

Some Aggravations of Aging & Some Advantages of Aging with Christ!

Geoffrey R. Kirkland
Christ Fellowship Bible Church

Psalms 71 could be titled: *the psalm of an old man*. May the truths here provide encouragement.

AGGRAVATIONS OF AGING

1. The growing fear of death intensifies.

The man of God prays and confesses that his enemies have together conspired against him and they adamantly seek his life. They have consulted together and have joined together to pursue and trap him since he is, so they contend, old and helpless with none to deliver!

2. The loss of honor and dignity compounds.

Growing older can also bring the fear of being shamed. The man of God desires to retain dignity and honor — even in the aging years. Perhaps the elderly man here is losing his ‘greatness’ and, so it seems, his worth and purpose in life. He feels as though his honor and dignity wastes away.

3. The loss of strength ever-so increases.

As one grows older, strength may seem to fly away. The psalmist begged God to not cast him off in old age even when his own strength fails. The loss of strength intensifies and the loss of certain abilities that once were enjoyed seems to grow even greater.

4. The sense of vulnerability captures.

Could it be that someone who ages in years is also one who feels that he sits vulnerable and exposed? The man of God in the psalm reveals that he needed God to rescue him since the ruthless men hunt and lurk for him. The sense is even conveyed that the reputation about him is that God has fled from the older man. It may feel as though God forsakes his people as they sense their vulnerability more and more.

5. The reality of forced dependence looms.

The old man cannot live in his own strength — at least, with the vigor that he once enjoyed. He is sustained by another and is in need of another to come near to help him. It has been said that a great fear of growing old is fearing the lack of independence. Those who age may at some point be entirely dependent upon another. This very situation surely happened to the psalmist.

6. The fear of the devaluing of life persists.

Respect for the elderly once may have been understood by all but is now a bygone practice. This old man in the psalm expresses his fear that his life is devalued. He feels as though he has become a sign, a wonder, a marvel to many. Life is important but as one grows older, as one ages, as one becomes more limited in mobility, could it be that one may succumb to the persistent fear that his life has become vain and void and absent of any value?

ADVANTAGES OF AGING WITH CHRIST

1. Find refuge in God's righteousness.

The righteousness of God in Scripture consists of God's righteous dealings with all His creatures that is perfectly in accord with His own right, good, just, and perfect character. God will — and must! — always do what is right. The aging man of God acquires hope and assurance in clinging to and finding refuge in the righteousness of God.

2. Recall the sustaining strength of God.

As one increases in age, he may decrease in strength. Yet God never changes and His strength never fails. The mighty support, the strong tower, the Rock of habitation, the God of the ages, and the Lord of all creation serves as an indomitable strength to sustain anyone, even the elderly.

3. Saturate your heart and life with God's glory & praise.

The old man in this psalm glories in his golden years since he leaps with heartfelt praise over the truth of God, the righteousness of God, the Godhood of God and the strength of God! The golden years provide a wonderful opportunity to seize the opportunity to sing to God and savor His glory and saturate one's heart with praise.

4. Fulfill your purpose in telling the next generation about God's wonders.

Rather than succumbing to the feeling of worthlessness or sorrowing in distress or complaints, the old man seizes the opportunity to fulfill his purpose in his elderly years. Work still must be done in Christ's Church! The man of God who is older, perhaps with more time on his hands now in this season of life, must tell, speak, mention, teach, and proclaim the deeds of God to the next generation. God commands the older to teach the younger. Those who have walked with Christ for decades can equip, encourage, and exhort those younger devoted ones to the Lord. The man in the psalm asks God not to forsake him when he is old and gray *until* he declares God's strength to this generation, that is, to all who are to come. Imagine the glory, the business, the productivity, the acceleration in godliness, the discipleship-relationships that would be formed if Godly old folks really took to heart the example of the psalmist here and the commands of God in Scripture to teach the younger so as to equip them with wisdom, to impart to them Godly practices, to exhort them to holy conduct and prayerfulness, and to explain to them God's unending faithfulness that far surpasses the bounds of changing times.

5. Muse triumphantly on the character of God.

The old man in this psalm refuses to complain, pity himself, whine, or sour in his own inabilities. Rather, he triumphs because God triumphs. He worships because God is worthy. He muses on the glory of Christ and the work of Christ because he, as a repentant believer, is united *in Christ*.

6. Allow your redemption to promote persistent praise.

A soul that God has redeemed cannot but sing and shout to this Sovereign Savior! The senior saint models this and motivates all who will follow after him to shout for joy and sing praises to the Lord because God has redeemed his soul! Every soul that has been liberated from the domain of darkness and brought into the light must worship! Redemption should promote persistent, purifying praise to God! One's soul saved from wrath must sing to the risen King!