

GROWING OLDER WITH GRACE **(Titus 2:2-3)**

1. Be tender-hearted.

- a. We have all heard the saying, you can't teach an old dog new tricks.
 - i. I really don't believe that.
 - ii. However, it is true if a person refuses to keep learning.
- b. The New Testament warns us about becoming hard-hearted or calloused.
 - i. Matthew 13:15;
 - ii. 1 Timothy 4:2.
- c. If we aren't careful, we fall into being completely set in our ways and our minds shut off to any more growth.
- d. Paul encouraged the Ephesians to be tenderhearted (Ephesians 4:32).
- e. We should never lose the ability to be touched by the gospel or moved by compassion to help others.
 - i. Tenderheartedness will allow us to teach others even as we age.
 - ii. It will move us to teach those who are younger, as Paul commanded, because we want them to make it to heaven.
- f. A tender heart allows one to listen and to understand those around them.
- g. The current generation, known as Millennials, are a very difficult group with whom to deal.
 - i. They need to be reached with the gospel as our generations did.
 - ii. If we refuse to be open to them and fail to listen to them, we will fail to help them see the importance of the gospel.

2. Be mature.

- a. We should never make the assumption that maturity automatically comes with age.
 - i. We've all met some pretty bratty older people.
 - ii. We've all met some fairly mature young people.
- b. However, maturity should come with age.
 - i. We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 3:18).
 - ii. If we do that, we will mature as we age.
- c. We need to be emotionally mature in the ways we deal with problems and people, especially if the people are the problem.
- d. We need to be those people to whom younger people will come when they need help or advice.

3. Be a lifelong learner.

- a. There is a vast amount of information out there to be learned.
 - i. Getting some age on us should never keep us from getting new information.
 - ii. I marvel at br. Tom Holland, who is over 80, and is learning Spanish.
- b. None of us will ever know all there is in the Bible, but we can keep learning up until we can no longer learn.
- c. If we are going to be those who are approachable by others in need of advice or help, we will have to have shown that we can still learn.
- d. The Bible is so deep, we will never stop learning if we keep studying.
 - i. 2 Timothy is the last letter Paul was inspired to write.

- ii. It was written at the close of his life, and he knew his life was about to end.
- iii. Notice 2 Timothy 4:13.
- iv. Paul still wanted to learn.
- e. We can always spiritually improve our minds by taking in God's word no matter how old we are or may get to be.

4. Be aware but not afraid of death.

- a. Every day, no matter what our age is, we should be aware of our mortality.
 - i. No doubt, those people at the Christmas party in California did not think they would not come home from it.
 - ii. Yet, we know that 14 of them didn't leave that party alive.
- b. Every day, young and old alike pass from this life.
- c. However, we do realize that the older we get the closer to death we are.
- d. We need to be prepared for it but not afraid of it.
 - i. Death is natural and it is coming for all of us.
 - ii. As we age, we know we are closer to death each day and that realization ought to cause us to be preparing for it.
- e. Have you ever thought of the impact you can have on others as you prepare for death?
 - i. Relying on Jesus and trusting in His providential care throughout one's journey towards death is inspiring to younger Christians.
 - ii. The younger, one day, will face the same physical problems older people have now.
 - iii. Those going through these problems can leave a lasting example of trust in God and contentment no matter the problem.
- f. The early Christians had a tremendous influence on others by the way they faced their persecution.
 - i. Numerous examples could be given of people going away from the martyrdom of an early Christian and ending up being converted because of the boldness and meekness of the one who died.
 - ii. The way death is faced has an effect on those who are looking on at the one dying.
- g. I have no doubt that the words of Paul were encouraging to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:6-8).
 - i. There was no whining or blaming God.
 - ii. There was no questioning of God.
 - iii. Paul was a man who was ready for death.

5. Be prepared for memory loss.

- a. The words dementia or Alzheimers disease are dreaded as we age.
- b. The fact is, as we age we are going to face memory loss on some level.
 - i. It may be a minimal amount.
 - ii. It may be a severe amount.
- c. What is interesting is that even with severe amounts of memory loss, people still remember certain things.
 - i. One man I read after told of his grandfather, who experienced severe memory loss, but he remembered how to pray.
 - (1) Prayer had been such an important part of that man's life that it

didn't leave him.

(2)It was a habit from a young age.

ii.When you go to services at nursing homes, people who suffer from dementia or Alzheimers will still sing songs word for word.

d.This has long been a part of aging as the Preacher wrote about a long time ago (Ecclesiastes 12:6-7).

e.We need to be preparing for that memory loss by being people of prayer, people who sing praises to God, and read scripture so that it is richly dwelling in us (Colossians 3:16).

6.Never stop.

a.You never read the words "retire" or "retirement" in the Bible.

b.This doesn't mean we don't have a right to end our day jobs and draw our pensions and live financially off of investments.

c.It does mean that we are never to retire from working for the Lord.

d.A lot of things in this life would never have come about if people of age quit doing anything.

i.I read this: "History records that many people made some of their greatest contributions to society after the age of 65. The Earl of Halsburg, for example, was 90 when he began preparing a 20- volume revision of English law. Goethe wrote Faust at 82. Galileo made his greatest discovery when he was 73.

ii.And when Caleb was 85, he took the stronghold of the giants (Joshua 14:10-15).

e.Part of aging well is having a goal to reach.

i.Heaven is that goal.

ii.It won't be reached if we ever stop striving to reach it.

f.Faithfulness is to be maintained till death (Revelation 2:10).

g.Don't stop working for the Lord in some way.

i.Your way may need to change.

ii.There may be some things you can't do physically or mentally.

iii.However, there are things you can do.

iv.Find them and do them well