

GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

Titus 2:1-2

Young man bought expensive diamond ring for the woman he just asked to marry him. He invested all the money he could gather, because he wanted to please her. It was a beautiful ring!

Before presenting it to her, he wanted to wrap it. How should he do that? Can you imagine going out to the trash, to find an old newspaper to wrap it? No! He'd buy finest gift wrap he could find for a special gift!

How can we think, when we have most precious gift, we'd present it in a junky wrapper?

If God gave His Son, so we might receive eternal life, shouldn't we be careful to present it in a way that's worthy of such a valuable gift?

God's gift should come wrapped in an appropriate life—*OURS!*
Paul instructs Titus to teach God's people **how to "wrap such a valuable gift."**

ATTRACTIVENESS OF A GODLY LIFESTYLE 2:2-10

SUMMARY EXHORTATION 2:1 *"But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine."*

"But you=> speak things which agree with sound, healthy teaching"

– what's consistent with sound doctrine.

In contrast to the ungodly,

people who hold sound doctrine ought to live *godly* lives.

Paul applies exhortation to specific groups. He shows how this works in every epoch of life, in whatever social level it may be found:

Older, mature men

Older, mature women

Young women

Young men

Slaves

[First he deals with older, mature men...]

What do *you* think of when you think about old men?

Do we think of someone who is ornery, cantankerous and stubborn?

Do we think of a bitter, angry person?

Do we think of someone who has walked with God for a lifetime?

...someone years of walking with God has made sweeter?

...more teachable? ...more anxious to see God?

...to please Him? ...to be like Him?

There's no particular value in getting old.

Things get old, become wrinkled, dried up, fruitless, bitter, moldy

–fit to be disposed of!

Paul urges godly people to grow old GRACEFULLY, to preserve their usefulness in others' lives

Ironside's prayer: "Lord, keep me from becoming a bitter old man!"

John Mitchell speaking @ DTS, repeating Scripture after Scripture

Student asked how he memorized so much Scripture, what memory program he used.

Tears filled his eyes. "Young man, when you spend a lifetime studying God's Word to see what God says to you, you don't have to *memorize* it." It just becomes part of your life!

Carl Armerding—in late 80s

We were driving him to speak one evening, talking about his walk with God. He shared his practice of studying God's Word each day:

1/2 hr in Hebrew O.T. 1/2 hr in Greek N.T.

1/2 hr in German 1/2 hr in Spanish

1/2 hr in English (and I think in either French or Latin)

THEN, he began his prayer time!

We were present when a building was dedicated in his honor.

Night of dedication, people spoke of his life, how he affected theirs.

At conclusion, Armerding stood to speak. I remember little of what he said; I'll never forget response to what they said about him:

"When I get to heaven, I'll pass your kind words on to the One who really deserves them!"

I remember saying to Helen one night after he got out of our car, "It felt like we were riding with the Apostle Paul!"

That's how I want to be remembered!—a person who walked with God, becoming conformed to the image of His Son, as I grow older.

Not stubborn! Not cantankerous! Not bitter!

But, who loves God, and loves His people.

That's description Paul gives of godly older men.

Older men should merit the respect of young people, so they aren't just looked at as "old men" but as mature men who walk with God and have earned our respect.

We often tell young people: "Respect your elders."

They ask, "Why should we?"

Normally we respond: "Because I said so!"

Or, because they're your elders, and elders deserve our respect."

I hate to disappoint you; nothing about being *old* deserves respect!

We don't deserve respect because we've survived a lot of years!

What makes us "worthy of respect?"

-Modeling godly character.

It's when we live as God intends for us to live, when we model godliness, then we give our youth something to respect.

When we live in a way that merits respect, we attract the outside world to our Savior.

Then we motivate young people to imitate what they see in our life. So what does message say to younger people? **A g e i s relative.**

Everyone is being watched by someone younger!

If you're a 5th or 6th grader, smaller children watch you!

If you're a senior, your underclassmen are watching you.

If you're a college student, high schoolers are watching you.

If you're a young parent, your kids are watching you.

If you're a senior citizen, *everyone* is watching you!

–Your grandchildren, kids, younger parents, singles, youth,

– they all want to know: does it work for *you*?

So here are standards Paul issues for old people;

they apply to us all!

SIX TRAITS OF MATURE GODLY MEN 2:2

“Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Lifestyle of godly, mature man...

1. Godly older men should be sober-minded (temperate)

We relate temperance to drinking– we shouldn't get drunk!

In pagan city, you don't have to *try* to find old men who are drunk!

But godly old men ought to look *a lot different* than old drunks!

Paul's idea includes that, but it's MUCH more than just that.

Refers to people who think clearly–alert and careful–“clear headed”

It's one who has learned self-control.

1 Th. 5:6-8 describes people prepared to face day of God's wrath.

They know God's plan and are prepared for it.

–opposite of drunk who's *not* ready; doesn't know what to do.

2. Godly older men should be dignified NIV–worthy of respect

Not "long-faced"=>Knows how to have good time–but isn't frivolous

Has earned respect–knows how to act in any circumstance.

–gracious, friendly–but not the group clown.

3. **Godly older men understand life from God's perspective [*<self-controlled*]**

"It's not the age, it's the mileage!"

Getting old doesn't guarantee maturity.

Aging should produce maturity/ ...wisdom.

Godly older men have **learned to see from God's perspective.**

Man I knew: *"What'll this look like from perspective of eternity?"*

Basic idea is DISCERNMENT

Rom 12:3—not "HYPER-thinking of yourself

-not thinking of yourself more highly than you ought.

-thinking "just right" about yourself.

-seeing yourself as God sees you!

-able to evaluate things from God's point of view

-not focusing on our circumstances, but on God's plan

-not evaluating people by external appearance, but by the heart

In Scripture: discernment is accompanied with four things:

(1) Humility (Rom. 12)

(2) Recognizing the importance of God's grace (Tit. 2:11-12)

(3) Knowing how to pray properly (1 Pet. 4:7)

(4) Not ashamed, timid, or cowardly (2 Tim. 1:7)

Some people consider this a spiritual gift.

Older I get, I'm more convinced that this is a mark of maturity!

–not limited to a few to whom God has given "the gift."

–evident in people who walk with God for yrs; reach maturity.

It's a key quality God asks for in leadership

Paul refers to it 5 times in this letter.

Only characteristic he asks for in every age group.

He looks for it in leadership

He looks for it in older men.
 He asks older women to teach it to younger women.
 It's the first thing on his list for younger men to develop.

It's critical to godly living.

Ability to know what's really important, and how to focus on it

—WE NEED THAT!

4. Godly older men have a healthy faith

Godly older men should be **in good health**.

(Have you noticed how older people read health magazines?)

3 areas of good health—should be in "good shape" in 3 areas.

In faith—older man's *doctrinal* foundation should be sound.

He should know *what* he believes and *why* he believes it.

Not carried away by whatever wind blows his way

—not impressed by fads.

He's walked with God long enough to know he can trust God,
 even when he can't see what's going on.

5. Godly older men have healthy love for others

He should be in "good shape" in his personal relationships.

Shows love, even towards people who don't deserve it.

Opposite of attitudes that often prevail among older people

Godly older men are opposite of bitter and cantankerous.

6. Godly older men have a healthy ability to endure hard times —ability to bear up under a heavy load.

In "good shape"—able to "bench press" 1000 lbs. of affliction

Older men should be prepared to endure affliction/persecution/suffering/hard times

Combined with discernment, understands that God's at work;
 we can trust Him!

Having been through battle many times, and experienced God's
 protection, we're prepared to bear up under the load.

That's the list--that's what godly older men OUGHT to look like! *That's all!*

HOW ARE WE DOING? Are we ready to retire yet?

My prayer for myself will continue to be, that I may finish the race well.

I've seen too many run the race for a lifetime, then trip and fall on the final stretch, as they approached the finish line.

In Tucson, our church had a living example of such a man:

Sports pages were filled with commentary regarding retirement of UA baseball coach.

Not everyone agreed about Jerry's coaching ability.

But 3 editorials describing Jerry as a man, caught my attention

2 articles referred to Jerry's integrity and godly character.

My prayer is that we'll all be that kind of people—that the world will take note of our integrity and our godly character!

A world filled with violence, treachery and deception, needs more people with godly character.

We need people who can be held up for world to see, people of integrity.

Young people call out for authenticity.

They're looking for people who practice what we preach--who live what the preacher says on Sunday!

–Older men who model godliness for young people who watch!

–My prayer to be that kind of person—to finish well!

That's what Paul is calling for—mature, older men who leave their mark on future generations—because they're models for young people to follow.

Men who are sober-minded

Men who are worthy of respect

Men who are discerning

Men who are in good shape as it relates to their faith

Men who are in good shape in their relationships with others

Men who are in good shape under the pressure of adversity

God's looking for some Harry Ironsides, John Mitchells, Carl Armerdings, Jerry Kindalls, ...maybe some people like YOU!

How are we doing? Any volunteers?

Let's be sure we're on the list!

Only God's Spirit can produce that kind of life!

***Mature, godly people walk with God
and are pleasing to Him!***

Will those who come behind US find us faithful?