

# G P S

## For Grandparents, Parents and Seniors

By Rick Shrader

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### A Biblical Picture of Long Life

Someone said, “Life is hard and then you die.” But what if you didn’t? What if life was easier and then you lived a long time? What if you lived forever? Well, that is what God created us to do!

#### In the Garden of Eden

Adam and Eve were made in God’s image as eternal beings who have souls. We are not animals nor angels. We were created to marry and produce children, to work and produce things (Gen 1:27-28), and also to live forever near the tree of life (Gen 2:9, 3:24). However, Adam and Eve sinned which brought death and an eventual end to their physical life on earth (Gen 2:17).

#### After the Garden

For the first time Adam and Eve looked at a corpse. Their son Abel lay lifeless on the ground. God’s promised penalty was taking place. But life also was continuing. Another son, Seth, is born in God’s likeness and image (Gen 5:3). And even though death continued to place an end on life, men lived almost a millennium (Adam, 930 years, Seth, 912, Methuselah, 969). The earth was still conducive to very long life.

#### After the Flood

The earth’s atmosphere changed after the flood and life was harder and shorter. Though Noah would live 950 years, his progeny would live shorter and shorter lives. Shem would live 500 years (Gen 11:11), Terah, Abraham’s father, 205 years (Gen 11:32). Noah sinned by becoming drunk, causing his son and grandson to see him uncovered, and sin began to shorten life through violence and immorality (see their children and their cities, Babel and Sodom, 10:6-20).

#### Under the Mosaic Law

Most of the Old Testament concerns Israel under the law of Moses. At the very beginning, under the shadow of Mt. Sinai, God gave the 5th commandment to honor one’s parents, “That your days may be long upon the land” (Exod 20:12). The Shema, in Deut 6:4-9, instructs fathers to teach their children, “That it might be well with you” (vs. 18). Obedience and long life were vitally connected in the Old Testament time.

#### The Church Age

Paul reminds us that obeying one’s parents is still God’s will and the 5th commandment still contains the “promise” of long life (Eph 6:1-3). Pastors are described as “elders” and grandparents as “aged men” and “aged women.” The church must care for widows over 60 years old. Fathers are those who should have “known Him who is from the beginning” (1 John 2:13, 14). Most importantly of all, the gospel contains the promise of “the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim 4:8).

#### The Kingdom Age

The millennial kingdom will contain those in physical bodies who live the entire time, 100 years old being considered a mere child (Isa 65:20). Many more will be there in resurrected bodies with amazing ability to navigate time and space. Israel will “possess their possessions” (Obed 17). Then we will all be transferred into the eternal state where all believers will be immortal. God’s purpose for human beings will be accomplished forever.

Want life to last forever? Regeneration brings inheritance “reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet 1:4).

## Book Review

*My Grandfather's Son.* By Clarence Thomas

This autobiography of Justice Clarence Thomas takes his life from birth (1948) to confirmation as Associate Supreme Court Judge. Thomas grew up poor on the back side of the tracks in the little town of Pinpoint, GA, not far from Savannah. It was a time of racism and difficulty for black families in the south. Clarence Thomas hardly knew his father and was raised (and his brother Myers) by his mother. However, when he was about 7 he and Myers were sent to live with his grandfather and grandmother. He called his grandfather "Daddy" and his grandmother "Aunt Tina." The whole book is dedicated to how his "Daddy" raised him by discipline and hard work. Judge Thomas originally wanted to be a Catholic Priest but ended up going to Yale law school. He became personal and life-time friends with MO senator John Danforth when he was Attorney General of Missouri and gave Clarence his first law job in Jefferson City. The book is politically interesting because it is about a poor black boy rising above his circumstances, fighting racism in the government at various levels, becoming a conservative and Republican when he was expected to follow the PC route for rising blacks. Two interests that Thomas had that I liked were his love for Corvettes and his love of reading Louis L'Armour. I can identify at least with the second.

## "GPS" Groups

This month we will hold the second GPS group meeting at our church. In our first meeting we took the time to introduce the concept. We are trying to do more than just a lunch and fellowship though those are fun things to do. We want to dig deeper into the problems seniors, especially grandparents, face in the present culture with their kids and grandkids. Some of those challenges are, unwanted divorce, children out of work and needing help, social pressure from the "woke" culture, grandchildren walking away from church, and difficult situations such as immorality, substance abuse, and civil disobedience. None of us are experts nor excellent counselors. We're grandparents who care about our kids.

## Statistics

Familiar with your family tree? There's a good chance you're not. More than half of Americans don't know the names of all four of their grandparents. A recent survey of 2,113 U.S. adults, including 1,911 from the top 10 Nielsen market areas and 202 from Salt Lake City, found that there is a massive knowledge gap when it comes to recent family history. Knowledge of past generations varied by city, as 66 percent of Boston residents could name all of their grandparents, compared to only 26 percent of those in Philadelphia. San Francisco residents weren't much better at 34 percent, while people in Chicago and Dallas only slightly higher at 36 percent. *Study Finds*, "Family tree stumped: Most Americans can't name all 4 of their grandparents!" April 6, 2022.

## Lessons on Prayer

One of the most difficult ingredients in prayer is consistency. How often has better prayer been a new year's resolution that failed? We may start out strong but in a few days or weeks we seem to be skipping regular times and then they get dropped altogether. The apostle Paul doesn't write a letter without addressing prayer. I don't think anyone was as busy as he yet he stressed consistent prayer constantly. In his last letter addressed to Timothy, while in the dark prison, he wrote, "I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day" (2 Tim. 1:3). In the earliest book of the Bible, Job, being an industrious man, would rise early and offer sacrifices for his children every morning in case they had sinned. Verse 1:5 which describes those sacrifices and prayers says, "Thus Job did regularly." We are never too busy for the things that matter to us most.

## Greatest Need in the Church?

One missionary answered, "Godly Grandmothers, who have lived out the principles of the book, who have reared their families, who have known a measure of success, having faced the challenges and the disappointments and the failures, who provide necessary instruction to young women." Wm. Barclay, *Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, 248.