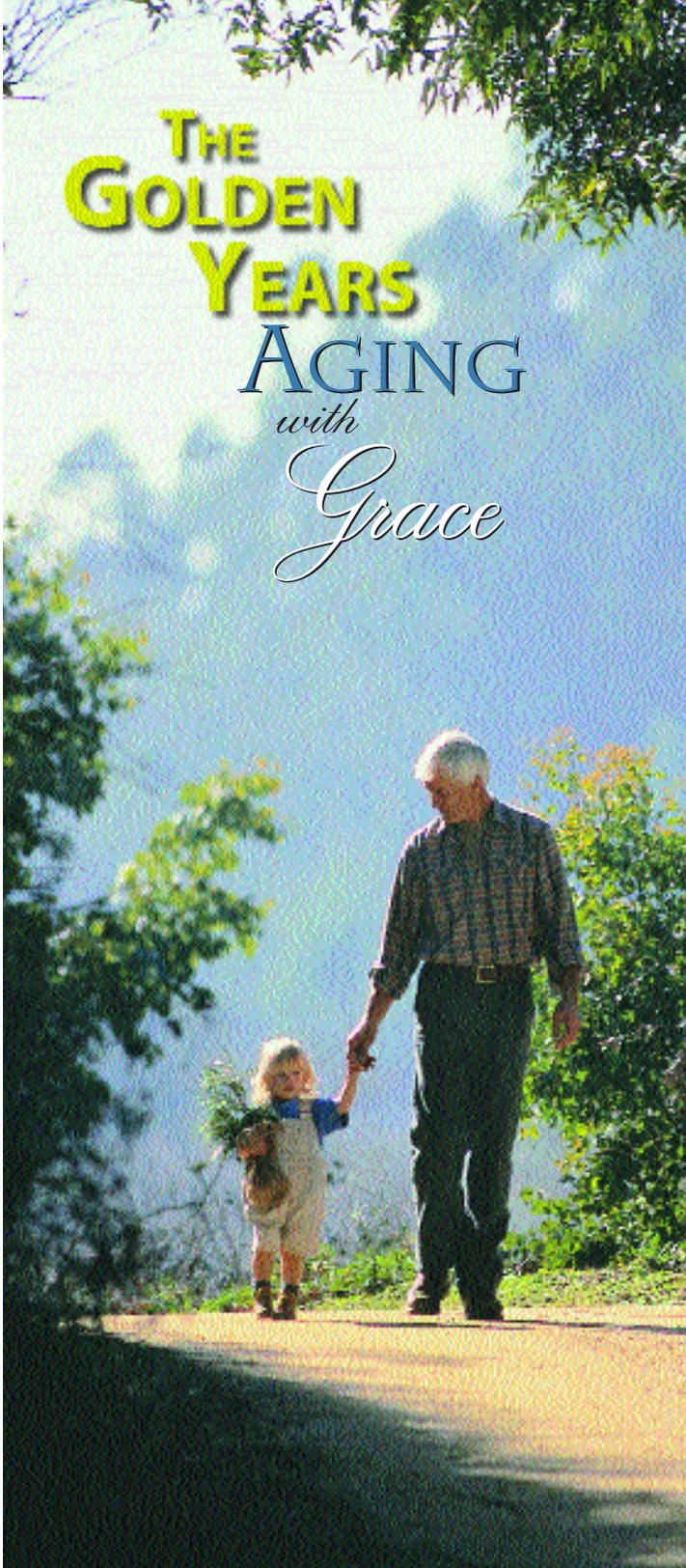


THE  
GOLDEN  
YEARS  
AGING  
*with*  
*Grace*



# Introduction

**W**e are all getting older by the minute—no one can dispute that. Europeans of the late Middle Ages could not expect to live longer than 40 years on the average. Americans born in 1900 could expect only 47 years. People generally labored and struggled through life until they were sidelined by some illness—then they died. Few had the opportunity to attain the “golden years,” let alone enjoy them. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, the average life expectancy in the United States is over 77 years.

We are living longer and enjoying better health, so much so that many retirees are outliving the funds they had set aside for retirement. Our longevity has given us a whole new set of problems and challenges that our short-lived ancestors could barely imagine.

What will we do with all this “extra” time? How will we afford it? Record numbers of the “forever young” boomer generation are about to enter their sixties, and the Social Security system is already creaking and groaning. Some experts are suggesting that the retirement age be increased or benefits reduced.

Retirement offers more options and challenges than ever before, yet relatively few people take the time to chart a meaningful course for what could be the most creative and significant season of their lives. That’s why we prepared this booklet. We hope it helps you chart a Christ-centered course for your retirement years—whether you are already there or only starting to think about it.



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There is a big difference between getting older and growing old,” declares former President Jimmy Carter. He discovered that truth by observing his mother, “Miss Lillian.” When her husband died in 1953, Miss Lillian was fifty-five. “For a few weeks she played the expected role of a grieving widow, but then decided that there was more to life than staying at home and enjoying a passive existence. She continued to age for thirty more years but never grew old,” he writes in his book, *The Virtues of Aging*.

Adopting a completely new life after her husband died, Miss Lillian worked first as a housemother to ninety-five “wild” Kappa Alpha fraternity students at Auburn University. “For six years she was their protector, confidante, loan and bail officer, and personal counselor. For most of them, she was a more intimate and understanding friend than their parents.”

Next, working with some friends, Miss Lillian agreed to open and manage their new nursing home in Blakely, Georgia. After a few years, she told her family she was tired of being with “old folks” and returned to Plains, Georgia.

Soon she spotted a television advertisement for Peace Corps volunteers that declared there was no age limit.

*“The older I get, the greater power I seem to have to help the world; I am like a snowball, the further I am rolled, the more I gain.”*  
—Susan B. Anthony

Thus, at sixty-eight years of age, Miss Lillian completed her training for the Peace Corps and was assigned to a small town near Bombay, India. She served there for two years. Upon completion of her duty she returned to the United States and made more than five hundred speeches describing her experiences and encouraging her audiences not to let old age be a limit on their lives. “At the age of eighty-five she was still full

of life, never failing to wake up in the morning with determination to make the new day an adventure,” Mr. Carter recalls.

Miss Lillian provides an inspiring and positive image of how people can move into retirement years to live creatively, engage in new activities, produce fresh accomplishments, and maintain a zest for living. Senior years can be an exciting adventure or boring monotony. They can be a time which is infinitely rewarding or a time which is psychologically paralyzing. Here are suggestions for aging with grace and for making the most of your life.

*“I have always thought what a melancholy world this would be without children, and what an inhuman world, without the aged.”*  
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

### #1) Think positively

Your image of retirement and your senior years can be positive or negative. Negatively, you can view yourself as “over the hill,” “out of the loop,” “out to pasture,” etc. Be wary of those negative labels because they can become self-fulfilling prophecies.

On the positive side, you can view your life as freedom from daily schedules, open to new adventures, and as containing infinite opportunities for further growth and learning. Continually remind yourself its better to be 75 years *young* rather than 40 years *old*. No matter what transpires in your life, identify and act on the positive.

Consider the example of Ralph, a 72 year-old whose vision problems made it difficult for him to continue driving. He voluntarily surrendered his driver’s license. Initially, this brought him some sadness and depression.

However, looking at his situation optimistically, Ralph realized that he was saving a lot

of money by not paying auto insurance, car repairs and a monthly car payment.

Those additional funds allowed him to use the readily available public transportation as well as taxi service. Consequently, Ralph was able to continue all of his activities.

The lesson? Challenge your thinking if you ever find yourself feeling negative about aging and believe your life is filled with more losses than opportunities.

As you look at your life, place your focus on the positive—that retirement is a reward for a lifetime of hard work and not a punishment for growing old; that retirement provides you with a priceless opportunity to learn and to do things you’ve always longed to pursue but did not have time for.

Here are some positives about aging which can help you remain more optimistic. Older people tend to:

- Possess superior wisdom and people skills.

- Instill more confidence in other people.

- Be more patient as teachers, listeners, instructors.

- Take the long view, minimizing setbacks and maximizing triumphs.

- Demonstrate emotional stability in themselves, defusing

and dispelling emotional turmoil in others.

- Draw from a deep well of experience and life knowledge.

## #2) Live one day at a time.

Minister and author Norman Vincent Peale lived to be nearly one hundred. He advised: “View each day as precious. Live it to the full. Skip any idea that ‘you’re running out of time.’ Take every day and its abundance of opportunity and make the most of it. You’ll be surprised at what you can do.”

Rev. Peale tells of sharing a speaking engagement with General Jimmy Doolittle. The General, who was quite elderly at the time, was a World War II hero for leading a strategic bombing raid on Japan. Rev. Peale recalls the retired General thrilled the vast crowd with his speech. Asked how he handled aging, General Doolittle replied: “I do just what I’ve always done. I live one day at a time.”

General Doolittle’s axiom echoes Jesus’ advice to his disciples not to worry or to be anxious about the future.

“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:31-34).

In this passage, Jesus is *not* saying that we should not make reasonable plans for the future, invest wisely or help prepare and teach the next generation. Jesus is saying that there is no need to *worry* about those things over which we have little or no control—things that affect our physical circumstances. Even though we may have made the best of preparation, our health and finances are often beyond our ability to manage.

When we turn the concern for those things over to God, that leaves us free to focus on his righteousness and the furthering of his kingdom—day by day. Even during the times when our physical future seems bleak, “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are

*“Life is a country  
that the old have  
seen and lived in.  
Those who have to  
travel through it can  
only learn the way  
from them.”*

*—Joseph Joubert*

*“To age with dignity  
and courage cuts  
close to what it is  
to be a man.”*

*—Roger Kahn*

wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

### #3) Be active in your church.

If you don't belong to a church, seek out a Christ-centered, healthy, well-balanced church. Then be as active a participant as you can be. A National Institute of Aging study of 4,000 people found that those who attend church at least twice a week are half as likely to experience depression as those who attend church less frequently.

Another study of 1,855 New York City residents found that failure to attend church services at least weekly was associated with an almost 40 percent increase in the risk of depression.

*“To me, old age is always fifteen years older than I am.”*

—Bernard M.

*Baruch*

have a 53 percent lower suicide rate than those who don't attend, as well as fewer health problems overall.

### #4) Focus on what remains, not on what has gone.

With age there can be some losses but rather than highlight what is missing, try to place the focus on what remains. W. Mitchell survived a horrible motorcycle accident. Although suffering from severe burns, he chose to focus on his life—not his injuries—and embarked on a successful business career. Mitchell resumed flying lessons which had been interrupted by the accident. Although he no longer had fingers, Mitchell

learned how to master the controls of the cockpit with what was left of his hands and completed the training so he could fly solo.

A few years later while piloting a small plane from Colorado to California, ice on the wings caused the plane to crash right after takeoff. Mitchell survived but was left paralyzed from the waist down.

A deep depression came over him as he realized that he would be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. While he was in rehab, a friend called to cheer him up. She reminded him it didn't matter what happened to him. The only thing that mattered was what he was going to do about it.

That was when Mitchell realized if he could survive both a motorcycle accident and a plane crash, he could make the most of his life. Since the second accident, Mitchell has held public office, found love and given motivational speeches on television and radio. He often says: “Before I was paralyzed, there were 10,000 things I could do. Now there are 9,000. What should I focus on? The 1,000 things I can't do? I prefer to focus on the 9,000 ways life can still be enjoyable and wonderful to me.”

When we consider what Christ has done for us, Christians should be the most forward-thinking of all people. Jesus' work on the cross has blotted out and erased our sins and mistakes of the past. Though we may still suffer physical repercussions of some sins, God has forgotten them.

*“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seamed with scars; martyrs have put on their coronation robes glittering with fire, and through their tears have the sorrowful first seen the gates of heaven.”*  
—Edwin Hubbel Chapin

We are free to live without regrets—without rehashing and rehearsing our past mistakes and misdeeds. This freedom from sin means that, “...just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Romans 6:4).

Paul describes this newness of life in Philip-  
 pians 3:12-15: “...I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.”

The grace of God through Jesus Christ is the very thing that enables us to break away from the past—whatever its losses, tragedies, pain and hardship—and to live for the bright future that God has in store for all who look to him.

### #5) Trust in God’s promises.

Aging can indeed be challenging. Some will experience loneliness and isolation, loss of mental acuity, loss of mobility and physical capability, loss of freedom (such as driving a vehicle), the need to rely on caregivers, feelings of uselessness and loss of control over one’s environment and life.

When any of these emerge in your life, turn to the many passages in Scripture which tell us of God’s constant love, care and guidance. Such passages include:

Isaiah 46:4: “Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”

Isaiah 43:1-3: “Fear not, for I have redeemed

you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God.”

Psalms 68:19-20: “Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God who saves.”

Jeremiah 17:7-8: “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Jeremiah 29:11-12: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”

2 Corinthians 12:9: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Remember also the promise of Jesus, himself, who invited us saying: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

In addition, remember this prayer from the apostle Paul: “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16).

### #6) Pray.

The Bible reminds us to pray “...on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Eph-

*“It’s a very strange name they picked for ‘Social Security.’ For the amount they actually send you, you can’t afford to be ‘social’ nor can you really feel ‘secure.’”*  
 —Andy Rooney

*“In youth we learn;  
 in age we understand.”*  
 —Marie Ebner-  
 Eschenbach

esians 6:18). So don't hesitate to pray about all things impacting your life: your depression, your loneliness, your illness, your loss of control over life, etc. You can offer a simple prayer in your own words or you can recite prayers others have found helpful such as these which deal specifically with aging issues:

*The day is gone,  
And I give thee thanks, O Lord.  
Evening is at hand,  
Make it bright unto us.  
As day has its evening so also has life;  
The evening of life is age;  
Age has overtaken me,  
Make it bright unto us.  
Cast me not away in the time of age;  
Forsake me not when my strength fails me.*  
—Lancelot Andrewes

*As each day passes,  
The end of my life becomes ever nearer,  
And my sins increase in number.  
You, Lord, my Creator, know how feeble I am,  
And in my weakness, strengthen me;  
When I suffer, uphold me,  
And I will glorify you,  
My Lord and my God.*  
—Ephraem of Syria

Join the Psalmist in this prayer:

*Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.... But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands; deliver me...Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.*  
Psalm 31:9-10, 14-16

## #7) Live with gratitude.

For his book titled *Elder Wisdom*, author Eugene C. Bianchi interviewed more than 100 older people over a two-year period. Their ages ranged from the mid-sixties to centenarians. Their average age was seventy-seven. One of the common factors for those who were thriving in their senior years was the ability to live with gratitude. Bianchi reports: "A strong trait among creative elders is a spirit of gratitude toward life. They are able to receive the small and large gifts along the way as blessings that evoke thankfulness...In these lives there have been disappointments, failures, losses, even tragedies. These elders do not deny the pain and hardship of the negative events, but they seem to be able to learn from them or at least to accept them as they turn back toward life."

*"According to some people, age is what makes furniture worth more and people worth less."*  
—Anonymous

Bianchi cites one man, in his nineties, who candidly admits that his wife's frail health makes this "the most difficult period of my life." The woman has been a shut-in for several years and he is always on call to oversee her care. Yet, he expresses gladness at having the very gift of an already long life. "I'm swimming in a sea of gratitude," he says.

## #8) Help others.

Helping others takes the focus off yourself, off your problems, off your issues—and plunges you into a new arena. There you will establish a new routine, create new relationships, remain actively involved in the community, make new friends, learn new skills and bring added meaning to your life.

"Helping others can be surprisingly easy, since there is much that needs to be done," say Rosalynn and Jimmy Carter in their book *Everything to Gain*.

“The hard part comes in choosing what to do and getting started, making the first effort at something different. Once the initiative is taken we often find that we can do things we never thought we could.”

One retired woman found a creative way to help others. Growing up in Chicago during the

*“If we have not achieved our early dreams, we must either find new ones or see what we can salvage from the old. If we have accomplished what we set out to do in our youth, then we need not weep...that we have no more worlds to conquer.”*

—*Rosalynn and Jimmy Carter*

has donated \$130,000 to the University of Missouri-Kansas City’s dental school to pay for braces for 48 needy children.

The Kansas City resident has also started a program with local orthodontists to subsidize treatment for 30 kids a year. “When you need braces you need them now, not when you can afford them,” she says. “Almost nobody gives money for orthodontia,” says Brown, a grandmother of six. “To feel good about yourself is so important. There are so many other things that knock you down in life.”

Of course, you may not have financial resources to donate sizeable amounts of money

as did Brown, but there are still plenty of other opportunities to help through your church and in your community.

The American Association of Retired Persons offers these ways you can assist others:

- Help the poor, homeless or needy.
- Work to improve your community or neighborhood.
- Provide services to older people.
- Work to improve the environment.
- Help people cope with their problems.
- Tutor students.
- Help at a hospital.
- Help foster art, music or other cultural activities.
- Volunteer to help with elections at polling places.

The wonderful fact about giving of yourself to assist others is that as you help another you end up helping yourself. Your own self-esteem is boosted, your own spirit is lifted, and life takes on deeper satisfaction.

One woman tells of being in an auto accident which left her in traction, unable to leave her bed for many weeks. Previously she prided herself on the energy she put into her home and family.

“My spotless home and my children defined me as a success,” she recalls. Because she was suddenly immobilized, a neighbor who had recently graduated from college and was unable to get a job, began to come over each morning. She would get the woman’s children ready for school and clean up the house. “She did this while I lay in bed feeling sorry for myself.”

The only thing this mother could do from bed was talk to her children. She read to them each night and for the first time, “I listened to

*“We are always the same age inside.”*  
—*Gertrude Stein*

them without distraction. I heard them laugh. I helped them when they cried. I didn't think about dishes or laundry, I just thought about them. In other words, I was a real mom for the first time in their lives."

After she recuperated, the woman wrote a long letter of gratitude to her neighbor and tucked the note into her coat pocket as she left one morning.

*"How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong.*

*Because someday in your life you will have been all of these."*

—George

Washington Carver

wisdom of Jesus' words: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38).

### **#9) Maintain your health.**

The aging process can bring some health problems but many of these can be eliminated or reduced by paying careful attention to some important factors. Be certain to eat nutritious, balanced meals. If you're overweight, find a way to lose some pounds. And, be sure to exercise regularly, at least 45 minutes five days per week.

The National Sporting Goods Association, surveyed people over 50 to determine their favorite exercise activities. This is their listing in order of preference:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Fishing
- Bike riding
- Camping
- Bowling
- Exercising with equipment
- Basketball
- Billiards and pool
- Aerobic exercising

Find an activity you like and engage in it regularly. The options are endless. You can walk, bike, jog, lift weights, swim, skate, ski, dance. You can exercise at home, in the neighborhood or at a nearby health club. It is impossible to over-stress the importance of physical exercise.

Tufts University researcher Miriam Nelson says that the secret to aging well may be as simple as doing a few basic exercises such as strength training to build muscle mass. She says muscles play a critical role in the aging process. "We don't value our muscle. People don't understand that as we grow older, starting at our 30s, most of us lose about one-third to a pound of muscle every year."

*"Old age is a gift, a gift that should not be feared or reviled, but understood and honored. Clearly, elders embody knowledge, tenacity and a passion for living."*

—Camille O. Cosby and Renee Poussaint

That muscle loss impacts everything from body shape to mental health. "What happens when we have that kind of shift in our body composition is that it puts us at a greater risk for

osteoporosis, it drops our metabolism and so weight gain is much easier,” says Nelson who is a nationally renowned expert on the effects of strength training on aging.

Nelson and her colleagues at Tufts have studied the impact of strength training on the aging process. “What we’ve found is that when you’re physically strong, you’re emotionally strong and ready to take on life’s challenges. There are so many factors we can control. You can control the loss of muscle and gain in body fat. You can control your metabolism. You can control your fitness and you can control how you feel about yourself,” Nelson adds.

Remember that it is easier to keep your health via exercise rather than try to re-gain it once you’ve lost it. The Carter Center sponsored an aging health conference themed, *Closing the Gap*. It was attended by 120 of America’s foremost experts on health and included several Nobel laureates.

It was noted that two thirds of all physical ailments and premature deaths are caused by our own deliberate choice of lifestyle and can be delayed or prevented through proper habits. Here are the

*“A person is not old until regrets take the place of hopes and plans.”*

—Scot Nearing

top eight experts’ advice for maintaining good health as one ages:

1. Do not smoke.
2. Maintain recommended body weight.
3. Exercise regularly.
4. Minimize consumption of foods high in cholesterol and saturated fats, sugar, and salt.
5. Do not drink excessively, and never drive when drinking.
6. Fasten seat belts.
7. Remove handguns from the home.
8. Have regular medical checkups, including blood-pressure tests.

## #10) Go back to school.

One of the best ways to deepen a retirement experience lies in new learning. Consider going back to school either to audit courses you’ve always wanted to take or complete a degree. Today’s colleges are teeming with older students in their 50s, 60s and even in their 70s.

Every community has seniors who have gone back to school and studied everything from philosophy to history to education. Many seniors have returned to school to study for the ministry, not necessarily to seek out a paid position as a pastor but simply to be more effective as servants and leaders in their church.

In his book, *Retire and Thrive*, Robert K. Otterbourg says older students cite the following reasons they chose to go back to school:

- *Get a degree* because they didn’t have time, couldn’t afford to or weren’t interested at a younger age.
- *Study something they were interested in* when they were younger but didn’t pursue because it didn’t seem practical at the time.
- *Study in depth* something they became interested in over the years.
- *Challenge themselves intellectually* and broaden their scope of interests.
- *Search for new meaning* in their lives.
- *Break the shackles* associated with a past career.

Here is a fascinating and inspiring example of one man who returned to school. He says that when he graduated from high school he was a mediocre student, graduating 150 out of a class of 152. However, at age 59, he graduated from a university with a 3.79 grade point average.

*“Youth is when you blame all your troubles on your parents; maturity is when you learn everything is the fault of the younger generation.”*

—Harold Coffin

“Even at 59, I was able to advance in my work, and eventually earned \$75,000 a year by the time I retired at age 71.” That man likes to tell his story concluding his talks with this statement: “This goes to show you that it’s never too late.”

In this booklet, we have given you a few suggestions as to how to make the most of your senior years. Our society holds up youth as a time of challenge and excitement—yet those of us who are seniors know that the real challenge and excitement comes with age.

The rewards of aging are too great to be given to the young, and the young are not prepared for the challenges of aging. Either way, age is not for the faint of heart.

Aging is a time when, more than ever, we need our Lord and Savior to walk along side

*“To grow old is to  
move from passion  
to compassion.”  
—Albert Camus*

us—to help us find our way at life’s crossroads—to be with us as we negotiate new and unexpected turns in the trail. “We know

that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit” (1 John 4:13).

If you have not yet given your life to Jesus, consider doing so today. If you have given your life to Jesus, you can count on him as a faithful friend, companion, Lord and Savior who will continue with you on your journey through this life—and forever.

### HELPFUL BOOKS

*Elder Wisdom: Crafting Your Own Elderhood* by Eugene C. Bianchi

*Everything To Gain* by Rosalynn and Jimmy Carter

*Retire Smart, Retire Happy* by Nancy K. Schlossberg, Ed.D.

*Retire and Thrive* by Robert K. Otterbourg  
*A Wealth of Wisdom: Legendary African American Elders Speak* by Camille O. Cosby and Renee Poussaint.

## *On The Lighter Side...*

### PRAY FOR OUR YOUTH!

I just spent several hours at our local mall, watching young people. I came to the conclusion that many teenagers are living in poverty. Most of the young men I observed didn’t even own a belt. Not only that, many of them seemed to be wearing their daddy’s jeans. Some of these jeans were so big and baggy that they hung low on their hips, exposing their underwear.

They weren’t even their daddy’s good jeans, for most of them had holes ripped in the knees and had a dirty look to them. It grieved me that in a modern, affluent society like America, there are people who can’t even afford a decent pair of jeans.

I have been thinking of asking my church to start a drive for the “poor kids at the mall.” But that wasn’t the saddest part. It was the girls the young men were hanging out with that disturbed me the most. These girls had the opposite problem of the boys...they seemed to be wearing their little sisters’ clothing.

Their jeans were about five sizes too small. I don’t know how they could even put them on, let alone button them up. Their jeans barely went over their hipbones. Most of them also had on their little sister’s top; it hardly covered their midsection.

Oh, they were trying to hold their heads up with pride, but it was a sad sight to see these almost grown women wearing children’s clothes. But it was their underwear that bothered me the most. They, like the boys, because of the improper fitting of their clothes, also had their underwear exposed.

I know it also saddens your heart to receive this report on the condition of our American teenagers. The next time you are shopping at the mall, and you pass by some of these poor teenagers, would you say a prayer for them?

—A Grandmother

## SENIOR WEDDING

Sam, age 92, and Rebecca, age 89, are all excited about their decision to get married. They go for a stroll to discuss their wedding and on their way they pass a drugstore. Sam suggests they go in. Sam addresses the man behind the counter. "Are you the owner?" The pharmacist answers, "Yes."

**Sam:** "We're about to get married. Do you sell heart medication?"

**Pharmacist:** "Of course we do."

**Sam:** "How about medicine for circulation?"

**Pharmacist:** "All kinds."

**Sam:** "Medicine for rheumatism and scoliosis?"

**Pharmacist:** "Definitely."

**Sam:** "How about Viagra?"

**Pharmacist:** "Of course."

**Sam:** "Medicine for memory problems, arthritis and jaundice?"

**Pharmacist:** "Yes a large variety. The works."

**Sam:** "What about vitamins, sleeping pills, Geritol and antidotes for Parkinson's disease?"

**Pharmacist:** "Absolutely."

**Sam:** "Do you sell wheelchairs and walkers?"

**Pharmacist:** "All speeds and sizes."

**Sam:** "We'd like to register here for wedding gifts, please."

## WRINKLES AND FRECKLES

An elderly woman and her little grandson, whose face was sprinkled with bright freckles, spent the day at the zoo. Lots of children were waiting in line to get their cheeks painted by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger paws.

A girl in the line said to the little fella: "You've got so many freckles, there's no place to paint!" Embarrassed, the little boy dropped his head.

His grandmother knelt down next to him. "I love your freckles. When I was a little girl I always wanted to have freckles," she said, while tracing her finger across the child's cheek. "Freckles are beautiful." The boy looked up, "Really?"

"Of course," said the grandmother. "Why, just name one thing that's prettier than freckles." The little boy thought for a moment, peered intensely into his grandma's face, and softly whispered, "Wrinkles."

## THE MEANING OF LIFE

On the first day God created the cow. God said, "You must go to the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer. I will give you a life span of sixty years." The cow said, "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for sixty years. Let me have twenty and I'll give back the other forty." And God agreed.

On the second day God created the dog. God said "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. I will give you a life span of twenty years." The dog said, "That's too long to be barking. Give me ten years and I'll give back the other ten." So God agreed.

On the third day God created the monkey. God said, "Entertain people, do monkey tricks, make them laugh. I will give you a twenty-year life span." The monkey said, "How boring, monkey tricks for twenty years? I don't think so. The dog gave back ten so that's what I'll do too, okay?" And God agreed again.

On the fourth day God created man. God said, "Eat sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. I'll give you twenty years." The man said, "What? Only twenty years! Tell you what, I'll take my twenty, and the forty the cow gave back, and the ten the dog gave back and the ten the monkey gave back. That makes eighty, okay?"

"Okay," said God, "You've got a deal."

So that is why the first twenty years we eat, sleep, play and and enjoy ourselves; for the next forty years we slave in the sun to support our family; for the next ten years we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren; and for the last ten years we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone.