

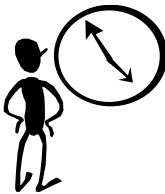
THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

Inside this issue:

<i>An Old Body with a Young Heart</i>	1
<i>A.M. Sermon Outline:</i> Growing Old	6
Duty Rosters	7
Announcements & For the Record	8



Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.
(every other week)	

Wednesday:

Bible Study	6:30 p. m.
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An Old Body with a Young Heart

By Orlando Gonzalez

Time: one of the great many banes of our existence. It's a useful tool to measure how long we've been at a certain place or how long to bake a cake in an oven, but it is also an unstoppable process that leads toward the end of countless things on Earth, including our very lives.

This process may not feel like anything to most people due to how our minds and bodies are designed, for we go "live in the moment," as the phrase goes. This is why it tends to be so difficult to remain aware of how much time has passed by only using our feelings and memories. One moment, we're strong, healthy, and energetic young adults getting ready to move out of our parents' homes to tackle life and forge our own paths, and the next moment, we're now elderly men who're prone to many illnesses, who struggle with severe memory loss, or who may even require help doing the most basic of tasks, like taking a shower. It's reflected in how James 4:14 puts it. Life on Earth is just simply too quick for us sometimes.

The elderly will often ask themselves, "Where did the time go?" [or] "Why must I suffer like this?" or when they look back at their lives, wonder, "Did I actually waste my youth?" It can be quite confusing, stressful, frustrating, and maybe even downright depressing. For all the pain and embarrassment that old age can bring, it comes as no surprise to see a certain number of old folks who have just never gotten used to their predicaments. Once relatively nice, kind-hearted, and respectful individuals decades ago, they are now foul-mouthed, quick-tempered, harsh, unreasonably stiff-necked, disgruntled, and distrustful toward many people, especially toward the youth.

There are also some older men and women who are so afraid to age that they become obsessed with their appearanc-

es and the state of their bodies, so they proceed to do outlandish things like receiving plastic and laser-skin surgery, using performance-enhancing drugs, going through extreme diets, hire the best fitness trainers they could find, or buy expensive skin-care and hair products to maintain a youthful and attractive appearance. However, this is all in vain. No matter what we may do, time will still force our bodies to deteriorate, forcing us to become more fragile and uglier versions of ourselves (Ecclesiastes 12:3-8).

Now, to a young person who might be seeing this, who is aware that they only have a limited amount of time to enjoy their youth, this can be quite discouraging. I mean, everyone enjoys the spectacular amount of energy, quick thinking, beautiful looks, charisma, confidence, charm, high sex drive, and impressive level of performance that the prime of life can offer to them, so why would anyone want to look forward to the “Golden Years?”

How does a young person deal with this sad fact of reality? They’re going to slowly lose many of the aspects that I previously mentioned, so they might as well learn now to be prepared for what’s to come.

Well, I have personally pondered about this for a long time. I mean, despite being 23 years old, I already feel like an old man due to back pain, weak knees, straining calf muscles, and a bit of excess belly fat. The worst part is that that’s all just out of simply not exercising and stretching enough, so I know that my older years will be a lot worse. Is there anything in the Scriptures that can help me out on this? And are there any real-world examples that can help me gain a better, more solid picture of what I should think and do before those “evil days” come, as the Bible puts it?

“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’...” (Ecclesiastes 12:1 NASB).

Fortunately, by the grace of God, there is.

Let me have you think about this for a minute: When you go to Sunday services, Wednesday night Bible study, or just a potluck party at a church member’s house, what do you notice about our elderly brethren? They don’t seem all that bothered about how they are, do they? That’s what I’ve noticed. They tend to not only display the suspected positive and godly qualities that you would expect from a “veteran” Christian, but they also hold qualities that you would naturally see in young people. Some examples of what I mean by this include:

- Having a great sense of humor
- Having a good sense of awareness of their surroundings
- Having a gentle but bold heart
- Carrying an openness toward making improvements
- Having great interactions with the youth
- Taking joy and pleasure in whatever activities they can do

- Having strong compassion and relatability for those around them
- Having an open mind to learn more about the Bible
- Having a strong and deep passion to continue to pursue God.

When I saw these things, I couldn't help but wonder, "How do they do it?" Isn't old age painful and depressing? Isn't it an inevitable stage in life that will do nothing but bring misery, resentment, anger, low self-esteem, and hopelessness for the rest of your remaining years on Earth? How do these people still act like they're 20 or 30 while their bodies are deteriorating so rapidly that they could suffer a severe injury or even experience death in the next day or two?

Well, first, look at Matthew 18:5: *"At that time, the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, 'Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'"*

Next, look at Proverbs 17:22: *"A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."*

Think about this for a second. While children can be ugly at times, they still tend to exhibit so many positive qualities that we adults tend to forget when we grow older.

Do they have openness? Yes. They're willing to learn so that they can eventually do things by themselves and be "big boys and girls."

Purity? Absolutely. After all, they're innocent.

Happiness? Certainly! Happiness is just naturally ingrained in them.

Contentment? Well, it doesn't really take much to please a child sometimes, despite their position in society, so you could say that too.

But Jesus' point in Matthew 18:5 was that the humbleness of a child should be mimicked. They know they must continue relying on their parents for support, guidance, protection, and love.

Likewise, since we are considered "children of God" for the rest of our lives, we ought to have a child-like attitude. In other words, we should never forget the positive qualities that we naturally had in our youth, from early childhood until our twenties. I mean, after all, doing this will help us not only improve our lives but also secure our spot in Heaven further.

Another thing to bring up: Have you ever considered what the effects are for an elderly person if they were to maintain a strong, positive, and joyous attitude about life? Studies such as this one from the National Center of Biotechnology Information show that positive thinking can improve older adults' resilience and quality of life. Remember Proverbs 17:22? Having just a good, stress-free attitude can do so much! Something about not letting the bad things get to you and enjoying what you have in life just reinvigorates your soul, doesn't it? And it also has the added benefit of helping the health of

your body out, too!

So, should an elderly person remain petty over the downsides of their old age and potentially further exacerbate their ailments, or should they take God's advice about having a positive attitude and a youthful way of thinking?

What I want you to recognize is that it's crucial for young men and women, whether you are 13 or 43 years old, to remember not just to seek advice and wisdom from their elders but also to mimic how they think and act, for there are good reasons why your elders are so loved and respected by many in the first place.

"But Orlando," you might ask, "What will I be like when I get to Heaven? Will I have a body that is similar to my current 20-something-year-old self, or will I forever be stuck looking and feeling like a 100-year-old man? If the latter is the case, then won't it be better if I just die now?" So you're wondering if your new spiritual body will reflect on what age you died here on Earth? Well, while there is no definitive answer to this exact question, the Scriptures do give us some good clues. Passages such as 2 Corinthians 5:1-5, Luke 9:28-36, and Philippians 3:20-21 confirm and hint that we will be given brand-new bodies (spiritual, not physical) that exemplify the glory of God. There is also Revelation 21:4, which states, *"and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."* Since old bodies are difficult to be in, and Heaven is supposed to contain the best of everything that is good, I suspect we will be shown in our prime years (or young adult years) when we make it to Heaven, so that way we will look, feel, and be beautiful beings in a very similar manner as God is a beautiful being. There is also this thought you have to consider over why you would still be in the body of an old man or woman when you make it to Heaven. Old age shows how deteriorated your body is and how long you've been on Earth. Once you die and arrive at Heaven, what is the point of being in an "old body" anymore? Also, if, for whatever reason, you happen to be stuck in the body of an old person for all eternity, wouldn't the same principle be applied to babies or little kids who died very young? Doesn't make much sense, does it?

I can also see people being concerned over how they've been seen once they reach their senior years. Many people don't think old people are beautiful (except for husbands in how they see their wives), and many also think that old people are a burden on society, so naturally, young people will be a little worried about how they will be treated in the future. While I won't ignore the fact that there are cases out there that show the younger generation's disrespect and hatred toward older people (just look at how Western society is right now with this whole "generational division"), King Solomon wrote this in Proverbs 16:31-33:

"A gray head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness. He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who cap-

tures a city. The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the Lord.”

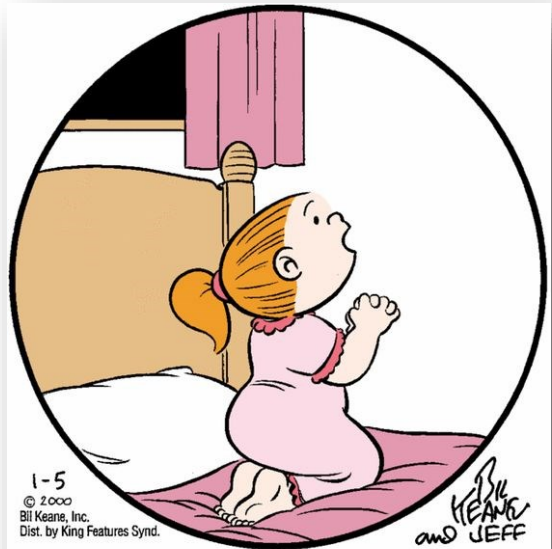
This passage says that old people still have a very significant position in society if they follow the way of righteousness and base their decisions on what the Lord taught them or told them to do. They are also masters over their own spirits, minds, emotions, and bodies because they have the experience and knowledge to do it, hence why we younger folk seek them to teach us. Yes, there will be worthless and foolish young kids or adults hating the older generations for many stupid reasons, but not every young person is like that. Those who love wisdom and truth will want to spend time with people who actually know what they’re doing and what is happening in the world around them. Aren’t those great signs of respect and recognition? Imagine how valuable and honorable that would be to an old person. That is why Solomon said, *“A gray head is a crown of glory; If it is found in the way of righteousness”* (Proverbs 16:31).

Before I end this, I want to give you a little warning: One day, the older generation will suddenly not be here anymore at a Sunday service, a Wednesday night Bible study, or even at a church member’s potluck party. They won’t be able to teach you and help you understand more of what you ought to know, for God called them. When that time comes, you, and many others, will be one step closer to growing old, and you will soon become one of many who will have to guide the next generation in following God’s will. What will you be like when that time comes, and how will you handle the pains of wrinkled skin, fragile bones, foggy thoughts, increased proneness to various diseases, decreased energy, and then death? Will you still have a young and good heart in the end? A final verse for your consideration and benefit.

“And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, your power to all who are to come” (Psalms 71:18).

It’s no secret that God wants us to always rely on him during times of great difficulty, but, based on this verse, He also wants us to remember him during our old age, for we have a great responsibility to share with the younger generations how wise, mighty, and loving God truly is. What’s more, God hears our pleas for help, and he will not abandon us, especially when we are knocking on Sheol’s door. That doesn’t sound all that bad now, does it?

I love you, and God loves you.



“... And if you find a purple balloon up there, it’s mine.”