

Growing Old With God

Text : **Acts 20: 17-24 ; Titus 2: 1-5**

Slide # 1

INTRODUCTION :

A. How old is old ?

SI- # 2

1. President Clinton is famous for saying,
“Well, that depends on what the definition of ‘*is*’ is.”
2. We make clear distinctions when referring to cars :
 - a. At 15 years a car is just old.
 - b. Between 20 and 40 a car is respected as a classic.
 - c. Above 45 a car is venerated as being an antique.
3. But ... when does a person become a classic ?

SI- # 3

SI- # 4

B. Advise : Guys ... Don't ever call a woman old.

SI- # 5

1. Even if a woman is 103 she is never to be referred to as “old.” (elderly ?)
2. They will never admit to their age until they get old enough to brag about it.
3. **Tip :** A woman who brags she's 103, expects you to react with surprise.
Nawwww ! I'd never have guessed it. You don't look a day over 102. (or 60)

C. We are a nation obsessed with being forever young. (*Kids of greatest gen.*)

SI- # 6

1. Multitudes of people are fixated on being, or staying, or at least appearing young.
** In the U.S in a 2 year period 194 women over 50 gave birth to their 1st child.*
 2. Selling anti-aging products is a multibillion dollar enterprise.
 3. Endless advertising on TV for such products.
 - a. Sell enough hair dye each year to float a battle ship.
 - b. Once their hair is dyed now they dye their skin to remove age spots, freckles, etc.
 - c. Lifestyle Lift ... surgery to look young, feminine and sexy at 72 yrs. old.
 - d. Men buy products to boost sexual ability to keep up with the lifted ladies.
 - e. Then if they have \$38K you get a set of “Clear Choice” teeth.
- * After all that effort and expense, the elderly still get little respect.*

D. No matter how obsessed we are with youth, we are an aging population.

SI- #7

1. As the baby-boomers are aging, we are rapidly approaching 20% over 65.
2. As longevity increases, we are also approaching 10% over 80.

This change in demographic directly affects the church so we must address it.

By this lesson we will observe the following.

SI- #8

- God requires that older people be given respect.
- Older people are of great value to a church.
- One is never too old to serve God.
- The reward comes only at the end of the race.

I. God requires that older people be given respect.

A. God's law given to Israel required physical demonstrations respect.

SI- #9

1. **Lev. 19: 32** – You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.
2. This was more than simply an attitude of heart, it required overt action .. stand.
3. Notice also that respect for the aged is linked to reverence for God.

B. Solomon teaches us that :

SI- #10

1. **Prov 16: 31** – A gray head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness.
2. **Prov 20: 29** – The glory of young men is their strength, And the honor of old men is their gray hair
3. Those who dye their gray hair, hide their glory for the sake of vanity.
 - a. No, ... I don't think it's a sin for one to dye their hair.
 - b. I'm not about to cover my gray ... *I earned every strain.*

C. As children get older, their parents don't stop being their elders.

SI- #11

1. One's ability to stay long in the kingdom is conditional on respect.
 - a. **Eph. 6: 1-3** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), **3** so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.
 - b. No nation will stand that does not maintain the proper family structure.
 - c. This is directly applicable to the church as well. (*Functioning parents / grandparents*)
2. In addition to our parents in the flesh we all have “parents in the Lord.”

* *No rational person would interpret this to mean that we only honor our parents in they are “in the Lord.” (Or vise-versa .. we're in ...)*

* The elderly do not have to earn respect, it is due them.

SI- #12

Rom. 13: 7 – Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due;

(*better if deserved*) **custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.**

II. Older people are of great value to the church.

SI- #13

A. It is said that all elderly people are rich because they have :

SI- #14

1. Silver in their hair
2. Gold in their teeth
3. Stones in their kidneys
4. Gas in their stomachs
5. Lead in their feet

* *“Golden years” refers to one’s relationship with his doctor. The doc takes the gold.*

B. Older members add stability to a congregation.

SI- #15

1. Having started congregations, I can assure you that having all new members is not an easy situation.
2. The older members know how to do more things than they realize.
3. Older, more experienced members tend to moderate some radical youthful ideas.
 - a. Remember Rehoboam : **I Kings 12: 1-15**
 - b. On the other hand, **just** older people at the helm tend to keep a church stagnant.

C. There is wisdom which comes only through experience.

SI- #16

1. Christianity is not just a study in doctrine.
 - a. There are some things one has to know to become a Christian, but Christianity is a more about what one becomes than what he learns.
 - b. People who cannot read and write can be taught all they need to know to be saved.
 - c. Many brilliant bible scholars never develop the heart of Christ.
2. Those who have walked with Christ for years exemplify the life in practical ways.
 - a. They exude strength and confidence that comes only from a tested faith.
 - b. Their practical counsel can help the younger through times that try their faith.
 - c. This is why young guys can’t become elders ... even if they wear a tie.
3. When tragedy strikes a congregation, the steady hands of the aged, keep it strong.

D. This congregation is the fruit of those who have gone on before.

SI- #17

1. Their tithes and offerings built this building. (*One person donated the land.*)
2. The work they did in the past brought members in the form the congregation.

3. They were just as busy as we are, but they chose to allocate time to evangelize.

III. One is never too old to serve God.

SI- #18

A. The youth orientation of our society tends to cause elderly people to feel unneeded.

SI- #19

1. The current attitude in the country is anti-biblical and ungodly.
2. This is one of the few cultures that does not respect the elderly.
 - a. Children are not taught to be respectful.
 - b. Today seniors often fear the youth.
 - c. An aged **W.W. II** vet was recently beaten to death by youths to get a few dollars.

B. Seniors have some physical limitations, but there is much they can do.

SI- #20

1. Everyone learns to adjust to their current circumstances. (*Pete & Doris handouts*)
 - a. As one ages he learns to work smarter rather than just harder.
 - b. Skills replace muscles. (*Learned from older men ... e.g. straightening angel iron*)
2. God does not expect for us to do anything we can't learn to do.
 - a. However, He does expect that we do ALL we can learn to do.
 - b. If we can't do more than we did five years ago, we are burying our talent.
 - c. God does not have to decode our DNA, He knows ALL of our potentials.
3. As Christians age, the elderly just adjust and keep on keeping on.

C. The problem is that too many seniors don't feel like they ought to be active.

SI- #21

1. *"I've put in my time; now it's time for the young ones to take over."*
2. The modern concept of retirement is foreign to the scriptures. (*retirement = Heaven*)
 - a. The prophet Eli served until he died.

SI- #22

I Sam. 4: 18 – When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years.
 - b. The prophet Samuel served until he died. **I Sam. 25: 1**
 - c. Moses served until he died. **Deut. 34: 5**
3. Not having to go to work to earn one's daily bread gives him time to serve God.

- a. Who we serve in our retirement demonstrates who is our Master. (**Rom. 6: 16**)

SI- #23

- b. God purchased us (body, soul, and spirit) to serve Him. (*serve Self vs God*)

I Cor. 6: 19-20 ... and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been

SI- #24

bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

D. God wants His most experienced servants actively serving Him.

SI- #25

1. Moses was not even called until he was 80 years old. (*He volunteered at 40, but*)
 - a. **Exod. 7: 7** – Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three, when they spoke to Pharaoh.
 - b. Moses became a leader that formed a great nation out of slaves.
 - c. He became to most mighty human prophet in the history of the world.

* *When called Moses made a lot of excuses, but I'm too old was not one of them.*

2. God specifically assigned one task to the older women.

SI- #26

Titus 2: 3-5 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, ⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

SI- #27

- a. Older women are tasked to TEACH the younger women. (*Communicate words*)
 - b. “**Likewise**” means women are to be doing the same thing as men are with men.
3. Basic values are passed down orally and socially to succeeding generations.
 - a. This is specifically the job of the older members of the family / congregation.
 - b. We can't just complain about the younger generation ... we made them.

SI- #28

E. Grandchildren are a ministry of the grandparents. (Prov. 17: 6)

SI- #29

1. Grandparents are not just free babysitters.
2. Grandchildren are not just for spoiling and enjoying. **TEACH THEM !!**
3. Grandparents must pass down to them the basic values of the faith.

* *The Christian is a servant so he cannot be all about ME !*

SI- #30

IV. The reward comes at the end of the race.

SI- #31

A. God has set a course for each individual to follow. (Cf. – Acts 20: 24)

SI- #32

1. **II Tim. 4: 6-8** For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.
2. God has laid out a course for you. **No one else has the same course.**

B. God has promised the victor's crown to ALL those who finish their course. SI- #33

1. **II Tim. 4: 8** ... the crown of righteousness,
2. **James 1: 12** ... the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
3. **I Pet. 5: 4** ... the unfading crown of glory.
4. **I Thes 2: 19** ... a crown of rejoicing
5. **I Cor. 9: 25** ... an imperishable crown
6. All of the eternal promises are for those who COMPLETE their prescribed course.
 - a. **II Tim. 4: 8** – ... In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.
 - b. **Rev. 2: 10** – ... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

C. Therefore, seniors :

SI- #34

Gal. 6: 9 – Let us not lose heart in doing good,
for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

CONCLUSION :**A. We pray we have accomplished the aim of the lesson, to teach us that :**

SI- #35

1. God requires that older people be given respect.
2. Older people have great value to the church.
3. No one is ever too old to serve God.
4. The reward comes only at the end of the race.

B. As we look about us, we see several “older” members who have kept the faith longer than some of us are old.

SI- #36

**** We specifically want to honor them for their years of faithfulness.**

1. They have shown us it can be done no matter what befalls us.
 - a. What does it take to stop us ? That is the test of character and of faith.
 - b. Many today miss services for the flimsiest of excuses.
 - c. These mighty examples came from an era when one got up and did his or her chores before getting the kids ready and going to the assembly.
2. Today we lift our thanks giving to God for the example they are setting for us.
 - a. For example, Sis. Ruby lives far, but she's normally the first one here each week.
 - b. It lifts my heart every time I see Sis. Stella at 98 yrs. old coming through the door.
3. Elder lead prayer.

SI- #37

INVITATION :

Lesson Texts :**Acts 20: 17-24**

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. **18** And when they had come to him, he said to them, You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, **19** serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; **20** how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, **21** solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. **22** And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, **23** except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. **24** But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. **25** And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face.

Titus 2 : 1-5

1 But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. **2** Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. **3** Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, **4** so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, **5** to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.