



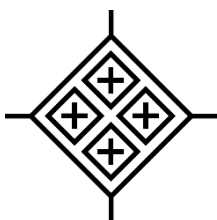
THE  
MENTORING  
PROJECT

# AGING GRACEFULLY: COMMUNITY AS A LIFELINE



SEAN DEMARS

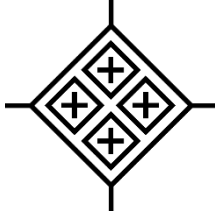
**AGING GRACEFULLY:  
MENTORING IN  
YOUR LATTER YEARS**



**SEAN DEMARS**

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# INTRODUCTION: A SOUL THAT'S GROWING OLDER

I just turned forty. That feels strange to write. I never thought it would happen to me. My hair is turning grey. My joints ache. People treat me differently than they used to. I get a lot more “misters” and “sirs” now, which is polite, but also a reminder: I’m not the young guy in the room anymore. Nor am I cool. Nor can I avoid the dad bod, it seems, no matter how clean I eat or how hard I work out.

In my twenties, I thought aging was for other people. Or, if it was for me, it was for a time beyond comprehension. Well, the time has come, and I’m beginning to comprehend the truth that I, like everyone else, am getting older. And as I do, I’m realizing that aging isn’t just physical, but also spiritual. Aging gracefully means learning to embrace the inevitable changes that come with age while deepening our faith and trust in God’s plan for our lives.

I’m no expert on aging. I’m writing this guide as someone who is wrestling with his own mortality, as someone who feels entropy in his bones-literally. I, like you, need the medicine of the gospel to minister to my aging soul.

Getting older has revealed hidden sin in my heart: pride, vanity, and a desire to control things I can’t control. Bible verses about getting older,

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like Psalm 71:9 (“Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength is spent”), have helped me reflect on the wisdom that comes with age. Aging is showing me how quickly the world moves on without me, and how my heart is struggling to cope. It tells me that my youth is gone and it’s never coming back, regardless of what the longevity gurus try to sell me. And if I don’t face the reality of my age with gospel hope, I will grow bitter, anxious, or obsessed with trying to keep what I’m losing to time.

The gospel offers a better way. It tells me that while the outer self is wasting away, the inner self can be renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16). It tells me that death isn’t the final word, because resurrection is coming. It tells me that my worth doesn’t depend on me being young, fit, or cool, but on being found in Christ. Aging faithfully means trusting that God’s purposes for us don’t diminish with age. The gospel tells me that to be wise in Jesus is better than being young, fit, or cool without him.

I’m writing this life skill guide because I need these truths to minister to my soul, and maybe you do also. Maybe you’ve felt the sting of aging, the frustration of a body that won’t cooperate like it used to, or the temptation to resent the younger faces around you. If so, let’s walk this road together. We may be getting older, but by God’s grace, we can learn to age faithfully and, yes, even beautifully.

# 1

## THE BIBLICAL LENS ON AGING

The Bible is refreshingly realistic about aging. It doesn't tell us that if we simply think young, we will stay young. It doesn't promise that if we drink enough kale smoothies or spend enough time under therapeutic red lights, we'll look and feel thirty forever. No, Scripture knows better. It knows that getting older is both a gift and a grind. Some blessings come with age: wisdom, perspective, and endurance. And there are difficulties: mysterious body aches, disease and illness, and the gradual loss of friends and family who pass before us.

The Bible affirms both: gray hair can be a crown of glory (Prov. 16:31), and yet "the years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble" (Ps. 90:10). Blessings and difficulties, bound together in your body and soul. Bible verses about getting older, like Ecclesiastes 12:1 ("Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come"), offer guidance on how to live with purpose and wisdom as we age.

Ecclesiastes 12 is perhaps the most honest passage in the whole Bible on aging. Solomon describes trembling hands, stooped backs, fading eyesight, failing hearing, and teeth that are few and far between. Scripture doesn't romanticize the decline of our frame; it puts it right in front of us like a mirror we can't stop looking at. But even in these reflections, we are called to age gracefully, embracing the changes with faith and trust in God's sovereign will for our lives.

### ***Aging Gracefully***

Aging is unavoidable. Which is why Moses prays in Psalm 90: "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." You can hide the gray, nip and tuck the skin, lift the weights, and buy the supplements, but eventually, the body's decay will outpace your ability to primp, color, and tuck. In other words, don't waste your time pretending you're not

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aging. Don't spend your life fighting the physical reality of your age. Face it head-on.

And here's the hope: the truth is not meant to discourage us. Instead, Scripture tells us the truth to set us free from the lies of the culture and the self-delusion of our hearts. Paul can say with clarity and courage, "Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). Yes, the body weakens. That's real. But just as real is the Spirit's work of inner renewal. If the mirror shows you crow's feet, it may also reveal deeper joy lines from a life marked by following Jesus. Aging gracefully is about accepting that change and seeing it as a part of God's plan for our lives.

That's the biblical view of aging: honest, hopeful, and...unavoidable. The question isn't whether we'll age, but how we will do so. Will we do it bitterly, contemptuously, ungracefully, grasping for a long-forgotten youth? Or will we do so wisely, numbering our days and finding renewal in the God who carries us all the way to gray hairs and beyond (Isa. 46:4)? Aging gracefully is the choice to embrace the natural process with faith, focusing on spiritual growth and trusting God with each season of life.

### ***Reflection Questions:***

1. What is the biggest challenge you face in accepting the reality of aging, and how does Scripture speak into that struggle?
2. In what ways have you seen God use your changing season of life to deepen your faith or shift your perspective?
3. How can you begin to cultivate a mindset that views aging not only as decline but as an opportunity for spiritual growth and greater dependence on the Lord?

## 2

# THE LIES OUR CULTURE TELLS

The older I get, the more I realize that aging is hard on the whole person, not just the body. Wrinkles aren't just wrinkles; they're evidence that I'm not young anymore. Gray hair isn't just gray hair; it's a signal to all of my daughter's friends that they should probably call me "sir". Aging gracefully doesn't come easily in a culture that celebrates youth and resists aging. But how to live a simple life in this context means accepting our age with grace and a heart that seeks God, not the approval of a culture that prizes external appearance over eternal value.

Aging is difficult enough on its own, but it's made harder by the stories our culture tells us about what it means to grow old. These are stories you've told, and been told, whether you realize it or not. Some of these stories are true, but rare. Most of the lies are common and not quiet. Let's explore some of them together.

### ***Lie #1: Life Peaks at 25***

Turn on the TV, scroll through Instagram, or glance at the ads in a magazine, and you'll notice a theme: youth is the highest good, the greatest value. Smooth skin, endless energy, and a body so tight that it squeaks when it walks: that's the dream. Entire industries are built on the promise of holding back, or even reversing, the effects of father time on the human body. But here's the truth: You can't win the battle against wrinkles, but even if you could, you will never win the war against the grave. Our culture tells us that with the right diet, exercise, and skin care routine, we can keep our youth forever, but Scripture reminds us: "All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades..." (Isa. 40:6–7).



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### ***Lie #2: Aging Means Irrelevance***

Our culture worships the new: new ideas, new technology, new voices. Which makes it feel like the old will be pushed to the margins. The message is subtle, but constant: once you've passed peak bloom, your usefulness is over. But that's not how God sees it. Proverbs calls gray hair a crown, not a curse (Prov. 16:31). The church is told to prize older saints for their wisdom, not shove them aside as relics of another era (Titus 2:2-4). Irrelevance is a cultural lie, not a biblical truth. Aging gracefully is not about fading into the background but embracing the wisdom that comes with time and experience.

### ***Lie #3: Death Won't Come for Me***

The biggest lie our culture tells is that death doesn't need to be dealt with until it's almost here. We avoid the word itself with euphemisms like "passed away" and "gone to the other side," we hide death behind closed doors and in hospital rooms, and we distract ourselves from the reality of our impending death with endless entertainment. But the Bible refuses to look away from the reality of death: "It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

It's no light thing to look death in the face, but look we must. Only when we face death honestly can we run to the One who has already defeated it. Aging gracefully begins with acknowledging the inevitable truth of death. It's in embracing this truth with faith that we find peace and purpose in our lives.

So much of the anxiety, bitterness, and denial that comes with aging is fueled by a refusal to reckon with death. That's why Moses prayed, "Teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). To number our days is to admit they are limited, to confess that we will not last forever, and to live each one in the fear of the Lord. This is not a call to morbid thinking, but wise living. Aging gracefully means accepting our mortality with faith in God's eternal promises.

When we take our mortality seriously, we receive God's mercy gladly. If you want to age gracefully, you must begin at the end. Consider your death, and then consider grace, because only those who accept their death can age with the grace of the gospel. Aging gracefully means facing

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the reality of life's brevity while embracing the mercy that Jesus offers to us all.

### ***Reflection Questions:***

1. How does the truth of God's steadfast love and faithfulness give you stability as you grow older?
2. In what ways are you tempted to let aging make you bitter or fearful, and how might God's promises help you resist that drift?
3. What practical steps can you take this week to remind yourself daily of God's presence and care in this season of life?

# 3

## THE GRACES GOD GIVES WITH AGE

Getting older isn't all bad. Sure, you may need stronger glasses, spend more time in the doctor's office, and take a lot more ibuprofen, but growing older can also bring many blessings. The story of aging in the Bible isn't just about that which fades, but about that which God grows. Consider...

### ***Wisdom and spiritual maturity***

Job 12:12 says, "Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days." You can't microwave wisdom; you have to crockpot cook it through a long life. Wisdom comes slowly, through the furnace of experience and ten thousand trials. Younger people may have energy and enthusiasm, but older saints see hidden pitfalls, remember God's faithfulness, and carry the confidence of someone who's never seen God fail.

What is spiritual maturity? Spiritual maturity is not simply about knowledge or age but about a deepening relationship with Christ that transforms our character. It's the process of becoming more like Jesus, where our hearts are aligned with His, and we reflect His love and wisdom in our daily lives. As we age, we have the privilege of growing in this spiritual maturity, learning more about God's heart and becoming more aligned with His will. This is the beauty of Christian maturity: it allows us to navigate life with wisdom and grace, embracing the aging process with a perspective centered on Christ.

In the process of spiritual aging, as we grow older, we also have the opportunity to mature spiritually. With each year, our trust in God's grace deepens, and this growth is essential to Christian maturity. The Bible's spiritual maturity verses guide us to understand that the true essence of life is not found in our physical appearance but in how we grow closer to Christ. It's a new spiritual age, one where we learn to prioritize eternal values over temporary ones.

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Think of the wisdom of the aged like compound interest: every year you walk with God, you are making deposits of trust and obedience into the account of your soul. Over time, those deposits don't just add, they multiply. By the time your hair turns gray, you don't just have knowledge, you have an abundance of wisdom. (Which is why the church desperately needs the voices of older saints in the congregation.)

### ***Mentorship***

Age also brings the opportunity to invest in others. Paul told Titus, "Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled... Older women likewise... are to teach what is good, and so train the young women" (Titus 2:2–4). With years of faithfulness comes gospel credibility. With gospel credibility comes spiritual responsibility and influence. Older saints aren't meant to store up their wisdom, but to share it liberally with the young in their midst. They are called to be spiritual mothers and fathers. The younger church needs the scars, stories, and steady examples of the aged.

This is a reflection of spiritual maturity, as Christian maturity calls us to pour into the lives of others. Being spiritually mature means not only growing in our walk with God but also nurturing the faith of those coming behind us. Our lives should be a testimony of how to live a simple Christian life, grounded in God's Word and focused on His mission.

### ***Discernment***

If youthful zeal tends to throw caution to the wind, seasoned faith tends to test the spirits, weigh the options, and distinguish between good, better, and best; between what is right and almost right. Hebrews 5:14 says, "But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." More years walking with Jesus sharpens our spiritual eyesight, even as our physical vision diminishes and blurs.

As we mature in Christ, we define spiritual maturity by our ability to discern what truly matters and to make choices that honor God, even in the midst of life's complexities.

### ***Perspective***

One of the great gifts of age is knowing that the world doesn't rise and fall on today's headlines, yesterday's mistakes, or tomorrow's tragedies. The aged have seen enough news cycles to know that storms pass, wounds heal, and God remains faithful. With perspective comes the ability to

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testify: “I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken” (Ps. 37:25).

This perspective reflects spiritual maturity, as we learn to trust in God's sovereignty even in our spiritual aging. We can have simple faith in His promises, knowing that His plan for us remains unchanged.

### ***Endurance***

Caleb, at 85, said, “I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me” (Josh. 14:11). Most of us won't feel that physically spry in our eighties, but we can feel that way spiritually. Endurance is one of the great graces of aging: the ability to look back over decades of trials, setbacks, and sufferings and say, “God has carried me this far, I know he will carry me all the way home.” Young faith is often fiery but fragile. Seasoned faith has weathered storms and proven its strength. That's why Paul could write these words near the end of his life, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7).

### ***Grandparenting***

Perhaps one of the sweetest graces of age is becoming a grandparent-in the faith or in the flesh. Paul reminded Timothy that his faith first dwelt in his “grandmother Lois” (2 Tim. 1:5). God often uses grandparents to leave fingerprints of faith on the hearts of their grandchildren. Your role may not feel as large or as fast-paced as you grow older, but your influence can be deeper and longer-lasting than you might imagine if you're willing to invest in the faith of your children's children.

### ***Legacy***

Paul's words at the end of his life are an echo of hope: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7). Older saints have the opportunity to pass the baton to the next generation, to hand down their faith to children, grandchildren, and the younger believers in their churches. Legacy isn't about leaving money or monuments behind but pointing to Christ so clearly with your life that those who come after you run the race with greater confidence.

The years may take much from us, but in Christ, they also give much back. The aged trade youthful strength for seasoned wisdom, restless ambition for calm perspective, naïve zeal for tested endurance, and constant striving for a legacy of faithfulness. Here is the option before you as you age: cover your gray hair with dye or wear it as a crown of glory (Prov. 16:31). Which of those, if you saw it in someone else, would look more like aging gracefully?

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### ***Reflection Questions:***

1. What does it mean to you personally that righteousness by the law is impossible, but righteousness by faith is available to everyone?
2. How does remembering the gospel free you from trying to prove yourself through performance, even as you grow older?
3. Who in your life might need to hear the good news that righteousness is by faith alone, and how could you encourage them this week?

# 4

## PRACTICAL COUNSEL ON AGING GRACEFULLY

The gospel doesn't just tell us why we can age with grace; it shows us how to age gracefully. If the earlier chapters have given us perspective on aging, this one is about practice—the intentional choices and daily habits that help us to live well in light of God's promises. Aging gracefully is not something that happens by accident; it happens when we actively trust Christ, taking small, faithful steps day after day. Aging well is about embracing the wisdom and opportunities that come with the passing years, not retreating or simply coasting through life.

There might be a tiny, lying voice in your heart that says, "Because God has promised resurrection, I can just coast until I die." But Paul says this, "But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13-14) In other words, God's grace energizes us to live differently, even as we age, all the way across the finish line. Learning how to age gracefully is not just about waiting for the inevitable but actively living with purpose and faith, pressing forward until the end.

So how do we press hard all the way to the finish line? How do we make sure we're not just growing older, but growing in grace, aging gracefully? In the pages that follow, I want to offer seven practical steps. They're not complicated, but they are essential.

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### ***Practice 1: Stay Rooted in God's Word***

Psalms 1 paints a picture of the blessed life as a tree planted by streams of water, whose leaves do not wither and whose fruit never fails. That's what it looks like to be rooted in God's Word. The older we get, the more this picture matters. Growing older means facing more challenges, but being rooted in God's Word allows us to withstand the storms that come our way. A tree that has stood through decades of storms only survives because its roots go deep. The same is true for us.

As we grow older, new challenges test our faith: physical weakness, grief over friends who have died, the sting of feeling less "useful," and the ache of regrets that may haunt us. We won't be able to withstand such storms if our Bible is closed and gathering dust on a shelf somewhere. We need to keep our eyes on the words of Scripture, rooting our hearts in the Word of God, the source of life and stability that no season of life can take away.

"Even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation" (Ps. 71:18). This is a beautiful example of the powerful scripture on aging that encourages us to remain faithful, even in our later years.

Practically, this means feeding on the Scriptures as a daily routine—daily bread that we feast on every time our soul feels the hunger pangs of aging gracefully. Some people stop reading the Bible because their eyesight weakens. Others give up because they can't remember Scripture as well as they used to. Don't let those obstacles rob you of the joy and strength of the Word of God. Listen to the Bible on audio. Read shorter sections and meditate on them more deeply. Copy verses on 3x5 cards. Ask someone to read with and to you. No matter what, find some way to keep the roots of your soul in the streams of heavenly water.

Here's some encouragement: older saints have a gift younger believers don't: years of Scripture already stored up in the heart. Think of all those Sundays you've heard the Word of God preached, all the Bible studies you've attended over the years, all the verses you've memorized and quoted. None of that is wasted. You may not be able to recall it as quickly or as clearly as you once did, but it still lives in you, flowing like a gentle but powerful stream.



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Even more practically, staying rooted in God's Word means more than reading for yourself; it means letting the Word overflow to others. When a young Christian asks how you've endured decades of difficulty, answer with Bible verses on age like Psalm 71:18, which says, "Even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me," or Proverbs 16:31, "Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life." When you pray with your grandchildren, pray the promises of Scripture over them. For example, remind them of Isaiah 46:4: "Even to your old age I am He, and to gray hairs I will carry you." When you talk with your spouse over dinner or pray before bed, recall God's faithfulness in His Word, like Psalm 92:14, "They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green." This is where aging and faith begin. Wrinkles may line our face, but Scripture cuts deeper lines in our hearts. Gray hair may crown the head, but God's Word will be the crown of our life.

### ***Practice 2: Keep Praying***

If staying in God's Word is like planting your roots deep in the streams of living water, then prayer is like drawing those waters up from the roots to nourish your entire being. Prayer keeps the soul alive and connected to God, even as the body fades. Prayer is the gift of every saint, in every season, especially as the years advance.

The Bible is full of older saints praying. Anna the prophetess, who was widowed young, spent decades in the temple worshiping and praying until the day she saw the baby Jesus (Luke 2:36–38). Daniel, in his old age, opened his windows toward Jerusalem and prayed three times a day, even under threat of death (Dan. 6:10). Paul, chained and aging in prison, filled his letters with prayers for the churches. Prayer doesn't retire with age, it ripens.

But let's be honest: praying as you get older can feel harder. Our knees ache when we kneel, our minds wander in meditation, and our memory may feel like it's slipping. But take heart: God hears the sighs and groans of His children, even when we stutter or forget what we were trying to say: "The Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26). Even when you can't find the words, God can.

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Practically, this means shaping prayer to your season of life. If long lists overwhelm you, pray short, frequent prayers throughout the day. If you forget who to pray for, write names down on cards or in a notebook. Pray Scripture back to God: the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, and other promises you've memorized over the years. If you can't pray out loud for very long, whisper short prayers for family, friends, and your church as the Lord brings them to mind. A lifetime of little prayers adds up to a legacy of fruitful intercession!

And here's one more thing: your prayers may be more powerful as you get older. Why? Because you have lived long enough to see God's faithfulness, to know His patience, to understand the depth of His mercy. Your faith has increased, and therefore, so will your fruit. So keep praying.

When you can no longer work like you once did, you can still pray. When you can no longer teach like you once did, you can still pray. When you can no longer leave your home, you can pray. And in God's economy, that is not a lesser ministry, but a greater one.

### ***Practice 3: Practice Gratitude***

Aging can quietly tempt us toward grumbling. The cliché of the crotchety old man exists for a reason. The body hurts, energy fades, and sometimes the world feels like it's moving on without us. The younger generation seems faster, sharper, and more relevant. The aged often feel forgotten. If we're not careful, bitterness can creep in, and bitterness has a way of shrinking the soul's capacity for thanksgiving. Gospel-grounded gratitude, on the other hand, enlarges that capacity, which is why gratitude is one of the surest signs of aging gracefully.

The Bible commands gratitude because it is God's will for your life: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:18). Notice it doesn't say "give thanks when things are easy" or "when you're young and strong." It says in all circumstances. Gratitude isn't a personality trait for the naturally cheerful people, it's a spiritual discipline for every believer, even as they age. Especially as they age.

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So how do we practice gratitude? Well, there are as many different ways to practice gratitude as there are differing life circumstances, but for now, let me offer you three very concrete ways:

- Keep a gratitude journal. Write down one thing every day you're thankful for. Some days you'll have a dozen things to write down. On other days, you may struggle to find even one. But even on those hard days, you can still thank God for forgiveness, life, breath, food, the hope of resurrection, and many more gifts coming down to you from heaven on a divine conveyor belt. Over the years, that journal will become a testimony of God's faithfulness in your life.
- Pray with thanksgiving. Philippians 4:6 says, "By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Don't waste any prayer. Find something to thank God for every time you speak with him. Make gratitude your heart's first inclination. Before asking for anything in prayer, begin with thanksgiving. Thank God for yesterday's mercies before asking for tomorrow's blessings.
- Express gratitude to people. Tell your spouse you're thankful for their patience. Thank your children or grandchildren for small kindnesses. Thank your pastor, your neighbor, your friend, or your co-worker when the opportunity arises. Gratitude is contagious, and when older saints model it well, the whole community catches it.

The thing about gratitude is, it redeems the very things we're tempted to resent.

- Wrinkles? Thank God for the years of laughter, conversations, and experience etched into your face.
- Scars and stretch marks? Thank God for the ways God has preserved your body through suffering.
- Gray hair? Thank God for the privilege of living long enough to earn wisdom (Prov. 16:31). Gratitude turns the marks of aging into memorials of grace.

Gratitude also shapes how others see you. Nobody enjoys the company of a bitter old man or woman, but everyone is drawn to the joy of a thankful saint. A grateful spirit is magnetic, and when people ask why you're so full of gratitude, you'll have the opportunity to say, "Because Christ has given me more than age can take away."

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And that's the heart of it: gratitude is only possible because of the gospel. Christ has already given us forgiveness, adoption, eternal life, and the promise of resurrection. Those gifts outweigh every loss, every ache, and every decline that comes with aging gracefully. That's why, even in prison, Paul could write, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). If Paul could rejoice in chains, on his way to certain death in Rome, then you can rejoice in your aging gracefully.

### ***Practice 4: Stay in Community***

One of the greatest dangers of aging is isolation. As friends pass away, as physical limitations prevent us from leaving home as much as we used to, as energy levels fade, the temptation is to withdraw and accept isolation as the new norm. And when we do, it's all downhill. We stop attending church as often. We decline invitations to dinner with friends. We tell ourselves that we don't want to be a burden. Before long, loneliness becomes the new normal. But here's the thing: God says it is not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18).

This is a truth that doesn't expire with age. Psalm 92 says of the righteous, "They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the LORD is upright" (Ps. 92:14–15). The world's image of old age, which you might have imbibed without even realizing it, is that we accept isolation as inevitable. But the Bible's vision of old age is full of community, ministry in the church, and fruitful fellowship.

Immediately, this means that God is calling you to stay as deeply rooted in the life of your local church as possible. Don't start treating church attendance as optional. You may not be able to serve the way you once did, but your very presence is a ministry. When younger believers see you singing through your pain, praying with faith, and listening with eagerness to the Word of God, it teaches them what it looks like to follow Jesus in every stage of life. Your endurance is their encouragement.

Community also keeps you safe. Proverbs 18:1 warns, "Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment." Don't believe the lie that says you will automatically and necessarily grow more holy as you age. Sin stands crouching at the door of every human

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heart, even the hearts of the elderly. Isolation will only compound the risks, but community offers relationship, accountability, and hope.

So what does this look like as you age?

Stay connected to worship. Even if you need help getting there, make gathering with God's people a priority. To be even more practical: don't be afraid to ask for a ride to church! If health prevents you, stay connected through phone calls, visits, or small groups. If your church has video or audio services available, be sure to tune in! But don't let virtual connection replace embodied fellowship.

Invest in relationships across generations. Don't be content to only spend time with those in your age group. Seek out younger families, singles, and children in the church to build relationships with and pour into. They need your perspective, and you need their energy. That's Titus 2 in action: older saints discipling the younger ones.

Be willing to receive care. Pride resists help, but humility receives it. Don't say, "I don't want to be a burden," when you need help. God calls us to bear one another's burdens in the local church (Gal. 6:2). Don't rob the other members of your local church of the blessing of being able to serve you in your time of need. When younger believers mow your yard, drive you to appointments, or bring you a meal, that's not you being a burden; that's them fulfilling the law of Christ. Let them serve you and be blessed in return.

Aging gracefully means resisting the drift toward isolation and pressing into fellowship. You may feel like you don't have much to offer anymore, but your presence, prayers, and faith are more valuable than you know. The church doesn't need its older saints to disappear quietly. It needs them to stay and be powerfully present: to sing, to speak, to encourage, and to model the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

### ***Practice 5: Steward Your Health Wisely***

There's no way around it: aging brings physical decline. Bodies slow down, joints ache, and recovery takes longer. Some people fight this decline tooth and nail, experimenting with extreme diets, fitness routines, and chemistry experiments on their endocrine system, all in the hopes of

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holding back Father Time. On the other hand, some merely resign themselves to the recliner, letting inactivity and lethargy steal what strength they have left. The gospel, however, gives us a better option: wise stewardship of our aging flesh.

Paul writes, “For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). Notice, Paul doesn’t dismiss physical training. It does have some value. But it’s not ultimate. Stewardship means taking care of the body God has given you, not to keep your youth forever, but to maximize usefulness for His kingdom while you’re still on this side of eternity.

Practically, what does this look like?

- Move regularly. You don’t need to squat 800 pounds like a bodybuilder or try to swim the English Channel like an endurance athlete. But daily physical activity like walking, strength training, and mobility work all pay dividends for long-term physical health. So get up and move. Find what workout works for you, and then work it!
- Eat wisely. As anyone over the age of forty can tell you, our metabolism slows with age. Overindulgence can weigh the body down, but so can a calorie deficit due to nutritional neglect. Choose foods that fuel energy rather than drain it, and eat enough of them to fuel your faithfulness. Think moderation and temperance, not obsession and extremes.
- Rest well. For some, sleep often becomes more difficult with age. For others, it gets easier. Too easy. Here’s the bottom line: rest is essential for recovery, clarity, and usefulness. Guard it as a gift, but don’t overindulge in it either. There’s a reason why we work for six days and rest for one—too much rest is actually not restful at all. It drains us of our purpose. So get to work for the glory of God, and then take a nap when you need it.
- See your doctor. Stewardship includes listening to the wisdom of medicine. Jesus is the physician of your soul, but your body needs a primary care provider with a zip code near your house. Checkups, screenings, and treatments can help you care for your body, not because you fear death, necessarily, but because you value the life

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God has given. Don't wait until you're too sick for healthcare to help. Go to the doctor when you need to, and trust in the common grace that is modern medicine.

And don't miss this: caring for your body is not vain if your motivation is love. Staying healthy allows you to keep serving the church, enjoying your family, and ministering the gospel that has saved you, body and soul. Stewardship is not mere self-preservation, it is an act of worship.

At the same time, remember your limits. You can eat kale every day of your aging life, and it won't stop you from growing old. You can stretch for hours every day, but you're still going to get stiffer with each passing decade. You can hit the gym religiously, but no amount of cardio will keep your heart pumping forever.

Stewardship isn't about escaping your mortality; it's about accepting it and then honoring the Lord with the body he gave you, for as long as it is in your possession.

So take a walk. Lift something heavy. Stretch a stiff joint. Eat a salad (and some ice cream, in moderation). And give thanks while you're doing it all. Your body may be fading, but it is still fearfully and wonderfully made.

### ***Practice 6: On Cosmetic Procedures***

This might be the most delicate topic of the whole section, and perhaps even the entire life skills guide! Nevertheless, we can't move on without considering what the gospel has to say about trying to preserve the appearance of youth, even as we lose it. So, let's ask the tough question: How should Christians think about cosmetic procedures? From hair dye to Botox, from facelifts to teeth whitening to calf implants? Are these practices inappropriate for the Christian? Or are they permissible?

First, we must admit that the Bible doesn't give us a verse that clearly states, "Thou shalt not dye your hair," though it does get close! (1 Pet. 3:3) And yet, we can say that the Bible does give us certain principles about beauty and aging that can merge together in a lovely bouquet of wisdom.

On one hand, God is not against beauty. He adorned creation with splendor and filled the temple with craftsmanship. Proverbs 31 celebrates a woman who clothes herself with strength and dignity. Caring about

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appearance is not inherently sinful and can often be a righteous way to love and serve one's neighbor.

On the other hand, Scripture warns us not to be deceived by outward beauty and the hold it can have on our vain hearts. "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised" (Prov. 31:30). Peter tells women not to focus on braided hair and fine clothes but on "the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit" (1 Pet. 3:3–4). Outward appearance is temporary. Inward character is eternal, and true beauty is what happens when the inward character radiates outward.

So, what does this mean for cosmetic procedures? This short life skills guide doesn't allow us space to explore every ethical nuance, so let's try to get to the heart of the matter. In many ways, this conversation comes down to motives. If the goal is stewardship-presenting yourself neatly, caring for your body, and seeking to love others with confidence-then certain cosmetic routines may be fine. But, if the goal is denial-pretending you're not aging, clinging to beauty or strength of youth in desperation, even as it eludes you-then there's a problem.

Think about it this way: you can cover your gray hair with dye, or you can wear it as a crown of glory (Prov. 16:31). Which one, if you saw it in someone else, would look more like aging gracefully? Dyeing your hair isn't necessarily a sin, but wearing your years with dignity, without shame, is a powerful testimony to the gospel. This is one of the signs of a mature Christian-embracing the natural process of aging without fear or shame. It must also be noted that one could go completely gray as an act of self-righteous pride. Do you see how tricky the human heart can be?

Practically, this counsel calls us to ask hard questions like:

- Am I doing this procedure to serve others or to prop up my pride?
- Am I trying to honor God or to escape reality?
- Will this draw attention to Christ in me, or to my attempt to hide the years he has given me?

None of this means you can't use lotion, fix your teeth, or comb over a bald spot. Tending to your body is very much like tending to a garden: Don't be afraid to pull out the weeds and primp the beauty of the flowers! But do remember: stewardship and vanity often look similar on the surface. The



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difference is often only seen in the heart by God. One says, "Thank you, Lord, for this body and these years. Help me use them well." The other says, "I refuse to look my age because my worth is in my appearance."

One of the tragedies of our age is how many people, in the name of preserving beauty, actually disfigure themselves with cosmetic procedures. What begins as a minor touch-up often snowballs into an endless quest to keep the beauty of youth. Faces get pulled too tight, Botox freezes faces, and bodies begin to look more plastic than human. The irony is painful. In trying to fight the signs of aging, many (men and women) end up advertising their decay all the more dramatically.

This is not just an aesthetic problem, but a spiritual one. Our bodies should tell the truth about the various seasons of life. To try and utterly erase the signs of aging is not only impossible, but is, in some sense, an attempt to silence the story God is writing in your flesh. And when we push too far, the results become unnatural and sometimes grotesque, because we are resisting something inevitable.

As Christians, we ought not sneer at those who go under the knife or get injections. Behind every procedure is a heart that understandably fears the effects of aging on fallen bodies. Such longings for a body of glory are not inherently wrong, just misdirected. The gospel tells us that the answer to our decay is not to cling desperately to our fading youth, but to fix our hope on the imperishable beauty that God promises: the unfading crown of glory, the resurrected body that will never wrinkle or sag, the beauty of Christ Himself shining through us.

So, while the world runs headlong into a grotesque parody of youth, we are invited into something far better: honesty about our body's decline, and hope in the body's renewal.

Aging gracefully doesn't mean neglecting your body, nor does it mean idolizing youth. It means wearing your years with dignity, using your body in service, and letting your life testify that Christ is your treasure, not your reflection in the mirror.

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### ***Reflection Questions:***

1. When you think about the ways people try to preserve youth through cosmetic procedures, what emotions or thoughts come to mind: sympathy, sadness, critique, temptation, or something else?
2. How does Scripture's vision of aging with dignity and hope challenge the cultural obsession with appearing forever young?
3. In what practical ways can you begin to embrace the beauty of God's design for aging, and how might that help you bear witness to a better hope in Christ?

## 5

# GROANING TOWARD GLORY

Getting older comes with a soundtrack: groaning. You hear it more loudly and often as you get older. It just happens. Groaning is the body's way of saying, "I'm not what I used to be, but I'm going to keep moving."

And yet, the Bible tells us that groaning is more than a symptom of age, it's also spiritual in nature. Paul writes in Romans 8:22–23: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

And again in 2 Corinthians 5:2: "For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling." Paul's point is clear: the aches and groans of life are reminders of our broken condition, and a guttural longing for what is coming. Every groan should remind us: This world is not my home, and this body is not my final body.

The Bible doesn't sugarcoat this truth. Outwardly, we are wasting away (2 Cor. 4:16). The body that once ran, lifted, danced, and worked so easily begins to slow down, stiffen, and weaken. But decay is not the end of the story. Paul lifts our eyes to glory in 1 Corinthians 15:42–44, writing: "So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

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Every earthly groan is a reminder that the seed of death is being sown. But God's Word reminds us that something imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual will grow from that seed. Something perfect. Not less real, but more real. Not less physical, but more fully human. And Paul tells us where this transformation comes from: "the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body..." (Phil. 3:21)

The Christian's hope is not a disembodied soul floating in the clouds; it's the resurrected and glorified body living in a redeemed and renewed creation.

So what do we do in the meantime? We groan, not in despair, but in hope. Our groaning is like the groaning of childbirth (Rom. 8:22): full of pain, but also full of anticipation. Every day our bodies remind us that this world is fading, and every day the Spirit within us reminds us that glory is coming. And soon!

So you sigh as you get out of bed feeling stiff and old, you can let that groaning lead to bitterness ("I'm falling apart, and it's only downhill from here)" or you can let it lead you to hope ("This groan is a sign that I'm closer to glory than I was yesterday.")

Let's get practical: How does this knowledge of a future glorified body change the way we live today?

- It gives us endurance. Knowing a new body is coming helps us persevere through the limitations of the old.
- It anchors our identity. Our worth is not found in youthful strength and vigor, but in God's promise of a newer, better body shaped after the image of Christ.

If these bodies are temporary, then it is urgent that we use them to point others to Christ before time runs out. You're groaning, so get going!

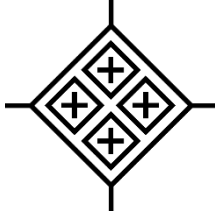
Paul sums it up well in 2 Corinthians 4:16–18: "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen."

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One day, there will be a final groan-the last breath, the last ache, the last reminder that our body is failing us. For the Christian, that groan is not the end, but the beginning. On the other side of that final groan is glory, renewal, and unending joy in the presence of our Lord. Our groaning will be turned to singing, and we will never run out of breath in that place.

### ***Reflection Questions:***

1. What are some ways you are tempted to measure your worth by outward strength or appearance, and how does the gospel correct that view?
2. How might embracing weakness as part of God's design actually deepen your dependence on Him and your usefulness to others?
3. Who in your life needs encouragement to see aging not as a loss of value but as an opportunity to display God's power in weakness?



# CONCLUSION: PRESSING ON WITH PURPOSE

Aging gracefully doesn't happen by accident. It requires intentional, daily habits that are rooted in Christ. The question isn't just how to deal with aging but how we can embrace this season of life with purpose, faith, and trust in God's promises. Aging is a process that we navigate through small steps—leaning on God's Word, speaking to Him in prayer, practicing gratitude, staying connected to His people, and caring for our bodies wisely. These simple actions allow us to finish the race well, not in fear of aging but with the joy of serving Christ through every season of life.

Paul's words to the Philippians resonate: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). Aging, then, is not something to dread but an opportunity to press forward in our relationship with God, with grace and purpose.



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