesus Christ's mentality, what He thought, and His intentionality, what He did, are critical for you. This is how you are to live. Your spiritual life is lived in the mentality of your soul, in your thoughts. This is where you win the battles of aging.

Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
(Ephesians 5:15-17)

"Be careful how you walk" is a mandate from God. God is telling you to regulate your life by thinking with divine viewpoint. God wants you to think and act based on what is in His Word.

Wisely redeem your time

Tomorrow is not guaranteed. This is why you need to make the most of today, and every day, as you fulfill God's purpose, plan and will for your life.

You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. (James 4:14)

**Your body may be racked by time
but your soul is timeless**

YOUR SOUL NEVER AGES

Just as time does not exist in heaven, neither does aging. There are no birthdays in heaven to mark the passing of years. The great news is that although we see the effects of aging on our bodies, time has no such effect on the soul.

Your soul is the invisible immortal part of you and it never ages. God gave your soul to you when you were born. When your body dies, your soul departs and lives on in a perfect resurrection body that also will never age.

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
(2 Corinthians 4:16)

Paul uses “*inner man*” as a reference to one’s soul. Your soul is refreshed, “*being renewed day by day,*” through staying filled with God the Holy Spirit and consistently studying the Bible under the ministry of a pastor who accurately teaches it. Note *every day*. In order for God’s Word to sustain you, it must be learned daily so it can actively renew your soul, renew you! Taking in God’s Word needs to be a daily habit. Your soul’s health depends on this.

Become refreshed through the power of the Holy Spirit by means of your thinking.
(Ephesians 4:23)

The tendency to worry about getting old and losing your independence is a threat to the successful spiritual life. Aging scares people. If you let the problems of old age propel you into self-pity, then you will finish your life like a discarded automobile sitting in a junkyard rusting out. Do you want to sit around feeling sorry for yourself because you can no longer operate the way you used to? Or do you want to push through to the finish line?

Live with a purpose, His

Toward the end of his life, as he was about to transition to be with the Lord, Joshua called the Israelites together and said to them:

If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve ... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
(Joshua 24:15)

Joshua laid down a challenge. This is what you can do as you get older. You can lay down this challenge to yourself, to your friends and to your children and your grandchildren.

Press on - To God be the glory

No matter how old you are, and in spite of difficulties, you need to press on fulfilling God's plan. In fact, you are heading for your peak. The end is better than the beginning when you experience how God showers you with His grace.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, how blessed is the man who trusts in You!
(Psalm 84:11-12)

As long as you are alive God still has a plan for you

You are moving into the best phase of your life because the body and its weaknesses are no longer of high importance. Now, it's all about the mentality of the soul and your volition, the choices you make. Actually, it always was, but now you see it more clearly. Choose to make strengthening your soul your priority.

Your soul manifests the real you

The soul is the seat of your spiritual life. The soul is where everything takes place. It's the real you. Look at it this way. If we take your mentality, what you think, and your volition, what you choose, together hopefully you do the right thing. And you will, if you're thinking with divine viewpoint.

Right thoughts lead to right actions

You have volition. How you use it will determine how you age. The challenge as you get older is to keep the thinking lanes open. This is why renewing your soul day by day is vital. It's the key to benefiting from God's grace in old age.

Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding!
Do not forget nor turn away from the
words of my mouth. Do not forsake her
and she will guard you; love her, and she
will watch over you. (Proverbs 4:5-6)

All the infirmities of old age, as challenging as they may be, are opportunities for you to reveal the patience, strength and faith of a soul sustained by God's Word learned and understood. The vigor and attractiveness of youth are replaced by the wealth and contentment in your soul.

Invest in your soul

I hope you choose to soak up God's Word every day because your soul goes with you to heaven. Not only does your soul never die, the Word of God never perishes. You carry the treasure of His Word you have put in your soul with you to heaven.

For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory
like the flower of grass. The grass withers,
and the flower falls off, but the Word of
the Lord endures forever.

(1 Peter 1:24-25)

Strength of soul is what you need to win the ongoing battles of aging.

THE BATTLES WITHIN

As we get older, our battles shift. No longer are we fighting the lust trends of our sin nature, whatever they may be. Now we have mind games of insecurity, frustration, loss of independence, confusion and doubt. The arena of contention is now primarily in the mentality of your soul, where when you were young, it was often related to your lust trends. Only a strong spiritual life will keep you encouraged and stabilized in old age.

Guarding your soul wins the mind games of aging

Do not let them depart from your sight; keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those who find them and health to all their body. Watch over [guard] your heart [soul] with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. (Proverbs 4:21-23)

In this passage Solomon is referring to the mentality of the soul where Biblical principles are metabolized, stored and ready to be recalled for use in your life. As you age, put an emphasis on keeping divine viewpoint flowing and not getting clogged up with human viewpoint thinking.

Human viewpoint thinking is stinkin' thinkin'

The rate of learning must exceed the rate of forgetting

“For they are life to those who find them and health to all their body.” I encourage you to establish and stick with a routine of daily Bible study under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor. You need to keep the thinking of Jesus Christ circulating in your mind. This divine viewpoint is your lifeline.

“Guard your heart” is a divine mandate by God. You comply by habitually learning and applying His Word. This verse is an indication of where the enemy will attack you and what he will try to do to neutralize your spiritual growth. The first thing Satan will attack as you get older is your confidence in God’s infallible plan.

Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil,
prowls around like a roaring lion seeking
whom he can devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

You have three enemies: the world (Satan’s cosmic system of human good and evil), the flesh (your sin nature) and the devil. As a Christian in the aging grace phase of life, you can expect that Satan and the lures of his world will try to deceive you, discourage you and defeat you. Don’t let them. Be on the alert!

Wisdom Knowledge Discretion Understanding

I call these The Fantastic Four. This is how you guard your soul and win the battles within.

The Fantastic Four

For wisdom will enter your heart and
knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
discretion will guard you, understanding
will watch over you. (Proverbs 2:10-11)

The process of “*For wisdom will enter your heart*” starts with the filling of the Holy Spirit, having no unconfessed sin in your life, as directed in 1 John 1:9. “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” You can’t learn spiritual matters without the empowerment of God the Holy Spirit.

As your pastor-teacher accurately teaches God’s Word, the Holy Spirit enables you to understand what is taught. Your objective is to convert this knowledge into what you live by. When you believe by faith what you are taught, this academic understanding becomes full knowledge that you can apply. This is divine wisdom.

Think of the process as similar to eating food. When you eat a steak, it does you no good until it is converted into energy. It’s the same thing with God’s Word. It needs to be metabolized in your soul so it is available for recall and use.

“*Knowledge will be pleasant to your soul*” refers to having a hunger for God’s Word. Ideally, you began feeding this hunger before you got into your aging years. But if you didn’t, start now. The Bible is the mind of Christ. As you acquire His thinking you’ll see the impact of The Fantastic Four in your life. Everything in the Bible is truth and is inspired by God for a reason.

Be diligent with your Bible study. *“You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart”* (Jeremiah 29:13). This is how you come to know God’s direction and will for your life.

You can’t apply what you don’t know

“Discretion will guard you.” With divine wisdom in your soul you are able to discern the truth from the lies of the cosmic system and distinguish the traps of human viewpoint thinking. Always remember the filling of the Holy Spirit is a prerequisite for guarding your soul.

“Understanding will watch over you.” Divine viewpoint gives you discretion and understanding. I call this spiritual x-ray vision. You will have true perspective that much of the world is missing.

Do you see how The Fantastic Four give you what you need to win the mind games of aging? The battles of aging are in your mind, not your body. You control what you put in your soul. You control your thoughts, and therefore, you will determine whether you win or lose the mind games of aging.

I pray that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment ... so that you are filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:9-11)

You win the battles within by having a soul that is spiritually strong and guarded by:

Wisdom Knowledge Discretion Understanding

AFFLICTION

Affliction is a term that applies to the hardships in our lives. Affliction is something most of us don't want to think about or deal with. We don't want that challenge in our lives. Can't God just make it go away and let everything stay nice and rosy?

It is not sinful to shrink from affliction or to ask God to remove it. But insisting that God take it away is arrogance, and frankly, short-sighted. Trying to manipulate God in prayer is wrong. God doesn't need to be reminded several times a day that we are hurting. Once is enough. God will do what He purposes and it will be for our benefit, not necessarily what we desire.

**You don't need to tell God your problems
He knows; thank Him for the solutions**

It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I
may learn Your Word. (Psalm 119:71)

God allows you to undergo affliction for several reasons: to develop patience, to accelerate spiritual growth, to increase your trust in His plan, and to glorify Him. God gives you the resources you need to persevere. There is no reason to get anxious when adversity comes into your life, as it inevitably will.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the Lord delivers him out of them all.
(Psalm 34:19)

Affliction will shake your mind, if you let it

The real test of your spiritual life is not how much knowledge you have acquired but how well you make application under extreme adversity. Paul had this to say, “*So that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this*” (1 Thessalonians 3:3).

The word for “*disturbed*” in the Greek is *saino*. This is really interesting. *Saino* means to be disturbed or rearranged by a shaking movement like a dog’s tail wagging side-to-side. Paul is talking about the believers in Thessalonica whose minds are being shaken by affliction. He cautions them to not allow their minds to be disturbed, their thoughts rearranged, when enduring affliction. *Saino* is related to another Greek word, *seio*, from which we get the words seismic and seismology.

Affliction is not meant to rearrange your life

A Christian suffering under affliction should never allow his or her thinking to be rearranged like the topography of the earth after a major earthquake. If you let it, affliction will turn you inside out.

Do you have cancer or heart failure or some other serious condition? What is it doing to you? Are you depressed and full of anxiety, begging God to take it away? If so, you are allowing adversity to become stress in your soul.

**Adversity is what circumstances do to you
Stress is what you do to yourself**

When you are under affliction and you let it shake or dislodge you from your faith, you will lose confidence in God and lose divine viewpoint perspective. People with afflictions are emotionally vulnerable and can be targets for those who want to take advantage.

I have seen believers who knew better, who understood God's Word, but they let their emotions take control and stopped recalling Biblical rationales. They moved away from using divine viewpoint, away from trusting the Lord, and started looking to be healed.

They got impatient and anxious. They stopped relying on God's plan and God's timing. They changed their way of thinking, got away from their routine of daily Bible study and adopted a new *modus operandi*. They allowed affliction to shake them and get them off-balance.

Affliction is designed to increase your trust in God and His provisions. When you have this confidence, and when you have contentment with your circumstances, then you will have patience in the midst of adversity. This honors and glorifies God.

If when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. (1 Peter 2:20)

Have you ever thought about the need for patience in dying? Maybe this is one of the reasons God allows affliction in our lives, to strengthen our patience and faith so we will die well, even if it is a lingering suffering, all to the glory of God.

An encounter with Christ is life changing

On his journey to Damascus to continue killing Christians, Paul, formerly Saul, was singled out by God in a divine intervention. *“He is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel”* (Acts 9:15). Paul wasn’t looking to alter course in life but Christ appeared to him and his life was forever changed. “I have a plan for you. I chose you in eternity past.” God chose Paul. Paul didn’t choose God.

You, as a Christian and member of God’s Royal Family, have the same claim on your life. You are chosen. After you accepted Christ as your Savior, you were left here on earth for a specific mission. Your mission is to fulfill God’s purpose, plan and will for your life.

There are many plans in a man’s heart but
it is the Lord’s purpose that will prevail.
(Proverbs 19:21)

Later in Paul’s ministry, this claim on his life led to a great internal pressure like a weight bearing down on his thoughts. This was not an emotional breakdown from self-pity nor a sin like fear. It was an internal pressure related to his mission.

“For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life” (2 Corinthians 1:8). Paul was worn out. He thought death was imminent and his ordeals were more than he could handle. This is not how you or I should think.

The will of God will never lead you to where the grace of God can't protect you

Internal pressure is not necessarily the result of a spiritual malfunction. It could be the weight of some circumstance that opens the door to anxiety. Sometimes it's self-inflicted because you converted some situation with your health, finances or a social issue into distress and you started doubting God and His grace provisions.

If you allow internal pressure to cause an emotional override you will stop thinking with divine viewpoint. Unless managed through the use of divine resources, the pressure will have a seismological effect on you and rearrange your life.

**We are afflicted in every way, but not
crushed; perplexed, but not despairing.
(2 Corinthians 4:8)**

This is the powerful testimony of a mature believer. Paul is saying, "I am under affliction but I do not have anxiety." Although excessively burdened, he stabilized by using God's grace.

Affliction can be self-induced or externally driven. Paul faced internal pressure, doubts that contradicted divine viewpoint. He also had external pressure from Satanic opposition coming at him from all directions.

External affliction often comes as a surprise

Let's take a look at the power source Paul used to be an Overcomer of Affliction.

In 2 Corinthians Paul shows us how we can overcome affliction using the **Power of Christ**.

There was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me - to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

And He has said to me, **‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’** Most gladly, therefore, I would rather boast about my weaknesses **so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.**

Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Paul used the metaphor of a *“thorn in the flesh”* to describe his affliction. It could have been a pain such as severe arthritis. You may have something like this in your life that plagues you. Paul pleaded with the Lord to remove his suffering. God answered No. There was a purpose for Paul’s affliction, as there is for any affliction that God allows.

There is no reason for affliction to distract you from your spiritual momentum. Use it to glorify God.

If anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. (1 Peter 4:16)

To be an Overcomer of Affliction, you must tap into the **Power of Christ**:

- Stay filled with the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:9).
- Contain your emotions by operating on divine viewpoint thinking.
- Focus on Jesus Christ and His provisions, not on yourself and what you're going through.
- Use His divine resources.
- Have the discipline to eliminate distractions; keep taking in God's Word every day.
- Exercise your faith.
- Commit to finishing the race.

I run with a purpose. I fight a real opponent. I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have proclaimed Christ to others, I myself will not be disqualified [fail to finish the race].
(1 Corinthians 9:26-27)

Here Paul is using himself as an example when he proclaims, "*I run with a purpose*" and "*I fight a real opponent.*" Many Christians start out running hard after getting saved but get distracted by adversity or get discouraged in the daily grind of life. You will face challenges but don't let them get you off course.

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

Faith - this is the key to overcoming affliction. You trusted God for your salvation; trust Him for the

details. He will provide for you in old age. By faith, believers accept God's saving grace and now have the advantage of God's grace in aging. Only believers can use the phenomenal resources of the **Power of Christ** to overcome affliction. It is a choice, as is everything in the spiritual life.

So that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.
(1 Corinthians 2:5)

In the simplest terms, the **Power of Christ** is the filling of the Holy Spirit and maximum use of God's divine provisions. Let's look at some of the components of this power.

If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:11)

We have this treasure in our earthly bodies so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Just as the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry, as a believer you receive the **Power of the Holy Spirit** to live your spiritual life. *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"* (Acts 1:8).

God the Holy Spirit enables you to understand spiritual matters, to metabolize Biblical principles

and to store them in your soul. Then as you advance to the objective of spiritual maturity, He recalls to your mind what is relevant for you to apply.

**The Holy Spirit is your escort
through time to eternity**

In order to have the enabling **Power of the Holy Spirit**, you must be filled with the Holy Spirit, having no unconfessed sin in your life. You can't live the Christian way of life in carnality. The Holy Spirit is your power source and escort through time.

That God would grant you to be made
strong by means of the Holy Spirit.
(Ephesians 3:16)

The Holy Spirit indwells you and you are mandated to let Him control your life. There is an ongoing conflict within you - the sin nature versus the Holy Spirit. Either one or the other is in control at any given moment. When you choose to have the Holy Spirit remain in control, you can keep that sin nature in check. And this is really encouraging - the Holy Spirit makes intercession on your behalf.

The Holy Spirit also helps our weakness;
for we do not know what to pray for as we
should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes
for us. (Romans 8:26)

Anxiety that is prone to come with aging can be prevented through habitual use of the **Power of Divine Provisions and Resources** found in God's

Word. In the following Scripture, Paul demonstrates the use of faith-rest, which is claiming God's promises and applying Biblical rationales to solve problems in life:

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or peril, or sword?

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:35-39)

You have God's grace. You have the same tremendous divine resources that Paul used to sustain himself, the same grace provisions that sustained Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. Use them.

God intends you to be spiritually self-sufficient. You can achieve this by using these powers. There should be no reason for you to go into panic palace or run to someone else for answers. How you respond when under affliction is an assessment of your spiritual growth.

For the Word of God is alive and powerful. (Hebrews 4:12)

You have the **Power of the Word of God**, just as the humanity of Jesus Christ did. He quoted Scripture to defeat Satan when he tempted Him in the wilderness. *“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only’”* (Matthew 4:10).

Scripture worked for Christ and it will certainly work for you

God is truth and His Word, the Bible, is absolute truth. The **Power of God’s Word** gives you the advantage in old age. It will encourage you, direct your path, evaluate you and challenge you.

You will guide me with Your Word in my soul. (Psalm 73:24)

I have directed you in the way of wisdom;
I have led you in upright paths. When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; and if you run, you will not stumble. Take hold of instruction; do not let go. (Proverbs 4:11-13)

God’s Word is the fuel to grow your faith

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

See how the **Power of Faith** is linked to the **Power of the Word of God**? Applying God’s Word puts muscle on your faith and gives you the ability to handle affliction without anxiety. By accepting the

truth and power of His Word, and then “*Doing the will of God from the heart*” (Ephesians 6:6), you exercise your faith in responding to affliction. Faith is spiritual muscle that grows stronger when put into action.

Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage. (Psalm 27:14)

Another component of the **Power of Christ** is the **Power of Prayer**. The influence of prayer is expansive. Prayer is your means to directly communicate with God. We will discuss how you can use prayer later in the book. It is one of your greatest privileges and ministries.

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

God tells you to use the **Power of Prayer** correctly and boldly. “*Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need*” (Hebrews 4:16).

When you are in affliction, this is your verse:

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

**Be an Overcomer of Affliction
Use the Power of Christ**

THE *ZUGOS* TEMPLATE

For you have been called for this purpose,
since Christ also suffered for you, leaving
you an example for you to follow in His
steps. (1 Peter 2:21)

The Lord Jesus Christ left us the example to follow, our template to live the Christian life, including how to win the battles of aging. This power of Christ is available to each one of us.

The word for “*example*” in the Greek is derived from the verb *hupographo*, which means to write under, the practice of tracing the letters to learn how to write them. This is a template that serves as a master pattern used to make similar things.

Jesus Christ’s spiritual life during His earthly ministry is the template the Holy Spirit uses to cut us into His image. When we diligently acquire the thinking of Christ by studying the Bible, the Holy Spirit forms us into Christ’s image.

Take the *Zugos*

Take My yoke upon you and learn from
Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
(Matthew 11:29)

The word “*yoke*” is the Greek word *zugos*. It is a metaphor comparing the yoke on the neck of an animal such as an ox to a believer using his free will

to put on God's yoke. When you "*Take My yoke*" you take off the yoke of religious bondage and legalism and replace it with the yoke of God's grace provisions, including His grace for you in aging.

These concepts, *take* and *learn*, are not in the form of a request or suggestion. They are mandates from the Lord to us as believers and require positive volition on our part.

The *Zugos* is Christ's mentality and intentionality

We can see this yoke when we study what the Bible teaches us about Christ. I refer to Jesus Christ's mentality and His intentionality as the *Zugos* Template. This is your example to follow as you advance in your spiritual life.

"For I am gentle and humble in heart." Christ was not given to mood swings because He had learned humility and was unpretentious. Although He had tremendous authority He chose to control it. There is a song that rightly says, "He could have called 10,000 angels" when He hung on the cross. He had the authority to do so, but He held back.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ was totally reliant on the Father and the Holy Spirit and on applying Scripture. This set the example for us to follow, the *Zugos* Template.

Putting on the *Zugos* requires using Jesus Christ's virtue system. It consists of the horizontal virtue system of impersonal love toward others and the vertical virtue system of personal love for God.

Personal love for God is your motivation in life

The Apostle Paul used similar words in his letter to the church at Ephesus, writing, *“Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love”* (Ephesians 4:1-2).

Learn from Christ

Teachability requires humility. Some people won't learn because they can't get past their own thinking and ideas, or they believe they can do it on their own. Frank Sinatra's lyrics, "I did it my way" don't pertain to you and me. The spiritual life can't be lived without God and His grace provisions.

What Jesus Christ is saying to you is, "Submit to the authority of My Word. I will not require anything from you that you aren't equipped to handle." Executing the Christian way of life takes commitment. It requires you stay filled with God the Holy Spirit and conform to the authority of the Word of God by learning it, believing it through faith, and applying it in your life.

Take ... Learn ... Find Rest

The Lord gives us two mandates *“take and learn,”* and an amazing promise, *“you will find rest for your souls.”* We are to focus on Jesus Christ and use His divine provisions. We are to take His yoke and learn from Him. And if we use our volition to choose to do this, He promises us tranquility and relief from the burdens of aging. Isn't this encouraging?!

Rest for your soul

Our Lord promises that the *Zugos* will give rest, “*you will find rest for your souls.*” This is not rest from work. It is refreshment and relief from the burden of organized religion. It’s freedom from oversight and judgment by others. Organized religion will never let you rest. To meet the requirements of organized religion you must work for your salvation and work to prove your dedication and your spirituality. That is not the Christian life, and it is not the precedent the Lord Jesus Christ set for you.

My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
(Matthew 11:30)

The yoke the Lord wants you to put on is not overwhelming. It is easy and light. He would never ask you to submit to something that is not to your benefit. Being easy and light means it’s manageable, in contrast to the weight of religious manipulation.

The *Zugos* is not oppressive. Rather, it is enabling, revealing, and illuminating as you acquire the mind of Christ. Colossians 1:26-27 has this to say, “*The mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints ... Christ in you, the hope of glory.*”

Christ in you, the hope of Glory

As you take on the *Zugos* developed by our Savior, you will be able to match perfectly with God’s plan for your life. This requires you use your volition to stay filled with the Holy Spirit and continuously learn

God's Word to enable the Holy Spirit to form you into the image of Christ. This is what living the Christian way of life is all about.

The *Zugos* template is the prototype spiritual life of Christ during His earthly ministry that is passed on to you by means of the mentorship of the Holy Spirit. You cannot replicate it in your own energy, by your own efforts, or with human dynamics. The Christian life does not work like that. It has unique mechanics.

Jesus Christ perfected it over thirty years as He grew to adulthood and advanced to spiritual maturity. Then He demonstrated it during His three-year ministry. The *Zugos* will never wear out.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

Reveal God's grace in aging by putting on the *Zugos*

The reason you didn't go directly to heaven when you were saved is so you can glorify Jesus Christ in time as you reveal His power in your life.

So that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:12)

Overcoming affliction is a wonderful way to reveal Christ to others

Knowing that you are suffering, people will watch you and be amazed by the illumination of your soul

strength. They will see the manifestation of the attributes you have acquired by putting on the *Zugos*. The *Zugos* is designed for others to see Christ in you and the hope He offers to all.

Amazing Attributes learned from putting on the *Zugos*

Compassion and Graciousness: *“The Lord of hosts has said, ‘Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion to others.’” (Zechariah 7:9)*

Confidence: *“Such confidence we have through Christ toward God.” (2 Corinthians 3:4)*

Deliverance: *“‘They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you. For I am with you to deliver you,’ declares the Lord.” (Jeremiah 1:19)*

Elimination of Fear: *“Do not fear, for I am with you.” (Isaiah 41:10)*

Endurance: *“Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” (James 1:3)*

Faithfulness: *“I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Your ordinances before me.” (Psalm 119:30)*

Forgiveness: *“Forgive others, just as Christ also has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)*

Happiness: *“Happiness belongs to those who hear My Father’s Word and keep it.” (Luke 11:28)*

Humility: *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up.” (James 4:10)*

Insight: *“I have insight, for Your testimonies are my meditation.” (Psalm 119:99)*

Joy: *“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full.” (John 15:11)*

Kindness: *“Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” (Colossians 3:12)*

Mercy: *“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:36)*

Patience: *“May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 3:5)*

Peace: *“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (John 14:27)*

Rest: *“Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.” (Psalm 37:7)*

Self-Control: *“In your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness.” (2 Peter 1:6)*

Strength: *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)*

Virtue Love: *“We love God because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)*

Wisdom: *“With humility comes wisdom.” (Proverbs 11:2)*

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
(Romans 1:20)

The Lord Jesus Christ left you the template for living the spiritual life and aging gracefully. It is revealed in the recorded canon of Scripture, specifically the New Testament. The *Zugos* was divinely designed for you. Wear it, and illuminate these amazing grace attributes.

Challenge: Learning and applying God’s Word is a life-long endeavor. Especially as you grow older, you must not wimp out. Stay steadfast. Do not allow yourself to be overcome by self-pity or fear or bitterness. Do not let your thinking be shaken by letting your emotions take over. Be sustained, stabilized and strengthened by wearing the *Zugos*.

He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.
(Psalm 62:2)

GETTING OFF COURSE

‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.’ (Jeremiah 29:11)

God intends the very best for you. His unique plan provides this. But emotionalism, self-absorption and human viewpoint will get you off course.

Emotions are a wonderful thing until they hijack your thinking. In their proper place, emotions are your appreciators in your life. But when you let your emotions override your thoughts, then emotions become your worst enemy. You will begin to react rather than respond with divine viewpoint.

Emotionalism leads to faulty thinking

Let’s take a look at some of the attitudes that are especially common and detrimental as we age. They are not necessarily sinful, but they can put you off course, and if perpetuated, will drag you down until you find yourself wallowing in mental attitude sins. Before that happens, before you lose your way, God’s way, adjust your thinking to get back on course. The battles of aging are won in the mind.

God gave you two ends

One to think with and one to sit on

Success in life depends on which end you use

Heads you win - Tails you lose

Disappointment and Regret - Are you suddenly old and nearing the end of temporal life, disappointed that your life didn't turn out as you had hoped, dreamed, and planned? You didn't quite manage to do all the things you wanted to do personally or in your profession and with your family and friends? Did you succumb to the cosmic system lure of looking back and now are filled with regret about bad decisions you made, misplaced priorities, failed relationships, or health mismanagement? Do you wish you had done things differently?

Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 3:13-14)

Course Correction: You can't change the past, but as long as you are alive, God still has a plan and purpose for you. Don't allow regret to morph into the complex sin of guilt. Reorient your thinking to the spiritual rather than the temporal. It's not about how much time you have left, but what you do with the time you do have.

Loneliness and Isolation - Feeling alone or abandoned is not unusual with the loss of a spouse, the death of friends, or having to leave your home to live in a care facility. Health issues may cause you to be home-bound or unable to participate in social activities. Maybe calls or visits become infrequent and you feel isolated. It's all too easy for bitterness to set in.

**I am with you always,
even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)**

Course Correction: Jesus said this to His disciples and He also promises it to you. You are never alone. Instead of sitting around watching TV or sleeping excessively, listen to a Bible study to refresh your soul and remind you of God's care for you. *"I will never leave you, nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5).

Why Me? - When you are having a hard time handling the adversities that come with old age, it's all too easy to stumble into the pitfall of "Why me?" Watch out! Unless you recover your footing, this path will take you from subjectivity, into the arrogance of self-pity, and then to doubting God.

We also exalt in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
(Romans 5:3-5)

Course Correction: God knows what He is doing. When He allows suffering it is for your benefit. Sometimes it's meant to wake you up and get you back into His plan. Responding to it using God's resources pleases God. He will honor this by turning your suffering into blessing.

God never makes mistakes

Insecurity - Are you preoccupied with your physical safety, your financial situation or the declining state of our nation? Do you feel uncertain about how your needs will be met? If you start to worry, that's a sin and it will lead to chain sinning.

Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be moved. (Psalm 55:22)

Course Correction: Stop being concerned about what might happen and focus instead on the Lord, who knows your every need and has provided for every detail of your future. Confidence comes from knowing who God is, putting your trust in Him and keeping it there. *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord"* (Jeremiah 17:7).

Feeling Useless, Unneeded and Dependent - Younger family members seem to take over, make your decisions for you, tell you what to do. No one asks what you want. You sense you've lost control of your own life. You perceive you're overlooked and ignored. Not only that, but your normal activities have been curtailed by lack of finances, mobility constraints or ill health. You can't go where you want to go or do what you want to do. This can lead to the sins of resentment, bitterness and anger.

**The greatest virtues in life
are personal love for God and
impersonal love for others**

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. (1 Peter 5:10)

Course Correction: Apply the divine resource of impersonal love. This is loving others based on your character not theirs. Impersonal love is a terrific grace provision. It is having a relaxed mental attitude toward those around you, including those that aren't attractive, treat you unfairly or don't give you the consideration you think you deserve. Learn to forgive others and be content knowing that God is in control, and then get on with fulfilling His plan.

Discouragement and Hopelessness - If you allow them, the attitudes we've just discussed can cause you to be discouraged and think there is no hope. Life can become more difficult as you grow older. Perhaps your health, your living situation, or your finances cause you to be overwhelmed. You see nothing bright in your future and you wonder why am I still here? Why doesn't God take me Home?

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Objective optimism is a characteristic of resiliency

Course Correction: The Lord will not allow more affliction than you can bear. God intends for you to stay objectively optimistic. Look at what Jeremiah wrote in the midst of the worst kind of historical disaster:

This I recall to my mind, therefore I have confidence. The Lord's mercies never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is His faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'Therefore I have confidence in Him.' The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to those who seek Him. (Lamentations 3:21-25)

God doesn't promise you a life free from adversity. But through His Word, He shows you how to persevere with peace, contentment and even happiness. Sadness and sense of loss are normal in certain circumstances, yet you must not allow these to consume you or your spiritual life will stall out.

Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. (Philippians 4:11)

Live by faith Relax in the Lord

Faith-Rest is an essential divine resource for living the Christian way of life and is especially beneficial as we age. When you worry or when another mental attitude sin threatens to overcome your thinking,

applying faith-rest allows you to reorient your thinking and stabilize your soul. Faith-rest is standing on the promises of God. You focus on God and His solutions rather than on your difficulties.

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)

God doesn't deliver by cancelling the adversity He delivers with the grace provision of faith-rest

If you cannot control your thinking in normal times, then you can bank on being an emotional hostage when a crisis hits. The believer's focus must be on the Lord Jesus Christ and His promises, not on the never ending scare tactics perpetuated by Satan's cosmic system and designed to distract you from developing your spiritual life.

A beautiful hymn written by Helen M. Lemmel titled "*Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*" reminds us where our focus should be. When you view your situation in the light of God's love and grace, the only course is to trust Him and His plan.

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!
Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.

**It's never too late
to make a course correction in life**

If you sense you are allowing your emotions to take over and human viewpoint has crept into your thought process, rebound and counter by applying divine viewpoint.

Have this attitude in you which was also
in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:5)

Challenge: In eternity past, omniscient God knew every little problem, every major adversity, and every seemingly hopeless situation that you will experience, and He provided a solution for each one of them.

**Every problem in life
has a solution stated in the Bible**

And my God will supply all your needs
according to His riches in glory in Christ
Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

As you age, hardships will come, count on it. Prepare for them by being faithful in studying and applying the Word of God. Then when difficulties come, you will be ready.

Stay balanced and on course by putting God's grace provisions into action.

Do not drift from God's grace

BE AWARE OF THESE SINS

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us.

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
(Hebrews 12:1-2)

As you age, you will be confronted with new challenges and difficulties. You can either respond to them with God's grace provisions or you can react to them with human viewpoint thinking that will take you off course. Thinking with human viewpoint will lead you into the "*sin which so easily entangles.*"

You may be unaware that some of the things you think or say are sinful. Let's take a look at a few of these sins so you can avoid becoming entangled.

Self-Pity

Self-pity is a terrible enemy at any stage of life but especially in old age. "I can't drive. My eyes are weak. I can't hear. My knees hurt. All I do is go to doctor appointments. I can't do what I used to be able to do. Where is the fun?" It is so easy to let your emotions kick in and to become self-absorbed.

That does not glorify God. Self-pity is arrogance and wanting others to feel sorry for you. You are focusing on yourself and your woes rather than *“fixing your eyes on Jesus.”*

Bitterness

Unfair circumstances, whether real or perceived, are a test many older believers fail to pass. Too often the reaction is bitterness. No matter how much Bible study they’ve done, they just can’t keep a relaxed mental attitude when crossed. Objectivity is lost. They take things personally and fail to use the divine resources of impersonal love and forgiveness. The capability to forgive others and forget their offenses is essential to acquire before you get old.

Forgiveness process: Forgive the person Forget the deed and Move on

Bitterness in your soul’s mentality pollutes your thinking. It’s a harsh attitude that can become a source of habitual carnality. Bitterness breeds numerous other mental and verbal sins such as anger, hatred, resentment, jealousy, vindictiveness, self-pity, complaining, slander and maligning. Bitter people aren’t happy people.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Eph 4:31-32)

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. (Hebrews 12:15)

Anger

One of the most crippling mental attitude sins is anger, when you express antagonism, resentment, maybe even hatred toward a person, a system, a philosophy or a condition. You might be angry about something you don't agree with, such as politics or rules that you have to follow. Anger is one of the sins associated with bitterness. Older people who lose loved ones or some aspect of their functionality can easily become bitter and angry.

Not only does anger kick you out of fellowship with God but it can also produce jealousy and even cruelty. Anger can turn a wise person into a foolish person very quickly. Ecclesiastes 7:9 says, "*Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, for anger resides in the bosom of fools.*" You know what I'm talking about - stupid, embarrassing things said in a fit of anger. Verbal sins spill out when you become angry because you're emoting, not thinking.

Arrogance

Arrogance is the great enemy of any believer, young, old or in between. It is a catalyst causing many other sins to flow from it and it can be difficult to recognize in yourself. Arrogance starts with a thought pattern that overflows into the motivation and decision-making processes of your soul.

Arrogance is pervasive

**Arrogance: Self-justification leads to
self-deception followed by
self-absorption often ending with self-destruction**

For example, an alcoholic, an unfaithful person, or a megalomaniac will have excuses for what they do. In self-deception they lie to themselves and justify their actions. They become totally preoccupied with themselves to the exclusion of God and anyone else.

Arrogant people always seek unconditional love from others, but they can offer only conditional love in return and only if you meet their terms. They see themselves as they think they are, not as they really are. They have an unrealistic self-image and unrealistic expectations.

The arrogant, self-righteous, religious person is the worst. He is ignorant of God's Word and lives by taboos. Often judgmental and self-serving, he tries to impose his standards on others.

He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, 'God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' (James 4:6)

Anxiety

Anxiety is a foreboding, unsettled vagueness brought about by human viewpoint thinking. Anxiety anticipates something bad, some cursing, failure, or calamity, without specifically defining the bad thing or cause. Manifestations include purposelessness, indecision and an unwillingness to proceed with life. Anxiety and stress go together. If allowed to go unchecked, they will eventually overflow and harm both mental and physical health.

When my anxious thoughts multiply
within me, Your comforts delight my soul.
(Psalm 94:19)

God's plan is for you to have perfect peace in this life. Having the mind of Christ in your soul, "*Your comforts,*" brings this peace.

God's Word is the antidote to anxiety

The Bible mandates no anxiety. Philippians 4:6-7 says, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*"

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Doubt

Faith is spiritual stamina, spiritual muscle developed by learning God's Word and strengthened through use. Hebrews 11:1 says, "*Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*" Faith is determining something to be true through confidence and trust in the source of that knowledge. God is truth. His Word is truth.

Doubt is the absence of faith

If you lack confidence that the Word of God is true or you are uncertain that God's plan is relevant to your life, you have doubt.

Doubts about God's provisions, His plan and the validity of salvation have significant potential to derail an older believer. Satan's cosmic system attacks the credibility of God's plan and His promise of eternal security. This is why it's so important to develop strong spiritual stamina, strong faith, ideally before you hit old age, so you can more readily counter the sin of doubt. Without strong faith muscles you will succumb to the lures of the world targeting seniors. "Am I really saved?" "Why would a loving God allow this to happen to me?"

Be confident in your guaranteed heritage and destiny

Avoid doubt. Use your faith to sustain you. Have patience in the timing of God's revelation of His unique plan. "*My soul, wait in patience for God only, for my confidence is from Him*" (Psalm 62:5).

Fear

Fear and your spiritual life are incompatible. Fear paralyzes thinking. There is never a time a Christian should be afraid. God promises and provides protection and deliverance. Trust Him.

Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid; for the Lord your God goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. (Proverbs 3:24)

The Lord is for me, I will not fear; what can man do to me? (Psalm 118:6)

Worry

Your thoughts and peace of mind can be hijacked by the never-ending call of worry and fear. Examples include the pandemic and the nation's weak foreign policy. "There is a virus and I'm afraid to go anywhere or do anything. I might get sick and die. World War III is about to start."

Worry is taking on unnecessary burdens

There is an endless list of things luring you to worry. Personal needs: "There are going to be supply shortages. I won't get my medication." Or social tension: "A race war is brewing." Or crime: "The neighborhood isn't safe" Or national decline: "My children aren't going to have a bright future." Or lack of income: "What if we have another depression?"

This is what Satan's cosmic system throws at you every day to get you to worry, to get you to doubt God and stop relying on His grace provisions.

Relax

Jesus Christ controls history

Jesus said to His disciples, 'Do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body ... Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!' (Luke 12:22-24)

Guilt

Guilt is produced when you can't let go of past failures. It is an emotional sense of responsibility or remorse for something that you did or think you did. It forms garbage in the sub-conscious and often develops into some morbid self-reproach where you believe you are inadequate and get preoccupied with yourself.

Satan will use guilt to manipulate you, and if you live by it, you will lose your perception of reality. Guilt is a trap. It can cause repression when you force things from the past deep inside your soul and never deal with them. This is harmful. With your supernatural spiritual life you can overcome anything in your past including failures, abuse and rejection.

Guilt ignores God's promise of forgiveness as found in 1 John 1:9, the provision we call rebound. After you name your sin to God, He doesn't remember your sin and neither should you. Clear your conscience and move on in your spiritual life.

I am He who blots out your transgressions
for My own sake, and I will not remember
your sins. (Isaiah 43:25)

Spiritual Apathy

Many people are pulled into human viewpoint thinking because of spiritual apathy. This is an issue that believers often face as they get up in age. Apathy is defined as a lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern. It may be brought on by negative volition, distractions, depression or other conditions.

Spiritual apathy is loss of desire to study God's Word, a lack of effort to advance spiritually. If you

let sickness or anything else overcome your appetite to grow spiritually, you are off course. The fallen angels observing you will applaud.

We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. (Hebrews 2:1)

Spiritual growth should accelerate, not fizzle

Enthusiasm for your spiritual journey is necessary, especially as you age. To get the winner's crown when you get to heaven, you must keep learning God's Word and growing in grace and knowledge. Then you will hear the Lord say to you, *"Well done, My good and faithful servant"* (Matthew 25:21).

Gritching, Criticizing, Gossiping

All of the sins we have noted are sins that you think. Verbal sins will also ensnare the older believer. So beware the sins of the tongue as you chat with your best friend forever or one of your old cronies.

When you are tempted to gritch (my combination of two words) remember God's Word tells you, Don't! *"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you"* (Matthew 7:1-2).

Instead of complaining or engaging in criticism when someone lets you down, apply impersonal love.

He who guards his mouth and his tongue,
guards his soul from troubles.
(Proverbs 21:23)

God's grace provision of Rebound is how you recover from sin

Sin takes you out of fellowship with God and puts you under the control of your sin nature. As soon as you recognize any sin in your life, in silent prayer name it to God the Father using God's provision for handling personal sin, 1 John 1:9. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Do not let sin reign in your body so that you obey its lusts. (Romans 6:12)

You may be thinking, "How do I contain my sin nature and keep the Holy Spirit in control of my life?" Great question! After I became a Christian, it took me over a year before I even knew I had a sin nature and then I needed to be taught how to use God's solution of 1 John 1:9. The sin nature will be with you until you transfer from this life; don't be ignorant of this.

Spiritual growth contains the sin nature

That God would grant you to be made strong by means of the Holy Spirit.
(Ephesians 3:16)

When you rebound, your fellowship with God is restored and you are again filled with the Holy Spirit. Now you are empowered to resume your spiritual life and your service to the Lord.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

You may not realize it, but you are in full-time Christian service. In fact, God has given you two royal commissions. You are a believer priest, meaning you represent yourself before God, and you are an ambassador representing Christ to others.

As your body declines, you may find you can't keep up with the type of service you did when you were younger. Perhaps you devoted yourself to enabling others, driving friends to appointments, helping a prison ministry or church administration. Now you need to adjust and turn to other service better aligned with your capabilities.

Prayer

You can be a phenomenal servant of the Lord through your prayer ministry. Years ago at my church there was a wonderful elderly lady known as Aunt Mae. She remained faithful in attending Bible class sitting in her wheelchair. Aunt Mae couldn't do much physically but she was a devoted prayer warrior. She spent hours in prayer every day in adoration to God and interceding for others.

There is tremendous power in prayer!

Prayer is a function of your royal priesthood. "*Pray without ceasing*" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). God designed the correct way to come to Him in prayer. We call this His prayer protocol - doing a right thing in a right way.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Psalm 66:18, *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”*

Prayer protocol: Address your prayer to God the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and close in the name of Jesus Christ. *“Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do; so that the Father may be glorified in the Son”* (John 14:13).

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert
in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.
(Colossians 4:2)

Your prayers should include thanksgiving. Express gratitude for who God is and for all that He does. *“In everything give thanks, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

With all prayer and petition pray at all
times in the Holy Spirit, and with this in
view, be on the alert with all perseverance
and petition for all the saints. (Eph 6:18)

Intercession for others, even those who seek to do you harm, is a very worthy category of prayer. *“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”* (Matthew 5:44).

What can you pray for? For people that need Christ and for occasions to give them the gospel. *“Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation”* (Romans 10:1). You can pray for your family, those who are sick or in need, your pastor and church staff and volunteers, evangelists, missionaries, seminary students, law enforcement, military, first responders, border patrol,

healthcare providers, divine establishment functions, government agencies, and local, state and national leaders. Did you know that as believers in America, we have this mandate to pray for our leaders?

I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.
(1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Along with obedience and humility to God, prayer is a component of the deliverance of a nation suffering under divine discipline. *“If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land”* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Absolutely it’s okay to petition for yourself. Pray for guidance, among other things. *“If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God and it will be given to him”* (James 1:5). Be comforted in knowing the Holy Spirit makes intercession on your behalf. Before eating, pray for sanctification of your food.

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the Word of God and prayer.
(1 Timothy 4:4-5)

You may not always see God’s answers to your prayers, but when you do, it’s exciting and satisfying.

Evangelism

You are a personal representative of Christ. Did you know this? He is counting on you to re-present Him to those who are lost and dying. This is why God leaves you here after you are saved. Evangelism isn't a ministry just for pastors and evangelists. It's also yours.

As Paul said, *"I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God"* (Acts 20:24).

We have the same mission, to present the gospel as we talk about Jesus Christ. Every person in your sphere of influence is an opportunity. The Word of God never returns void.

**If I am lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself.
(John 12:32)**

This doesn't mean you have to walk the neighborhood handing out tracts. But think about the people you engage with during the normal course of your week - repairmen, store clerks, servers in a restaurant and your nurses and doctors - these are chances for others to see Christ in you. Take advantage of these encounters.

I make known to you the gospel by which also you are saved ... that Christ died for our sins, and that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

You are a divinely appointed influencer

Manifest your confidence in God wherever you live. Opportunities abound in care facilities. People will see you are relaxed and have an attitude of gratitude. They will notice you are different from those who are frightened, complaining and demanding. Be ready to respond when asked why.

Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. (1 Peter 3:15)

Extend God's grace to those around you. Introduce them to your Lord and Savior and open a conversation about His salvation work on the cross. If you are not sure about what to say, give them something easy to read or listen to that accurately presents the gospel. The greater your spiritual growth, the more effective your witness.

Encouragement

Those undergoing affliction usually welcome encouragement. There is a right way and a wrong way to encourage others. It's not about being a busybody and minding someone else's business. It's about easing the burden of the one who is suffering by reminding them of the Source for relief.

Encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. (1 Thess 5:14)

Blessings come and blessings go The Source remains the same

The believer who is having trouble handling adversity may benefit from you giving them an infusion of Biblical rationales to apply to their circumstances. Challenge them to reorient to God and His grace provisions.

If you see a person is applying God's Word to the situation, your role is to be refreshment for their soul. A spiritually mature friend of mine who had a stroke was cheered when a fellow believer emailed her a Bible promise every day for weeks.

Playing a hymn or sending a written note or email that highlights God's love and steadfastness is heartening to those who are suffering. Expressions of divine viewpoint and reminders to appreciate God's grace bring refreshment to all of us.

Become refreshed through the agency of
the Holy Spirit by means of your thinking.
(Ephesians 4:23)

Many seniors are afflicted with diminished eye sight. Listening to someone read from accurate Bible studies is often welcomed by those with failing vision.

God's Word is absolute solace

This is why it's so important you store the Word of God in your soul so the Holy Spirit has something to recall. A soul soaked in God's Word will give you a wealth of refreshment.

Other Things to Consider

Encourage one another and build up one another. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Host a weekly Bible study. You don't have to be able-bodied to do this. It need not be an elaborate social gathering, just assemble and listen to a Bible lesson. Turn on a recording or tune in to an online lesson from a well-qualified pastor.

Invite like-minded believers to join you for a time of prayer. Meeting in person isn't a requirement. You can gather in group prayer over the phone or using social media venues.

Teach children about God. This is a mandate from God. Do you have children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews? Get them to God consciousness and give them the gospel. Intercede; don't interfere. Pray with them. Don't let these opportunities go to waste.

These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

Perhaps doing this in person isn't feasible for you. For instance, if you don't live in the vicinity of your grandchildren, write to them or ask to set up a regular time to call so you can talk to them about God. If you are comfortable learning new technology, ask them to show you how to use social media.

As each one has received a special gift,
employ it in serving one another as good
stewards of the manifold grace of God.

(1 Peter 4:10)

Challenge: These are just a few ideas to help inspire you to transmit God's grace and thereby glorify Him. Don't forget that God has a specific and unique plan for you in every phase of your life, including aging. Pray and ask Him to show you what He would have you do. He will answer your prayers.

Recognize providential circumstances

Wait on God's lead

Go through open doors

Wishing you could still do the things you used to do is pointless and wasting time. The most valuable and beneficial thing you can do, regardless of your age, is to study and grow in God's Word every day. Then when God presents you with opportunities to serve Him, you will be ready. God uses prepared believers!

For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

(Hebrews 6:10)

Have you ever asked God for an assignment?

IMPACT AS AN OLDER CHRISTIAN

Your impact is to be greater in old age than when you were younger. I can hear your retort, “No way. I’m by myself. I can’t do near what I used to do.” Ahhh ... you’re thinking human ability.

Think divine. Where is your lasting health and wealth? Where is God’s grace that you are to reveal? Where is the real you? In the mentality of your soul.

In your aging years, you have fewer distractions and demands from the details of life so you can devote more time to spiritual matters. More time in God’s Word. More time in worship and prayer. More time reflecting Christ’s mentality and intentionality. You are now in your spiritual prime - God expects you to show it.

Declare the Power of Christ

Even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation. (Psalm 71:18)

This verse is a direct reference to the omnipotence of God. Jesus Christ’s resurrection from the grave is the historic representation of this power. We have a job in our old age to declare God’s power and His strength to this generation and those that follow.

When you are faithful to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have a convincing witness. ***“Being manifested that you are a letter of Christ” (2 Corinthians 3:3).***

Others will observe you are living with objective optimism and free from fear, worry and bitterness. You are happy because you share God's happiness. This inner peace and strength, the power of Christ in you, is what you are to declare.

How blessed is the man whose delight is in the doctrine of the Lord and in His Word he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers. (Ps 1:2-3)

God's blessings transcend the death of the spiritually mature believer. He showers a multitude of blessing in time and in eternity. These blessings overflow in ways that you may not even know. Material things are often what come to mind, but these can also be blessings of capacity, time, and other assets of God's grace.

What is less obvious is that God also blesses you by prospering and protecting those you love. One spiritually advanced believer will be the source of blessing to the entire family. The best possible inheritance you can leave your children and grandchildren is to keep on learning and applying God's Word and advancing to spiritual maturity, becoming an invisible hero.

Don't fall for the lure of making the world a better place for children. It's not going to happen. It's the devil's world. But you can be confident that God honors you as a winner believer by continuing to bless those in your periphery, even after you die.

I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread. (Psalm 37:25)

The same principle applies to other areas of your life, where you work and volunteer, memberships, your friends and neighbors all benefit by association with you as a maturing Christian. My pastor liked to use the illustration of a prosperous business. The board was celebrating their record profits, thinking what great business people they were. Little did they realize that God had prospered the business because of the janitor who had a soul filled with God's Word! To go a step further, the presence of maturing Christians has great impact on the neighborhoods, cities, states and nations where they live.

Your legacy needs to be spiritual

Challenge: Your legacy will depend on your commitment to advancing to spiritual maturity. You will not have an impact for Christ in your community or in your family if you can't replicate His mentality and intentionality. There is no legacy if you have not declared the power of Christ to your children and your grandchildren, your co-workers and friends.

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, be sober and fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:13)

**Be an effective representative of
your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance. (Psalm 33:12)

As goes your spiritual life so goes your nation

Believers with positive volition to God's Word who are advancing to spiritual maturity bring protection and prosperity to their nation. They are the invisible heroes of the nation, the quiet spiritual professionals who have tremendous historical impact. When this group of maturing believers is large enough the entire nation is blessed and preserved.

On the other hand, when too many Christians abandon the plan of God and reject His Word, the nation will be disciplined and eventually destroyed.

Hosea spoke of this, *"For the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children"* (Hosea 4:1,6).

Be reassured, God does not abandon faithful believers. God's grace provisions sustain and are always sufficient. God will deliver a remnant of His people. *"Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him"* (Psalm 91:14).

There are a lot of Christians in America, but I wonder how many actually know and apply Scripture. Part of the problem is the declining number of pastors who are studying and accurately teaching the mechanics of the spiritual life.

You shall walk in all the way which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days.
(Deuteronomy 5:33)

America is in turmoil because many Americans have turned away from God. You see it in political conflict, racial rage and frustration, financial distress, and licentious behavior leading to moral degeneracy. The United States is a nation in decline.

There is a **FOG** across America: **F**ailure of spiritual leadership in the pulpit. **O**pen rebellion to the rule of law. **G**od's Word rejected.

Anyone with any discernment can look at the trends and see that dark days are coming, or have already arrived. We are about to be fogged in and will not survive as a free nation much longer if this continues.

The only thing that will deliver this nation is you and your spiritual life. This is how you can have significant impact. You must take your spiritual life seriously. If you go to church for socializing rather than learning, or you put your time and emphasis in the wrong place, then you are part of the problem. You have to be committed to spiritual growth.

Spiritual growth dissipates the FOG
It is your essential spiritual life decision

‘Let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me. For I delight in these things,’ declares the Lord.
(Jeremiah 9:24)

As you advance in spiritual maturity and reflect Christ through your thoughts and actions, you are the salt to preserve a nation. When you re-present Christ to others you become a light. Light attracts. Declaring the power and strength of Christ in your life is how you *“let your light shine.”*

Can you now see that God designed your impact to exponentially increase in your final years?

You are the salt of the earth ... You are the light of the world ... Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.
(Matthew 5:13-16)

Challenge: We have a nation full of scarred up consciences and deluded people who have been deceived by Satan, especially our youth. As older believers, a generation that will soon pass on, what are we leaving our children, our grandchildren and our friends? Are you the man or woman God called you to be? Are you committed and enthused to have a greater spiritual impact today and tomorrow?

Do you have the courage to ask God to inventory your soul and guide you to shine brighter?

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
try me and know my anxious thoughts;
and see if there be any hurtful way in me,
and lead me in the everlasting way.
(Psalm 139:23-24)

FROM TIME TO ETERNITY

Death is a topic many don't want to talk about but it is a reality a believer should embrace. Sooner or later it will happen to all of us. We have to die. This body won't work in heaven.

Perhaps you've recently lost a loved one and miss them greatly. Here's reassurance. The Bible gives us evidence that our loved ones are not really dead, simply removed from this time continuum. *"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it"* (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Your soul, the real you, never dies

The earthly body is infected with sin and has to be destroyed, *"dust will return to earth."* But the soul is indestructible. At the point of physical death, the soul departs from the body and lives forever - in heaven for the believer or in the Lake of Fire for the person who rejected Jesus Christ as Savior. *"Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies'"* (John 11:25).

Fear of dying inhibits living

The fear of death enslaves many. Satan uses it to intimidate and to manipulate. You need to be aware of this also. He wants to distract you from living your spiritual life and advancing to spiritual maturity. When you obsess about dying you are off course.

That through death He would render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.
(Hebrews 2:14-15)

People who normally give no thought to God or the truth of His Word, when faced with the prospect of imminent death, will often beg God to deliver them. Sometimes this dread of dying is what will bring a person to the need for salvation. Seize these opportunities to present the gospel.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

No believer should ever fear death. Jesus Christ conquered death and He promises you will also. The believer's death is God's victory.

**In living, you apply God's Word
In dying, you live it**

For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality ... Then will come about the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'
(1 Corinthians 15:53-55)

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 15:57)

The death of every believer is a wonderful victory and a promotion to being face-to-face with our Savior and in the presence of our loving heavenly Father. The time and manner of your death is God's sovereign and wise decision. He knows the right time and right way to take you Home. God will be punctual.

You belong to the Lord, whether you live or die

For if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.
(Romans 14:8)

What about after death? There are certain blessings that all believers will enjoy no matter how they lived their lives on earth, whether growing to spiritual maturity and glorifying God or trudging down the My Way Highway.

Being in the presence of God forever, worshipping and glorifying Him is the utmost blessing. This is beyond description, and so are the other blessings we know of from Scripture.

Do not throw away your confidence, which is a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. (Hebrews 10:35-36)

There will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. (Revelation 21:4)

In heaven you will receive a resurrection body like that of Jesus Christ. You will be sin free, pain free and disease free, living forever in a perfect body. Won't this be amazing!

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to be conformed to His glorious body. (Philippians 3:20-21)

**Your home is heaven
You are just a sojourner here**

All believers are endowed with an eternal inheritance and a heavenly home more wonderful than could ever be imagined. *“An inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”* (1 Peter 1:4-5).

Even though we can't begin to fathom the scope of God's abode, our departed loved ones who are saved are basking right now in His glorious provisions.

The eye has not seen, the ear has not heard, the heart has never known the amazing things that God has for you. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Dying grace is the bridge between time and eternity

Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of His godly ones.
(Psalm 116:15)

Dying grace is unbelievable. If you ever have the privilege of being in the presence of a mature believer passing from time to eternity, you will concur. I remember a friend of mine who transitioned under hospice care. The nurse apologized to her daughter, “I’m so sorry your mother is moaning in pain.” The daughter responded with a smile, “No, she’s singing. Listen.” Her mother was humming “*Amazing Grace*.”

God bestows grace blessings in every phase of spiritual advance, but the most fantastic is dying grace. It makes the death of the mature believer the greatest experience in his or her life. Dying grace takes you through the dying phase of your life with no fear, with absolute confidence, and with eager anticipation of what lies ahead.

Dying grace is the ultimate blessing in time

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12)

Dying grace brings eternal rewards into focus

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! So that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them. (Revelation 14:13)

It's my prayer you have a great handle on death and the victory over death that we enjoy through the resurrection and the life that Jesus Christ gives us.

Challenge: You need not worry about your death, but you should prepare for it now. You prepare for death in the same way you live, by filling your soul with the knowledge of God's Word. Then as you face death, you can be relaxed and happy applying what you know of God and His truth. When you fulfill God's plan, you become a winner in time and in eternity, abundantly blessed by God's grace.

Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight; we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Dying grace is the mature believer's transition from time and experiencing God's living grace, including aging grace, into God's surpassing grace throughout eternity.

So that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us. (Ephesians 2:7)

THE THREE F'S

Remember getting report cards in school? The worst thing was having to show it to your parents when you failed a class. Maybe you never got an F, but if you did, you know what I'm talking about. Let's discuss the three F's you absolutely need to have on your report card when you get to heaven.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have **fought** the good fight, I have **finished** the course, I have kept the **faith**. (2 Timothy 4:6-7)

The Apostle Paul spent his last days as a prisoner of Nero in the Mamertine Dungeon in Rome. In his final letter to Timothy, his "young son in the faith," Paul wrote that he had fulfilled his mission and was ready to be a testament of God's grace. Paul knew he would soon be executed.

These are your goals:

Fight ... Finish ... Keep the Faith

Fight by acquiring the mind of Christ

The Greek word for "*fought*" is *agonizomai*, from which we get the word agony. The ancient Greek athletes trained at the Agonizomai camp grounds. They trained for the Pythian Games, the Isthmian Games and the Olympic Games in this place of

agony. Translated literally, *agonizomai* means to compete for a prize.

“I fought, I contended with adversaries, I competed for the prize.” Why did Paul decide to use this analogy comparing his life to an athletic competition? Paul had been contending with adversaries ever since he became a believer. His entire ministry was one tremendous test after another.

Before his conversion to faith in Jesus Christ, he was a well-respected, prosperous high-ranking Pharisee who hated and persecuted Christians. After his salvation, he acquired humility which replaced his arrogance about himself and his position. He was completely changed. His life took a new direction.

When he came to know Jesus Christ as his Savior, Paul lost his standing among the Jews, his money, and his prestige. In Philippians 3:8, he talks about the change in himself:

I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.

To “*gain Christ*” refers to significant spiritual growth. It is occupation with the person of Christ. “*It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*” (Galatians 2:20). You fight by acquiring the mind of Christ and reflect this as you win the war on aging. Paul had an amazing transformation after his encounter with Christ. So will you as you take on the mentality and intentionality of Jesus Christ.

Keep the battles of circumstances external

What kind of battles did Paul fight? Here he describes some of what he endured and suffered:

Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.
(2 Corinthians 11:24-31)

This passage is only part of the story. It does not include Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7), Paul's being abandoned by his friends while he was in prison (2 Timothy 1:15) or Paul's thinking that he was about to lose his life.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

This comfort comes from the maximum use of God's living grace provisions. Remember:

The battles of aging are won in the mind

Let us hold fast to our faith without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23)

When Paul said, "*I have fought the good fight*," he was not exaggerating. He fought the fight. Paul endured trials and tribulations that we cannot even imagine, all because he preached and proclaimed the gospel. As he pushed to the finish line, Paul faced one test after another, each one a unique opportunity to advance in spiritual maturity and to glorify God.

Challenge: Now, what about you? People may tell you that once you believe in Jesus Christ, you are going to have a rosy and wonderful life. In reality, when you accept Christ as your Savior, you step into the arena of contention of the angelic conflict. Satan is not happy with you being saved and he doesn't

want you to grow spiritually. He wants you to get distracted by his schemes, to get discouraged by the challenges of aging, and to fail in fulfilling God's plan for your life.

When your time comes, and it's coming sooner than you think, are you going to be able to say, "I fought the good fight?" Your battles are not like Paul's. He was the great servant of God who authored thirteen New Testament epistles, four of which he wrote while in prison. But you have your own significant battles to fight and win.

Finish fulfilling God's plan

Paul had many struggles while he fulfilled God's plan presenting the gospel. In Acts 20:24 he said, "*I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.*" Paul did what he was chosen to do. He didn't wimp out. He didn't moan in self-pity. He didn't quit.

Paul's race, his course, his mission, was to "*testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.*" You and I have the same mission. We are to present the saving message of Jesus Christ, His death, burial and resurrection. The unbelieving world needs to be rescued out of the death penalty of sin. You have the solution. Be willing to relay it.

Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. (Colossians 4:6)

You will face opposition in your mission as a personal representative of Jesus Christ by Satan and his cosmic system of evil and human good. I have seen this for more than fifty years in my own life. Paul said in Romans 1:16:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek [Gentile].

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel even though it cost him everything, even his life. He knew that he was doing the right thing, in the right way, and for the right reason.

Whatever your stage of life, whatever your age, if you want to finish the course as Paul did, here is what you must do:

Fight ... Finish ... Keep the Faith

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

You are being observed

You are in the center of the angelic conflict. You don't see them, but angels are observing you and learning from you. Your friends are watching you as well, to see how you handle circumstances. Will they

see something different about you? Will your spiritual strength be obvious as you respond to challenges with calm confidence?

When hardships strike, and they will, how do you deal with them? How do you handle the tough diagnosis you receive from your doctor? Do you get full of self-pity? When life's distractions and demands hit you, do you stick with your priority and make time to study God's Word? Or do you say, "I don't mind going to church once a week, but Bible study every day is too much. I don't need it."

Essential or Non-essential? Evaluate distractions to your spiritual life

"Lay aside every encumbrance." This refers to the distractions that take up your time. You have family that need your care and attention. You have chores. You have to get your exercise. You have places to be and see. We all do, but make this your number one priority: ***"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"*** (2 Peter 3:18). Remember, time is a gift from God; redeem it.

Many Christians do not run with endurance, especially as they get older. Normal daily activities become more difficult. Cognition declines, pain is a constant and it is hard just to get up and to walk. Have you given up your enthusiasm for living? Do you feel sorry for yourself? Are you wondering why dying grace is taking so long? God's plan for you is not finished yet; He still has more for you.

God's plan is perfect and His timing is perfect

Not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. (Romans 12:11)

Challenge: How are you running your race? Pick up your feet and run! Quit shuffling along. So many people just shuffle along in their spiritual life. Some even audit the Christian life, never taking seriously spiritual growth. Lay aside all distractions. Keep the priorities you have set. Win victory over your sinful habits that cause you to stumble. Endure the pain. Embrace the sacrifice. Grow spiritually. Replicate the life of Christ. Bring maximum glorification to God. Reap the reward. *“Lay aside every encumbrance and run with endurance.”*

Run with fidelity. Be faithful to do what God called you to do. People say, “I don’t really know what God wants me to do. I’m kind of confused. I’m trying to figure it out.” I can tell you what He wants you to do. He wants you to study His Word and make the application in your life, and to look for opportunities to re-present Him.

Keep the faith

You must! Faith is your spiritual stamina. The word faith in the Greek is *pistis* and means that which is believed, the truth of God’s Word stored in the soul ready to be used. *“I have kept the faith.”* Paul is saying he didn’t deviate from the truth and the mission he was called to do in spite of the cost. He stuck with it.

Don’t bend to the demands of the world
Don’t blend God’s Word to meet your desires

There will be times when what you believe will be tested. You may be recruited to leave a sound pastor to follow a more dynamic one whose church has something for everyone. I have known people who were lured away from their right pastor to an appealing church where there were more programs for the children. They used their children as the reason for leaving accurate Bible teaching.

The Israelites used the same excuse for not going into the Promised Land. *“Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”* (Numbers 14:3).

Without faith it is impossible to please God, because he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.
(Hebrews 11:6)

The faith Paul is talking about is operational faith. It takes faith to execute the Christian life, to advance to spiritual maturity and to exploit God’s grace in aging. How do you develop this faith? *“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God”* (Romans 10:17).

A shallow soul produces a shallow faith. Your faith is developed by persistent and consistent study of God’s Word under the accurate teaching of a pastor. Then it is strengthened through exercise.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
(Romans 11:33)

God's Word convicts

For the Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
(Hebrews 4:12)

“The Word of God is alive and powerful.” It is the greatest power in this world. The Biblical principles you learn are what establish and strengthen your faith muscles. The core values in your soul motivate you to stay on course. Your faith is an act of your volition and it is also a system of your belief.

Fight ... Finish ... Keep the Faith

These are the 3 F's you must have to arrive in heaven as a winner believer.

Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.
(1 Timothy 6:12)

Challenge: Evaluate yourself. As you're nearing the finish line, are you wisely using the time you have left on the course? Are you giving it your all in a mental sprint to be a testament of God's grace?

Teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom.
(Psalm 90:12)

LESSONS FROM PAUL

There is a lot you can take from Paul's experiences and teaching to apply in your life, including principles on how to live and how to die.

You are a purchased possession

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you belong to the Lord. Ephesians 1:14 tells us, *"Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."* This refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit given to you at salvation. You have been bought and paid for by Christ's spiritual death on the cross. He substituted Himself in your place.

When you accepted Christ as your Savior, you were freed from the penalty of sin and death. Now with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit you can be free from the control of your sin nature. You have volition, a free will, to choose your course. What path will you take? Paul tells you to come back to the One who purchased your freedom and show appreciation by joyfully serving and glorifying Him.

For you have been bought with a price;
therefore glorify God in your body.
(1 Corinthians 6:20)

Whatever you do, do all to the glory of
God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Time is an expression of God's grace

By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.
(1 Corinthians 15:10)

Prioritize spiritual growth

Your soul needs nourishment every day, just as your body does. This is why it's so important to establish and stick with a daily routine of Bible study. We're not talking about a daily devotional. You need to study an hour or more each day under a pastor who accurately teaches the Word of God.

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
(2 Corinthians 4:16)

Examine your soul strength

As your body starts breaking down, the spiritual strength in your soul needs to kick into high gear. Are you acquiring the mind of Christ to develop strength? The Word of God is a mirror. Use it to assess your spiritual life.

**Test yourselves
to see if you are in the faith;
examine yourselves!
(2 Corinthians 13:5)**

Stand firm in your faith

Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13)

Here Paul used the Greek word *steko* which means to stand firm, to maintain balance and to stay steadfast. Your faith is your stability in life.

Faith is the foundation of your spiritual life. It is developed by the metabolization and application of the Word of God. Your faith is what distinguishes you to unbelievers.

Trust God for deliverance

He grew strong in faith; being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. (Rom 4:20-21)

The Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from evil.
(2 Thessalonians 3:3)

God's peace produces tranquility

God wants you to have tranquility of soul and stay relaxed regardless of your circumstances. You have God's peace when you trust God, for everything. *"In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety"* (Psalm 4:8).

The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:7)

Physical difficulties are normal

For bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.
(1 Timothy 4:8)

Expect physical difficulties associated with age. They are normal. God never intended for you to live in this sin-infected body forever. Your body is going to wear out. You have to get rid of this one to get your resurrection body. So don't become discouraged by the challenges that will come with old age. Prepare for them by paying more attention to developing your soul.

So that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.
(1 Thessalonians 3:3)

Destined for affliction

God allows affliction in your life to accelerate spiritual growth, to develop patience, to increase trust in Him and to glorify Him. He has given you the divine resources to overcome affliction and thereby be blessed in time and throughout eternity.

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,
(2 Corinthians 4:17)

Use aging and dying to witness

Paul used his imminent death as an opportunity to talk about Christ to his guards and to encourage his congregations and Timothy, his partner in grace. Be attuned to this in your life also. Reveal Jesus Christ to those around you. Manifest the strength of your faith. Refresh others with your divine viewpoint.

A friend of mine nearing a hospice state wrote to her circle of friends and business associates and told them the Lord's plan for her life was near completion. She explained why she looked forward to dying, presented the gospel and challenged them to decide where they would live forever.

For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

God decides the time and manner of your death

People died today that were not expecting it. They died in accidents, suddenly from heart attacks or quietly in their sleep. Only God knows the time and the manner of your promotion. You have no control over it. The timing of your death and the way you die is God's perfect decision. At the right time, in the right place, He will decide when you come Home. Questioning His plan reflects lack of faith.

God doesn't make mistakes

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. (Philippians 3:10)

As long as you are alive, God still has a plan for you, whether or not you're cognizant of it. Even if you develop dementia and no longer understand what you're going through, God's plan is still in operation. He may use a parent's mental decline to teach patience and humility to children and to show the sufficiency of His grace. No one wants Alzheimer's, but God in His omniscience:

Causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
(Romans 8:28)

Spiritual strength is what matters

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

This is why Paul appeals to you to concentrate on soaking your soul with God's Word. Paul starts his letter to the Philippian congregation, *"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."* And note how Paul ends this letter, *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your soul."*

Lessons from Paul to you
Grace ... Peace from God ... Your Soul

GRACE TRANSMITTERS

The Apostle Paul wrote his final epistle while under arrest in a Roman prison. Paul was a grace transmitter. Although facing death, he wasn't focused on his circumstances and didn't complain. These are characteristics of grace transmitters. Paul's last recorded words were "*Grace be with you.*"

Paul was thinking God's policy of grace and transmitting it, and challenging us to do the same.

But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20:24)

It has been my privilege to broadcast our radio show, *The FLOT Line*, on stations across America since 2005. Radio stations employ transmitters to terrestrially broadcast. I like to use the transmitter as an analogy for spiritually mature believers who relay God's saving grace and his Word. I call them grace transmitters.

**The Christian life is not activity or productivity
It is conductivity of God's grace**

Our spiritual lives are about conductivity, not activity. It is through this conductivity that God's grace flowing within our souls is relayed to others.

God will use you as a grace transmitter, a spiritual influencer, to relay His plan, but only if you are prepared. By now, you know how. Stay filled with the Holy Spirit and prioritize growing spiritually. Here is an acrostic you may find helpful to think and act **GRACE**:

Grow “*in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Peter 3:18). Have a hunger for acquiring the mind of Christ.

Remain filled with the Holy Spirit. “*Be filled with the Holy Spirit.*” (Ephesians 5:18)

Acquired, not inherited. There is no short-cut to learning God’s Word and advancing to spiritual maturity. “*For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you.*” (Proverbs 2:10-11)

Careful how you regulate your life, wisely redeeming the time. “*Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*” (Ephesians 5:15-17)

Expectancy of fulfilling your destiny. Knowing what God expects of you and doing it.

I delight to do Your will. (Psalm 40:8)

Your last years will give you unique opportunities to transmit God's grace. God entrusts you with divine truths to spiritually influence those around you, your care providers, your family, your friends, service personnel, the list is endless.

A transmitter initiates!

Proclaim Jesus Christ's Saving Grace

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. (Ephesians 1:7-8)

Paul, the extraordinary believer, used this promise of God as he transmitted Christ's saving grace, *"Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved"* (Romans 10:13).

When I did this at the age of 22, when I prayed and asked God to save me because I believed in Christ as my Savior, my life changed forever. A grace transmitter gave me the gospel and I responded to it. Everyone who has lived has had the opportunity to be redeemed from the penalty of sin. *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by His grace"* (Romans 3:23-24).

This is the grace we are talking about. It is reflected in Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross. John 3:16, *"God so loved the world He gave His uniquely born Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."* This love is grace.

The grace lifestyle attracts unbelievers

To be a grace transmitter you have to communicate the message of saving grace to those in your periphery. This requires you use God's grace resources. Your primary resource is the wonderful provision of the filling of the Holy Spirit maintained through the confession of sin, 1 John 1:9. God provides you with His living Word, the Bible. All the information you need to be a grace transmitter is found here. Study it under the ministry of a qualified pastor and you will acquire the mind of Christ.

Divine viewpoint is your grace protection

How does God transform an ordinary person into an extraordinary servant for Him, a grace transmitter? He does this through His grace. Our Lord took a group of ordinary fishermen, the disciples, and changed history with them. During the Last Supper, the Lord taught them essential doctrines they would need to live the spiritual life and fulfill their mission representing Jesus Christ. They went from ordinary to extraordinary by learning and applying principles the Lord taught them. The same is true for us.

If you love Me you will obey Me (John 14:15)

Personal love for God is your motivation to transmit grace as you push through the pain and suffering. Live one day at a time. Keep your focus divine and not on the physical. Be diligent in fulfilling God's plan. Come to understand what God expects of you and how He equipped you. Trust Him implicitly and you will experience the wonderful benefits of God's grace in aging.

Be a testament of God's grace

There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day. (2 Timothy 4:8)

Stay faithful to growing spiritually and then when you get to heaven, you will be recognized as a winner believer, an invisible hero, and receive "*the crown of righteousness.*"

This is the prize the Apostle Paul challenged you to run for - your trophy for your fidelity and maximum glorification of God. Think about this. You can have blessings and wear the visible distinction of being a grace transmitter forever!

It is hard to grasp how the riches of God's grace build upon one another. Remember when we discussed how filling your soul with the Word of God is an investment? Consider the magnitude of God's grace blessings as a compounding investment. The wealth in your soul increases in time and throughout eternity, all because of God's grace, and all for His glory.

Your faith is your distinction

So that the proof of your faith, being much more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:7)

Transmit your confidence in eternal security

To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. (Ephesians 4:7)

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

To live your life looking at the eternal, you must walk by faith. You won't always know what the outcome in time will be, but the proof of your faith is your eternal security. As you relay your faith in God's saving grace and His grace for you as you finish your race, you will honor and glorify God.

Show your grace equilibrium

Do you realize you are already in your eternal status? The moment you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, your eternal life began. So focusing on the eternal is the rule of order and should motivate you.

Do not fear what you are about to suffer ... Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

FAITHFUL TO THE FINISH

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:26)

Yes, our bodies are failing. No surprise. This is an expected part of God's plan. God designed challenges for our aging years so He could bestow abundant blessings on us depending on how we respond using His divine resources. Strength of soul is what matters, now and forever.

Wisely redeem the time you have left

Remember, time is a gift from God, use it wisely. God's plan for you is individualized. No one else has your unique plan. As long as you are alive, the Lord has more for you to do. Your plan is not fulfilled or you would already be Home.

God's grace is sufficient and sustaining

Even when you are old, I will take care of you. Even when your hair turns gray, I will support you. I made you and I will continue to care for you. I will support you and I will deliver you. (Isaiah 46:4)

Never forget God loves you, protects and provides for you, strengthens you, and is always with you.

God's Word in your soul is your forever treasure

So that in the ages to come He might
show the surpassing riches of His grace in
kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
(Ephesians 2:7)

God's Word in your soul makes you rich. This is
part of the "*riches of His grace*" you will be blessed
with forever. Most people don't understand your
advantage. Paul revealed it in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "*We
have this treasure in our earthly bodies.*"

Be faithful to the finish A testament of God's grace in aging

When the Chief Shepherd appears, you
will receive the unfading crown of glory.
(1 Peter 5:4)

Rejoice - wrapped in God's grace

When you lie awake at night tired and frustrated
that you can't sleep, or wake up in the morning
seized with aching joints, my prayer is that your first
thought will be His grace, not your pain. "Thank you,
Lord, for giving me more time to serve You."

**This is the day the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
(Psalm 118:24)**

PRINCIPLES

A shallow soul produces a shallow faith.

Adversity is what circumstances do to you. Stress is what you do to yourself.

As goes your spiritual life, so goes your nation.

As long as you are alive, God still has a plan for you.

Blessings come and blessings go; the Source remains the same.

Doubt is the absence of faith.

Faith is the foundation of your spiritual life.

God doesn't make mistakes.

God's plan is perfect and His timing is perfect.

Growing old is inevitable; growing up is optional.

Have you ever asked God for an assignment?

Live life in the light of eternity.

Man looks on the outside; God looks on the inside.

Now is the time to prepare for old age.

Prioritize your relationship with God over your relationships with people.

Spiritual growth should accelerate, not fizzle.

The battles of aging are won in the mind.

The Holy Spirit is your escort through time to eternity.

The Supreme Court of Heaven is open 24/7. Let God handle the justice, He has all the facts.

There is no adversity too great for the plan of God.

Time doesn't shout, it just runs out, sooner than you think.

Time is an expression of God's grace.

Use your circumstances to glorify God.

Wisely redeem the time; tomorrow is not guaranteed.

You are a divinely appointed influencer.

You are never alone; God is with you always.

Your body may be racked by time but your soul is timeless; your soul never ages.

Your home is in heaven; you are a sojourner here.

Your legacy needs to be spiritual.

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GOD'S PROBLEM SOLVING DEVICES

REBOUND

FILLING OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT

FAITH-REST DRILL

GRACE
ORIENTATION

DOCTRINAL
ORIENTATION

PERSONAL SENSE
OF DESTINY

PERSONAL LOVE
FOR GOD

IMPERSONAL
LOVE FOR ALL
MANKIND

SHARING THE
HAPPINESS
OF GOD

OCCUPATION
WITH CHRIST

FOR OTHER ACCURATE BIBLE STUDIES CONTACT:

BERACHAH CHURCH

2815 Sage Road
Houston, Texas 77056-6002
berachah.org | 713-622-6922

R. B. THIEME, JR., BIBLE MINISTRIES

5139 West Alabama
Houston, Texas 77056-5802
rbthieme.org | 713-621-3740

There is no charge for any material from Berachah Church or R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries. Anyone who desires Bible teaching can receive our recordings or publications without obligation. God provides Bible doctrine. We wish to reflect His grace.

If you, or a loved one, are incarcerated
and want to study the Word of God contact:

PHILIPPI FREEDOM MINISTRY

PO Box 552
Chesterfield, Missouri 63006-0552
philippifreedomministry.org
314-435-2957

Philippi Freedom Ministry presents the Gospel message of Faith Alone in Christ Alone and teaches Basic Bible Doctrines to those who are incarcerated. The purpose of this ministry is to make doctrinal Bible teaching available without charge or obligation.



RICK HUGHES, founder and President of Rick Hughes Evangelistic Ministries, Inc., communicates clear and concise Biblical principles for people to apply in their lives. For over 50 years, Rick has presented the truth to thousands of students and spoken at hundreds of schools and churches. He has authored books and training publications and hosts *The FLOT Line*, a weekly radio broadcast that is also available as an archived podcast library. All of these resources are available free of charge on his website, rickhughesministries.org.

A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Rick was raised in a modest, single-parent home. He distinguished himself through excellence in athletics, being named to the High School All-American football team and setting state records in the shot put and discus. The University of Florida offered Rick a full football scholarship, but his SAT scores were too low. Challenged by a coach to overcome this failure, Rick applied himself in the classroom as he had done on the field. He seized the challenge, earned a second chance, and entered the University of Alabama as a football player under the training of the prestigious coach Paul “Bear” Bryant. The team won a national championship that year. After just one successful year, however, Rick quit school and drifted down *the my way highway*. Rick emphasizes that *bad decisions limit future options*, and that *God gave you two ends: one to sit on and one to think with. Success in life depends on which end you use. Heads you win—tails you lose*. Many of Rick’s personal experiences vividly illustrate these principles.

Rick’s turning point came when he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, by faith alone in Christ alone. This is the most important decision in your life, also. Rick’s decision opened a new path, not of football, but one personally designed for him by God. Through the ministry of Berachah Church in Houston, Texas, and its pastors, R. B. Thieme, Jr. and now R. B. Thieme III, Rick learned principles and promises of God’s Word that directed him into a life of Christian ministry. Rick’s life is proof that when you leave your own agenda behind and walk into God’s plan, you can have fulfillment and happiness beyond your imagination. “For with God, nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37).

GOD’S GRACE IN AGING

For most people, aging brings escalating physical and cognitive challenges. But if you age with a soul soaked in God’s Word, use His divine resources, and trust in His unique plan, you will be confident, content and strong. Adversity is inevitable; stress is optional. Old age and physical deterioration are also inevitable. It’s how you handle them that makes aging either the best or the worst time of your life. This is what *God’s Grace in Aging* is all about. It’s not about the difficulties associated with aging. It’s about the inner strength and tranquility of the soul God designed you to have throughout your life. My prayer is you will use your aging years to be a tremendous witness as you reveal the sufficiency of God’s grace. “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).