

His Hair Is Grey... Her Faced Is Wrinkled

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Introduction:

- A. Whenever lessons are prepared to target a particular age group, its usually the young people
 - 1. This is good, and must be done
 - a. They face challenges that are extremely difficult and pressure that are high
 - b. However, young people eventually become old people – what then?
 - 2. I have only heard one lesson aimed at those who are older - Never even preached myself
 - 3. Yet lessons aimed at those who are older hit everyone – Unless the Lord returns or our lives are cut short we are either old now or we will all be old one day
- B. Commercial on television a few years back: “Help I’ve Fallen And I Can’t Get Up!”
 - 1. Some younger people would laugh at such a scenario; however, those who are older realize exactly how much of a reality this is!
 - 2. The problem with the commercial was its credibility:
 - a. It was one of the worst acting jobs I have ever seen! It was obvious she had not really fallen and that she was able to get back up!
 - b. She had laid down intentionally and then pretended she couldn’t get back up
 - 3. After a few runnings, no one took this commercial seriously at all!
- C. This raises an interesting question:
 - a. In real life, is it possible that when we reach old age we convince ourselves that we have fallen and we just can’t get back up, when if we would try we could do a great deal more than we think!
 - b. Is it possible that we give in to old age and quit, when God still has plans for us and some of the greatest good we do can be accomplished in these years?

I. The Bible Addresses Growing Older:

- A. **One of the most famous passages that speak of growing older is Ecclesiastes 12:1-8**
 - 1. First of all, Solomon identifies the later years of life as being “difficult days:
 - a. This is why, just a few verses before, Solomon pleads with the young people to serve the Lord in their youth... it will get harder as time goes on **(11:9)**
 - b. As we get older, physically speaking it is much harder to do things we once did!
 - 2. How is it that these days are more difficult than the “days of our youth?” – It often seems to those who are younger that those who are older have it much easier!
 - a. Keeper of the houses tremble → Picture someone’s hands shaking uncontrollably
 - b. Strong men bow down → Those who once stood tall and mighty, due to back problems, now walk bent over
 - c. Grinders cease cause they are few → The teeth begin to fall out
 - e. Those that look through the windows grow dim → Eyes begin to diminish (we need glasses, bifocals, trifocals, and then some may even lose sight all together
 - d. Doors shut in the streets, sound of grinding is low →
 - e. One rises at the sound of a bird → Those of you who are older, how easy is it for you to get the kind of sleep you need?
 - f. Daughters of music are brought low → Your ability to hear begins to go out
 - g. They are afraid of height and terrors in the way → I get the picture here of an older person driving down the road amongst younger crazy drivers
 - h. When the almond tree blossoms → It starts with just a few grey hairs and eventually one’s who head turns white (like an almond tree does)
 - i. The grasshopper is a burden → Things that were once rather easy tasks are now difficult or maybe impossible to do without help
 - j. Desire fails → Things that were once something he craved are no longer important
- B. **David was a man who experienced what old age often brings to man:**
 - 1. **1 Samuel 21:15-17**

2. Don't you know this had to tear David apart on the inside!
 - a. David was a GIANT KILLER!
 - b. David was a WARRIOR! – Often led them victoriously into battle
 - c. Now he is to the point he could no longer do what he did best!
3. It appears David could not accept this fact on his own, he had to be told by others
4. When I read this passage I am reminded of the faithful men and women who experience the same things when it comes to the Lord's work:
 - a. Preachers unable to do what they do best, elders no longer able to serve as elders, and Bible class teachers having to step aside due to difficulties old age brings
 - b. I can only imagine the how painful this must be! – I get a good picture of it when I see what happens when older preachers have to step down
5. David's service wasn't over though → Still important work to do that we'll see later

C. God does not want us, as we grow older, to become stagnant in His work

1. God wants us, no matter what stage of life we are in to be fruitful in our service to him
2. **Psalms 92:12-15**
 - a. The Lord never says, "You've done your fruit-bearing, now sit back and enjoy life!"
 - b. Not only that, but He says that in our old age we can be refreshed and flourish
3. Even though the body of someone who is older may be wearing down, if they continue to press on in the Lord they can find renewal for in inward man (**2 Cor. 4:16**)

II. The Bible Is Full Of People Who Did Not Retire From The Lord's Work!

A. Americans begin their working career looking forward to the day they retire

1. We have a government ran social security program that we pay into so that we will be supported when we get older
2. We have opportunities to invest money so that we can have extra money for retirement, and if we are lucky, we will retire a little be early and "enjoy life"
3. Sometimes we carry this idea of "retirement" over from our physical jobs into the spiritual realm and our service to the Lord
4. The idea of physical retirement, sitting in a rocking chair and watching the world go by, is foreign to the word of God → The same on a spiritual level is even more foreign!

B. We noticed a minute ago that David faced a time when he could no longer fight the battles which he once faced so valiantly:

1. David had two paths he could take then with his life – the choice was his!:
 - a. He could have become depressed by the fact he could no longer fight and be constantly discouraged by the thought of being useless to his kingdom
 - b. Or he could realize that he is no longer able to fight, but yet there was still very important things that he could do for his kingdom and the Lord
2. David realized, "Even though I am not able to slay giants anymore, I am still needed in the kingdom of the Lord!" (**II Kings 1:1-4**)
 - a. If they lose David – they've lost leadership, guidance, and counsel
 - b. They may not have wanted him in the battle field... but he was still wanted in the camp of Israel! They needed him.
3. We see them coming to David for advice and counsel while he is old and in this state

C. Daniel is a man who we look to as serving the Lord in his old age:

1. This may strike us a strange since the majority of what we study of Daniel is in his youth
2. The first few chapters of Daniel were written when he was younger, however, like us Daniel did grow and become an "old man"
 - a. When he entered into captivity he was but a youth (in mid to late teens)
 - b. The captivity lasted 70 years, and yet as the book of Daniel closes out, he is still serving the Lord
3. **Daniel 6:10-17**
 - a. We often read this text and picture Daniel as a younger man standing for the Lord

b. This isn't the case at all!!! He is likely well into his 60's or maybe even 70!

D. The most prominent people surrounding the birth of Jesus were aged people:

1. We see Simeon:
 - a. **Luke 2:25-28**
 - b. He has reached the latter years of his life, yet all of his life centered around the arrival of the Messiah
2. There is also Anna who was 84(?), yet she never thought of retiring from serving the Lord:
 - a. **Luke 2:36-38**
 - b. Look at all the wonderful things she was doing:
 - 1) She never departed from the temple → She could have set back and watch those that were younger do things, but she did not.
 - 2) She fasted and prayed night and day! → Not something we'd particularly expect a woman who's at least 84 to do.
 - 3) When the Messiah arrives on the scene... she teaches about His work!

E. Paul left a wonderful example of not retiring from doing the Lord's work:

1. He once referred to himself as "Paul, the aged" (**Philemon vs. 9**)
 - a. Here's a man who was old and yet He was still actively serving the Lord
 - b. He is even spending time in prison because of preaching the gospel!
2. Paul, while in his 60's, shows us the attitude we should have our entire lives, especially as we grow older (**Phil. 3:7-14**)
 - a. Does this sound like a man who had retired from serving the Lord?
 - b. We must do what we can to serve the Lord as long as we have breath!
3. Don't you get the picture here?
 - a. It's a race and Paul is saying that he has rounded the final bend and that straightaway lies the homestretch where he can see the goal... the finish line!
 - b. Seeing the finish line he presses ahead with every nerve, muscle, and tendon!
3. What do you do with people like that?
 - a. They just rob us of any reason or excuse we may have for laying down on the Lord
 - b. **Luke 14:16-24**
4. We need those who are older in the church to have this mindset!
 - a. We need to be able to look across the track and watch you run the "home-stretch"
 - b. We need to see you gutting it out as you finish the race!
 - c. We need to know that the race can be won!

F. What is the key behind all of these individuals "bearing fruit" in their old age?

1. Probably several things, but one is the fact that they did not dwell on their limitations
2. Take two individuals for example:
 - a. Epaphroditus: (**Phil. 2:25-30**)
 - 1) Instead of focusing on his ailments, he focused on what work he could do!
 - 2) He was so focused & caring that he didn't want others to know he was sick!
 - b. Paul (**2 Cor 12:7-9**)
 - 1) It seems likely that Paul's thorn in his side was his poor vision
 - 2) It is difficult to write letters and do the other work he did with poor vision, or any other such physical impairment
 - 3) Instead of using this as an excuse, he did what he could, increased the size of his letters, & used his ailment as a motivator to do more and better!
3. I understand that as we get older we do become more limited on what we are able to do:
 - a. The Lord understands that we have limitations, but wants us to do what we honestly can for Him (**Psalms 103:13-14, 17-18**)
 - b. The Lord does not expect us to do what we cannot, but we must be willing to do what we can for Him

III. The Lord Has Plans For Us When We Reach Our Golden Years:

A. As one becomes older, it is not a time a retire from the Lord's work

1. God wants service from those who are old as well as those who are younger (**Ps. 148:12**)
2. He wants us to bear fruit in our old age, however, it might seem like there isn't much we can do... what can an older person do?

B. Those who are older should be there for counsel and advice:

1. What do you think of when you see a man with grey hair? (**Prov. 16:31**)
 - a. As I look around I see several men and women here who are grey headed
 - b. Their grey hair is not a sign of shame or being worn out because of being old → It is rather a sign of honor and respect!
 - c. Their grey hair is evidence of knowledge, experience and much wisdom
2. One of the greatest roles those the older can play is to counsel & advice the younger:
 - a. Solomon in Proverbs refers to the younger as being "simple"
 - 1) This does not mean that they are "less complicated"
 - 2) Their simplicity has reference to being naïve and inexperienced!
 - b. The older can offer the younger counsel and advice to stand in the place the young person's inexperience (**Job 12:12**)
3. Often times the young people have a problem in that we have to figure things out completely on our own and so we do not use the help the older can give!

C. The older women are supposed to teach the younger women: (Titus 2:3-5**)**

1. There was a little girl who came to me who, I believe, needed some advice on marriage:
 - a. I could tell this woman things which the word of God said, but I (obviously) have no personal experience I can offer in this area
 - b. She did not come and ask me, "Can you give me some advice on this?" – NO! She asked me, "Is there an older lady here I can go to talk about this?"
 - c. I believe that's what this verse is all about!
2. Too often Christian women stop their "spiritual teaching careers" at the moment they are commanded to be teaching!
3. There are certain qualities here that the older women are supposed to teach the younger:
 - a. These things may come naturally to some degree, however, having this qualities in their fullest extent takes much time and work!
 - b. The older women have placed this time and effort in and are able to counsel the younger women how to love their husbands, children, and take care of the home!
4. Those who are younger → DON'T THINK TWICE about seeking out an older woman who has experience in these areas and learn from how to do it right!

E. It is when a man gets older that he becomes qualified to serve as an elder:

1. I couldn't say enough about the vital role that elders play within a local congregation!
2. It is not till a man is older that he becomes qualified to be an elder! (**Titus 1:5-9**)
 - a. Why was it that God, in His infinite wisdom, chose to have older men serving as overseers and shepherds in His church?
 - b. Older men bring with them wisdom and experience to make proper decisions where a younger person in his inexperience might be rash & make poor choices
 - c. Older men can lead a congregation and a congregation will be willing to follow him because they know he has the wisdom and experience that only many years can provide!
3. What if every man, when he reached the age in which he could serve as an elder, decided they were useless and retired from the Lord's service?
4. Whether we are men or women (I think that covers most everyone) the Lord has plans for us when we reach our golden years... It is NOT a time to quit!

F. There is always things those who are older in years can do!

1. There are some things that older people can do that those who are younger may not be quite as able to do:
 - a. Those who are older may have the time and ability to be benevolent and hospitable to others... where as young person w/family could not do as much
 - b. If they are retired, why not use the extra time one has on their hands to teach others and lead people to Christ!
2. I am reminded of Tabitha in the Bible who busied herself doing what she could and was remembered by others for her great work!
 - a. The scriptures do not tell us exactly how old she was, but when reading the account of her works, she strikes me as being one who was older
 - b. **Acts 9:36-39**
 - 1) I learn from this that we do not need to “minimize” the impact that the small things that one can do
 - 2) Often times an older person might think, “But I can't really do much for the Lord or others” – then they become discouraged!
3. The simple act of making phone calls, offering encouraging words, sending cards, and things of that nature have much more of an impact than we can imagine!
 - a. The things Tabitha did may have seemed simple to her... and it may have been all she was able to do
 - b. However, these “little” things had a HUGE impact on the disciples and the world!