

Old Age: Blessing or Curse

INTRODUCTION:

1. Thinking first about God's care for the elderly...
2. Read Psalms 71:1-9, 18.
 - a. Note especially vv. 9, 18.
 - b. Would God do that? Would He forsake one of His people in their old age?
(especially in light of vv. 4-5).
3. Read Isaiah 46:3-4 (talking about nation, but certainly has individual application).
 - a. Society may cast off the elderly, but God does not.
 - b. Deuteronomy 33:27 says, "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."
 - c. He continues to be our refuge, even in old age.
 - d. Bill Hall (age 84) telling me about sermon: "All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me."
4. In the remainder of this lesson, let's look more closely at what the Bible says about the elderly. 1) Our responsibilities to the elderly 2) Their responsibilities to us—the contributions they can make. 3) Strength of body is not everything.

BODY:

- I. HOW SHOULD WE TREAT THE ELDERLY?
 - A. We have a special obligation toward those in our family.
 1. Read Proverbs 23:22.
 - a. Not many children would say they despise their parents, but we can despise them by not properly honoring them.
 - b. There are many ways we can fail to properly honor our parents:
 - (1) Fail to care for them when they are sick.
 - (2) Not visit them as often as we should.
 - (3) Close our ears to any advice they may give.
 - (4) Fail to speak to them in a respectful tone.
 - (5) Just generally show them little attention.

2. Read 1 Timothy 5:4, 8, emphasizing the word “repay,” and the consequences of failing to provide for our “own.”
 - a. Sometimes we forget how much our parents and grandparents did for us (diapers changed, sacrifices made, important lessons taught, and yes, how much money they spent on us).
 - b. When they get older, it’s payback time. The man who will not provide for his own is worse than an unbeliever.
 - B. What about those outside our family?
 1. Read 1 Timothy 5:1-2.
 - a. A different approach, different demeanor toward those older.
 2. Read Deuteronomy 28:49-50.
 - a. The Lord is warning His people about what will happen if they do not faithfully serve Him.
 - b. Notice what is said about the nation He will bring against them (Babylon).
 - c. We see that this did come true. Isaiah 47:6-7.
- II. WHAT CAN THE ELDERLY DO FOR US? WHAT KIND OF CONTRIBUTIONS CAN THEY MAKE?
- A. They have quite a bit to offer (would be great if we could give that reassurance).
 1. Read Psalm 92:12-15.
 - a. Even in old age, the children of God can still bear fruit, even when there may be limitations on the kind of fruit they can bear.
 - b. Still much they can do in the kingdom of God.
 - c. Barzillai in 2 Samuel 19:31-39 (realized his limitations, but...)
 2. Read Job 12:12, which discusses one very important contribution that the elderly can make. If elderly people have spent their earlier years properly, then they should have the greater wisdom, the greater understanding.
 - a. They can explain Proverbs 4:18 better than most.
 3. And they will probably get many opportunities, because older people usually have no trouble getting the attention of others.
 - a. Paul to Philemon in Philemon 1:8-9.
 - b. Joshua addressing the Israelites before his death (Joshua 23-24). I don’t believe Joshua had any trouble getting their attention, especially when he said, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
 4. Remember Rehoboam’s mistake in 1 Kings 12?

5. But old age does not automatically mean that a person will be wise.
 - a. “Great men are not always wise, nor do the aged always understand justice” (Job 32:9).
 - b. Younger folks, then, should heed the advice given in Proverbs 19:20.
 6. Their contribution comes not only in what they say, but also in what they DO—read Titus 2:1-5 (do all you can for as long as you can)
 - a. Serving as elders.
 - b. Hospitality.
 - c. Using money to help other people.
 - d. Those who can’t get around as much can write encouraging notes to others.
 - e. Praying (Epaphras—Col. 4:12; Anna—Luke 2:36-38).
 7. To all the older men and women: the younger men and women are going to be listening, watching. Don’t let them down.
- B. The body may decay, but the spirit doesn’t have to.
1. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16.
 - a. Don’t quit studying when you get older. Continue to let God’s word strengthen your inner man.
 2. We need to understand that strength of body is not everything.
 - a. Read Proverbs 20:29: “The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is their gray head.”
 - b. Strength of body may be gone, but other ways to distinguish themselves.
 - c. Old age is nothing to be ashamed of. It should not be looked upon as a curse, but as an opportunity.

CONCLUSION:

1. Read Psalm 71:18.
 - a. Notice what the Psalmist has in mind to do in his old age.
2. We have some young people here who are faced with the decision of whether or not to become a Christian.
 - a. Let’s listen to older man named Paul and see if he can help you with your decision. Read Acts 26:28-29.