

Biblical Insights on Aging
Randy Russell – July 5 2015

A calling for older ones: 1 Timothy 5: 1,2 Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

Titus 2:2-5 Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers, or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Brevity of life: Psalm 90:10,12,17 The length of our days is seventy years- or eighty if we have the strength. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us-yes, establish the work of our hands.

Psalm 39:4-7 Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: he bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it. But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.

Fear of rejection: Psalm 71:9 Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone.

Purpose across generations: Deuteronomy 32:7 Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain it to you.

Honoring parents: Deuteronomy 5: 16 Honor your father and mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you. (also, see Ephesians 6:1-3 & 1 Timothy 5:8)

Jesus: Moses said to honor your father and mother and you use the human tradition of declaring something a gift devoted to God (corban) and thereby nullify the very desire God had for you to care for your parents. Mark 7:6-13 At the cross, Jesus gave to John oversight of his mother. John 19:26, 27

- We are always valuable in Christ .. including as we age
- We are lifelong maturing in knowledge and understanding
- We are always aging and will experience some suffering
- We all will die; those in Christ will be living with Him

Our Senior Initiative is divided into two groups.

"Not what are your retiring from, but what are you retiring to do?"

1. **Second Calling** is an opportunity to help seniors shape the quality of life for their next years.

- For those 50+ this will mean planning for retirement. Beyond the typical topics of health, financials, housing, and use of time, this also includes service to Christ. This second calling may include volunteering, starting a non-profit, or missions at home/overseas. We will form groups to help people evaluate their own plans.
- For those who have already retired, we may incite thinking that helps to cover grandchildren, recreation, and travel, yet broadens to include the kind of legacy desired to be left-behind.

"Do you have adequate resources to give care to loved ones?"

2. **Finishing Well** desires to advocate for people in the autumn of their lives.

- These may be younger people helping their aging parents with various options for their lives ... like healthcare, managed caregiving, insurance, or talking about giving up their car keys.
- These may be our aging church members finding resources and referrals to make wise decisions for their own future.
- Eventually, these may be people outside our church who may inquire of the resources we have discovered & created.

Our task is to find these resources & help make them available.

- *One person who has taken initiative is Carole Younkin.*
- *Over 50 caregivers signed in by invitation to her Facebook page, forming a group to ask questions & share best-caregiving practices.*

Here are books I referred to about the senior initiative:

- The Third Third of Life by Walter C. Wright
- Learn to Grow Old by Paul Tournier
- Aging, the Fulfillment of Life by Henri Nouwen
- A Vision for the Aging Church by James Houston and Michael Parker
- Nearing Home by Billy Graham
- Setting Boundaries with Your Aging Parents by Allison Bottke