



Thankful for Older Age

Can we really be thankful for growing older? It may not be part of our nature to think so, but it is part of our biblical responsibility. In fact, the Bible extols old age and makes it an example for others to follow. “The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness” (Prov 16:31). Like many of you, I have come to this time in life and I have found new challenges but I also have found that God’s Word is filled with admonitions, blessings, and opportunities. Old age is God’s will too, and I want to use it for His glory and finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord to testify of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). Here are seven reasons I believe we can be thankful for older age.

1. We have earned the title of elder. I use the term in the general sense of an older person. “You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD” (Lev 19:32). We have “earned” this title only because we have put in the years it takes to receive it. The Bible emphasizes elders in society, in the family, and in the church. An older person has simply seen more of life than younger people.

2. We are learning humility. We have to! Old age forces it upon us and for this we are thankful. In my youth I thought I could conquer anything, do anything, be good at anything I did. In my older age I know I can’t. Age has natural limitations to it and we learn that these limitations are good for us. We don’t brag about things as we used to; we don’t see ourselves as God’s gift to the world; we don’t pretend to know things that we don’t know; and we don’t spend a lot of time worrying about our physical appearance.

3. We have changed many priorities. Old age makes you downsize your living space, tighten your budget, stretch the use of many things you once threw away, and practice safety measures that you used to ignore. Better priorities have advanced in importance: prayer, church, children, friends, gospel, introspection. In his epistle, John addressed fathers as those who “have known Him Who is from the beginning” (1 John 2:12). I want to be a man of whom that would be true.

4. We are longing for a different kind of wisdom. James wrote about “the meekness of wisdom” (Jas 3:13). This wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, then gentle, then easy to be entreated (vs 17). When was the last time someone sought out your wisdom? “Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea” (Isa 48:18). The meekness of wisdom should be a kind that can be sought, not a kind that needs promotion.

5. We are learning to be servants. Servanthood and humility are much alike. A servant doesn’t choose which service he would like to do, it is handed to him, especially criticism, and that is something difficult for the younger person. But an older person knows he makes mistakes and he sees them in ways he never saw before. He also sees the impatience with his mistakes of those around him. If he can accept that and do his service anyway, he is learning true servanthood.

6. We are praying more. One reason is because we have more time. I’m not retired yet but I don’t waste time as I used to either. Quiet time is easier now, especially early morning time. Another reason is that we know we can’t do as much as we used to do so we rely more on God to do it. I find a greater satisfaction to answered prayer than I ever had before.

7. We’re closer to heaven than we’ve ever been before. Mortality doesn’t bring fear but hope. “The righteous has a refuge in his death” (Prov 14:32). It is not that the older saint wants to die, but knowing that death is inevitable, he is prepared for it and has learned with Paul that the next life is “far better” than this one. Who does not want “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away” (1 Pet 1:4)?

So I choose to be thankful for my older age. The Bible commends it for many reasons and I find those reasons comforting. Life is often pictured as a race and we should press toward the finish line as a runner wanting to win. I know it can be difficult. The last leg of a race is always exhausting but ours is an incorruptible crown.