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## How to Avoid Being Too Soon Old Too Late Smart: More Sage Wisdom from Pre-Boomers and Boomers to the Yuppie Puppies of Generation X

Don P. Diffine Ph.D.  
*Harding University*, [ddiffine@harding.edu](mailto:ddiffine@harding.edu)

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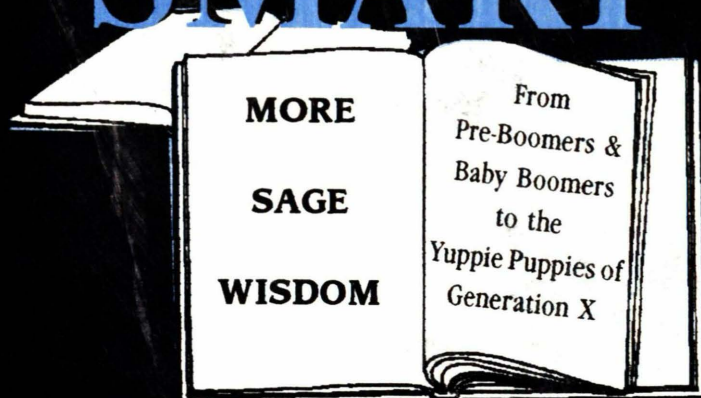
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HOW TO AVOID BEING

**TOO  
SOON  
OLD  
TOO  
LATE  
SMART**



Edited, with Commentary, by  
**D.P. Diffine, Ph.D.**

## LIFE IS IN SESSION – ARE YOU PRESENT?

Dear reader, this book is about investing in futures. You are now in the process of opening Volume II of a time capsule whose original title was WHAT I KNOW NOW THAT I WISH THEY'D TOLD ME BACK THEN. Consider this -- if the fountain of youth is unattainable, wouldn't it be great to avoid being, as the Dutch used to say, "*too soon old and too late smart?*" After all, nobody gets a second chance to go through life again; this isn't a dress rehearsal -- it's the real thing!

Alas, we must learn from those who have been around the block a few more times than we have. We won't live long enough to make all their collective mistakes -- as resourceful as we might be behind their backs. Two ladies were talking about a handicapped orphan child -- One lady had paid for expensive surgery, so he could walk. "*Guess where he is today?*" she asked. "*Well,*" said the other lady, "*Is he some great person?*" "*No, he's in Federal prison -- we taught him how to walk, but we forgot to show him where to walk.*"

Here is what I tell parents, teachers, advisors, counselors, and administrators: "*Regarding your role -- if your candle should ever flicker, and you should ever question your role, remember this: There is no greater gift than to have God's children entrusted to YOU! God must love them very much, because somehow He gave them YOU. If He rewards YOU, far beyond your worth, by letting YOU be their teacher-mentor-benefactor, then who are YOU to question His wisdom?*" Hopefully for all of us, the coming generations, who will be the true judges of what we do today, will find us worthy of our task.





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The author wishes to thank a battalion of friends, associates, educators, church leaders, colleagues, university alumni, students, parents, grandparents and civic and business leaders for their encouragement and cooperation which led to the completion of this book.

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in writing to the author as follows:

D.P. Diffine  
Harding University, Box 2245  
Searcy, Arkansas 72149-0001  
(501) 279-4470  
Fax (501) 279-4195  
e-mail: [ddiffine@harding.edu](mailto:ddiffine@harding.edu)

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## DEDICATION

To all who are old enough to know  
the score and yet young enough  
to enjoy the game of life.



*Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life,  
For which the first was made.  
Our times are in His hand,  
Who saith: "A whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half;  
Trust God; see all, nor be afraid."*

-- Robert Browning

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## INTRODUCTION -- LIFE'S DRESS REHEARSAL

When I was in my mid-20's, I was an administrative officer stationed at a Strategic Air Command Air Force Base. There, I worked for a career officer who proudly announced at work one day that he had just kicked his son out of the house. "Why?" I asked.

I will never forget his reply (although I have repeatedly tried). He said, "*Because my son just turned 17 yesterday ... My dad kicked me out on my 17th birthday ... My Dad didn't do nothing for me, and I'm not doing nothing for my son.*" Haven't we learned anything? Children raising children!

Dear reader, this book is about investing in futures. You are now in the process of opening Volume II of a time capsule whose original title was WHAT I KNOW NOW THAT I WISH THEY'D TOLD ME BACK THEN -- A Time Capsule of Advice from Pre-Boomers and Boomers to the Yuppie Puppies of Generation X.

Consider this -- if the fountain of youth is unattainable, wouldn't it be great to avoid being, as the Dutch used to say, "*too soon old and too late smart?*" After all, nobody gets a second chance to go through life again; this isn't a dress rehearsal -- it's the real thing! This second book emphasizes "... *the last of life for which the first was made*" (Robert Browning).

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This is my 27th year with Harding University; guess I'll stay. I marvel at where the time has gone. I was the age of my students once (then twice and now three times). In our Economics classes, I'm now instructing the children of my former students. On a good day I vow to try to teach 3 generations. Most days I say, "No!" As the earth rotates, Father Time stands still for none of us. Education lasts all our lives: *"Womb to Tomb."*

I'm 55 now. I should be 56, but I was sick a year. My peers and I have watched our kids grow up together. And should it cause us to reflect on many things--both personal and professional? Yes, especially the need for that good, sound, two-way, intergenerational communication.

As I travel, people often ask me this question, *"How are today's students different?"* They are different. They *"nuke"* their food in microwave ovens and *"channel surf"* with remote controlled TVs (We were so poor--we had to walk across the room to change channels). Less patient with anything considered boring, their attention spans place value in not *"how important"* something is, but *"how entertaining"* it is. This is the legacy of the Nintendo Generation.

When we instructors hand back the term papers they write, our students look at the

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disappointing grade and exclaim, "Hey, I ran 'Spell Check' over it." I don't publish anything until I rewrite it 10-12 times (and, alas, mistakes still creep in).

And yes, there does seem to be an attitude today--our kids probably don't have a monopoly on it--but it's that attitude which says, "*Nothing is really wrong, if I don't get caught.*" It is a scary attitude wherever it's found. When did they learn that (from us, perish the thought!)? Maybe it has always been so. It would make a good term paper topic--(or a book report), referencing accounts in the Scriptures. How far back could we go -- Cain and Abel -- last week's headlines?

Genealogies -- the youth of today (those ages 14-34) have the distinguished status of being the 13th generation born in America. They have been labeled by the demographic experts as "*The X Generation,*" "*The Baby Busters,*" or "*The Invisible Generation.*" I've been a skeptic on this--mostly. However, they are different. We *Baby Boomers* talked back to those in authority. *Baby Busters* just walk away. What makes them tick? According to the West Coast Barna Research Group, they are " . . . a cause for bewilderment and concern on the part of their parents, grandparents, ministers, employers, and teachers."



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What else did the researchers learn? Surveys of the *X Generation* show them to be "... *skeptical, survival-oriented, stressed-out, self-reliant, pragmatic, and struggling to find an identity. They want to rebel.*" "*The problem is,*" says researchers, "*they don't know what to rebel to.*" Sound familiar?

It's not that we were placed here to flounder. The Designer of the Universe put spaceship earth here with a guidebook of instructions. We were also given the common sense to seek knowledge and to learn judiciously from others. As I've chided some graduation audiences in the Mid-South, "*Seniors, if you don't want to be a loser in the game of life, watch what losers do --and don't do that! Avoid dumbth, that is, willful ignorance...Don't make the same mistake twice more than once.*"

Alas, we must learn from those who have been around the block a few more times than we have. We won't live long enough to make all their collective mistakes -- as resourceful as we might be behind their backs.

Two ladies were talking about a handicapped orphan child -- One lady had paid for expensive surgery, so he could walk. "*Guess where he is today?*" she asked. "*Well,*" said the other lady, "*Is he some great person?*" "*No, he's in Federal prison -- we taught him*

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*how to walk, but we forgot to show him where to walk."*

It was rare, but some of our kids' peers and playmates of yesteryear in soccer, football, baseball, and softball did grow up and get in trouble with the law. Whenever we'd see that in the newspaper, I'd remind our grown kids: *"As a parent, never underestimate the power of that broken record you heard from us while growing up: Where are you going? When will you be back? What will you be doing? and Who will you be with?"*

I tell parents, teachers, advisors, counselors, and administrators this -- *"Regarding your role -- if your candle should ever flicker, and you should ever question your role, remember this: There is no greater gift than to have God's children entrusted to YOU! God must love them very much, because somehow He gave them YOU. If He rewards YOU, far beyond your worth, by letting YOU be their teacher-mentor-benefactor, then who are YOU to question His wisdom?"*

Accordingly, and for some years now, I have been giving the following homework assignment to willing and cooperative campus visitors, educators, alumni, parents, grandparents, members of local congregations and adult Bible classes, older adults in the harvest years, and business, civic, and trade

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association audiences: Write a thoughtful essay on the theme, *"What I Know Now That I Wish They'd Told Me Back Then"* or *"How to Avoid Being Too Soon Old and Too Late Smart."*

Those wonderful voluntary participants interested in this writing project, most of whom had done a *"heap of living,"* were encouraged to focus their wisdom and sage advice on a smorgasbord of topics. On all fronts, the preliminary results of these homework essays have been thrillingly tender and movingly profound.

So, can we who are life's veterans think of a better reason for feeling good about putting our best thoughts in HOW TO AVOID BEING TOO SOON OLD AND TOO LATE SMART? If we could just get our young people to read this valuable time capsule, we'd be helping them to stay right side up and on track for their life's journey.

Every contributor, as a role model, is leaving our young people a legacy. I have done my best to consolidate and edit the information provided by our contributors of wisdom into a very meaningful document worthy of all of us. Anonymity was guaranteed when it was requested.



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Yes, we have assembled quite a large task force composed of life's veterans and those in the harvest years. Again, a world of thanks goes to our battalion of literary mentors for their accurate axioms, profound principles, logical laws, trusty truisms, money homilies, colorful corollaries, quotable quotes, and rambunctious ruminations. Hopefully, the coming generations who will be the true judges of what we do today, will find us worthy of our task.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Diffine". The signature is stylized with a large, bold "D" and a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.





## I. INTERGENERATIONAL BONDING

In the mid-1970's, and about the time our son (who graduated from medical school in May 1997) was starting elementary school, a letter arrived in the mail. It reads in part as follows (the original version was one full page, typed):

*Dear Mr. and Mrs. Diffine:*

*... Your son seems to enjoy games, but he has a tendency toward undue roughness. There have been many complaints lately concerning your son's use of his hands. This often brings group and individual disapproval. For no apparent reason, he strikes out with his fists. Temporary separation from the group seems to help him most. He is a capable boy; he excels in academic pursuits. His paramount need at the present time is control of his hands in his relationships with his classmates ...*

*Sincerely yours, Edna Johnson*

Now get this. The letter came in an envelope from my Mom 25 years after Mrs. Johnson, my First Grade teacher, wrote it on April 11, 1949! And Mom's note to me in the mid-1970's said, "Son, I just found this in some old papers. Thought you'd like to have it at this time, as your children start school. It's called

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*"retribution" -- your kids will soon be paying you back for the way you treated us."*

I remember the incident (not the letter). I remember Mom accusing me, *"You say you've been good. Mrs. Johnson says she had to put you on the bench. (Hey, I was good while I was on the bench)."*

Now some 20 years later, one might ask, were there ever times, however brief, that we felt like wringing our kids' necks? Sure. Did we ever return from a car trip and feel the urge to dropkick-them-through-the-hedge? You bet. Were there ever times when their seeming ingratitude or procrastination just about sent us around the bend? Oh, yeah.

Did we struggle to gain even primitive two-way communication with them? Uh-huh. Have we ever wished they wouldn't tell people their last name? Yep. Did we get on a first-name basis with several auto-body repair shops in town? Sure.

However, listen to the last paragraph of their Senior Letter (as they graduated from high school):

*This Senior Letter concludes the same way it began. Please know that you have always been so much fun to be around. We do so look up to you. We are so*

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*proud of your tender conscience. You are always teaching us something wonderful. You never cease to amaze us. You are the best--truly World Class. You'll always be in our "Hall of Fame." You make us so happy and proud--so much so, that we have one final request--can we have your autograph.*

And here is a short paragraph adapted from our son's medical school application:

*My life's mission is to pay back, through a life of medical service, that gift that was given to me those many years ago. I intend to make it my life's goal to help people gain greater mobility, battle against needless suffering, and avert premature death.*

How did we get from there to here? In the summer of 1994, and after we had all survived the teen years to our house, a longtime neighbor startled me with this question: "*What Did You Do To Raise Such Fine Kids?*" Honestly, I was speechless, and finally managed a feeble, "*They are?--Beats me--Let's wait 50 years until we decide that.*" Although we didn't have a formal approach or a code etched in stone, early and often we communicated the following to our kids (we are just now documenting it in writing):



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- *Children need parents, students need teachers, and employees need employers.*
- *Even smart people can do stupid things.*
- *This is homework-related--Even the most fertile soil, if left uncultivated, can produce the rankest weeds.*
- *Life is really very simple. There are 26 basic letters, 10 basic numbers, 7 basic notes, and 3 basic colors.*
- *Be truthful, keep us informed, and we'll be your friend and supporter.*
- *Be dishonest, deceive us, and we'll be your judge and jury.*
- *We will not be manipulated by you, to wrongly defend you (even though we know that if we don't defend you, nobody will).*
- *The Teacher and Principal and Coach are always right--we're on their side (even when they're wrong).*
- *There is an attitude which says, "It's not wrong unless you get caught." That attitude is unacceptable.*

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- *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." --III John 4.*
- *Two parenting approaches can create a monster--"All love and no rules," and conversely, "All rules and no love."*
- *You'll get "tough love" from us, no matter what; so ask us questions you know we can say "yes" to.*
- *You are not to drive alone without an adult in the car before age 16. It's the law.*
- *Speed and inexperience and carelessness have no place behind the wheel of a car. Amen?*
- *We will all do our best to send you to school each day fully prepared and receptive to learn.*
- *We will continue to read and study about our roles as Moms and Dads, so that if there ever were a Minimum Performance Test for parents, we'd pass it handily.*

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- *When arguing with us, consider taking a time out to cut your losses and to do some damage control.*
- *"Well, Duh!" is an unacceptable response.*
- *Avoid playmates who use foul language and have mean tempers -- bad news.*
- *Never wrestle in the mud with a pig; you'll get all dirty and the pig will enjoy it.*
- *"A good name is better to be chosen than great riches." --Proverbs 22:1.*
- *Plan your work--work your plan.*
- *Work while you work, play while you play--that's how you get the most out of every day.*
- *No one can really embarrass you for long, unless they have your assistance.*
- *There is something worse than losing a so-called boyfriend or girlfriend -- losing yourself.*

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- *Nice guys don't finish last--nice guys are winners before the game ever starts.*
- *Try to become the kind of adult that the child you once were would approve of.*
- *You cannot pay back our love; you can only pass it on.*

Yes, it has been said in jest that *"the good Lord gives us 12 years to learn to love our children before they become teenagers."* When there are difficult times, we all need to be reminded that teenagers don't cause difficulties by themselves. The problem is that both parents and children are changing.

Many parents don't realize that this is the source of conflict. There is a type of triple whammy that hits at this point of life. When our children are teenagers, we, ourselves, are hitting the mid-life crisis years, and our own parents are in their declining years.

When the adolescent is asking *"Who am I,"* the parents are asking *"Is that all there is?"* The experts say that parents are going through *"middlescence,"* a time for looking back at what has been accomplished and ahead to what is left to be done.



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A parent may have exaggerated reactions to the thing his teenager says or does, because the parent himself is having doubts about his own self-worth. So, my youthful friends, don't worry about an occasional outburst of temper from moms and dads. One bad day does not a bad parent make.

This item titled "*FATHER -- IN ANY LANGUAGE*" is translated from a Dutch magazine shows that families are pretty much about the same the world over:

- ◆ 4 years: *My Daddy can do anything.*
- ◆ 7 years: *My Dad knows a lot, a whole lot.*
- ◆ 8 years: *My father doesn't know quite everything.*
- ◆ 12 years: *Oh, well, naturally Father doesn't know that either.*
- ◆ 14 years: *Father? Hopelessly old-fashioned.*
- ◆ 21 years: *Oh, that man is out of date; what did you expect?*
- ◆ 25 years: *He knows a little bit about it, but not much.*
- ◆ 30 years: *Must find out what Dad thinks about it.*
- ◆ 35 years: *A little patience; let's get Dad's meaning first.*
- ◆ 50 years: *What would Dad have thought about that?*



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- ◆ *60 years: I wish I could talk it over with Dad once more.*

Although most parents wouldn't want to be teenagers again, they are upset about their own missed opportunities. They feel that with the wisdom they've gained, they would do a great job of being a teenager. They are probably right, but we must all learn from our own experiences, both the happy and the painful ones.

Parents, too, are human and vulnerable. Young people have more freedom than we ever had at their age, to pursue their own interests. Teens are starting to appreciate some of the things that older people enjoy. Teens are interested in the world, taking on a whole new perspective about it.

And we adults are often pleasantly surprised how responsible, sensitive, and perceptive our teens can be toward worldly and eternal values. We hope that teens will always keep a tender conscience, as they are bombarded by the media with so much sex, crime, and drugs.

The permissive generation of the 1960's-- which was a very anti-authority, anti-establishment time -- has resulted in the crime, drugs, divorce, and AIDS problems of the 1990's. We adults do so appreciate our teens' tender hearts in trying to view TV programs and

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movies that are as wholesome as possible. It is just not normal for people's relationships to move as fast in real life as they do on TV, hopping in and out of bed as fast as fleas on a dog.

We parents shouldn't cling to our teens unnecessarily. Children who are desperate to get away from their parents are sometimes the ones whom the parents are frantically holding on to. If we give children the freedom they long for, they may want to keep coming back.

It's ideal when we have the best of both worlds--an active, exciting life on our own and the option of sharing our parent's life as well. In everything, we try to guide our young people to be responsible individuals. We are compelled to teach them that, as a child, no one really *"gets by"* with anything here or in the hereafter.

Rather, every person--dad, mom, brother, and sister--is ultimately accountable to God who sees all actions. The child who feels an ultimate responsibility to God, in the context of a parent's responsible authority, is the least likely to rebel, or the most likely to recover from a period of rebellion. Consider this cherished note my daughter wrote me at about age 7: *"To Daddy and Mommy -- I love you. You are nice to me. I know you love God and Jesus ..."*

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Then there was this poem she wrote at about age 16:

### FATHER & FRIEND

*It seems like you've always been there for  
me,*

*Not as authority but as my friend.*

*Something inside you only I can see,*

*Like a noise in a whispering wind.*

*My time spent with you has been  
worthwhile,*

*Especially the day of the baseball game*

*You knew how to bring my face to a  
smile,*

*It makes me feel like a queen in her reign.*

*Overcoming the trials that we once had,*

*Inside of my heart I would always know,*

*A bond shared by a daughter and her  
dad,*

*So special that it would forever grow.*

*So to my father and my special friend,*

*All my blessing and love to you I send.*

And yes, it is frustrating to try to sort out good from bad. It's just that between the good and the bad are a lot of wise and respectively unwise actions. Wise actions usually lead to good results, and unwise actions often lead to bad results. That is what we've tried to teach



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our children -- it is part of our job description as parents.

I think it is a disservice to our young people to tell them that ". . . *this is the most carefree time of your life.*" It is not true; it's a wonder we don't send more of our young people over the edge with such thoughtless advice. They were going through a period of adolescence when their hormones wouldn't stabilize, when their extremities wouldn't coordinate, and they found little comfort in our telling them that " . . . *it is going to get worse.*"

The fact is, although the stresses and pressures continue to mount as the years and decades pass, our ability to cope with these pressures -- socially, mentally, financially, spiritually, etc. -- grows so much faster.

We have been losing our moral umbrella in this country. Freedom is not just the right to do as we please. "*Freedom,*" as Peter Marshall, former Chaplain of the Senate, put it, "*is the opportunity to please to do that which is right.*" Therefore, I try to remind young people to keep on striving for maturity (they hate that "M" word).

Young people will often counter with, "*but you can't define maturity!*" Well, can you do a job without being supervised? Can you carry money without spending it? When you make a

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promise, do you try to keep it? Can you consistently get to where you're supposed to be and on time? When you get something out, do you try to put it away? Can you bear an injustice without trying to get even? That's maturity.



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### ***Our Contributors' Advice on Intergenerational Bonding***

Probably the best technique that works for me is to remember who I am talking with. If it is someone older-they are full of wisdom and experiences that I need to learn about. I love talking with older people. Teens I adore-they are so full of life and enthusiasm for so much. Most teens have not yet developed the "worry technique," so they are a joy to be around, and I let them know it. I hate the "back in my day" stories. Things are different today. I love to hear about the differences. Young children I adore. I could talk to young children forever. Their total innocence and love of life and people is a "pick-me-up" on any day. Children are beautiful and great teachers about what is important in life. Bonding with my own age is great! We have so much to talk about, we don't know it all, but we're maturing and so willing to teach each other. The main key to generational bonding is an open mind, a willingness to learn from everyone, and just a love for people of all ages!

*-- Clara Hinton, Sharksville, Pennsylvania*

The first rule for intergenerational bonding is to be our age and allow the other person to be his or her age. Teenagers don't need a parent who is another teenage pal, they need one who is a good, understanding, helpful parent. Rule 2, look for the good, commend it. When you see something bad, pray for it. Children and teenagers need and want discipline. One reason they rebel is that they are trying to find out where the



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parameters are. If they never find out, they keep trying, which leads to further rebellion. The best rule for bonding is to have genuine love for the other person. For the true manifestations of love, read I Corinthians 13:4-7 and Galatians 5:22.

-- Paul Easley, San Antonio, Texas

*Train up a child in the way he should go:  
and when he is old, he will not depart  
from it.*

*Proverbs 22:6*

With two children in their teen years, I freely admit my lack of confidence in speaking of intergenerational bonding techniques. In the past, when family ties did not play the significant role, I was moderately successful in forming such bonds by sharing a common interest with someone of the younger generation. For me the vehicle to accomplish this end was the Boy Scouts of America. Many others have enjoyed similar success with Little League athletic programs. The theory here is that both the young and old participants are working toward a common goal. This removes some of the feeling on the part of the youth that he is being scrutinized, personally.

-- Eric B. Hedden, Brunswick, Tennessee

Intergenerational bonding comes from respect, admiration, and getting to know older/younger people. With the young, you get fresh ideas, thoughts,



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"remember when you thought that," and can watch the changes and experience a lot of things through them all over again and maybe do a little guiding along the way. With the older, it's fun to listen and talk about their experiences, history, and learn a few things to help yourself out along the way. But with both, there's always a common bond of laughter, interests (be it in music, books, movies) that anyone can find if the time, care, and concern is taken.

*--Vicki Ironside, Alexander, Arkansas*

Respectful questions are my technique. Be genuinely interested in the other person and find something that you have in common. Then, be willing to listen sincerely, but I believe before any of this can work, you have to develop a genuine love for each person as Jesus did. I have made it my goal to love every person and always concentrate on the positive and good things about the person -- no matter what age, etc. I often play the "what if" game. What if I were that person, with their history, etc. All of this helps to find the key to bonding with that individual.

*-- Connie Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*

I'm still working on these. Communication skills are vital. Strive to see the world through their eyes. Help them to understand where you're coming from. Allow them to be who they are and utilize the talents and gifts God has given them. Just because you don't agree on some issues, doesn't mean the other person is going to fail in life. Accept each other's differences and encourage each other with the patience and love of Christ.

*-- Carol Wilterdink, Aurora, Colorado*

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We enjoy each other. We love to have our children and grandchildren visit. We do many things together: work, study, play, eat, pray, hunt, and have a happy time together. There is no fussing and no disagreements. We work out differences and do not let them become displeasures. We go visit our children and grandchildren and have a great time being together.

-- Jean Gregg, Little Rock, Arkansas

Turn off the TV -- at least during meal time so you can talk and pay attention to each other. Be a part of your child's activities, sports, band, or whatever-be there and be proud! Be willing to stop what you are doing to listen or have a discussion, including staying up at night -- all hours if needed (and go to work the next day, not always easy, but very worthwhile). And keep a sense of humor. This is a must!

-- Kathy Lacefield, Jacksonville, Arkansas

Coaching works for me. I have two boys, and I have coached both of them most of the time. We have refereed soccer together for many years, and usually as a team. We also do family vacations. We dragged my wife all over the ski slopes of Colorado and to Disney World many times. I think the togetherness really bonds.

-- Bill Sowell, Brandon, Mississippi

Find out something about what was going on when the other person who was your age if they are older or what is going on for that generation if they are younger. This gives you a starting point to work from. Also, ask



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questions. People enjoy talking about themselves and you will find you have more in common than you thought.

-- *Kim Swiecicki, Portland, Maine*

Take time to listen and to do things together. Asking my parents, my aunts and uncles, and other older friends to tell stories of their experiences, or to give me advice on some subject, or to tell me how they got started at something has opened the door to many wonderful friendships and/or deeper relationships.

-- *Marquita Moss, Austin, Texas*

The behavior of some children suggests that their parents embarked on the sea of matrimony without a paddle.

I listen to my almost 85 year old father, receive and video-tape his stories, and have our grandchildren, who are getting old enough, to hear him recall early-day stories now when we visit ... I cherish memorabilia from my parents and grandparents that is displayed in our home.

-- *Eloise Muncy, Searcy, Arkansas*

Love is the cement that bridges the generations. Be warm and caring toward the other person. Try to be understanding and tolerant because someday we may be where the older generation now is. Try not to become angry, but learn from the older generation.

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This is wisdom. Listening is a great way to bond. Just listen and take an interest in others-old or young.

-- Janice Martin, Hope, Arkansas

I don't know how many people one can "bond" with. Can we bond for a moment with a stranger by smiling or saying thank you? Doesn't this make the world a better place? Perhaps bonding in degrees with all we meet as much as can be. Hugging is an excellent bonding agent. Eye contact, listening, really listening.

-- Allen Holland, Munsford, TN

Intergenerational bonding is a genuine exchange of ideas, ideals, interests, hopes, dreams, goals, fears, inspirations and aspirations. Encouragement and support of a youth in a worthwhile project is gratifying when you can, and give the best advice you have when asked for it, remembering that our words are weighty.

-- Margaret Garrett, Tucker, Georgia

Kind words are the bright flowers of earthly existence. If you want to be miserable, think about yourself, about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you, and what people think of you. The best portion of a man's life is the kindness and love shown to others.

-- Gloria Evins, Bartlett, Tennessee

Baby sitting for neighbors, visiting grandchildren twice per year (1200 miles distance), communication by phone, and letter writing. Recognition and positive reinforcement at every opportunity. Try to appreciate



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and understand the generational gap regarding music, dress, attitudes, and habits.

-- *Mr. and Mrs. Dean Carlton, Portland, Oregon*

Be a part of the other generation's life. For my sons, I coached and attended everything I could that they did from basketball, football, and soccer games to school plays. With my grandson, I am giving as much time as possible, swinging on the porch, walking, and playing to holding him in my lap and reading to him.

-- *Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*

Trying to stay up with your children as they get older helps a lot. Staying involved in their activities/interests helps in the bonding process. Communication with other generations, including the older one is essential. Being a genuine person with all (both younger and older) helps so much.

-- *Max Reiboldt, Alpharetta, Georgia*

If you study the Bible and pay attention to the life of Christ, you will become a very good person. That person will not have much trouble bonding with others. If you do, then consider if you really need to bond with that person.

-- *Bob Little, Abingdon, Maryland*

I try to talk to older or younger people about the things that they are interested in. I also try to teach younger people what I know about my hobbies such as hunting or fishing. This works well for intergenerational bonding.

-- *Bob Wright, Judsonia, Arkansas*

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I think young and really enjoy young people. I respect my elders and openly display that respect. I love my children and am not afraid to openly express my love, and I spend as much time as possible with them.

*-- Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas*

In this day and age, it's very important that you raise a family. Because, if you do not raise a family, how will you ever know how many jobs you can hold at the same time.

Be interested in what they are interested in. Make them feel worthwhile. Most importantly, realize and remember you have the most to benefit-you can learn so much from the old and young alike. Invest your time. Share "you" with others.

*-- Tina Bigelow, Marshall, Minnesota*

I visit care homes with my children. Make a "Grandma's book" -- putting this together with your mom, grandma, and children -- as many generations as possible. Make holiday cookies and holiday activities that become a tradition.

*-- Randie Seeber, Newburg, Oregon*

Traditions bond parent to child, child to parent, sibling to sibling, generation to generation. If you have no family traditions at this point in time, start some.



## **Intergenerational Bonding**

Tradition creates memories that are not erased even in times of separation.

-- Susan French, Sarasota, Florida

Within our family, we spend time together. As our children were growing up, we went camping and vacationing together, visited older relatives and friends, which all helped our children to know and respect older folks and us, their parents.

-- Randy Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri

Listen to people -- children or the elderly, put yourself in their place as they relate experiences and respond accordingly. Ask questions. Keep in touch. Use eye contact, and smile.

-- Gail Tomlinson, Senatobia, Mississippi

We use lots of time (the problem with quality time is that you never know when it will happen), lots of love, and touchability (touch and hug a lot), vulnerability (be willing to say you were wrong and you're sorry), and lots of forgiveness (for yourself as well as others).

-- Bill Watkins, Dolthan, Alabama

Never separate yourself from any age. Make friends and love all ages. Include in your circle of friends, young and old alike. You will find you'll learn much. Never consider yourself too good or above anyone regardless of color or age.

-- Sallie Dawson, Sulphur Springs, Arkansas

## Intergenerational Bonding

It should begin with a showing of genuine interest and concern for all ages. Realizing that all ages can teach each of us something about how to deal with this world will allow bonding to take place.

-- *Peggy Usery, Grenada, Mississippi*

I love to read to children. I like to have them sit in a semi-circle all around me so I can see their little faces as they get involved with the stories.

-- *Sarah Nell Pomerenk, Memphis, Tennessee*

Have less talking and more listening. Both the young and the old need someone to take the time to consider their wants and needs, and let them know that they are loved.

-- *Cecile Key, Searcy, Arkansas*

Have money, kids always want it! Show genuine interest in old people, they have many things of value that they want to give away.

-- *Jimmy Behel, Searcy, Arkansas*

On the topic of intergenerational bonding, I have no idea -- just caring and touching and being unafraid to shed tears as well as fall on the floor laughing are all great bonding experiences.

-- *Tom Hancock, Pasadena, Texas*

Try to understand them, listen to what they have to say. Don't put them down. Plan to do things together as much as possible.

-- *Lee Ashby, Granite City, Illinois*



## Intergenerational Bonding

Listen to what children and seniors have to say. If we're truly interested in what others do and say, we form some very strong bonds.

-- Jeff Earnhart, St. Louis, Missouri

Spend time doing something everyone enjoys. For men, sports are the one thing almost all of them have in common. Outdoor activities like camping, fishing, and hunting are also great.

-- Ron Montague, Arvada, Colorado

Things are pretty well evened up in this world. Other people's troubles are not as bad as ours, but their children are a lot worse.

Don't let young people scare you with their new styles and what they think about the world. Keep an open mind and don't lose your temper with them.

-- Opal Burton, Paragould, Arkansas

Kid a lot. Joke a lot. Do things for that person young or old. Do things together. Give that person something special -- preferably something you made.

-- Tom Gaskins, Jr., Palmdale, Florida

I think one of the best techniques is encouragement. Everyone needs to know they are worth something, especially young ones. If they aren't told once in a while they begin to doubt themselves.

-- Janie Barber, Batesville, Arkansas

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I am most likely to have meaningful conversation with my mother, son or daughter while traveling in a car alone with one of them.

-- *Mrs. William Shadel, Savannah, Tennessee*

Remembering what it was like for me at younger ages and picturing myself in the shoes of the older ones is a good technique for me.

-- *Holly Cooper, Grand Junction, Colorado*

Frequent expressions of "I love you" (verbal and through actions). Bless them out loud with hands on them. Spend time with them doing what they want to do.

-- *Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas*

It is vital that the old and the young keep good communication between them. The wisdom of the older and the youthful zeal of the younger provide a counter balance to each life.

-- *Alton Howard, West Monroe, Louisiana*

I hope I have succeeded by worshipping, working, and playing together. Because we raised our family on a farm, we were able to have them in the fields when we worked together.

-- *Mildred Horton, Midvale, Idaho*

Being willing to listen to both older people and younger people. Have an honest concern for the needs of people of other generations.

-- *Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas*



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Show genuine interest and appreciation always. Let all your communications (verbal and non-verbal) speak to your belief of the importance of the other party.

-- *Bill Cox, Rowlett, TX*

I consider young people to be intelligent and treat them so! I look to older people for their wisdom.

-- *Don Shackelford, Searcy, Arkansas*

Doing common interest "things" together and sharing the good and bad experiences of life.

-- *Stanley Keown, Chattanooga, Tennessee*

Try to stay up-to-date on current issues and interests. Be positive and happy.

-- *Lois Jenkins, Prior Lake, Minnesota*

Suffer the little children to come unto me,  
and forbid them not: for of such is the  
kingdom of God.

Mark 10:14

It is important to listen. Everyone wants to be heard older, younger, it doesn't matter.

-- *Joe Stork, Doraville, Georgia*

Super glue does a pretty good job -- known as family, love, respect, and discipline.

-- *Eugene Smith, Jr., Duncanville, Texas*

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**I work in the First Grade department at church.**

**-- Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Altig, Long Beach, California**

**I sit with Alzheimers patients and their families.**

**-- Reba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas**

**Talk with good eye contact-especially good listening.**

**-- Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas**

**Listen and give of your time.**

**-- Danny and Barbara Hayes, Searcy, Arkansas**

**Don't preach or patronize.**

**-- Ed Bethune, Searcy, Arkansas**



## Intergenerational Bonding

### SUMMARY

Whenever and wherever I speak to audiences around the land, I encourage parents and grandparents to write a letter to their children at graduation. It is a tradition at Harding Academy. Leave them a legacy -- make them read it twice a year. Give them a quiz on it; if they don't get at least 70% correct, write them out of your Will (only kidding)!

I also apologize to young people on behalf of busy parents. We haven't always been there for our young people. It has frustrated them and us. We have had to work so hard to pave the way for a bright and promising future for the next generation. We owe them that. We would give our lives for our children. We are giving our lives for our children. And guess what they owe us? Just one thing -- their cheerful cooperation.

Parents should not be taken for granted. It is true that the Wright brothers invented the airplane, but it was Mr. and Mrs. Wright who invented Orville and Wilbur. I am always encouraging young people to take mom and dad in their arms and say, "*Mom and dad, I love you; thank you for the start you have given me.*"

And if young people will promise to do that, I guarantee them that they will live long and

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prosper. If they refuse to do that, I tell them that they will be poor and miserable and all their babies will be born naked (of course, they don't want that).

As they start their working years, I remind young people that the world doesn't owe them a living; it owes them nothing, it was here first. And sure, variety is the spice of life, but it is monotony that buys the groceries. And while we are on the subject, the grass isn't greener on the other side of the fence; the grass is greener where it has been watered. This isn't rocket scientist stuff here. Our young people are certainly welcome to climb the fence, but let them take some water with them. Then, wherever they are, the grass will be green.

Rudyard Kipling once said, *"I had six honest serving men, they taught me all I knew, their names were where and what and when and why and how and who."* Why do I tell young people this? All their lives we have told them, *"Be somebody, be somebody."*

Now they must get specific and ask some tough questions: who, what, where, when, why, how, etc. I tell young people, *"You don't want to be a 'loser,' watch what losers do -- don't do that!"* Avoid *"dumbth"*; dumbth is willful ignorance. Don't make the same mistake twice more than once. This isn't rocket science stuff.

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For the sake of intergenerational bonding, there may also come a time in our careers that we would have enough confidence in ourselves and our achievements that we could honestly say that true happiness in our lives may be one less promotion, one less title, one less advancement, one less transfer. After all, what good is it to dedicate a career to making a name for oneself if our family doesn't know who we are.

Conversely, we need to nudge our young people toward the direction of developing good, marketable skills. If we are going to get involved in other people's lives to do good, it is going to take time and money. And we will have neither time nor money if we don't have unmarketable skill; we will be working at two jobs seven days a week, and we won't have the time and energy to do much good for anyone.

We need to be there for our children in those formative years. For a decade, Mom and I spent many a boring evening in a hot, steamy gymnasium around our state because our son or daughter's ball team was there. Sometimes their evening was spent keeping the other end of the bench from flying up when the coach sat down. And yet, at some point during the evening our child would give a faint wave to us from across the gym. And that meant, *"Thanks, because if you weren't here, my parents missed it."* Mission accomplished.



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It was fascinating watching our children go through a metamorphosis and arriving at adulthood. Somehow, through that “*no-man’s land*” we call the teen years, that caterpillar, which crawled awkwardly and slowly into the cocoon, emerged as a beautiful monarch butterfly.

So, what are the four hardest jobs in the world? (1) teenager; (2) parent of teenager; (3) teacher of teenager; and (4) employer of teenager. The challenges are extraordinary. The famous educator, Horace Mann, once allegedly described the ideal educational environment -- the student, and teacher seated at opposite ends of a log, conversing. Well, in truth, I have known some times when I would rather sit-on-the-student and talk-to-the-log!

Here is advice from a real authority:

*Dear Abby: My mother is always on my back about something. It's "sit up straight, talk slower, turn down the TV, quit picking your face, and go do your homework!" What's a poor defenseless teenager supposed to do anyway? Signed Hassled.*

What do you suppose Abby wrote back?



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*Dear Hassled: "Sit up straight, talk slower, turn down the TV, quit picking your face, and go do your homework."*

When it comes to Intergenerational Bonding, I only have one thing against our younger generation, and it's this: I'm not a part of it anymore. But the results are in -- The top nonscholastic problems that schools report facing today? Drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery, assault.

The Biggest problems in the 1940's and 1950's? Talking, spitwads, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, cutting in line, not putting paper in wastebaskets, sticking pony tails in ink wells. What's a pony tail? What's an ink well? Well, let's just say that if the two are in proximity, there is a moral obligation for little boys to connect them.

Have you heard this question before? *"Did you do your homework?"* Students whose parents closely monitor their activities tend to get higher grades (a firm grasp on the obvious), according to the National Center for Education Statistics, which studied 58,000 high school students.

Some 88 percent of the "A" students indicated the highest degree of parental supervision. Eighty-one percent of the "B" students reported their parents knew of their

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activities. Seventy-two percent of the "C" students, and only 61 percent of the "D" students, said their parents monitored what they did closely. Surprise. Surprise. That probably explains my undistinguished record in junior high and senior high school.

See, my folks just tried to raise me on Parent's Magazine. They didn't read it; they just rolled it up and whacked me on the rear. I never understood why my teachers would go into the Work Room so grumpy and come out later so happy, until I sneaked in there one day and found a perforated picture of me on their dart board.

There is a song I hear on the radio ever so many years and about Mother's Day time. It, paraphrased here, is a story about a teenager who came to his mother and said, "*Mom, I feel I should be rewarded for all the things that I have done this semester.*" He presented to his mother a list. And the list said:

<i>For all my good grades -----</i>	<i>\$10.00</i>
<i>For being on time at school -----</i>	<i>7.00</i>
<i>For keeping my room clean -----</i>	<i>10.00</i>
<i>For taking extra care of my books -----</i>	<i>3.00</i>
<i>For not complaining about the lunches you fixed -----</i>	<i>5.00</i>
<i>For doing extra reading and getting home with the notes from school -----</i>	<i><u>5.00</u></i>
<i>TOTAL -----</i>	<i>\$40.00</i>

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His mom looked the list over, put her arm around him and said, *"For taking care of you since you were a noise at one end and a mess at the other, NO CHARGE. For sitting up at night when you were sick and then going to work the next day, NO CHARGE."*

*"For helping you many times with your homework, NO CHARGE. For taking you to school and picking you up 2,000 times, nearly 200 times this year alone, plus ball games, fundraising events, cheerleading practice, band practice, outings, NO CHARGE."*

*"For the time and the tears you've caused throughout the years, NO CHARGE. For advice, knowledge, and some money for college, NO CHARGE."*

The teenager, having learned the cost of real love, took his bill and marked it "PAID-IN-FULL." And Mom said, *"Son, all we owe each other is our love. See, we pay our debt to the past, by being responsible for the future."*

Some years ago, United Technologies ran the following "PLEDGE" in the Wall Street Journal (I have used it many, many times with educational audiences):



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1. *I now realize that the greatest power in the world is the power of knowledge.*
2. *I want to be smart. Dumb, misinformed people go through life missing so many rewards that could be theirs.*
3. *I will learn my basic skills and be expert in them.*
4. *I will read books on the subjects that interest me most. But I will also read books and articles on other subjects to broaden my awareness of what is happening in the world around me.*
5. *I will discuss at dinner time what I have learned or questioned at school today.*
6. *I will study the ideas and dreams of our history to see how they can help me today.*
7. *I will set aside some time each day to think about my future, to discuss it with people I respect and to work on accumulating the knowledge that can guarantee that future.*



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8. *I pledge this to those who love me  
and are trying to help me succeed.  
More important, I pledge it to myself.*

*Student signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Teacher (I'll help you)* \_\_\_\_\_

*Parent Guardian (endorsed with  
great love)* \_\_\_\_\_

It comes back to establishing priorities early in life. In the late 1950's, James Michener was invited to dinner by President Eisenhower. He declined in a letter saying he was going to a dinner to honor a former elementary school teacher. The President wrote in reply saying that Michener had made the better choice.



## II. THE AGING PROCESS AND PHYSICAL CHALLENGES

Truly, the longer we live, the more we experience an enlarged sense of both sorrow and joy. It has always been so. One day in the last year of his life, John Quincy Adams was tottering down a Boston street. He was accosted by a friend who said, "*And how is John Quincy Adams today?*" The former president of the United States replied graciously:

*Thank you, John Quincy Adams is well, sir, quite well. I thank you. But the house in which he lives at present is becoming dilapidated. It is tottering upon its foundations. Time and the seasons have nearly destroyed it. Its roof is pretty well worn out, its walls are much shattered, and it trembles with every wind. The old tenement is becoming almost uninhabitable, and I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon; but he himself is quite well, sir, quite well.*

And with this the venerable statesman, leaning heavily upon his cane, moved slowly down the street.

Pop and I had the same birthday -- June 15th. He was 40 when I was born, and he seemed to truly enjoy poor health and inactivity



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the second half of his life. He lived to be 86. Those last three years he'd stare back at me from a place I never want to go. Mom lived into her 80th year. I remember her over the years as our family's prime provider and caregiver. She remained alert and active nearly to the end.

Two people, both beloved by us six children. One rusted out, and eventually he checked out. The other stayed tuned in and connected until she physically wore out completely. What shall we learn from this? Shall we give up on life when life seems to be giving up on us? Nay.

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, gives us this perspective, as it is recorded in Ecclesiastes 3:1-7:

*To every thing there is a season,  
and a time to every purpose under the  
heaven ... A time to be born, and a time  
to die; a time to plant, and a time to  
pluck up that which is planted ... A time  
to kill, and a time to heal; a time to  
break down, and a time to build up ... A  
time to weep, and a time to laugh; a  
time to mourn, and a time to dance ... A  
time to cast away stones, and a time to  
gather stones together; a time to  
embrace, and a time to refrain from  
embracing ... A time to get, and a time*

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*to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away ... A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*

At this writing, I am in transition from the old age of my youth to the youth of my old age -- indeed, an apprentice senior citizen. God is still God, and I am His child. And yet, surveying my own life, and gauging the direction it is headed on this planet, I have devised the following timetable by decade (all cleverly start with "D," as does my name):

0 - 10	<i>Discovery</i>
11 - 20	<i>Drift</i>
21 - 30	<i>Dilemmas</i>
31 - 40	<i>Development</i>
41 - 50	<i>Debt</i>
51 - 60	<i>Determination</i>
61 - 70	<i>Decisions</i>
71 - 80	<i>Disabilities</i>
81 - 90	<i>Decomposition</i>

In a lighter vein, nothing heightens interest in the physical challenges which accompany aging as much as writing an "OVER THE HILL" roast, as I did recently, for an esteemed colleague:

*Let's put things in perspective:  
You've got one foot in the grave and  
the other one on a banana peel. Here  
are the 7 ages of man: spills, drills,*

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*thrills, bills, ills, pills, and wills. So, remember -- nothing lasts forever (with the possible exception of Elvis). You see, the only way not to die is not to be born -- and not being born would take all the pleasure out of not dying.*

*Don't be depressed at being 50. Did you know that when Mozart was your age, he'd been dead 14 years. I mean, if you died tomorrow, you'd only have one regret -- that you died tomorrow. By the way, did you know that on this date in 1902, Eldon Meriwether died? He was the inventor of the thermometer -- lived to the ripe old age of 98.6 years. His burial was a bit unusual. They held him upside down by his feet and shook-him-down into the ground.*

*Look at it this way, you no longer wonder what you will be when you grow up. And by now, some people recognize that you were right about a few things after all; and others have given up trying to change you. You realize that old people know more about being young than the young people do about being old.*

*At 30, you didn't care what the world thought of you. At 40, you worried about what the world thought of you. At*



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*50, you have discovered that it wasn't even thinking of you. The positive side of prune juice is now obvious to you. Your actions creak louder than your words, and recently you showed someone the way to your house by using the varicose veins on your legs as a road map. A travel tour that includes a guide and planned activities doesn't compromise your sense of independence.*

*You went to your class reunion. It was a sad occasion. Half of the group was so old, they had to wear name tags so you would know them, and the other half was so old that they couldn't read the name tags. When you were 20, you wanted to change the world; when you were 30, you wanted to change the country; when you were 40, you wanted to change the neighborhood. But now that you are 50, you will have to rev just to change the sheets. You've reached the age where the "happy hour" is a nap, and you suspect that by the time you get to greener pastures, you won't be able to climb the fence.*

*You've been around long enough to tell Alfie what it's all about. In the game of office politics, you're already a senator. Artifacts saved from your*

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*childhood sell as valuable "antiques." You are more reluctant to fix what isn't broken. And you no longer worry about being drafted. Like Scarlet O'Hara, you know there are certain things not worth thinking about until tomorrow. In your 30's, your heart governed your head. In your 40's, your head governed your heart. At 50, your kidneys govern both. Now, you begin to expect that maybe, after all, happiness doesn't live "over there." And at this point, it occurs to you that if Helen Keller could get through her life, then somehow you can get through yours. So, we would like to tell you the Secret of Long Life: "Eat like a horse, think like a fox, work like a dog, play like a rabbit -- and, of course, see your veterinarian twice a year."*

*At 50, you realize that you can't be too out of shape to watch a football game. You used to be active in sports, but bad knees put an early end to your athletic career -- you played marbles. We know that you have been a great athlete -- we have seen you throw a wet blanket the entire length of a room. It has probably occurred to you that if your ship hasn't come in yet, it's time to get the tugboats. However, the graduate school loans are finally paid in full. The verdict is in on whether candy*

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*bar theft would turn you into a hardened criminal. The verdict is not in on exactly how you'll become rich and famous.*

*Never forget that you are deeply appreciated. "To his dog," Aldous Huxley said, "Every man is a Napoleon; hence the popularity of dogs." You should buy a kennel. Happy Birthday, anyway. Don't think of aging as growing older -- think of it as building seniority. Forty isn't really that old. Think of yourself as sort of an apprentice senior citizen. Be positive about life. Get up every morning; read the newspaper Obituary Column. If your name isn't there, be thankful, close the paper, and have a Great Day! Please know that today you are very special -- very special, indeed. Tomorrow, you're nothing! Just remember this: despite all your life's accomplishments, the size of your funeral will be determined by the weather. If it is cold and rainy, don't look for me.*

*-- Your Friend, Colleague, and Aging  
Boy Wonder, Himself*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Diffine". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.





## **Our Contributor's Advice on the Aging Process and Physical Challenges**

Whether or not 40 is the break-over point (no pun intended), it is a medical fact that for the first segment of one's life the body is growing and strengthening; and the second segment is rarely a plateau, but rather just the opposite. The body slowly begins to lose its vigor. Some manifestations of this are more obvious than others. People born with perfect near-vision begin to need reading glasses. Some men develop pattern baldness. Women undergo that process which culminates in the cessation of their monthly cycle. I think the best way to deal with these inevitable changes is to look to God's nature. Spring is so exciting with budding trees, blossoming flowers, new born or hatched animals and birds. But look closely at that leaf. As soon as it reaches full maturity, holes begin to appear where insects have left their mark. The supple light green color darkens as the sun has hardened the leaf's surface. But, OH! What a beautiful autumn awaits!

We live in a time when political correctness has forced the use of hyphenated phrases. We speak of someone being "challenged." Wheel chair ramps have proliferated at the government's mandate. Behind all the hype, I think most of us realize that one does not have to be confined to a wheel chair to be called upon to deal with physical challenges. I know a woman in her sixties who is an example of courage. She, like Franklin D. Roosevelt, was stricken with polio years ago. By all rights, she should have started being pushed about in a wheel chair twenty years ago; but, she had too much to do -- too many people to help, too

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many people with worse problems than her own. May we all accept our own physical challenges bolstered by such examples!

--Eric B. Hedden, Brunswick, Tennessee

This is a difficult one. I always prided myself on looking younger, feeling younger, and acting younger than I really was. In fact, I truly dreaded the thought of grey hair, sagging skin, wrinkles, and less energy. However, I'm surprising myself. Aging is natural, and along with aging comes wisdom (at least it should). It is possible to keep your body in good working order while aging, as well as to stimulate the mind more than ever before. I am now 45, and I love this age better than any age I've gone through before. (I'm still not sure I like this greying hair!) I would not want to turn back the clock. I feel more confident with myself than I have ever felt before. I hope my attitude will continue as the years click on.

*By the time a man finds greener pastures,  
he's too old to climb the fence.*

I'm not quite sure what is meant by this -- physical in the sense of changes in health? If so, I pray that I would be able to stay positive in my thinking. I've been so blessed in this area, that I would feel totally ashamed to complain. Aging is inevitable, and physical changes such as arthritis, poor eyesight, heart problems, less energy, less mobility go with the process. I pray that I



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will accept gracefully and positively the challenges -- do all I can to improve the situation, and accept what I cannot.

-- Clara Hinton, Shanksville, Pennsylvania

My father gave and lived the best example I've ever seen -- He was a heart patient, stroke victim -- lost use of his right hand (yes, he was right handed), back surgery, several other surgeries, and died of stomach cancer. He worked on cars, mowed grass (mine included), repaired practically everything, and walked everyday (even my son, Nathan at 16 had a hard time keeping pace). Doctors said to slow down, we fussed -- His comment -- "Did you want me to sit here and wait to die?" As long as there's life, fight. He worked harder and fought harder after his handicaps than most do full bodied. You can always do more than you think you can. Go for it! You've got nothing to lose and everything to gain.

There's nothing you can do about age -- you can change hair color, eye color, weight, etc., but you're still as old as you are, so accept it! Enjoy each phase you go through, learn from it, grow from it. Be able to look back occasionally with good memories, look forward to more memories, but always live today! That's all we really have, anyway. Appreciate the beauty around you, the many various people you touch each day, and think about "getting old" around 85 or so! Then decide to wait a few years after that to get old -- if the good Lord allows.

-- Vicki Ironside, Alexander, Arkansas

## Aging and Physical Challenges

Growing old gracefully is an attitude. If we try to avoid it, we are sure to lose. Someone has rightfully said, "God has as much plan for December as He does for June." Every age has special blessings that we can never have if we try to avoid that age. There are a few things more silly than a 65 year old trying to act like a teenager, or more sad than a teenager trying to act like a 65 year old. As the ad says, "You only go around once." That is true, and if we miss the age we are, we lose it forever. Yesterday is just as much beyond our reach as the day Adam and Eve were created.

Physical changes, like aging, are inevitable. We should try to stay as healthy as possible by following the rules of good health. When sickness comes, don't blame God. He didn't build a single program in our bodies that is designed to keep us well. Disease is in the world as a result of sin, not necessarily on the part of the sufferer. Whatever our physical condition may be, if we will take it with trust in God, He will sustain us in it and see us through it.

*-- Paul Easley, San Antonio, Texas*

*Youth looks ahead, old age looks back,  
and middle age looks tired..*

This I can speak on ... my husband had polio as a baby, and has always been handicapped, and I have had over 9 operations on my legs. We are quite a pair!! It may seem "cruel" to some, but Buddy and I deal with



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these physical handicaps with ... LAUGHTER! Last week, at the football game, the cheerleaders did the splits, and Buddy said, "I've done that before, and boy, did it hurt!" It brought the house down, and he never wants anyone to feel sorry for him...or me. Laughter can help make a serious situation a little brighter. It really can.

What's to deal? You are born, you live, you die. In the REAL WORLD a face lift does not take away years you've lived ... it only takes away a few of the lines from aging. I want to age gracefully, yes, but I want wisdom to season my aging process. I want to be able to help someone whose age I once was, and I want to make a difference in that person's life. I have been blessed to know such people, and I want to be like them ... unafraid of age and what lies ahead.

*-- Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hancock, Pasadena, Texas*

Accept it: "Grow old along with me; the best is yet to be -- the last of life for which the first was made." Quote from Browning. We can't escape it. Try to maintain good health. Take advantage of leisure time -- serving others, reading, recreation and exercise. Keep abreast of current events. Maintain family ties. Keep interest in grandchildren -- learning to accept differences in generational gap of interests. Example: music, dress, and movies. Maintain wholesome thoughts. See Phil. 4:8.

Select physical challenges that can be achieved within the physical limits of one's well being. Choose a physical challenge that will improve one's physical



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abilities. Choose one that you feel is of interest. (Hand ball would not be a challenge to me). Determine to maintain a selected exercise.

*-- Mr. and Mrs. Dean Carlton, Portland, Oregon*

Having a severe curvature of the spine, I have had to limit some of my activities. There were things as a child my friends could do, and I could not. This would have been harder, had it not been for my dad. He made me realize that I was special, and there were other things I could do well. My mother made me clothes that would look like the styles, but would cover my curvature. Believing in oneself and the help of loved ones helps greatly.

I work with children, so I believe that this keeps one young and energetic. I have had some grey hair since I was 25. This grey hair makes younger kids believe I'm older than I am, but adults say because of my energy I don't act my age. I also believe age is all in the mind. My mother is 83 and very active. She goes to the "old folks" home to visit the old folks. Someone said the good thing about growing old and forgetting is you can hide your own Easter eggs.

*-- Sarah Nell Pomerenk, Memphis, Tennessee*

It hurts when you finally realize that you won't play centerfield for the Yankee's. It really caught up with me when I found out I was past the age limit of FIFA refunds. I have called Soccer games since my oldest was eight years old; now I'm too old to call the World Cup (not that I ever would). But if you take care of yourself you won't feel as old. And remember each

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year older is another step closer to your Maker and where your goal should be.

I haven't had to deal with physical challenges thus far in my lifetime unless you count getting up on Monday morning. Like I said on marriage, I have been lucky. But I have seen Individuals overcome cancer, handicap, depression, and other physical problems. And I have seen other people give up. What I think was the difference was a dynamic will to persevere, and a close relationship with Christ.

-- *Bill Sowell, Brandon, Mississippi*

Growing old is not a pleasant thing --in fact I cannot think of a single good thing about it. But it's inevitable (or at least the best alternative), so I deal with it with realism and a sense of placing it in perspective. A Christian can certainly deal with aging so much better because he knows this natural living process on earth must pass and then eternity is going to be so much more wonderful -- aging should and does make our faith grow stronger.

I presume you mean illness-that is difficult because I've been very fortunate to not have been very ill. But, I believe one would do this with determination, strong will, and faith in the Lord that all will work out. Staying physically fit and also eating right certainly help meet these challenges as one grows older.

-- *Max Reiboldt, Alpharetta, Georgia*

"Take time to smell the roses." No one can make anyone else understand just how very short this life is,

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until they have lived it. Live each day to the fullest, as if it were your last (and it may be according to God's will). Take nothing for granted. Do your very best at whatever you do, and don't worry about tomorrow. Take care of yourself spiritually, physically, and mentally as if you could live forever and may die tomorrow.

Meet each physical challenge with willpower and determination. "There is power in positive thinking." Do not brood, nor indulge in self pity. Keep a positive attitude and remember: "When you smile the world smiles with you -- when you cry you cry alone." Be concerned with your physical health and have regular checkups with your doctor, but do not be a hypochondriac. Keep active and pray.

--Thetus McCoy, Little Rock, Arkansas

*A lot of people lose their health trying to become wealthy, and then lose their wealth trying to get back their health.*

As one becomes older, you become more responsible and accountable. Building your spiritual growth will make becoming older easier. The fact is God's view of beauty is entirely different from that of human standpoint. For example, Eliab, who was tall and handsome and one man thought was the representative to lead Israel; however, God chose Samuel.



## Aging and Physical Challenges

Physical changes are a part of aging. Each decade brings changes, and you should expect different body shapes and sizes. Planning early for security allows you to accept these changes. Along with physical changes are challenges to explore options in your life, which haven't previously been possible.

--Gloria Evins, Bartlett, Tennessee

I certainly don't worry about aging as many people do. You learn to adapt and reconcile your mind to those activities that your body allows you to enjoy. Most definitely, aging brings some concerns about health and financial stability, but it can also be a time to relax from the fast-paced world around us. I look forward to the time when my husband and I can enjoy long talks and laugh at past experiences. Accept the aches and pains, realizing that the body is probably not as strong as it was at the age of twenty. Keep a good attitude and press on!

--Peggy Usery, Grenada, Mississippi

Don't let it get you down. Do what you can to overcome it, but don't let it dominate your life. Find a way to honor God in it. Try to focus on something else, something worthwhile and absorbing. This is easy for me to say-I've never had to cope with a major physical challenge. I do run in our annual jog-a-fun. I just keep asking God to help me put one foot in front of the other. I love getting older. This is my Jubilee Year, and I'm grateful to God for it. Every year draws me closer to my destination. Every year, God grants me a little more wisdom and insight. Every year, he helps my light to shine a little stronger/brighter.

--Marquita Moss, Austin, Texas

## Aging and Physical Challenges

This has been very hard on me because I have always helped other people, and I love to do for others whatever they need that I can do, but now I have had to have help from other people, and I feel so worthless because of this. But I am so thankful to those who have helped me. I am better now than I have been in over three years, so I have a lot of living yet to do. I need to do all I want, but can only walk.

I will soon be 65. I can't believe that. That is getting harder to deal with every day. I read this in a cartoon: "Time really flies, so much to do, and so little time to do it." I am really trying to do the things I want to do and have never done, not knowing how many days I have left on this earth. I am slower and cannot do all I plan in a day. I am thankful for each day!

-- Jean Gregg, Little Rock, Arkansas

*The five B's of middle age are: baldness, bridgework, bifocals, bay windows, and bunions.*

The aging process wasn't like I expected. There are advantages and disadvantages in being young and advantages and disadvantages in being old. I think God for good health as I get older. When I was young, I set a goal of building a house after the age of 60. That was more than 20 years ago. I am presently accumulating supplies.



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Physical challenges have begun to take place. When I was younger, it seemed to be the pathway to death; but now I find that the changes taking place create a desire to overcome and excel. So instead of becoming less we become greater as we age and deal with adversity.

*-- Bob Little, Abingdon, Maryland*

I respect my body and know its limitations, but their aren't many things that I can't do that are done by younger people -- I just can't do it as much, as fast, as good, as long, etc. It's still fun to accomplish difficult tasks and to be challenged.

First, I accept aging and I am happy to get to participate. Next, I am not fighting it, but rather making the most of it. That is, to have the grandchildren that I so desire. I must be "old enough" for my children to be of child bearing years. A simple fact of nature.

*-- Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas*

Having raised a deaf daughter, I've been down and I've been on cloud nine. I believe God chose me to have a deaf daughter to teach me that there are those who really struggle in life to make it through. I have learned that physical disabilities can be a blessing in many ways.

I'm almost seventy years old and the aging process has never bothered me. Every age is beautiful. The only aging I have is I'm slower and my eyes and ears aren't like they use to be, but I wouldn't trade this age for any other age. I'm happy.

*-- Sallie Dawson, Sulphur Springs, Arkansas*



## Aging and Physical Challenges

The older I get, the younger it seems. Be thankful for every year and ALL that year may bring. Enjoy the elderly and learn from their wisdom. It makes our life easier if we can only listen and hear. Be a survivor. Accept aging as a normal process. Focus on the future ahead and hold on to the good memories of the past. As a Christian, the best is always ahead. Accept physical challenges; understand your limitations. Find other pursuits that enable you to feel good about yourself.

*-- Alton Howard, West Monroe, Louisiana*

Carpe Diem! Seize the day! It flies so very quickly. Each stage allows for different opportunities to be of service. Do your best with what you have! Physical challenges merely uncover our need for God. People who are physically challenged are God's special people because He is using them to teach us to overcome. Physical challenges do not make anyone better or worse than ourselves.

*-- Debbie Poss, Judsonia, Arkansas*

I would try to remember what is important to me and for me to God. Also invest energy in what lasts. Hair color or abundance, and your figure or complexion may change, but interests outside yourself will keep you from dwelling on them. Also, talk about your fears. More people than you think can relate and understand, which is comforting.

*-- Kim Swieciki, Portland, Maine*

I have now enjoyed twelve years of retirement. Most of that time has been spent in serving others in

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voluntary service which includes Mennonite Disaster Service in nine states, selected a board of directors to which I belong on Mennonite (MCC) clothing centers, camps, etc. Presently my wife and I are taking water aerobics and doing some traveling (short trips), and taking care of grandchildren. Think hard and rest a plenty!

*-- Ellis Gingrich, Roanoke, Illinois*

*Medical doctors measure physical health by how the tongue looks. The Great Physician measures spiritual health by how the tongue acts.*

Aging is a natural progression of things. It happens. Again, God is in control. I used to wonder why people had to suffer with pains, aches, sickness, etc. as they grew older, and it occurred to me one day that perhaps God allows this so we will eventually want to leave this life for our reward. If we felt young and good all the time, we would not want to leave.

*-- Kathy Lacefield, Jacksonville, Arkansas*

I am a firm believer that you can do anything you want to do (or be anything you want to be). As we get older, our physical ability may slowly decrease, and frustration may set in, but accept early on in life that this is going to happen, and plan some strategies, start early taking care of yourself before you start "falling apart."

*-- Tina Bigelow, Marshall, Michigan*



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I've not had to deal with them personally, but over the years I've always been impressed by people who've overcome challenges. Last month I golfed with a Sr. Vice President of a bank, whose one arm had polio. He was virtually a one-armed golfer. His attitude was great. He was an elder in the church and a successful businessman, too.

*-- Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*

Some physical challenges you just can't handle ... Know your limits and don't cross the line. While young, eat properly and exercise so it will become a regular part of your life. The older you become, the more difficult it becomes to change habits and create new ones, whether eating habits, exercise, or whatever it may be. Keep up a "youthful" spirit, attitude, and (at least -- if all else fails) a youthful appearance. An 86 year old man told me recently ... "your health is the greatest battle; if you have good health, the rest will take care of itself."

*-- Randy Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*

Learn about aging before you get aged. Look forward to certain aspects of aging with full knowledge and acceptance. Learn how to grow old with style -- put other people's needs first. Don't decide you can't "serve" because of your age. Be as active "serving" as you possibly can. (Cards, calls, prayers, smiles)

*-- Kathy Seeber, Newburg, Oregon*

Just admit that you can't do what you used to be able to and accept it. It's painful, but it's a fact of life I had to face and so will everyone else eventually. Try to



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enter your later years with dignity, because when everything begins to sag and droop, at least your dignity will still be firm. Leave your stubbornness on the doorstep. Trying to maintain some sort of independence for independence sake only makes it harder on you and your family in the long run.

*-- Opal Burton, Paragould, Arkansas*

Realize it is natural and unavoidable. Accept changes in the body that cannot be helped. Do what you can to stay healthy. Work on mental health all your life. Always be planning for some fun or recreation. Cultivate and maintain friendship -- people to share life with. Realize the best (heaven) is yet to be.

Protect mental health. Make friends with God early in life. Keep your body healthy. Do whatever you can physically within your own range of appropriateness. Don't press beyond your own reasonable limits. Learn to exercise mind over matter for at least short periods of time.

*-- Gail Tomlinson, Senatobia, Mississippi*

Be creative. If there is one obstacle in front of you, find a way around it. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Join a support group of people with the same difficulty. Find out how other people have successfully overcome problems. Don't focus on what you can't do. Capitalize on what you can do. Don't engage in self-pity.

*-- Kim Swiecicki, Portland, Maine*

Accept it! Take each stage as a challenge and new adventure. Learn new skills and grow more loving for

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God. Be ready to share your experiences and new understandings with the younger generation. You are needed!

Adapt to the changes the body goes through. Don't give into being "old." Get out with people, learn new skills, go to events that stimulate your mind, and keep your body in shape. Walk and enjoy God's creation.

*-- Carol Wilterdink, Aurora, Colorado*

Take it one day at a time. I'm 55, and I like it. I can't do everything I could do at 20, but I don't have to do all that (the children are all grown). I like doing what I can, and I plan to grow old gracefully and enjoy every minute I can. I do the best I can with what I have.

*-- Reba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas*

You're only as old as you act. I am dealing with it. By eating healthy and exercising, the body still allows me to enjoy softball on the same team as my sons. Having a grandson and doing "stuff" with him also helps to deal with aging.

*-- Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*

When you're only taking a day at a time you don't realize the aging process is happening. Maturity gives you such a sense of calmness you don't mind becoming old. Gravity rules, everything falls, but who cares! It's happening to everyone.

*-- Janie Barber, Batesville, Arkansas*



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I'm not sure I am dealing with the aging process! Mental attitude is great, each age has its own blessings. I find myself surprised however that my body can't always keep up with what my mind is planning to do. To deal with physical challenges, we must be like the little engine repeating to ourselves, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can."

-- Susan French, Sarasota, Florida

Be active. Stay fit. Walk a lot. Try not to repeat yourself. Take a special interest in ALL ages. Look to God, Christ, the word, the high calling, and THE PRIZE. Run the good race and fight the good fight. Be persistent. Stay fit. Set goals. Set a course of action and just stay on it. Never, never, never give up!

--Tom Gaskins, Palmdale, Florida

*The awkward age is when you are too old for the Peace Corps and too young for Social Security.*

Since there is but one alternative, we each deal with it in our own unique fashion. I am thankful that God has let me live to enjoy my grandchildren, and I pray that I am growing old graciously. I am, and it's frustrating! My motto -- "Take one day at a time"

-- Cecile Key, Searcy, Arkansas



## Aging and Physical Challenges

I don't think much about aging. Stay in condition. Keep up on the things that are important to young people so you can converse with them. Maintain a good sense of humor and laugh a lot. Do what you can to stay in condition and eat healthy. Try not to complain and accept that our bodies will start to deteriorate.

*-- Lois Jenkins, Prior Lake, Minnesota*

This is a process we must all go through, and in order to deal with it we must understand this, and except it. Then just deal with it one day at a time, and thank the Lord for allowing the process to occur. We can deal with physical challenges by understanding our limitations.

*-- J. D. Williams, Newport, Arkansas*

We don't have to get "old" just because we get older. Exercise and proper diet slow the aging process. Make exercise a life long project. Your quality of life and perhaps your quantity of life will improve. Meet physical challenges head on.

*-- Bill Cox, Rowlett, Texas*

See with the mind and avoid the mirrors! Dealing with physical challenges requires patience, a stout heart, and a positive mind set. If you think you can, you probably can. If all else fails, yell for help! Age is opportunity no less than youth itself, though in another dress. I agree with Longfellow.

*-- Margaret & Wesley Garrett, Tucker, Georgia*

Train in advance so you'll be prepared for the challenge. Pray to God for strength and remember, "I can do all things through Jesus Christ who makes me

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strong." Old age is sad but the alternative is not at all appealing. Stay young at heart and adjust your attitude while you're still flexible. "Young is not an age but an attitude."

- -- *Janice Martin, Hope, Arkansas*

Physical challenges are just like the aging processes. It is also a state of mind. It's like climbing a mountain; it starts with only a step and ends with only a step. You can do anything you set your mind to. The aging process is mostly a state of mind. You are as young as you feel no matter what your age is.

-- *Bob Wright, Judsonia, Arkansas*

I learned early in life that I was not athletic. It is best to know your own physical limitations and accept them. The world is full of work that does not need great physical strength.

-- *Mildred Horton, Midvale, Idaho*

Never stop learning. Never stop loving. Never stop dreaming. Always look for new challenges. Remember that if you're a Christian, the best of your life is always in front of you.

-- *Bill Watkins, Dolthan, Alabama*

Handle it! Do what you can for as long as you can, and do not dwell on growing old. We are only as old as we allow ourselves to become. Eat right, exercise, and be positive.

-- *Bill Renton, Stuarts Draft, Virginia*

## Aging and Physical Challenges

Look at each new decade as a new phase in life. Enjoy each one. You are only as old as you think you are. Do the most you can with your abilities. Even push yourself at times.

-- *Connie Warren, Silva, Missouri*

I choose to keep my mind active and to maintain a good appearance. I try to accept the inevitable signs of aging, as it is unavoidable.

-- *Mrs. William Shadel, Savannah, Tennessee*

Stay active mentally and physically. Get off the couch. Dr. Benson had a philosophy that I try to live by: "This life is for working -- The next life is for resting."

-- *J. Bill Harris, Searcy, Arkansas*

*It is possible that a man could live twice as long if he didn't spend the first half of his life acquiring habits that shorten the other half.*

It's terrible to get old! "Grow old gracefully" is good advice. No smiling face looks bad, so keep smiling. Don't dwell on your own problems. Accept what you have to work with and make the most of it.

-- *Roy & Cassandra Dickson, Searcy, Arkansas*

You will trade wisdom for youth hopefully. Both have their advantages and disadvantages. Cherish every moment of life. You never know when it may



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end. Change is inevitable. Learn to adjust. There is little you can do about it.

*-- Larry Moree, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

Live one day at a time and enjoy it for its beauty. Think young. Don't fret or worry. Thank God for every day He grants us, even if it is poor health or grey hair? Keep a good mental attitude!

*-- Eloise Muncy, Searcy, Arkansas*

Take one day at a time. My mind does not have to age past self worth and is smart enough to deal with the harder problems. Physical changes are going to occur. Be kind to yourself, but no self-pity.

*-- Ed Birch, Painesville, Ohio*

Live today, not in the past or the future. Recognize the brevity of life. Enjoy the special things that come with age, like grandchildren. We all have physical challenges. Thank God that they are no worse than they are. God can help us cope with them.

*-- Danny Skipper, Tyler, Texas*

Rely on God to guide you through any challenge you face. Advice from family doesn't hurt either. It's really true what they say, "You're only as young as you feel." Don't grow old before you have to.

*-- Rori Montague, Arvada, Colorado*

If you have your eye on the world to come, physical challenges are less interruptive on our lives. Say, "thank you, Lord" each birthday! Would you prefer the alternative (to dealing with old age)?

*-- Eugene Smith, Duncanville, Texas*

## Aging and Physical Challenges

I realize that I am not a teenager anymore (thank goodness), and try not to overextend my abilities. Exercise, but also realize it is going to happen no matter what.

-- Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas

*It's not how old you are but how you are old.*

-- Marie Dressler

You must accept it, and realize that life does get better. Each year of my life has gotten better. I have lowered my expectations. I don't try to compete physically with 20-year-olds.

-- Nicky Boyd, Searcy, Arkansas

If you can't prevent or change it, learn to live with it. Don't worry about things that you have no control over. Try to maintain a lively spirit.

-- Lee Ashby, Granite City, Illinois

I have come to know that I can't fix and judge everything. God made man -- I didn't. If I can't change it then I must accept it.

-- Carley Long, Gresham, Oregon

Being a female, I don't have to worry about proving myself -- I'm more concerned with my mental challenges.

-- Carol Levi, Dermott, Arkansas

## **Aging and Physical Challenges**

Realize that physical changes and disabilities will come. Be prepared for them.

*-- Don Shackleford, Searcy, Arkansas*

Age is a number. The old cliché (old as you feel) says it correctly. There are things yet to enjoy.

*-- Robert Lewis Sr., Nashville, Tennessee*

Listen carefully to your body, especially when it tells you to slow down, but never quit. Face physical challenges head on. Analyze them and then, "have at it."

*-- Jack Alexander, Mulberry,*

Live today in a way which results in fond memories, not bitter regrets.

*-- Jackson Coker, Atlanta, Georgia*

Accept it as a natural process but live it (life) your way. Avoid stereotyping. Part of God's plan is to do your best and let God reveal himself.

*-- Ron Keeth, Westminster, Colorado*

Accept it as a part of life and keep your sense of humor. Romans 8:28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

*-- Sheryl Rainwater, Jay, Oklahoma*

Life is an adventure with new horizons at every turn. Where there is hope there is adventure.

*-- Dwight A. Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*



## Aging and Physical Challenges

I use humor. We look like our parents now. And so will you 20-25 years from now!

-- Kathy Seeber, Newberg, Oregon

If outside your expertise or interest, hire it done. (Save time and hassle; reward an expert in that field!)

-- Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas

I've been very lucky to not have any physical challenges worth developing a perspective about.

-- John Sparks, Kirkwood, Missouri

*Wish not so much to live long as to live well.*

-- Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanac, 1838

Physical challenges are a test to see what you are made of. Live one day at a time.

-- Danny and Barbara Hayes, Searcy, Arkansas

Hard work is your greatest ally.

-- William Waugh, Dallas, Texas

I do my best and accept the rest.

-- Holly Cooper, Grand Junction, Colorado

I do my best so that the Lord and I are pleased.

-- Mrs. John Coon, Searcy, Arkansas

## **Aging and Physical Challenges**

**Tackle the hardest head on -- immediately.**

*-- Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas*

**Don't bite off more than you can chew.**

*-- Ed Bethune, Searcy, Arkansas*

**Don't sweat what you cannot change.**

*-- Dwight Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*

**Be relaxed and calm. Don't count age as a factor.**

*-- James O. Pennington, Ola, Arkansas*

**Look at it, analyze it, then have it done.**

*-- Gus Reynolds, Edgemont, Arkansas*

**Each day is God given. Do what you can.**

*-- Bert Jones, Hawkins, Texas*

**Stay in shape. Stay active.**

*-- Don Helms, Russellville, Arkansas*

**Never, never, never give up! Find a good spouse.**

*-- Joe Stork, Doraville, Georgia*

**Try!**

*-- Jeremy Thompson, Clarkston, Michigan*

**I enjoy a challenge, and I try to find the best way to meet it.**

*-- Paul Knopp, Staunton, Virginia*

**Start young promoting good health habits.**

*-- Ken Dunn, Monticello, Arkansas*

## **Aging and Physical Challenges**

Trust God more each day. Try to age gracefully.

-- *Bill Cox, Rowlett, Texas*

*You are getting along in years when it takes you twice as long to rest and only half as long to get tired.*

-- *Philnews*

Don't fight it. Adapt.

-- *Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas*

Think young.

-- *Ed Bethune, Searcy, Arkansas*



## Aging and Physical Challenges

### SUMMARY

I have a dear aunt who at this writing is 84. I have treasured her kinship so very much over the decades. Aunt Marian, my dad's younger sister, has been such a wonderful leavening influence in my life. I credit her as being the prime mover in helping me to mature as a young adult, and thereby grow back closer to my dad and mom for whom I once again recaptured that childlike love and devotion.

Aunt Marian is in the process of distributing old photos to us adult nieces and nephews. Recently, I asked her, *"Who is the redheaded little girl in the 1920's scene?"* *"That's Georgette, your second cousin,"* she replied. So, on the span of a few months in 1994 and 1995, I went from not knowing I had a cousin to visiting with Georgette Tenley and her husband, Frank, at their retirement village complex in Seminole, Florida. Georgette definitely has the Diffine family humor in her genes. When told of my book project, this became her contribution:

### SENIOR CITIZEN'S LAMENT

*Thought I'd let my doctor check me  
'cause I didn't feel just right.  
All those aches and pains annoyed me,  
and I couldn't sleep at night.*

## **Aging and Physical Challenges**

*He could find no real disorder, but he  
wouldn't let it rest.*

*What with Medicare and Blue Cross, it  
wouldn't hurt to do some tests.*

*To the hospital he sent me, though I  
didn't feel that bad,  
He arranged for them to give me every  
test that could be had.*

*I was fluoroscoped and cystoscoped --  
my aging frame displayed.  
Stripped upon an ice-cold table while  
my gizzards were X-rayed.*

*I was checked for worms & parasites,  
for fungus and the crud,  
While they pierced me with long  
needles, taking samples of my  
blood.*

*Doctors came to check me over, probed  
and pressed and poked around,  
And to make sure I was living, they  
wired me for sound.*

*They have finally concluded; (their  
results have filled a page) ,  
what I have will some day kill me -- my  
affliction is Old Age!*

## Aging and Physical Challenges

The Scriptures tell us that it is not given to man to know his days. However, Dr. C. Ward Crampton once said that you are as old as the average of these 7 ages: (1) number of years lived (chronological); (2) condition of tissues (anatomical); (3) functional ability of the organs (physiological); (4) mental capacity (psychological); (5) condition of the body as a result of diseases (pathological); (6) normal life expectancy (statistical); and (7) average age of ancestors (hereditary).

### REFLECTIONS

*I am an elderly woman, and I live alone, but I am not lonely because I have some men friends to keep me company.*

*I wake up with "Charlie Horse," eat my meals with "Will Power," spend my days with "Arthur Itis," and go to bed with "Ben Gay." "Mr. Clean" stays around constantly to assist me with house cleaning.*

*Things are still not the same: Everything is farther away now than it used to be. It is twice as far to the corner, and they have added a hill, I notice. I've given up on running to the bus, it is faster than it used to be.*



## **Aging and Physical Challenges**

*It seems, too, that they are making stairs steeper than in the old days; and have you noticed the smaller print they use in newspapers now?*

*There is no sense in asking anyone to read it aloud; everyone speaks in such low voices that I can't hardly hear them.*

*Even people are changing: they are so much younger than they used to be when I was their age. On the other hand, people of my own age are so much older than I am.*

*I ran into an old classmate the other day, and she had aged so much she didn't even recognize me!*

*I got to thinking about the poor thing while I was combing my hair this morning, and in doing so, I glanced at my reflection and, confound it, they don't even make mirrors like they used to!!*

Here is the partial text of a letter of encouragement I wrote recently to a close family friend:

*Word has reached us of your recent medical test results. We love you with*

## **Aging and Physical Challenges**

*the love of the Lord, and we think of you often. May I respectfully encourage you and mention some specific ways to maintain that "hope which springs eternal"? These suggestions come from literature by Virgil Fry, a Chaplin representing the churches of Christ at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas:*

*Live one day at a time -- each day on earth is a gift of God ... Claim the promise of God's presence ... Seek the support of others -- we are created as social beings ... Adjust to limitations without becoming passive ... Be creative, letting your dreams come alive ... Refresh yourself with quiet time and meditation ... Read meaningful scriptures, books, and poetry ... Recognize the value of the here and now ... Cultivate the treasure of genuine relationships -- share yourself with trusted persons ... Use imagery to view medical treatment as a friend ... Find the renewal that humor brings to the inner self ... Begin a journal just for you -- write your life's story ... Pray openly and honestly ... Ask questions of medical*

## **Aging and Physical Challenges**

*professionals; it is the best way to maintain control of decisions that affect you ... Keep a perspective on unsolicited advice and insensitive statements by others ... allow yourself to delve into the unanswerable questions -- God can bring growth to such encounters.*

To the spouse I wrote this:

*The experience of further treatment is probably a time when you and she are continuing to learn additional ways to function and to support each other. Sometimes families find strengths they never fully knew they had until encountering such a medical circumstance. A spouse's role may not always be an easy one, and yet, as I'm sure you know, the supportive relationship you choose to offer is a vital part of survival.*

*Your choosing to redeem each day to the fullest benefits both her and you. Your caring spirit can provide a sense of God's caring presence. May I be so bold as to also recommend Chaplin Fry's suggestions that you can consider to keep a sense of balance and renewal:*



## **Aging and Physical Challenges**

*Remember that taking care of yourself is a necessary part of taking care of her ... Maintain and nurture your relationships with significant colleagues and groups -- Just like her, you also need those with whom you can unwind ... Resist the temptation to smother her with attention. Encouraging her to do what she can promotes self-esteem and healing ... Seek needed information and clarification regarding medical options -- You have a right and obligation to be as educated as possible ... Pray with open honesty. God is not surprised by your feelings, needs, and requests ... Find the support you need -- A minister, social worker, counselor, or support group can provide you with a listening ear and spiritual resources.*

*In the meantime, please remember that your Creator's compassion is boundless, as it is recorded in Psalms 56:8 that God actually "... collects our tears and saves them in a bottle." Take care and have courage, dear friends. "The Lord bless you and keep you ... The Lord make His face to shine upon*

## **Aging and Physical Challenges**

*you and give you peace ...” God bless.  
For you we are praying,*

Fact is, dear reader, we will all die someday because our earthly parents were mortal humans. But praise God, we can all live forevermore because our Father in Heaven is Eternal.

Finally, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., in a speech on his 91st birthday, March 8, 1932, had a wonderful grasp of transition:

*The riders in a race do not stop short when they reach the goal. There is a little finishing canter before coming to a standstill. There is time to hear the kind voices of friends and to say to one’s self, ‘The work is done’.*

### III. HARVEST YEARS' RETIREMENT STRATEGIES AND AVOCATIONS

It has been reported in *M-K-T-Employees' Magazine* that as a man grows older he values the voice of experience more, the voice of prophecy less. He finds more of life's wealth in the common pleasures -- home, health, children. He thinks more about the worth of men, and less about their wealth. He begins to appreciate his own father more. He boasts less and apologizes more. He hurries less and usually makes more progress. He esteems the friendship of God more and more.

So here I am: stuck between the "*Young and the Restless*" and the "*Old and the Stressless*." Here are the ages of life: "*You are... You could be ... You can be... You will be ... You could have been... You were.*" It has been said that the average elephant lives longer than the average human being, which proves that there may be something to working for peanuts; but some think that it proves the secret of long life is a thick skin.

Listen to the soothing words of "*GROWING OLD*" by Rollin J. Wells:

*A little more tired at close of day;  
A little less anxious to have our way;  
A little less ready to scold and blame;  
A little more care of a brother's name;  
And so we are nearing the journey's end;  
Where time and eternity meet and blend.*



## Retirement Strategies and Avocations

Second cousin Georgette Tenley also provides this transitional ditty:

*Today, Dear Lord, I'm 80 and  
There's much I haven't done.  
I hope, Dear Lord, you'll let me live  
until I'm 81.*

*But then, if I haven't finished  
all I want to do --  
Would you let me stay awhile --  
until I'm 82?*

*So many places I want to go,  
so very much to see --  
Do you think that you could manage  
to make it 83?*

*The world is changing very fast  
There is so much in store.  
I'd like it very much to live  
until I'm 84.*

*And if by then I'm still alive  
I'd like to stay 'till 85.*

*More planes will be up in the air,  
so I'd really like to stick --  
And see what happens to the world  
when I'm 86.*

*I know, Dear Lord, it's much to ask  
(and it must be nice in heaven)  
But I would really like to stay  
until I'm 87.*

*I know by then I won't be fast  
and sometimes will be late;*

## Retirement Strategies and Avocations

*But it would be so pleasant --  
to be around at 88.  
I will have seen so many things,  
and had a wonderful time.  
So, I'm sure that I'll be willing  
to leave at 89 ... maybe!*

The following is a roast I wrote for Berniece Diehl as she retired in June 1996 from managing the Fairfield Bay Chamber of Commerce in Arkansas:

***BERNIECE -- ASPIRE, INSPIRE,  
DON'T JUST RETIRE!***

by Don Diffine, Searcy, Arkansas  
June 28, 1996

*Retirement, I'd say  
Without hesitation  
Is day after day  
Just one long vacation  
Before, you might win  
A brief rest from strife,  
But now you are in  
For the "rest" of your life.*

*Throughout her many years with the Fairfield Bay Chamber, there were those who said that Berniece didn't always know if she was "coming or going." Tonight, she has definitely resolved that issue.*

## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

*We're talking about a lady who, in retirement, will have to switch from a Type A to a Type B personality. Yes, Bernice now has to learn to exhibit a driving, insistent, irresistible compulsion to do nothing. She really is a hard worker -- shoulder to the wheel, nose to the grindstone and ear to the ground ... worst posture you ever saw!*

*I have asked Berniece about her management philosophy. Here it is -- She said, "Half the people work and the other half goofs off; or maybe it's the other way around." At times I have known Berniece to be very indecisive. When I asked her if she had trouble making up her mind, she answered, "Yes and no."*

*Berniece, retirement is when you don't "lead" -- you don't "follow" -- you just realize that "getting out of the way" isn't all that bad. Not too many people know this, but Berniece has been moonlighting with a rock band called the "No Temptations." As the leading female vocalist, she has popularized some all-time office hits such as:*

*"You'll Never Work Alone" ...*

*"Rock Around the Time Clock" ...*

*"It's My Project And I'll Cry If I*



## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

*Want To" ... "I'll Walk the Deadline" ... "Desk Over Troubled Waters" ... "Coffee Break Hotel" ... "The Way We Work" ... "It Ain't Heavy -- It's My Paycheck."*

*Yes, retirement is when you graduate into a brand new world -- Magna Cum Loiter. The first few months of retirement are always a difficult period. It's when Berniece asks Stan, "What in the world did you do all day while I was at work?" And Stan will answer, "Better."*

*This is a great time. You suddenly realize that all those wonderful things you didn't have as a child, didn't have as a teenager, didn't have as an adult, and didn't have after the kids were grown -- you now won't have them in retirement as well.*

*Berniece may be retiring at exactly the right time because, with the population growing older, experts predict problems in the years ahead. The Social Security Fund could be in trouble again; Florida will be full; and perhaps the most serious problem of them all -- a worldwide shortage of prune juice.*

## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

*Of course, the best exercise for retirement is the sit-up and deep breath exercise. When the alarm goes off in the morning, you sit up, take a deep breath -- then you go (raspberry) and return to sleep again.*

*You are in transition, because you know that old people know more about being young than young people do about being old. Youth is when you were "lean and mean" and wanted the world on a string. Retirement is when you are "wheezy and queasy" and settle for the TV on a cable.*

*Yes, there are some positives to retirement. You celebrate going from being the "young and restless" to being the "old and stressless." Berniece, retirement from the chamber means you don't have anything to do, you don't start that until noon, and by bedtime you have it only half done.*

*It isn't easy being retired. People really do think you have nothing to do. Next winter when it snows, a kid will come to your door and ask if you want to shovel his walk.*

*Stan told me this. The bank called Stan and scolded him for all those*

## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

*insufficient funds and overdrafts. And Stan said, "It's not my fault, it's Berniece's fault." And the banker said, "Well, why don't you stop her?" And Stan said, "Because I'd rather argue with you than with her!"*

*Think of it this way: Most of your life you've been in the army of taxpayers. Now, in retirement, you are joining the reserves. To give you an idea how long Berniece has been around -- At the time she started her working career, the Dead Sea was only sick.*

*Yes, Berniece and Stan have been building seniority down through the years. I got them aside and asked them, "What's the secret to long life?" It was like talking to the comedy team of Bob and Ray.*

*Stan said, "Well, you eat like a horse" and then Berniece said, "Yea, and you think like a fox" and then Stan said, "You work like a dog," and then Bernice said, "You play like a rabbit," and then both of them in unison capped it off with, "Yeah, and then don't forget to see your veterinarian twice a year."*

*Berniece, I know you looked forward to retiring, but did you have to write*



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*"The End" on your resume? Don't think of yourself as retired. Think of yourself as a recovering workaholic. Seriously, you're doing it right. Retire while you can still enjoy it. Too many people live in the fast lane and miss the turnoffs to the scenic route.*

*And isn't it great to sit at your desk that one last time, consider all the problems yet to be solved, all the hassles in search of resolution, the rocky road yet to be trod and say, "Th-th-th-th-That's All Folks."*

*Finally, this is from Proverbs 31 and it personifies Berniece:*

*Who can find a worthy woman? For her price is far above rubies ... The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her ... she will do him good all the days of her life ... Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land ... Her children rise up and call her blessed ... Give her the fruits of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates ...*

*And all the people said, "AMEN!"*

## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

### ***Our Contributors' Advice on Harvest Year's Retirement Strategies and Avocations***

I have an admiration for those people with service oriented avocations. Ignore the attacks waged by socialists. The health care field is a very worthy endeavor. This applies to laboratory technicians, nurses, and physical therapists, as well as to physicians. Was not Jesus himself referred to as "the great physician?" Other service vocations which are certainly worthwhile are teachers, firemen, police, automobile mechanics, transportation workers -- the list goes on and on. But notice I did not mention the plethora of paid church ministers. I agree with the apostle Paul that "they which preach the *gospel* should live the *gospel*." (emphasis mine). Also, I realize the need for "Barnabas-type" ministries on a full time basis. But, young reader, I ask you to avoid the pitfall of reasoning, "If I can't be a pulpit minister, or a youth minister, or an involvement minister, or a minister of music, then maybe I can become the family-life-center minister."

One mistake I have made in preparation (or lack thereof) for retirement has been to confuse saving with materialism. I was so afraid of being like the fool of Luke 12 that I went to the other extreme, and did not follow the practical advice taught in the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25). While Jesus' message in the latter is toward our spiritual preparation for his second coming, I can see myself in the actual situation of not bringing sufficient oil to last the evening. People are living longer, and the cost of health care is increasing

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rapidly. Having a modest, but appropriate retirement strategy in place is just good stewardship.

*-- Eric B. Hedden, Brunswick, Tennessee*

My plans are to have enough money set aside that I do not have to struggle to eat, as we did in our earlier years. Putting money aside has been, up to this point, very difficult with such a large family. A move to a smaller home is a dream -- one that will be easy to care for -- all on one floor -- We would like one of the children to have the old homestead, so that there is stability kept in "coming home" for the family. Travel is a dream, but not a necessity. I would love to write, visit sick and shut-ins, prepare meals for others, and just have a flexible schedule in retirement that says -- if you want a "do nothing day," then do nothing. These things, to me, would be great pleasures. I do pray that I will, above all things, be able to enjoy "retirement" with my husband, and that our health will remain good. As far as big financial strategies -- I have none at this point. I have never needed a lot of "things" to make me happy. Family and friends would be most sufficient!

This is a good question! There are so many worthwhile avocations to choose from. I would suggest those that deal with heart and soul of people. Work in a hospice program. Visit the lonely, forgotten ones in nursing homes. Spend time in hospital works, visiting those who never get visits. Volunteer to help the handicapped. Write cards of encouragement on a weekly basis to those souls who have no one to encourage them. Make toys, dolls, or other gifts, and personally deliver them to those in need. Work in a



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soup kitchen. Help hold and cuddle AIDS children. Teach Bible classes to children by way of puppet shows or whatever means is natural to you. The main thing I'd suggest is choosing an avocation that will help uplift, giving meaning to, and help others. Service to others is good for the soul!

-- Clara Hinton, Shanksville, Pennsylvania

*Youth is when you want the world on a string. Retirement is when you settle for the TV on a cable.*

OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR AVOCATION! They are a blast, and not nearly so foreign as one might be led to believe. Parents who don't get involved with their kids will lose the best time of their lives. Buddy and I have never had so much fun as knowing our kids and knowing their friends. We enjoy traveling together, but we also enjoy doing things apart. I have two wonderful friends at school, and the three of us do a lot of things together. Buddy is the same way, so we don't live our lives around our children everyday, but rather we have a good variety of friends and hobbies. However, our number one avocation is OUR KIDS -- they're the most entertaining and fun!

-- Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hancock, Pasadena, Texas

Be a Christian -- you just work in order to live. Work to live, but live to serve God. All avocations are good if they are honest work -- digging ditches, receptionists

## Retirement Strategies and Avocations

(that's me), teachers (which we all are, whether we're paid or not), accountants, etc. -- so long as it's honest, decent work that you apply yourself to, and you give an "honest day's work for an honest pay." All avocations are necessary for a company to exist and prosper, from janitor to president to owner. Be proud of your vocation, and do a job anyone can be proud of. At present, my place of employment has a profit sharing/retirement plan, plus I have some taken out weekly for a 401K plan, plus some for savings. I also have a small IRA and the faith that God will take care of the rest. Materially, it's not much -- maybe I'll live with my kid. Ha. He'd love that!

-- Vicki Ironside, Alexander, Arkansas

Financially speaking, save money in a plan you cannot cash in until years down the road. Believe it or not, however, many problems that arise in retirement are not financial but emotional. People have not prepared themselves for that time of life that supposedly everyone looks forward to. Find hobbies you enjoy before you retire; don't neglect friends over the years and then expect them to be there when you're finally "ready." Don't wrap yourself up so tightly in your children that when they leave you and your husband look at each other like you're strangers. Family-oriented activities, with moms and dads both in the work force these days, the family as a unit doesn't spend enough time together. Do things everyone can be included in -- church outings, putting together family albums or scrapbooks, family garden, etc.

-- Tina Bigelow, Marshall, Minnesota



## Retirement Strategies and Avocations

Begin early to plan for retirement, because if you live long enough, you will surely retire. In planning retirement, ask yourself practical questions: In what kind of house would I like to live? How much income will I need to sustain me? In what kind of activities would I like to engage? Don't plan to loaf! That will bore you to death. Don't plan to move too far away from family and friends. Good friends are hard to come by in old age. Don't become too remote from medical services; they usually are more needed in old age. There is nothing magic about retiring. It requires saving, diversification of investments, and persistence. All of this requires "that wisdom which is from above, which comes only through prayer."

The most rewarding avocations are those in which we invest our time and resources in the welfare of others. Recreation for self is important, but to center one's avocation around it will surely lead to disappointment. God has created us in such a way that self-satisfaction comes through selflessness. That is a great secret paradox we need to learn early in life and follow it all the way through.

*-- Paul Easley, San Antonio, Texas*

Plan retirement when you are first married. Put money and energy aside each month. Discuss with spouse and children health issues, and options for possible decisions that need to be decided regarding failing health before or after retirement. Discuss with spouse and kids "advanced directives," so issues regarding death and dying don't come up with guilt. Be supportive emotionally as a family with aging parents.



## Retirement Strategies and Avocations

Lovingly accept what happens with or without good health at any age. Emphasize God's plan in retirement. We don't retire from God. What joy we have to look forward to when we will have more time to bring joy to others.

-- Kathy Seeber, Newberg, Oregon

*Retirement is that special time of life when you get too much gray and not enough green.*

Teaching is one of the most worthwhile (and important) avocations in the world. I have been closely associated with teaching for 30 years, and society can be made or broken by our teachers. It's just a shame that teachers normally work for low wages. It can be hard to support a family on a teacher salary. Being an engineer, I am quite high on engineering. It is very rewarding both monetarily and satisfactorily. I can highly recommend an engineering career. Invest as much as possible in the company's 401K savings plan as early as possible. Sixteen percent pre-tax money builds up rather quickly. It is possible to accumulate \$1,000,000 in a 30 year career. If you work for yourself, IRAs can do the same. Take advantage of company stock options. Don't plan on Social Security taking care of you.

-- Bill Sowell, Brandon, Mississippi

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Find a hobby that you enjoy. Donate time to hospitals and nursing homes who have patients who need an understanding and helpful visitor, and orphanages where children need special attention, collecting good but used articles and distributing them to needy people, creating a small home business, or maybe tutoring poor kids who need extra instruction. Give free music lessons to children who are gifted, but can't afford to pay a teacher. The list is endless. A good retirement fund is a must. An early education in finance and investments pays good dividends in later years. Good hospital insurance is vital and a home without a mortgage is so sweet. Life insurance is overrated.

-- *Margaret and Wesley Garret, Tucker, Georgia*

Accounting, nursing, finance, and sales are several good avocations. I would not suggest any church vocation at this time. I feel badly that I feel this way. I see the church attacking young preachers, and I have a son that is a missionary, and I see what he is going through, and it hurts. Maybe the young people will make the changes needed. We have not done much to save for retirement as we had some big unexpected things happen to us. However, neither of us expect a lot, so I think we will be fine. We plan on buying a place on the lake when we retire, and we have bought a travel trailer to go south in the winter months.

-- *Lois Jenkins, Prior Lake, Minnesota*

We are in retirement. My husband works part time. He is able to work, and that is all he has ever done -- (sometimes 2 jobs). So that is fine. We have never



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vacationed much (lack of money), so we are trying now to do some vacationing when we can afford to do so. Of course our planned retirement is not quite enough now as prices go up each year, but we will live within our income. Everything we have is paid for. We are just trying to take care of it now. There are many avocations we can pick from as long as we serve God first. One thing I did for years was go bowling once a week. We play games now with our friends, who are our age, and our children and grandchildren. I do a lot of sewing, making quilts, clothing, and other items. I could suggest ball games, tennis, bowling, and many more for exercise and unwinding.

-- Jean Gregg, Little Rock, Arkansas

Be prepared to meet God. Plan your future. Budget your income. Put aside some amount of savings. Start from the beginning planning for your children's and grandchildren's education. Save for emergencies. Plan not to be a burden on your family and/or community by having proper funds and insurance, if possible! Qualify for Social Security and Medicare. Make pre-arrangements for funeral. Make a will. Be happy. Keep busy.

-- Thetus McCoy, Little Rock, Arkansas

A worthwhile avocation is the key -- the key for each person. Those avocations which require the working of the hands seem to be such rewarding therapy. Painting, writing, gardening, or craft making are a few that I would suggest. If the avocation makes the person feel good about himself, it is worthwhile. At the same time it can bring pleasure and enjoyment to others. My



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mate and I would plan so that our home would be paid off, have income coming in from a retirement plan and other investments from earlier years, and an adequate health care plan. I would encourage all young people to discuss and plan with their mate for those later years.

-- Peggy Usery, Grenada, Mississippi

Begin to save now, or plan for what you want in your retirement years. Be ready to face the fact that all the strategies you plan could make a complete 180 degree turn in the future. Sometimes just day to day expenses is all you can handle. Develop things you enjoy doing and think about skills that can be utilized when time becomes more abundant even if money is not. Take Christ as a personal Savior, strive to be like Him in everything you do, and to bring honor to Him. Take one day at a time. Make it a goal to help others, but to also find time for yourself. Take time to be with those who are the closest to you.

-- Carol Wilterdink, Aurora, Colorado

*Mandatory retirement is another form of compulsory poverty.*

Retirement planning should be put in place from the very first job. Although no one can predict the expenses which may occur, you are given the strength at an early age to be the most productive. Take time to explore the best long term capital gain. Plan for service which you were unable to do because of commitments

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required in early life. Service to God's Kingdom can increase due to more available time. All of us go to school, and we don't all get the same lessons to learn. But the one we do get is ours. Happiness is like manna. It is gathered in grains and enjoyed daily.

-- Gloria Evins, Bartlett, Tennessee

Develop a hobby that you enjoy; something that helps you get over the rough times in your life. For me this is music. It is relaxing to play the piano and sing. I enjoy teaching others to enjoy this. I can be happy, sad, angry, or any other mood with my music. It relieves frustration. My goal is that I will not be a burden on my children or fellow man when I am not able to make a living. Each person needs to establish retirement goals early and work toward those goals. You must keep in mind that all plans must be flexible.

-- Mildred Horton, Midvale, Indiana

Plan to build a supplemental income that would add to retirement. Determine in advance considerations involving arrangements at the time of death in the family. Record in advance vital statistics such as funeral service proposals, lots or cremation, and estate information. In case of physical or mental incapacitation, have a plan for care in a Christian home.

-- Mr. and Mrs. Dean Carlton, Portland, Oregon

Always try to have 10-12 percent of your paycheck in some sort of pretax savings plan, no matter how small or large your salary, because your regular company retirement and social security will not be sufficient to keep you living the standard to which you



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have become accustomed when you decide to retire. This is mainly due to inflation. Anything you enjoy doing, such as hobbies, writing, art, or crafts can be worthwhile avocations.

-- *Bob Wright, Judsonia, Arkansas*

Family interests can be avocations. Working for others: church, social, political-not for pay, for the cause. Stay active in sports. I'm 43, and I still play real baseball in an over 40 Men's Senior Baseball League. Still being able to function at a competitive level at this age is really a personally gratifying thing! Save more via qualified retirement plans from the first day out of college. This is difficult because there never seems to be enough money to meet the day-to-day financial pressures at each stage of your life.

-- *Max Reiboldt, Alpharetta, Georgia*

*Retirement -- it's the first day of the "rest" of your life.*

Accumulate land holdings and liquidate when the proper time comes. I couldn't afford insurance due to a physical problem. When the liquidation occurred, others could get to it and much was wasted. Have a plan, and let the family understand it; then go for the goal. Plan for a quality retirement. Carpentry, furniture refinishing, mechanics, and food preparation; all of these will assist in home life and budget supplement.

-- *Bob Little, Abingdon, Maryland*



## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

Be right with God every day of your life. Put finances in order well before retirement. Plan to keep active and never retire in church activities and relationships in the family. Cultivate a wide circle of friends -- people you enjoy. Plan to work at something each day until you die. "With a book you're never lonely," (not an original thought). Yard work is always available. There is lots of satisfaction and it keeps you at home and saves money. Church or community volunteerism is another avocation.

*-- Gail Tomlinson, Senatobia, Mississippi*

If you begin putting aside at least a little bit at the very beginning of your career, you'll be surprised how it adds up but you never miss it. This is something I wish I had done worse than anything. Try to have home and all major purchases paid off before retirement. I crochet and grow and make flower arrangements. This is something I love doing, and I give these things to others. I feel this is giving a part of myself. My satisfaction is seeing the happiness it gives others.

*-- Janie Barber, Batesville, Arkansas*

Decide on an income and standard of living needed to be comfortable. Set up a plan to help you reach that goal and work hard until then. Then relax, but don't retire. Keep on going and growing as long as it's physically and mentally possible to do so. We all need to be needed. Just slow down the pace a bit. Service type projects to help church or community, working in a mission effort, doing homebound work for disabled students, or private tutoring to help a student complete a degree or catch up in their studies are all good

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avocations. Anything to help others really helps ourself and gives glory to God.

*-- Janice Martin, Hope, Arkansas*

After you get your children out of college save, save, and save!!! While in your youth, plan a savings and investment program no matter how small. Keep up physical activities and get plenty of exercise. Make it a goal to spend quality time with your spouse, family and friends doing things of interest. I suggest getting out in the woods in God's beautiful creation ... Enjoy it, especially at/during the change of seasons. Always have a hobby, something you do enjoy, to help you get your mind off of stress, work, etc.

*-- Randy Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*

*Retirement is when you graduate into a brand new world -- magna cum loiter.*

Spectator sports, golf, involvement with children, and especially grandchildren are good avocations. My wife, Lil, and I drove over 5,000 miles in the spring of '94 to go to our granddaughter's track meet in Nashville. We try to attend as many of our grandchildren's activities as possible. All choices of activity are worthy if they have merit within themselves, and can fit into our varied schedules. Sports of all kinds, different interests pursued in a leisurely way, and travel for some folks can be very beneficial. Volunteerism is always good. We have a completed will, tombstone in place, home paid



## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

for, diversified investments, and beyond that God's will be done all the way.

*-- Virgil Gingrich, Roanoke, Illinois*

Get into the habit early to deduct for retirement saving through tax-deferred annuities and IRA contributions. It should become a habit. Have a large amount of savings and/or investments. I have a plan of action so I won't lose my purpose in life and become inactive. Make a list of things you always wanted to do, but couldn't because of a lack of time, money, or courage, and do them. Be a teacher, career counselor, therapist, parent, financial planner, or doctor.

*-- Kim Swiecicki, Portland, Maine*

We worked and planned on how we wanted to live at retirement. We started saving and buying a farm, and getting it paid for so we could just enjoy it. We planned on a place for living in the winter, where it wouldn't be so cold, and worked it into our budget. It doesn't take much now for us to live comfortably. I would suggest being a Bible teacher of children or a leader in children's activities. Children need good strong leaders of Christian people for heroes. Helpers are good workers.

*-- Sallie Dawson, Sulphur Springs, Arkansas*

I often hear retirement strategies associated with financial planning, but it seems to me that the unexpected excess of time causes a greater problem. I would suggest beginning a "wish book" of things to do, places to go, people to help, books to read, new things to learn, etc. if only I had the time. Reading -- it is



## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

educational, entertaining, cheap, easy, and can be accomplished in varied time spans -- is a good avocation. Any hobby that doesn't cost so much that you have to work twice as hard to be able to afford it is also good.

*-- Susan French, Sarasota, Florida*

I'd like to say I have a great scheme in place, but I don't. I'm not depending on Social Security but I work for a small company that has a 401K plan in place that allows matching dollars, so I'm trying to match as much as possible and buy stock in this company. It seems to be less risky than just investing, since I have a lot to say about the success of the company.

*-- Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*

Reading is my biggest hobby. No matter how much schooling you've had, you still learn things when you read. It also passes the time when there is nothing to do. Plan ahead and retire early while you can still enjoy what life has to offer. Start making a retirement fund as soon as you start your first real job. Most importantly, don't expect Social Security to take care of it all.

*-- Opal Burton, Paragould, Arkansas*

If I had saved \$50 a month all my life, I could retire with a comfortable income. Save when you are young and "can't afford it." Actually, I hope to die in my tracks, serving God. I trust the church (the Lord) to take care of me if I become unable to work. Reading is a worthy way to relax. Reading good books is a good way to keep growing mentally. Gardening is a good way to

## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

keep in touch with God's creation, and to share in a partnership with His creative process.

*-- Marquita Moss, Austin, Texas*

One should start saving early for retirement so the time can be pleasant; so one can travel and enjoy recreation and grandchildren. There should be plans for activities so the retiree won't become physically inactive. Flower gardening has been a great enjoyment for me. Not only do I enjoy fresh flowers in the house and at school, but I get my needed exercise. Avocations that benefit your health and/or benefit others are great.

*-- Sarah Nell Pomerenk, Memphis, Tennessee*

Read! It expands your mind, knowledge, and horizons. Participate in a sport of some sort. It provides exercise. Do volunteer work in church or the community. The satisfaction of helping others is morale building. Be prepared. Plan ahead. Do not depend on social measures; they may not be there. Have your house, car, etc. paid in full. Have a savings built up so it can make your "living" for you.

*-- Kathy Lacefield, Jacksonville, Arkansas*

First of all, planning our retirement is very important, and we should be as debt free as possible. When we retire, we should plan on having major debts, such as home, paid for. It is important for a person to have a hobby along with his/her work. This hobby would depend on the person's interest. I would suggest golf, tennis, softball, baseball, swimming, volleyball, or whatever you prefer.

*-- J.D. Williams, Newport, Arkansas*



## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

Don't build your self image on your job title, or the size of your office, but rather on your lasting character such as your honesty, integrity, etc. This builds a self image that is every bit as strong in retirement, as it is in a competitive career. Something you can continue to do as you get older is volunteer work at worthwhile non-profit organizations, and fishing. These are beneficial avocations.

*-- Roy and Cassandra Dickson, Searcy, Arkansas*

Save 10 percent of all you make. Invest when you can. Develop a life of purpose apart from your occupation. (Retirement from an occupation should never mean retirement from life). Prepare your finances to live comfortably on less. Reading: it makes a well-rounded person. Writing: it makes a precise person. Physical sports in moderation: it makes a healthy person. Do any good thing you enjoy!

*-- Bill Watkins, Dolthan, Alabama*

Hobbies?! Develop some hobbies (skills) that can be done alone and some that can be done with others. Keep trying new things. After age 35, I learned two foreign languages, taught myself and my boys to play mandolin, guitar, and banjo ... and I keep learning.

*-- Mr. and Mrs. John Coon, Searcy, Arkansas*

Plan early for how you will handle the end stage of life. We are doing this now by moving to a retirement home where we can be taken care of for life.

*-- Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Altig, Long Beach, California*



## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

Be sure your house is paid for by the time you retire. Have a good vehicle paid for. Be free of debts. Be content and practice contentment. You need to be in control and practice control.

*-- Carley Long, Gresham, Oregon*

Counsel those who are going through difficulties in life. Create things of beauty through painting, crafts, and photography which are all fulfilling. Woodworking, sewing, and quilting also fulfill this need.

*-- Mrs. William Shadel, Savannah, Tennessee*

Don't waste the present preparing for the future. Plan and save logically but take time now for spouse and children.

*-- Holly Cooper, Grand Junction, Colorado*

Save and invest. Go to seminars on college campuses. Watch out for get-rich-quick schemes. Others can give better advice, as I plan never to retire.

*-- Tom Gaskins, Palmdale, Florida*

Shun golf. It absorbs too much time for young men with families. Enjoy all sports as a spectator. Work out one hour per day with walking, tennis, or racquetball.

*-- Bill Cox, Rowlett, Texas*

Think about retirement before the children come. You will not have the time or money once you have kids to think about retirement.

*-- Ron Montague, Arvada, Colorado*

## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

Have a retirement plan that will allow you to not be monetarily dependent upon society or your family. Have a will.

*-- Alton Howard, West Monroe, Louisiana*

Begin early and don't depend on Social Security. Make plans so your house will be paid for when you retire.

*-- Nicky Boyd, Searcy, Arkansas*

*Retirement is when you don't lead -- you don't follow -- you just realize that getting out of the way isn't all that bad.*

Keep active even if you don't feel good all the time. I'm still working at 70 because I want to, and I know I wouldn't be worth a nickel if I didn't get up and go to work.

*-- J. Bill Harris, Searcy, Arkansas*

Missionary -- we need more people who are willing to sacrifice and do worthwhile jobs. Sales -- control your own wealth, next best to owning a business.

*-- Joe Stork, Doraville, Georgia*

Never retire -- make a transition from one opportunity to another. Look for ways to add significance to your remaining years. Spend a lot of time with your grandchildren.

*--Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas*



## Retirement Strategies and Avocations

In addition to all other retirement savings programs put 2percent to 5 percent of your earnings in a moderately aggressive growth fund, never touch it, and don't think about what it's doing.

-- Ken Dunn, Monitcello, Arkansas

Never be still. Stay active and productive. Give your spouse the best you have to offer, now that you have the time and freedom to explore areas of your environment not yet explored.

-- Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas

*The first few months of retirement are always a difficult period. It's when husbands ask, "What in the world did you do all day while I was at work?" And wives answer, "Better."*

It's never too early to begin planning for retirement. Anytime you get a raise, before you spend any of it, remember the Lord's work, and then your own retirement.

-- Jeff Earnhart, St. Louis, Missouri

Don't put anything on the back burner until retirement. It won't be worth cooking by then! Don't stop reading! Don't stop exercising and doing things you really enjoy! Don't stop growing!

-- Jimmy Behel, Searcy, Arkansas



## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

Have a debt-free home, comfortable income, and plan to keep busy. Always be responsible for your needs. Never plan to retire from the Lord's work.

-- *Lee Ashby, Granite City, Illinois*

Choose avocations that are relaxing and stress dampening like fishing, golfing, gardening, or just being alone and quiet.

-- *Larry Moree, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

Find at least 1-2 avocations that your spouse and children can enjoy with you. Be open to new hobbies such as visitation ministry.

-- *Randie Seeber, Newberg, Oregon*

For women some avocations are homemaking, nursing, teaching, travel agent, interior design, or secretarial.

-- *Eloise Muncy, Searcy, Arkansas*

Live your life so that you are ready to go to heaven. Pursue those avocations that you can do with your family and not ones that take you away.

-- *Eugene Smith, Jr., Duncanville, Texas*

Hunt, fish, hike, play tennis, basketball, or prowl the back roads. I suggest taking up nothing dangerous like sky diving.

-- *Tom Gaskins, Palmdale, Florida*

My avocation is the computer industry -- we are in the information age. Be a servant of mankind for the Lord in whatever else you do.

-- *Alton Howard, West Monroe, Louisiana*

## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

Garden, fish, and perform volunteer work. Enjoy nature, watch things grow, and share. Have securities that will enable me to be independent as long as possible.

-- *Cecile Key, Searcy, Arkansas*

Mission work! I go to South America every year during my vacation time for medical missions. Aim for the mission field! Spend retirement doing mission work!

-- *Debbie Poss, Judsonia, Arkansas*

Teach, based on Christian principles. Be a doctor or a nurse.

-- *Bill Renton, Stuarts Draft, Virginia*

Help young people, raise golden retriever dogs, and give away the puppies.

-- *Ed Birch, Painesville, Ohio*

Keep in mind life and health are but a fleeting moment. Prepare for these events.

-- *Larry Moree, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

Train your child to be a professional athlete. Then train them to take care of mama and daddy.

-- *Joe Stork, Doraville, Georgia*

Start planning early. Always have something to fall back on.

-- *Connie Warren, Silva, Missouri*

(1) Financially secured. (2) Have as many bills paid off as possible. (3) Winnebago.

-- *Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas*



## Retirement Strategies and Avocations

I believe that retirement is the final drive to heaven.  
Never retire.

-- *Gus Reynolds, Edgemont, Arkansas*

I want financial coverage, health insurance, and projects to keep my hands and mind busy.

-- *Eloise Muncy, Searcy, Arkansas*

Keep on doing what you want to do. That's what retirement really is.

-- *Jack Alexander, Mulberry, Arkansas*

Save enough today to guarantee retirement solvency.

-- *Bill Cox, Rowlett, Texas*

Save early and always work as long as you can.  
Rest when life is over.

-- *Ed Birch, Painesville, Ohio*

Good retirement plans for income, jobs to do, places to go, and people to see.

-- *Don Shackelford, Searcy, Arkansas*

Work with young people. Give your time, your energy, and your love.

-- *Bert Jones, Hawkins, Texas*

Something that interests one and doesn't cost a lot of money unless a lot of money is accessible.

-- *Jeremy Thompson, Clarkston, Michigan*



## Retirement Strategies and Avocations

Read, visit, study, attend good clean entertainment, and help others.

-- *Lee Ashby, Granite City, Illinois*

Some avocations are church work, golf, tennis, fishing, and reading/studying interesting subjects.

-- *Robert Lewis, Nashville, Tennessee*

Read, especially the Bible, or biographies of worthwhile individuals, or non fiction.

-- *William Waugh, Dallas, Texas*

*A recent retiree writes that he's tired of retirement already. "I wake up in the morning with nothing to do, and by bedtime I have it only half done."*

Be a government worker so you will have a good retirement.

-- *Carly Long, Gresham, Oregon*

A large residual income developed prior to age 40 can help.

-- *Ron Keeth, Westminster, Colorado*

Put something aside early and often.

-- *Don Helms, Russellville, Arkansas*

Save 10 percent. Get in some plan early.

-- *Robert Lewis Sr., Nashville, Tennessee*

## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

Live before you retire and you will live after.

-- *Paul Knopp, Staunton, Virginia*

Retire from business, never retire from life.

-- *Jackson Coker, Atlanta, Georgia*

Pay off your home and IRA's.

-- *Bill Renton, Stuarts Draft, Virginia*

Work to create residual income.

-- *J. Vance Cox, Yucaipa, California*

Save a little for a long time.

-- *Dwight A. Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*

Have a good retirement plan and estate plan.

-- *Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas*

Don't retire.

-- *Ed Bethune, Searcy, Arkansas*

Never retire. Live every day.

-- *Bert Jones, Hawkins, Texas*

Photography, fishing, and volunteer work are all good avocations.

-- *Don Shackleford, Searcy, Arkansas*

Do anything outdoors and around nature.

-- *Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas*

Do anything that you like that helps you relax.

-- *Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas*

## **Retirement Strategies and Avocations**

Never stop learning. Search for new ideas.

-- *Ron Keeth, Westminster, Colorado*

Woodworking, carpentry, and crafts are all worthwhile avocations.

-- *Don Helms, Russellville, Arkansas*

Serve others who are less fortunate than you.

-- *Danny and Barbara Hayes, Searcy, Arkansas*

Do something that benefits others as well as self.

-- *Holly Cooper, Grand Junction, Colorado*

*Retire while you can still enjoy it. Too many people live in the fast lane and miss the exit.*

Read, golf, fish, and do community service.

-- *Danny Skipper, Tyler, Texas*

Service to others is the finest thing in life.

-- *Jack Alexander, Mulberry, Arkansas*

I garden and do woodworking crafts.

-- *Paul Knopp, Staunton, Virginia*

Read.

-- *Sheryl Rainwater, Jay, Oklahoma*



## **Retirement Years and Avocations**

Get a job working with and helping people.

-- *Reba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas*

Volunteer to serve those less fortunate.

-- *Carol Levi, Dermott, Arkansas*

Garden.

-- *Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas*

Sail.

-- *Ed Bethune, Searcy, Arkansas*

Choose your vocation.

-- *Gus Reynolds, Edgemont, Arkansas*

Serve others.

-- *Dwight Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*



## Retirement Years and Avocations

### SUMMARY

I close with this rendition of "RETIREMENT" (from a child's view) -- a parody submitted by my second cousin Georgette Tenley:

*After a Christmas break, a teacher asked her young pupils how they spent their holidays. One small boy wrote the following from his perspective:*

*We always used to spend Christmas with Grandpa and Grandma. They used to live here in a big red house, but Grandpa got retarded and they moved to Florida. Now they live in a place with a lot of other retarded people. They all live in little tin boxes, they ride in big three-wheeled tricycles and they all wear name tags because they don't know who they are. They go to big building called a wrecked hall, but if it was wrecked, they got it fixed up, because it's all right now.*

*They play games and do exercises there, but they don't do them very good. There is a swimming pool there. They go*



## Retirement Years and Avocations

*into it and just stand there with their hats on. I guess they don't know how to swim.*

*As you go into their park, there is a doll house with a little man sitting in it. He watches all day so they can't get out without him seeing them. When they sneak out, they go to the beach and pick up shells.*

*My Grandma used to bake cookies and stuff, but I guess she forgot how. Nobody cooks; they just eat out. They eat the same thing every night, early birds. Some of the people are so retarded that they do not know how to cook at all, so my Grandma and Grandpa bring food into the wrecked hall and they call it "pot luck."*

*My Grandma says Grandpa worked all his life and earned his retardment. I wish they would move back up here, but I guess the little man in the doll house won't let them out.*

#### IV. ENJOYING LIFE'S SIMPLE PLEASURES WITH QUALITY LIVING

Viewing life in its totality is a wonderful exercise. *"In the church I heard men praying,"* said the puzzled young boy. *"It must be awfully hard for God."* *"Why?"* asked the preacher gently. *"The woodcutter was praying for cold weather, the fruit seller prayed for mild weather, the farmer prayed for rain, and the brick maker prayed for dry weather."*

*"They are godly men. How does God know how to answer all their prayers?"* *"How is the weather now?"* asked the preacher. *"Dry -- and mild."* *"And last week?"* *"Let me see -- on Monday and Tuesday it rained ... and on Thursday it was cold."* *"See?"* said the preacher.

Consider this profound ditty (author unknown, but wisdom eternal):

*To the preacher life's a sermon,  
To the joker life's a jest,  
To the miser life is money,  
To the loafer life's a rest.*

*To the soldier life's a battle,  
To the teacher life's a school,  
Life's a great thing for the thinker  
But a folly to the fool.*

## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

*Life is just one long vacation  
To the man who loves his work,  
But it's constant dodging duty  
To the everlasting shirk.*

*Life is what we try to make it,  
Life's a story ever new:  
To the faithful, earnest worker  
What, my friend, is life to you?*

It has been said that we can't control the length of our life, but we can control its use. We can't control our facial appearance, but we can control its expression. We can't control the weather, but we can control the moral atmosphere that surrounds us. We can't control the distance of our head above the ground, but we can control the height of the contents in our head. We can't control the other fellow's annoying faults, but we can see to it that we do not develop similar faults.

So, why worry about the things we cannot control? Let's get busy controlling the things that depend on us. Don't be a pessimist, one who feels bad when he feels good -- for fear that he'll feel worse when he feels better.

Here's how Arthur Pell, author of "The Human Side," colorfully put it:



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

*When the blues hit, don't get into a funk. The bright orange sun is still there. It is only temporarily hidden. The path to those silver linings may be barred by green envy of others, distorted by purple rage, or impeded by yellow lights that may make you overcautious. Visualize your goals with crystal clarity and fan those red flames of your zeal to overcome your problems to a white heat of strength that will enable you to leap over the pits and change the color of your life from grey to glittering gold.*

In the *Christian Herald*, Nancy Turner wrote this:

*God often has His largest shares in the smallest houses. Remember this in blustery times, when the roof leaks, when the larder is lean, when there are more children than beds and more beds than blankets. Keep cheerful and do your best, and the largest Shareholder in the little shack will see that it weathers the storm.*

It has been duely noted that the great soul prays, "Lord make me as big as my problem." The little soul prays, "Lord, let me off easy." The giant soul asks, "Lord, give me strength

## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

*sufficient for a hard day," while the small soul begs, "Lord, let me have a lighter load." The busy soul prays, "Lord, stand with me until I finish my task," while the weak soul says, "I got tired and quit."*

After all, John Milton was without sight, but that did not prevent him from seeing beauty and sharing it with the rest of the world. Louis Braille could not see, but that did not prevent him from opening new horizons to many thousands of people. Helen Keller could neither see nor hear, but that did not prevent her from understanding the world, and explaining it to others.

The world has changed a great deal in the more than 200 years between the death of John Milton and the birth of Helen Keller. In many ways, it has changed even more in the shorter time between Helen Keller's era and our own. It will change even more in our lifetime, and our children's.



## **Simple Pleasures and Quality Living**

### **Our Contributors' Advice on Achieving Life's Simple Pleasures with Quality Living**

Some of life's simple pleasures are: Holding hands, and taking a walk with my husband ... Getting hugs and lots of "smoochie" from my little ones ... A wonderful bubble bath... Watching the sunrise ... Smelling the crisp autumn air ... Making someone happy and having a cup of tea with my husband early in the morning ... Reading a good book ... Watching a movie such as "Rudy" ... Listening to my teenagers tell their fantastic stories ... Snuggling with a baby ... Reading books to my two little girls ... Having lunch with a friend, watching the clouds, listening to soft music, the smell of scented candles, eating at home by candlelight, laying on a blanket listening to the ocean waves rolling into shore ... Watching the ocean, a walk along the beach, the peace and serenity found at the end of the day, when life shuts down and I hear nothing but total silence.

Learn early on what is truly important in life -- love, friendships, family, God, service to others. The earlier we learn these lessons, the sooner we will achieve a higher quality of life. When I was young, I used to worry so much over the clothes I wore, the hairstyle I had, how much money we didn't have, things, and my children taught me that these things do not add anything to the quality of life. Attitude is also so important. How we view each day can definitely determine the quality of life we live. Many times quality of life is achieved through sorrow and pain, hardships and disaster. It is during those times of devastation that we realize what really gives life its "quality." A good



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

way of achieving and maintaining quality of life for me has been that of "remembering" -- times of illness, accident, death, crisis, and "remembering" what and who gives life all meaning and purpose. A quality of life is a life of selflessness-not selfishness. Remember often the grace and goodness of God and those around us.

-- Clara Hinton, Shanksville, Pennsylvania

Life's simple pleasures for me are found in nature. Whether mountain or seashore, forest glade, or white water stream, the life that a loving Father created for us delights and astounds me. The leaf and the bird are both simple. Or, are they? Lately, there is a lot being said about quality of life. The citizens of a city known for exorbitant taxation defend it by saying: "The quality of life is so good there." Sometimes I think the definition frenzied parents put to the phrase, "quality time" employs the same "whistling past the graveyard" defense of a lifestyle they know in their heart is really just not measuring up. I believe the only real definer of "quality of life" should be the One who breathed this life into existence. The trite description of the Holy Bible as God's instruction manual for the operation of the human being may bear some closer investigation. The resultant quality of life may surprise you.

-- Eric Hedden, Brunswick, Tennessee

These are life's simple pleasures: Friends that talk over coffee, mint chocolate chip ice cream, trumpet music, people's testimonies, fall, my children, dreaming, good photography, fog over a marina, redemption, homemade turkey noodle soup, men in uniform, ducks,

## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

old houses, good children's picture books, sunbeams, analytical Bible teaching, flowers, solitude, winter, Civil War reenactments, cabins with lights in windows, spring, Zebedee, renovating my home, light, Hydroxes, Kelly's letters, living. Be grateful. I have seen no greater factor in improving quality of life than a thankful heart. Don't look at your poverty, find the things you are rich in.

-- Susan French, Sarasota, Florida

*In the game of life, it's a good idea to have a few early losses. That relieves you of the pressure of trying to maintain an undefeated season.*

I love being with a good friend who doesn't require being entertained, who accepts me as I am, and with whom I can talk. As Maria Craik said it, "I have neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but may pour them all right out just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping and with the breach of kindness blow the rest away." I truly believe that God has a plan for every life, that He has built into each one of us the talents and abilities we need, and will provide the necessary opportunities for us to live out that plan, if we will follow the advice of Solomon when he said, "Trust Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon



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thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths."

*-- Paul Easley, San Antonio, Texas*

Quality living for me is having a quiet dinner one on one with my husband, or my children individually. Additionally, I would have to include camping in the woods, roasting marshmallows, singing praises to God with or without other people, especially in the dark, in the outdoors. I love listening to my children, hearing my family laughing and joking, and spending time at the beach or the mountains. Another special quality time for me is curling up in bed reading a book when it is raining outside. Always, if at all possible, be at all services Sunday a.m., p.m, Wednesday, Bible studies. Worship God daily, but always seek who God has put in your path that day to encourage. It is important to encourage others with cards, calls, visits, etc.

*-- Kathy Seeber, Newberg, Oregon*

First, dedicate your life to Christ and his service. Then, decide what it is you want to achieve and set some goals with a reasonable time schedule. Appreciate people who take an interest in you and help you along the way. Pick your friends as carefully as you would a fine gem and cherish them. Be honorable and truthful, for truth never collides with truth. Be loyal, loving, and caring to your family. Quality living for me is to listen to childrens' conversations, observe nature in my own backyard, listen to the music of the spheres, see and feel all the colors around me, camp in the mountains and by the sea, observe night skies and day skies, conversations with loved ones, visits from friends,



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

study the Scriptures and talk to God. I also like to discover something more about life, its meaning and purpose each new day, watch my children and grandchildren grow in mind, spirit, and body.

-- Margaret Garrett, Tucker, Georgia

*"What kind of man deserves the most pity?" someone asked Benjamin Franklin at a dinner party. Replied Franklin, "a lonesome man on a rainy day who does not know how to read."*

Be content! Love and appreciate life! Be thankful for each day, and for what we have even if it isn't as much as our neighbor has. We do not need all these things, especially the young people and young married couples. They want and get more than they can pay for, and this causes tension and in some cases, divorce. That is sin. Achieve honestly and be happy and keep striving. Be at worship with God's family to take part of the communion to celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Live in a country where we can worship. Be with our children and grandchildren. Have good friends to spend time with.

-- Jean Gregg, Little Rock, Arkansas

We all have to face responsibility for our actions. Through the scriptures I've learned that you get up, brush off, start again. We're going to mess up, no

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doubt about it. I realize that now. I have more confidence in myself now and feel that I can do anything through Christ who strengthens me. I enjoy beautiful sunsets, ice cream, talking with my kids, and taking a drive with my husband.

*-- Janie Barber, Batesville, Arkansas*

To enhance my quality of living, I read. Continue your education. Be careful in picking a mate. If you have a degree, go for a Masters, if you have a Masters, go for a Doctorate. Take in plays and quality performances. Develop quality friendships. Hang out with the kind of people you want to be like. Have a good command of the English language. Get involved. School ... Church ... Sports ... Civic Activities. I enjoy being in the woods, picking, peeling, and eating an orange, just being with, spending time, and doing things with my wife and sons.

*-- Tom Gaskins, Palmdale, Florida*

Remember, quality of life is not a position, it's your disposition! Quality of life lies in your relationship with God and Jesus Christ, and then it extends down to those you surround yourself with. Remember your first love. If you forget that, you won't even know what "quality of life" is. God will give you quality of life if you put him first; anything else is a "false sense of security." Seeing my son or daughter succeed at something that they have really tried hard at is true quality living. Hearing the two of them say "I love you" to each other and knowing they mean it is truly quality living! I would have to include a warm summer or fall evening with nothing to do but water the flowers, and a cozy winter



## **Simple Pleasures and Quality Living**

evening with the family in the den watching T.V. in my list of simple pleasures

*-- Tina Bigelow, Marshall, Minnesota*

Quality of life is very difficult to define. For me it means being physically healthy, spiritually sound, and able to enjoy a reasonably comfortable lifestyle. Having a successful career is important and contributes to quality of life, but is not the primary focus. A happy and spiritually strong family is most important. First, pursue your desires in life in Godly desires. Don't ever have to say, "If only ... " -- Make the Lord and his church of primary importance in you and your family's life. Instill within your family a genuine love for God and His kingdom. Also, support your family...spend quality time with them. It is quality living for me to be close to my family, to see the tears of joy on my daughter's face, and receive the biggest hug ever after her band won a band competition. Simple pleasures are to watch my first grandchild grow and change, answer the phone, and hear ... "Hi Dad."

*-- Randy Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*

Life's simple pleasures for me have always revolved around family. Whether it has been coaching a soccer team or going to a church picnic, the family has been first and most important. The family vacations are something that give me a major lift. Even our twenty-two year old looks forward to them. Work is a means to an end. Do not let it become the end. You work to make money to do other things. My other things are kids, wife, church, and I also work to send money to Harding, but I guess that's still kids.

*-- Bill Sowell, Brandon, Mississippi*



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Listen to the voice that God gave you inside your heart. Listen to your conscience...remember that God is everywhere and anywhere and when you have compassion, kindness, gentleness, you possess a very part of our Father. It's hard not to become cynical or hard..in my job, all I see is "bad to the bone" kids, who have no heart or conscience, because they have parents who are like that. There is no quality in their lives because there is no conscience in their lives. This "conscience thing" God gave us is a great motivator in achieving a good life.

-- *Tom Hancock, Pasadena, Texas*

Quality living for me is to hear my adult children say, "I love you, Mom," to look out my windows at the beautiful mountains that are capped with snow today, to work in my garden and watch it grow. All of these things remind me of the goodness of God. What is "quality of life?" Does it mean things that money can buy? For me it is having the necessities of life; being able to help others, especially family members; and never forgetting our Father in Heaven who provides for us.

-- *Mildred Horton, Midvale, Idaho*

Take enjoyment from everyday things in life. Learn to appreciate where you are through sunsets, a child's question, the touch of a co-worker, a passage of scripture, a good meal, or a walk in the sun or rain. Try to think of one good thing about your day every day, and remind yourself of it all day, at different intervals, or when you feel frustrated, angry, or uninvolved.

-- *Kim Swiecicki, Portland, Maine*

## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Quality of life is a cold Dr. Pepper, a piece of cheese toast, olives, and a good English Gothic romance. It is spending an evening with my husband watching a good movie, going to a dinner theater, or playing games with friends. It is warm sunshine and laughter -- my family, healthy, happy, together. Slow down and put first things first. Learn to say "no" to trivial things and focus on things that will last: the Lord's church, family, love, and memories.

-- Janice Martin, Hope, Arkansas

*Life is like an onion: you peel it off one layer at a time, and sometimes you weep.*

To sit in the sunshine, stare at a lake, river or ocean, a quiet evening at home with my family, watching or hearing my children make decisions, showing their maturity both in life and in the Lord are all a part of my quality living. Some of my simple pleasures would include dinner out with my husband, and walking along the beach, listening to the powerful waves of the ocean. Put God first. Know, study, and obey His word. Be a servant to others. Do not center your life around yourself.

-- Kathy Lacefield, Jacksonville, Arkansas-

Live for something. Do good. Write the name of kindness, love, and mercy on the hearts of people you come in contact with day by day. It is good to have



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

money and the things money can buy, but it is good to check up once and a while and make sure you haven't lost the things money can't buy. One has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much. "Count your age by your friends, not years. Count your life by laughs, not tears."

-- *Gloria Evins, Bartlett, Tennessee*

Quality of life depends on what each individual needs and wants. I look forward to enjoying a peaceful life and, if at all possible, to enjoy nature, mountains, meadows, streams, and the oceans. Then I would be happy. The children coming for visits would be joyful. Quality living is to see babies, young children, and young animals, to watch a caring mother with her children, and to enjoy spring time and fall. Enjoy the feeling at Christmas and Thanksgiving.

-- *Bob Little, Abingdon, Maryland*

Reach for those aspects of life that build relationships with people. Time together as a family is vital. Grow together by being together. Allow time to grow strong spiritually with God. Spend time in prayer and alone with Him every day.

-- *Carol Wilterdink, Aurora, Colorado*

Look for balance across important areas (finances, family, work). Look at people at airports saying goodbye and hello and build that attitude and expression in your important relationships. Be a generous giver in all aspects of your life. An afternoon nap, and watching children and grandchildren participate in their sports/activities are all part of my life.

-- *Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas*



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

The following contributes to my quality of life: a bowl of popcorn, a Braves game, a beautiful sunny day to play nine, green trees and fields with their simple, yet magnificent beauty, a child's smile, a mother's caress, and a father's gentle hand.

-- Max Reiboldt, Alpharetta, Georgia

Life is full of surprises.  
It's enough to give you fits.  
Sometimes it's a bowl of cherries --  
Sometimes it's just the pits.

Life is what you make of it. It can be poor quality if you don't put anything into it, or it can be a great quality of life if you put forth the effort. Always be honest and give of your time to help other people every chance you get, and above all, put God first in your life. Quality of life is a walk through the woods, a beautiful sunshiny day, a clear blue mountain stream, and seeing any wild animal in its natural habitat.

-- Bob Wright, Judsonia, Arkansas

Quality of living for me is being a husband, father, grandfather, neighbor, friend, and having the satisfaction that all of the above are culminated with a life in Christ. I enjoy our home, all the beauty of nature, and my national heritage. We always try to have an honorable motive for our interest and actions. We try to be accountable by being punctual and thorough.

-- Virgil Gingrich, Roanoke, Illinois

## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Work hard, rejoice in your accomplishments no matter how minor, be honest, maintain your self esteem. "There is nothing better for a man that to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good." Ecclesiastes 2:24. Quality of life is home, family, a quiet evening on a trout stream, a warm chocolate chip cookie, and an electric blanket.

-- *Roy and Cassandra Dickson, Bartlesville, Oklahoma*

I love to pick flowers and watch people. I like to sit in an airport and watch people. I sit and wonder where each person is going and where they have been. I love to see how they greet the people who are waiting for them.

-- *Sarah Nell Pomerenk, Memphis, Tennessee*

Time spent with my husband of 35 years is always special, whether we're working on some carpenter job together, or walking in the woods, doing yard work, or travelling to see the children and all the grandkids.

-- *Reba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas*

At my age of 70, I dearly love to have my family: sons, daughters, in-laws, and grandchildren come home and we sing for hours. Being with good Christian friends, and being able to cook for anyone are two of my life's simple pleasures. As Paul said, "Learn to be content at any time of your life." You'll be surprised at how much you can do and achieve.

-- *Sallie Dawson, Sulphur Springs, Arkansas*



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Form close lasting friendships early in life and take great pains to continue to nurture them. Good quality of life is measured greatly in our relationships with others, not into attaining material possessions.

-- Mrs. William Shadel, Savannah, Tennessee

"Quality" is in the eyes of the beholder. I think we should continue to be challenged by the events of our daily lives, with the understanding that we can "savor" the good times and overcome the difficulties we may face in life.

-- Stanley Keown, Chattanooga, Tennessee

*Happiness consists of living each day as if it were the first day of your honeymoon and the last day of your vacation.*

Treat others as you want to be treated! Do your best and be your best. Live your life, don't try to impress others by big deals. Don't try to keep up with the Jones's. Be satisfied where you are.

-- Rheba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas

Realize what our ultimate is: eternity in heaven. Never set goals so high that they are unattainable. Realize that failures are not the end of the world, especially if one has learned from that failure. Quality of life is a walk in the woods during a crisp, fall day, carrying pumpkins, Christmas, and taking a nap under a tree.

-- Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Simple pleasures for me are reading a good book in front of a roaring fire with my family gathered around me, or doing anything with my husband and children, and working in my little flower bed. Live your life for a higher purpose, something beyond yourself.

-- *Marquita Moss, Austin, Texas*

I believe that doing things with and for my grandchildren and watching good clean entertainment are some of my simple pleasures. Additionally, I enjoying God's creation -- the moon, the stars and a beautiful sunset. Quality living for me is, as the old saying goes -- "God first, others second, self last." I have nothing better to offer.

-- *Cecile Key, Searcy, Arkansas*

Simple pleasures for me are spending time with my family (daughters and their spouses, grandchildren, and my wife) who are all committed to God, and a large bowl of cornbread and buttermilk. I believe quality living is to focus on all aspects of life that are not dependent on material prosperity.

-- *Jackson Coker, Atlanta, Georgia*

Helping to coach my sons in soccer or basketball, and seeing a smile on someone's face that I've helped are simple pleasures for me. Going for a walk on a windy autumn day and looking at the colorful trees would have to be included in my simple pleasures. Quality of living for me is our relationships and our family, our church-family, and our God.

-- *Jeff Earnhart, St. Louis, Missouri*

## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Simple pleasures for me are relaxing outdoors in beautiful weather -- just me and God, talking on the phone with a friend, and watching my 11 year old daughter hug her grown-up friends. My definition of quality living is to love all, and give of yourself.

-- *Debbie Poss, Judsonia, Arkansas*

Keep right with God. There is no quality in life without that. Don't do things that make you feel guilty. Learn to love. Like simple things. Be true to your highest ideals. Learn to work. Quality of life for me is time alone to do as I wish, a good book, a good cup of coffee or hot tea, and sitting in the swing, talking with friends, a dog, and a good music system.

-- *Gail Tomlinson, Senatobia, Mississippi*

Simple pleasures include a hot fudge sundae, a walk on the beach at sunset, and being around my grandson all contribute to my quality of life. Quality living for me is to put the Lord first, your wife second, and the rest of your family next. All other priorities will work themselves out such as job, recreation, living location, etc.

-- *Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*

Live in the smallest town in which you can still make a living. Love your wife forever. Don't stop growing. Praise always surpasses criticism as a motivator for family members. Fresh lemon for my tea, watching the float go under, watching children grow, watching the light bulb come on in a student's eyes -- These are all a part of quality living.

-- *Jimmy Behel, Searcy, Arkansas*



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

In my opinion, simple pleasures would be to share time with your family while you eat out, watch a funny movie, or play putt-putt golf. The quality of life is found in accepting yourself and your purpose in life. Truly understanding that it is on the inside that really matters. Learn to love others as Christ loves and accepts.

*-- Peggy Usery, Grenada, Mississippi*

*The secret of happiness is to learn to accept the impossible, to do without the indispensable, and to bear the intolerable.*

Have a strong faith in God, a good healthy lifestyle, a spirit of friendship, and a positive outlook. Do not be ruled by a negative spirit. Be a truth seeker. Quality living involves family, music, singing and God's nature.

*-- Alton Howard, West Monroe, Louisiana*

Get to know Jesus through study, fellowship, and practice of the Golden Rule. Be involved in the life of others. Be a reader of good books. Find some time for leisure.

*-- Mr. and Mrs. Dean Carlton, Portland, Oregon*

Simple pleasures for me are to fellowship with God's people, to do gardening, wood working, seeing God's handiwork, and having and sharing with a God-given companion. I believe that quality living is to give yourself fully to God so you can be filled with his Spirit.



## **Simple Pleasures and Quality Living**

Live in God's kingdom where there is righteousness, peace, and joy. Give thanks in every situation.

*-- Paul Knopp, Staunton, Virginia*

Simple pleasures for me is being with my children and grandchildren, sitting by the lake and enjoying God's creation, being able to worship God in peace! For quality living, don't have such high expectations. Be happy where you are. Strive to achieve and make the world better, but don't make it your life. Keep your eyes on Jesus and try to be like Him.

*-- Lois Jenkins, Prior Lake, Minnesota*

The standards are set by you. You can be happy on any amount of money you make. Realize people are much more valuable than physical wealth. I see quality living in God's beauty -- just a simple walk through the mountains will always put a smile on my face no matter what my situation.

*-- Ron Montague, Arvada, Colorado*

Hiking deep into the forest and staying by myself for a period of time and enjoying the quiet beauty of God's creation -- all lend to my life's simple pleasures. Have the desire to live a quality life. Try not to be satisfied with the ordinary. Have the joy of the Lord in your heart.

*-- Bill Renton, Stuarts Draft, Virginia*

Simple pleasures for me include time with family, playing and sharing. Enjoying nature's beauty and grandeur, enjoying husband and children in the oak swing and by the fireplace. I believe quality living is to

## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

have realistic expectations of yourself and others. Do the best you can resist the urges to want more and more.

-- *Holly Cooper, Grand Junction, Colorado*

Seek God's will at every turn. Be passionate about one or two things and enjoy the rest. To see a brilliant yellow hickory in the fall proclaiming God's glory, to watch a red bird, unworried, enjoy a sunflower seed, to hear a mockingbird praise God -- these all make a quality of life.

-- *Dwight Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*

Love God. Love the truth (it makes you free). Find the truth (for those who have eyes to see, its everywhere). Live the truth. A good book, cool water on a hot day, a hawk in flight, a mountain top view, a warm hug, holding hands, hearing, "I love you" -- these all make quality living.

-- *Bill Watkins, Dolthan, Alabama*

To watch a child play, my children, to make someone smile, to hear birds sing, to know my dog is always happy to see me all make quality life. Have a personal relationship with God.

-- *Danny and Barbara Hayes, Searcy, Arkansas*

One of my simple pleasures is to play with my grandchildren. Quality living is to prioritize your life. Save to fund your fun! Since water always flows downhill, look for the natural flow. It shows you how God causes things to work.

-- *Bill Cox, Rowlett, Texas*



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Look for the best life has to offer, no matter the situation. If you look hard enough, you'll find it. Never take for granted blessings God has given you like your health, friends, or family.

-- Opal Burton, Paragould, Arkansas

*Happiness is a healthy mental attitude, a grateful spirit, a clear conscience, and a heart full of love.*

My quality of life is helped by playing with grandchildren, digging in the vegetable garden, smelling the roses in my backyard, and watching my back yard birds. Learn contentment. Look for the good. Accept our state.

-- Eloise Muncy, Searcy, Arkansas

Simple pleasures are watching my children grow physically and spiritually, and watching them gain wisdom from living. The definition of quality living is very simple -- Just remember that love is the essence of life.

-- Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas

Life's simple pleasures for me are slowing down and observing what life is about in a quiet time of reflection. The big question is, Are you happy? How do you define happiness?

-- Larry Moree, Baton Rouge, Louisiana



## **Simple Pleasures and Quality Living**

One simple pleasure for me is being with my children. (It really isn't simple anymore as they're getting older and have their own schedules). In order to have quality living, we must try to keep our bodies healthy.

*-- Jeremy Thompson, Clarkston, Michigan*

Simple pleasures would include the beauty of a child, the impact of knowledge, and observing the artistry of God. Quality living is to seek God always in all things. Be a quality person. Be an honest, kind, and gentle person.

*-- William Waugh, Dallas, Texas*

To have spiritual dedication, accept the fact that you always have something to offer, keep up on changes and never give up are truly simple pleasures. God, His church, and my family are all a part of my quality of life.

*-- Lee Ashby, Granite City, Illinois*

To see a brilliant yellow hickory in the fall proclaiming God's glory, to watch a red bird, unworried, enjoy a sunflower seed, to hear a mockingbird praise God, all make my life a higher quality.

*-- Dwight Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*

Learn what selfishness is and don't be that way and do things. Warmed over macaroni and cheese, a happy little child, a soft rain, music from the 40's, success and /or good fortune of a friend -- these all increase my quality of life.

*-- Ken Dunn, Monticello, Arkansas*

## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Have realistic expectations. Count your blessings. Control your ambitions. Peace and quiet, warm comfortable bed at night, untroubled sleep, the smile of a child, friends -- all these contribute to my quality of life.

-- *Danny Skipper, Tyler, Texas*

I enjoy simple pleasures: Sports, golf, tennis, and just having quiet time with my family. My instructions would be to accept the Lord as your Savior, and then make sure your mate is also a Christian.

-- *J.D. Williams, Newport, Arkansas*

Take one day at a time! Learn from the past, but don't dwell on it. Be thankful to God for everyday!

Remember, you can't undo the past!

-- *Carol Levi, Dermott, Arkansas*

My family is a simple pleasure in my life. Question your goals by asking, "Will this help me become my very best and serve God?"

-- *Sheryl Rainwater, Jay, Oklahoma*

Put God first, trust Him to lead you in all decisions of life. If you aren't doing what God wants you to do, then there will be no quality to your life.

-- *Connie Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*

Talk with other people. Watch your child perform (sports or music, etc). Give a lot of money and time to church and your children.

-- *Joe Stork, Doraville, Georgia*



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

A walk through the woods, a beautiful sun shiny day, a clear blue mountain stream, to see any wild animal in its natural habitat builds the quality of life.

-- Bob Wright, Judsonia, Arkansas

Fresh lemon for my tea, watching the float go under, watching children grow, watching the light bulb come on in a student's eyes -- all of these help my quality of life.

-- Jimmy Behel, Searcy, Arkansas

*If life is passing you by, don't complain --  
tailgate!*

An afternoon nap, watching children and grandchildren participate in their sports/activities can both contribute to your quality of life.

-- Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas

My simple pleasures are to sit in a lawn chair alone in the backyard and drink a glass of tea. Don't take on too much. Wealth and power are not equal to quality.

-- Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas

Live everyday to its fullest. Serve God and your fellow man. Being with family and traveling and going to Branson are what builds my quality of life.

-- J. Bill Harris, Searcy, Arkansas



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Quality living is to work, be with your family and church. Do what you want to do with those you love and want to be with.

-- Jack Alexander, Mulberry, Arkansas

Hunger and thirst for the Lord and the things of the Lord. Strive to please Him.

-- Mrs. John Coon, Searcy, Arkansas

Seize the moment. Attain the "peace that passeth understanding." Be content with what you have.

-- Robert Lewis, Nashville, Tennessee

"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13

-- Eugene Smith, Jr., Duncanville, Texas

Marry a partner, and work hard to make each other happy, healthy, and complete.

-- Ed Birch, Painesville, Ohio

Put Christ and the Church first in your life. Enjoy nature.

-- James O. Pennington, Ola, Arkansas

Listen to a worker and emulate success. My wife, my children, my work help my quality of life.

-- Gus Reynolds, Edgemont, Arkansas

Life's simple pleasures for me are too many to list. Let Jesus work in your life.

-- Ed Bethune, Searcy, Arkansas

## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

Read and study. Keep goals and ideas moving forward. Read and laugh with friends and family.

-- Ron Keeth, Westminister, Colorado

Live for the Lord. Watch a sunrise, a sunset, or spring and fall. Laugh.

-- Bert Jones, Hawkins, Texas

*It seems that some people can't be happy unless they're unhappy.*

Invest of yourself and stay in good health. Experience sunsets, autumn, and spring.

-- John Sparks, Kirkwood, Missouri

Walk, fish, read, eat, and sleep -- these all contribute to quality living.

-- Don Helms, Russelville, Arkansas

Mix a little fun in life with your work. Smile at strangers.

-- Sarah Nell Pomerenk, Memphis, Tennessee

Be a good person, especially to your own family. Be the best you can be.

-- Carol Long, Dermott, Arkansas

Live for the Lord, His Church, and serve both.

-- Don Shackelford, Searcy, Arkansas

## **Simple Pleasures and Quality Living**

**Trust in the Lord. Seek Him first.**

**-- J. Vance Cox, Yucaipa, California**

**Quality of living for me is to serve others .**

**-- Eugene Smith, Duncanville, Texas**





## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

### SUMMARY

At this point of my life, the most important title I answer to is "*Grandfather*." The following are excerpts from our recent "*annual reports*" to friends and loved ones, showing that life continues to be a beautiful choice:

A baby is " ... *The next generation ... A well-spring of pleasure ... A messenger of peace and love .... A resting place for innocence on earth ... A sweet new blossom of humanity ... A living jewel dropped unstained from heaven ... A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded ... Such a nice way to start people ... God's opinion that the world should go on*" -- so say the great writers over the ages.

Yes, there is nothing like having a baby around to make you realize that it's a changing world, for out of the mouth of babes comes --cereal. And no one can plan a family's activities like a newborn baby. It has been said that sooner or later, every person opens his mouth and puts his foot in -- but only a baby is admired for doing it. Truly, a baby is the world's longest suspense story: you have to wait a generation to see how it turns out.

## **Simple Pleasures and Quality Living**

### **"GRANDPARENTS' VOCABULARY"** (courtesy of Hallmark Greetings):

**ANYTHING:** What a grandchild can ask for without being unreasonable.

**BRAG:** When grandparents do it's nothing but the plain and simple truth.

**DAILY:** Frequency at which grandchildren get smarter, better-looking, and more talented.

**FAULTS:** Little personality defects to be found in other people's grandchildren.

**HAUL:** What grandkids take home from the grandparent's house at Christmas.

**HOLIDAY:** Any day the grandkids visit.

**NO:** This word does not exist in a grandparent's vocabulary.

**PHOTO ALBUM:** Vast collection of pictures which Grandma shows to strangers.

**SPOIL:** An immoral act, except when committed by grandparents.

**TELEPHONE:** Instrument which renders grandchild's mouth completely silent.



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

TOY STORE: What grandparents buy out on their grandchild's birthday.

UNIVERSE: Area in which your grandchildren are the cutest.

VERY, VERY, VERY, VERY: How much grandchildren love their grandparents.

WRONG: The one thing a grandchild can't do.

YES: A grandparent's answer to any question that starts with "Can I have..."

Just what are grandparents for? From his extensive interviews with grandchildren, Dr. Arthur Kornhaber, M.D. has uncovered five roles which they express to be especially significant:

♥ *Historian. Grandparents represent realistic access to "the olden days" -- another dimension in time. As family historians and guardians of the heritage--grandparents are the only way distant or long-dead relatives can be brought to life. In the role of official biographers of a child's parents, grandparents offer expanded access to a child's roots -- the knowledge of where I came from and therefore I really am.*

## **Simple Pleasures and Quality Living**

*This is accomplished as grandparents affirm family history, and through holiday and other rituals thrust the past into the present. The religious faith and values they transmit are of enormous significance in a grandchild's development.*

♥ *Mentor. The real magic of learning comes when occasionally one finds a mentor who can imbue his deep love for a subject into a student. The emotional attachments which draw grandchild and grandparent together make a grandparent's lessons stick forever in a child's mind. And the curriculum is limited only by the grandparent's interest and the child's capacity to understand.*

♥ *Role Model. Today's grandchildren will be grandparents for nearly half their lives. And their performance will depend largely upon the images of grandparenting they will carry inside of them. Grandparents serve as strong models of the aging process, family values, attitudes, moral ideals, talents and of how to nurture one's own grown children. Grandparents are living examples of what grandchildren can expect one day to become.*



## Simple Pleasures and Quality Living

♥ *Wizard. Being old is in itself a source of amazement to children. But a grandparent's capacity to draw upon wide and divergent experiences almost magically lavishes an excitement of the unexpected upon a child's narrow world.*

♥ *Nurturer. These "Great Parents" are truly able to look after the physical and emotional needs of their grandchildren much as they did with their own children, but with an added bonus -- to the child, their time and attention is viewed as a pure gift without obligation.*

Parents, says Dr. Kornhaber, want desperately to meet every deep emotional needs of his or her children, the resources natural or even surrogate grandparents represent are obvious. So by phone, letter, photo albums, audio and video cassette and personal visits, he suggests that we do all we can to keep those grandparent connections in our family alive and well.





## V. FINDING OUR CALLING AND LEARNING THE MEANING OF LIFE

I have read that to scrutinize the trivial (such as an ordinary pencil) can be to discover the monumental. We were always taught in school that it is an art to be able to write with great warmth (and charmth). The pencil, which creates and reshapes ideas, may be mightier than the pen. And that may make the pencil more permanent. The world pencil market is 14 billion pencils a year (2 billion are made in USA).

Nobel Economist Milton Friedman wrote a classic example titled, *"THERE ISN'T A SINGLE PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO CAN MAKE A PENCIL."* It stresses cooperation, specialization, and interdependence:

*The wood from which the pencil is made comes from a tree in Washington state. To cut down that tree, it took a saw. To make the saw, it took steel. To make the steel, it took iron ore. The black center of the pencil, the compressed graphite, comes from mines in South America. The eraser, a bit of rubber, probably comes from Malaysia, where the rubber tree isn't even native. It was imported from South America by businessmen. The brass ferrule? Who knows where it*

## Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life

*came from, or where the yellow paint came from, or the glue that holds it together.*

*Thousands of people cooperated to make one pencil, -- people who speak different languages, who practice different religions, who might not readily like one another if they ever met. What induced them to make this pencil? The magic of the marketplace got them to cooperate, so that you and I might buy a pencil for a trifling sum. In the process of trading a few moments of our time, we have become involved in the lives of thousands of people. This is why free markets are so essential: not only to promote product efficiency, but even more to foster harmony and peace among the peoples of the world.*

Pencils are amazing all right, but I'm convinced that America's greatest natural resource is our young people. Here are three important numbers. If you have a pencil, write them down. It's on the test. The first number is 15,000 -- The second is 2,400 -- The last one is 312.

According to reliable estimates, by the time you graduated from high school, you had watched TV for an average of 15,000 hours -- and who knows what you were watching?



## **Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life**

Between kindergarten and high school graduation, you attended Bible study and church a maximum of 2,400 hours. Your Dad, during those 12 years, devoted less than 312 hours of training you by personal attention.

There are the numbers (K-12). 15,000 hours of TV -- 2400 hours in Church -- 312 hours of personal training. So, you see, we pass into adulthood mostly programmed by secular influences. And so, I write now as one who grew up in that secular world, not knowing about New Testament Christianity, nor about Christian education, nor of Harding University until I was a young adult.

After being in this business for a quarter century -- long enough to have taught some of my students' parents (many of whom carried pencil boxes and slide rules), it strikes me all the more, that Christian schools and colleges have become a highly sought after alternative to the secular world from whence we came.

And, by the way, Bible-centered schools existed in America 217 years before there were public schools. Sometimes we are so close to it that we can't see it. Did you know that 104 of the first 119 colleges and universities of America were founded by those who professed Christianity and who wanted schools in which those principles could be advanced? Of the

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first 40,000 college graduates before the Civil War, 10,000 entered the ministry.

Many of those colleges are now openly hostile to Christianity. What happened to them? Gradually they became more concerned with *"the things of this world"* than they were about the reasons they were established. And yet, what better place has there been this year to secure an education than on a college campus where God is honored -- where the principles of the Bible are taught as the principles of life? You get Biblical faith in the Science laboratory, in the History class, and, yes, in my Economics course.

As our students progress through Harding University and beyond, we will probably rejoice most when we hear of their trustworthiness, their unrepachable character, their faithfulness to Christ, and their service to the church. With pencils-in-hand, we, their learning partners, believe that the honorable pursuit of a professional career in education, in science, in business, or in any other area, is consistent with a righteous life.

We would join the Apostle Paul to tell our students this. It's recorded in Philippians 4:8 -- *"Brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if*



## Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life

*there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."*

Do you know how much mileage you can get out of a properly-used pencil? Thirty miles--for a nickel, so the experts say. Along the way, we want so much for our students to be able to discern right-from-wrong, wise-from-unwise, good-from-bad, and righteousness-from-unrighteousness. It is important to put our pencils to it, and remember that the greatest of all gifts is the power to estimate things at their true worth.

How many pencils can our students wear out in a college career? Don't know. However, while they are here, we encourage our students to keep on developing a set of convictions that will guide them through any situation or temptation. Keep developing a quick conscience. Never forget that integrity is in short supply and great demand. It's a seller's market! Judge everything that is said, written, and done -- Judge it all by the Book of Books.

Whenever I come across Friedman's "PENCIL" example, I think of the diversity found in I Corinthians 12:

*For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*



## Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life

*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

*And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*

Here is how Thomas Macaulay put it:

*The real security of Christianity is to be found in its benevolent morality; in its exquisite adaptation to the human heart; in the facility with which its scheme accommodates itself to the capacity of every human intellect; in the consolation which it bears to the house of mourning; in the light with which it brightens the great mystery of the grave.*

Dr. L. P. Jacks, inspecting a school, asked the master where in his schedule he found time for teaching religion. The schoolmaster replied:

*We teach it all day long. We teach it in arithmetic by accuracy, and we teach it in history by humanity. We teach it in geography by breadth of mind; we*

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*teach it in astronomy by reverence; and we teach it in the playground of fair play. We teach it by kindness to animals, by courtesy to servants, and good manners to one another, and by helpfulness in all things.*

Helen Keller gives us this insight:

*Dark as my path may seem to others, I carry a magic light in my heart. Faith, the spiritual strong searchlight, illumines the way, and although sinister doubts lurk in the shadow, I walk unafraid toward the Enchanted Wood where the foliage is always green, where joy abides, where nightingales nest and sing, and where life and death are one in the presence of the Lord.*





## **Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life**

### **V. Our Contributors' Advice on Finding Our Calling and Learning the Meaning of Life**

Seek it and be patient. I started out just looking for a career. I was sure that I knew what I wanted to do by college -- to be a newspaper reporter. By the time I was 27 or 28, I knew there must be something more. I read my Bible and prayed a lot. I wrote out my prayers in a notebook, asking, "What am I for, Lord?" I expressed my frustrations and conflicting desires and dreams, then I got involved with the founding Christian school and forgot about my quest. I was too busy to think about it. Several years later -- in my mid 30's -- I came across that notebook and realized that God had answered my prayers. He has used me to help grow a Christian school against all odds and thus continues to use me now in my 50's. My calling is to love and honor God and to serve Him all of my days; to draw others to Him, especially my family, but also the school faculty, student body, families, friends, and others God brings my way.

*-- Marquita Moss, Austin, Texas*

Finding our calling is very different from avocations. Members of the church of Christ have shunned the idea of our pulpit minister being "called to preach." In contrast to this position, let me suggest that not only preachers, but indeed everyone should seek to know their calling. It is God who gives us talent. Even the "stick-to-itiveness" necessary to earn a college education should be viewed in humble thanksgiving. With the constant reliance upon our Heavenly Father, even through career changes, it will eventually lead us

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to find our calling. Happy is the man who is able to combine his calling with his occupation! A subject so grand as "the meaning of life" is beyond the scope of my wisdom. In fact, the elusiveness of this concept has caused others to make jokes in their inability to understand its totality. Even comedy movies have spoofed this subject. I must invoke the words of the world's wisest man: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

*-- Eric Hedden, Brunswick, Tennessee*

One New Year's Eve while reviewing my successes and failures from the previous year, and at the same time considering what goals to set for the next year, it occurred to me that Life is like a series of football seasons back to back. You seldom win all your games. Sometimes you don't have a winning season. But, by in large, you win most of the time. Every year is a new season. Last year's record doesn't really matter anymore and next year is something to plan for an occasion. The current season with its "next game" is what counts. Our goal should be to exit life with a winning record, because we have learned from our mistakes, and then stayed in each game until the clock ran out. Never give up on a worthwhile game plan. Keep setting goals.

*-- J. Vance Cox, Yucaipa, California*

I think we need to follow what comes naturally to us. I do not believe in "forcing" an attitude, or a belief, or a need on myself. I'm an awful teacher, and I don't appreciate being made to feel guilty that I'm not



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teaching Sunday School. But, I'm great at greeting, cooking, crying, laughing, sharing ... I've learned that God is really right...not everyone can do anything. Instead, focus and fine tune the things you do well, and do that for His glory! LIVE. Not for earthly life, but for ETERNAL life. I want to LIVE FOREVER.

-- Tom Hancock, Pasadena, Texas

*Life's most difficult problem is to keep clean of debt, dirt, and the devil all at the same time.*

I really believe that deep within our hearts lies a strong desire to become or do a "special something." As a child, I constantly daydreamed about having a Christian home, husband, many children, and writing a book. I never gave up on either the desire or the courage to seek out this "calling." Many people give in to failures much too quickly, ending the strong desire or calling of the heart. I believe so much good has never been achieved, because of lack of persistence or fear of failure.

Without God, life is pretty meaningless -- it is work, worry, save, buy, and then die. As I see it, life is here to enjoy, to worship, to serve, and to hope. We have been given life to do the very best possible, and to live in such a way that we may have eternal life. Much of life seems so futile at times, and the more spiritual we become, the more the worries of this life (the car you



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drive, the clothes you wear, the home you live in, the income you earn, the places you travel to) seem so totally senseless. In the end, when all is said and done, life is to worship and serve.

*-- Clara Hinton, Shanksville, Pennsylvania*

Begin early in life to look within ourselves for the talents and abilities God has given, be sensitive to the opportunities He provides, then put forth the effort to develop and use those talents and abilities for His glory and the good of others as well as ourselves. Be content with the plan God has for you. It would be just as ridiculous for an eagle to try to be a hummingbird as it would for a hummingbird to try to be an eagle. I believe that the true meaning of life may be drawn from passages of Scripture: Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

*-- Paul Easley, San Antonio, Texas*

My goal from my early years was to marry a Christian man and raise my family as Christians. My children and much of the grandchildren are Christians. Two sons are elders, song leaders, and teachers. My grandsons are song leaders and teachers. This kind of life will make a better world as the word of God is being taught. This is much more important than riches or fame. Do not measure yourself beside someone else because you'll be disappointed if you do. Look within yourself and find the things you're best at doing. It may only be your kindness and smile to others, an

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outstanding father or mother, a leader, or a good Samaritan. Then do with all your might the thing or the things that you're good at doing. God gave everyone at least one talent.

-- *Sallie Dawson, Sulphur Springs, Arkansas*

Be a good listener! God directs our path in many ways. Find out your talents. What do you get excited about? How do you spend your time now? Be ready to try new paths as you grow, even if they seem narrow and uncomfortable. Sometimes the one that feels like a comfortable shoe isn't God's calling. Pray about it! Life only has meaning when God is placed first in your life. He guides, challenges, directs, and comforts you in time of trouble. He gives a reason for being on this earth. Because of this meaning, you gain strength to accomplish the impossible.

-- *Carol Wilterdink, Aurora, Colorado*

The meaning of life as I see it is wonderful! The birth of a new born, the making and developing -- there is nothing like it in this world. God planned that. We should enjoy life. Do things that are right and not destroy ourselves with evil or wrong doings. What a wholesome life! Do many things and see lots everyday. Thank God. Try what we feel is to our liking and ability. If that isn't suited for me, try something else. But do something! Not everyone wants to be a doctor or can be a doctor. Not everyone wants or can be a ditch digger, but with God's help, we can and should find work. If we don't work, we don't eat.

-- *Jean Gregg, Little Rock, Arkansas*



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We're born into this world completely dependent on being taken care of until we begin to walk and talk. Then, we spend a whole lifetime walking and talking (we ought to be in great shape and really have something to say), and then we begin to decline, to go back to the almost completely dependent stage. Reach out. Stretch your limitations by praying, caring and doing.

-- Reba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas

*God gives us the ingredients for our daily bread, but He expects us to do the baking.*

Read the word! There is no "magical" voice that tells you what to do. It's in the word. As far as finding or developing your talents, try different areas of service and see what you enjoy and are good at, then make a commitment to serve. I measure the quality of life by who loves me. I have my husband (my one and only husband) and two children whom I know love and care deeply for me. Life is a temporary trip here to prepare us for an eternal journey in Heaven where hopefully those precious to us will all be reunited.

-- Tina Bigelow, Marshall, Minnesota

God has put all of us here for a purpose. Some roles may be bigger than others, but we're all in it together. Make the best out of what life has to offer. It all won't be good, but that's just part of the grand



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scheme of time. Finding your calling involves a relationship with you and God. Pray hard about it, but don't expect immediate answers. Just remember why we were all put on this earth to begin with: to glorify God and to show His example through the life we live.

*-- Opal Burton, Paragould, Arkansas*

Life is a gift from God, and when I leave this world, I shall return to Him. Meanwhile, I will try to conduct my life in a manner pleasing and acceptable in his sight, and talk to everyone I can about Jesus Christ and His plan of salvation for all people. If we get to know ourselves, our abilities, talents, our desires, and interests, then I believe after a while we will gravitate toward one particular goal or subject that catches our imagination. Inspiration plays a part in finding our calling as does fate sometimes.

*-- Margaret Garrett, Tucker, Georgia*

The meaning of life is "to love God." How you accomplish this is the meaning you get out of life. The example you show at work can show God's love. The family can show your love for God. Everything you do and say is an example of your love for God. The feeling that comes from a completed task should give you a sense of accomplishment. If there isn't satisfaction from the "doing," then it probably isn't a calling. Work is a means to an end, but you need to enjoy the work.

*-- Bill Sowell, Brandon, Mississippi*

The meaning of life as I see it: To live in such a way as to bring glory to God and point others toward Him as we come in contact with them. Leave a legacy,

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primarily through our children, that life might continue on in the same way after we are gone. Leave the world a better place because of the influence we have been. Branch out. Try a variety of things. Weed out the things that are not suited to your talents. Again, as in all things, seek the Lord's guidance. He will lead and open or shut doors according to His will for your life.

-- *Kathy Lacefield, Jacksonville, Arkansas*

"If one lacks wisdom, let him ask of God." James 1:5. Teachers at all levels often identify special talents in their students. Aptitude tests have been used successfully in identifying talents. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." (James 4:14) "I would so live as if I knew that I received my being only for the benefit of others." Seneca.

-- *Mr. and Mrs. Dean Carlton, Portland, Oregon*

First, we have all been called to serve God. Second, He gave us talents and abilities to use in serving Him. So, we need to look for the opportunity to serve the Lord with these things in mind. The proper vocational training in an area of interest and ability will help in finding your calling. Internships can be of value to help you determine if a particular field is really to your calling or not. Talk to your parents and other family members. Explore various fields. Most importantly, pray ... seek God's help and direction.

-- *Connie Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*

The meaning of life is for each of us to, "fear God and keep his commandments" in our own unique way



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(we are unique). The pattern, the plan, is the same for us all. Our lives are the unique part. How we take His truths and apply them to each moment is the meaning of life.

*-- Allen Holland, Munsford, Tennessee*

*The Lord gives us our faces, but we must provide the expression.*

The purpose of life is to develop a soul that is in fellowship with God. The duty of life is to fear God and keep his commandments. The joy of life is to live in love. The peace of life is to live in the center of God's will. Find what you enjoy. Find where your talents are. Find where the two meet. Look for open doors of opportunity. Pray a lot.

*-- Bill Watkins, Dolthan, Alabama*

My calling will be a time when I can become all that I am able to be, and to realize that no matter what I become it is very small compared to everything else around me and eternity. Without life, how could we know how much God loves us anyway? Evaluate your own strengths. Talk to people older than you for their advice. Consider what you would like in 20 years. Be aware of opportunity and be open to change.

*-- Ed Birch, Painesville, Ohio*

Achieve a contagious self esteem. Success is not so much "did I win," but rather, I did my best with hurt



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to no one. Life begins with God, and to Him we owe our allegiance. Pursue each activity with interest. Usually we find the greatest satisfaction in doing the things that benefit others. Be willing to change yet dependable at the same time.

*-- Virgil Gingrich, Roanoke, Illinois*

Life is boot camp to prepare us for Heaven ... Life is the period between the cradle and the grave in which we are to be tested, and refined, and also to grow in wisdom, faith, and power of God's calling for us as His children. We are pilgrims on a journey home. Learn to love to work. Learn to love others. Know that you can exercise great control over your own life and other lives in the way of creating happiness. Always seek God's will in whatever role you play.

*-- Gail Tomlinson, Senatobia, Mississippi*

Instead of working all week to get to the weekend, so you can do what you really enjoy, find a way to make what you really enjoy what you do as a vocation. Figure out the path, pray about it, remind yourself as often as you need to that you can do it, and then go for it. The meaning of life is to glorify God in all that we do, use our talents to serve others, set a good example, and raise our children as they should be raised.

*-- Kim Swiecicki, Portland, Maine*

Seek daily to be led by the Holy Spirit. Do the best you can at what you're involved with today. Look to improve in a broad range of areas that may lead to new experiences or opportunities. Be conformed to the image of Christ, maintain or establish a righteous line in

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your family, seek transparency, integrity, and significance in all you do.

-- Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas

Never give up. Keep striving to achieve your goals. Set goals in the first place. Don't get down on yourself. Keep searching for something you're very good at. Don't lose a sense of adventure and curiosity. The meaning of life to me is service, servanthood, and faithfulness to God and man.

-- Max Reiboldt, Alpharetta, Georgia

*God gave to man five senses: touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. The successful man has two more -- horse and common.*

The universe, the earth, its inhabitants, and we are just one of God's little projects. I love it when a plan comes together. Keep a broad and long range perspective of life and plan accordingly. Just keep searching. Pray a lot. Talk to older, wiser, and more experienced people.

-- Tom Gaskins, Jr., Palmdale, Florida

Faith and obedience are found in the same bundle. One who obeys God trusts God. One who trusts God obeys God. One is happiest who finds peace in God. Walk in the way God leads you, then you are prepared to find delight in wayside incidents.

-- Gloria Evins, Bartlett, Tennessee



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Seek out the things you really enjoy doing, that you feel you accomplish things doing. Believe in yourself, through the strength and power of God, and believe that we can accomplish all things.

*-- Roy and Cassandra Dickson, Bartlesville, Oklahoma*

There is no mysterious calling. We take what is present and do our very best. New opportunities keep presenting themselves and often prepare us for opportunities we never thought of earlier in our lives. We should let our light so shine that we glorify our father who is in Heaven: that is the meaning of life.

*-- Eugene Smith, Jr., Duncanville, Texas*

Worship and serve God. Try to make the world a little better. This can be done by making sure that each generation has the right goals in life. My life will be successful if my children love God and serve Him. Pray a lot, and listen to Him, and watch for Him to answer. Stay in God's word. This is the "meaning of life."

*-- Lois Jenkins, Prior Lake, Michigan*

We are only stewards of our earthly possessions. The way we use them and live our daily lives will determine our Eternal destiny. I believe God expects us to live full and abundant lives within His scriptural framework. Meaning of Life: Perceptiveness. Prayer. Pursuing.

*-- Eloise Muncy, Searcy, Arkansas*

Find our Calling: Pray. Listen to the Holy Spirit leading. Be creative with the talents God has given you. If others feel you have a talent in an area you



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have not been aware of, be open to the Holy Spirit working through other people to use you. Love and honor our Lord daily. Live to serve. This is the meaning of life.

*-- Kathy Seeber, Newberg, Oregon*

Life is what I choose to make it. I've learned that I do have control of my life. I've learned to live one day at a time giving the best that I have and leaving the rest in God's hands! Be true to yourself; look inside and figure out what you're all about. Do you do what you do because you want to, and feel conviction and not because that's what you feel someone else wants from you?

*-- Janie Barber, Batesville, Arkansas*

Do the best you can every moment of your life. Overcome your mistakes, and realize we are only on this earth for a short time, and that we need to use this life to prepare for the next life. The meaning of life: Pray. Know what our limitations are. Know what our strengths are. What would I like to do for the next 40 years?

*-- Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas*

A Christian will bloom where he is planted, so be prayerful about where the Lord needs you to be. Make sure you are open-minded, and look for where He gives you opportunities.

*-- Jeff Earnhart, St. Louis, Missouri*

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I believe we have an attraction for certain fields of endeavor. Determine what it is. Then pursue the knowledge that will make us proficient in that field. There are primary and secondary fields that could apply to most of us. At one time, I said life was to prepare ourselves for heaven. Now I believe we also have a job to defeat Satan in his endeavor to tear at Christ and destroy us.

-- Bob Little, Abingdon, Maryland

*The man who bows humbly before God is sure to walk uprightly before men.*

I believe that doing what you enjoy contributes to making people and things really better, but not necessarily bigger, faster, cheaper, or easier. The meaning of life as I see it is to obtain fellowship, or be reunited with God as it was originally planned, in the Garden of Eden, before the fall of man. That will be accomplished as revealed in Revelation 21.

-- Larry Moree, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Pray for guidance on the direction we should take. Look for ways we can serve using talents we have been given. Be flexible and able to go to Plan B. Carpe diem -- Seize the day. "Life is a short summer, man a flower." Since life is just a vapor, each day is precious. We should live it as if it were our last.

-- Janice Martin, Hope, Arkansas



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Seek to observe your gifts. Do the job at hand with cheerfulness. Trust God to open doors where you can serve. Do every thing without grumbling or complaining. During hard and unpleasant circumstances, trust that God is working for your good. Do the will of God so you can enjoy him forever. This is the meaning of life.

*-- Paul Knopp, Stauton, Virginia*

Pray, and ask God to lead you in whatever you do. It is impossible to go wrong with His guidance. Follow God, and put your trust in Him. Serve God while trying to survive. In all that you do, keep our eternal life in mind to help you get through this life.

*-- Ron Montague, Arvada, Colorado*

Life is a journey allowing us to prepare for our ultimate home in Heaven, if we are wise enough to accept its teachings. Pray for guidance. React to life's difficulties, and turn them to our advantage.

*-- Mrs. William Shadel, Savannah, Tennessee*

Life is a testing ground. Each of us was put here for a purpose. The test is finding that purpose and developing it with God's help. The meaning of life for me is perseverance, Philippians 3:14; growing in grace, II Peter 3:18; striving for perfection, Philippians 3:13; and prayer and supplication, Philippians 4:6.

*-- Cecile Key, Searcy, Arkansas*

Some of us are lucky; some are not. But God has given us all a chance, and life is what we make it. Even when our position is lowly, we can find God walking with



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us. I'm not sure that life is always that simple. For me, it meant pursuing a career that I really wanted, and since my job was so fun, it just seemed to be "my calling."

-- Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas

*God doesn't expect us to solve all the world's problems -- He only expects us not to create them.*

Finding my calling is to do all within my power to see that my family and I get to Heaven, and to take as many others that will listen and obey the Word of God.

-- Randy Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri

When we are born, we are very selfish. We must learn to forget self and rather serve others, which is the finest thing in life. Look for something you like to do, and try it for twelve months. If after that period of time you still like it, then you are probably there.

-- Jack Alexander, Mulberry, Arkansas

Life is a vapor. We get out of it what we put into it. It is a time of preparation for life eternal with God. We should live it as though we want eternal life and want others to enjoy it with us.

-- Lee Ashby, Granite City, Illinois

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Adapted from *Every Life a Plan of God*, by Batsell Barrett Baxter :

1. Are you able to do what you think your calling is?
2. Do you have an overpowering desire to do it?
3. Do others think you can do it?
4. Are circumstances (God's providence) cooperating so you can do it?
5. Pray, Look, and Listen.

Glorify God. Live to the praise of His glory. To me, this is the meaning of life.

-- *Dwight A. Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*

Look into yourself to decide what career you really want. Always remember to put God first. Each choice we make in our every day life helps us come to our real calling. Service to God and our fellow man -- I consider this the meaning of life.

-- *Mildred Horton, Midvale, Idaho*

Listen, try out different things, and learn as much as possible about those things you are interested in. Ask for God's guidance in your decision making. It's hard to sum it up any better than the wise man, Solomon. "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

-- *Alton Howard, West Monroe, Louisiana*

Keep opening doors and be willing to try new things, relating to jobs and careers. Spiritually, our calling will come if we keep the Lord first. Glorify God in all that you do.

-- *Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*



## **Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life**

I think our calling finds us. We don't even need to look for it if we just keep moving in a direction. Then feel forward, and we will bump into it. The meaning of life: To learn and contribute to future life.

*-- John Sparks, Kirkwood, Missouri*

Never, never, never stop growing! The rich young ruler was condemned because he suggested that he would stop growing! The meaning of life: Look for it; try different things; keep a wide base of preparation.

*-- Jimmy Behel, Searcy, Arkansas*

We were put here to replenish the earth, and have dominion over the other animals, and above all, worship God and glorify his name. Prayer and much soul searching is the meaning of life.

*-- Bob Wright, Judsonia, Arkansas*

Give our hearts to God, and allow Him to guide us where He knows we will be the best and the happiest. Fellowshiping with God is the meaning of life.

*-- Danny and Barbara Hayes, Searcy, Arkansas*

It makes a launching pad for eternity. Know that success is directly proportional to the level of preparation.

*-- Jackson Coker, Atlanta, Georgia*

Maintain an open mind and willingness to change. Be ready to accept the challenge when opportunity knocks. Serve God by serving man.

*-- Danny Skipper, Tyler, Texas*



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Early in life, ask God to direct your thoughts and efforts along the lines He prefers for you. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself.

-- Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Altig, Long Beach, California

*Life's heaviest burden is to have nothing to carry.*

Get to know the One who is calling you. He knows what He has created you to do.

-- Mrs. John Coon, Searcy, Arkansas

We are here to give glory to God. Life has meaning as we fulfill that purpose.

-- Susan French, Sarasota, Florida

I believe that we should live one day at a time. Make that day happy for you and others.

-- Sarah Nell Pomerenk, Memphis, Tennessee

We can find our calling through our struggles, conflicts, and interactions with others. I try to live my life in such a way that others may see Christ working in me.

-- Peggy Usery, Grenada, Mississippi

Find what you do exceptionally well, and do that for the benefit of others. Share the joy of Christ in someone else's life.

-- Ken Dunn, Monticello, Arkansas

## **Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life**

Enjoy life and people. Please God. Let the Spirit work in us, and He will guide us to the point where we will know what we should do.

*-- Joe Stork, Doraville, Georgia*

There is no meaning to life, but only meaning in each life individually chosen. Be quiet. Be serious. Be interspective. Do not live or chase an illusion.

*-- Gus Reynolds, Edgmont, Arkansas*

We find our calling by searching the scripture and letting the work guide us. The meaning of life is to be content with one's lot in life.

*-- J.D. Williams, Newport, Arkansas*

Finding our calling is to live for the Lord, and the way will be shown to you. The meaning of life is a journey to obey His commandments, so you can have life forever.

*-- Bert Jones, Hawkins, Texas*

Our calling is to prepare ourselves and others for death and real life thereafter. Focusing on what we do well at, and what others tell us we are good at, is the meaning of life.

*-- Holly Cooper, Grand Jct., Colorado*

Find your calling through prayer and hard work. Remember, retirement is only mentioned once in the Bible, and then as punishment. Prepare yourself and your family today to live with God throughout eternity.

*-- Bill Cox, Rowlett, Texas*



## **Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life**

Check all doors that open to you. Let God close them if He chooses. Live as God wants us to, so that we have eternity with Him.

*-- Ron Keeth, Westminster, Colorado*

Trust God to lead you to the work He has for you to do. Pray and listen! The meaning of life is to bring Glory to God throughout all of your life.

*-- Debbie Poss, Judsonia, Arkansas*

The attempt by man to live within the will of God as set forth in the Bible.

*-- Stanley Keown, Chattanooga, Tennessee*

Finding our calling is to determine if we pass the test for eternal life. The meaning of life is to search; be adventuresome.

*-- Don Helms, Russellville, Arkansas*

Have many experiences, and do much, and then choose. This, to me, is finding my calling. I don't know the meaning of life.

*-- Tom Thompson, Clarkston, Michigan*

Start at a young age seeking the Lord. To seek the Lord's will in your life, and to follow His will as closely as we are able is the meaning of life.

*-- Bill Renton, Stuarts Draft, Virginia*

Pray. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. We're here to bring glory to God.

*-- Robert H. Lewis, Sr., Nashville, Tennessee*



## Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life

Set your goal on heaven and pursue it. Fear God and keep his commandments.

-- *Sheryl Rainwater, Jay, Oklahoma*

Continually ask for and seek God's wisdom. Be useful to God and others.

-- *William Waugh, Dallas, Texas*

*As one travels down the highway of life, it becomes evident that there are far more toll roads than freeways.*

The true meaning of life is a great mystery!

-- *Roy and Cassandra Dickson, Bartlesville, Oklahoma*

Serve God first, others next.

-- *James O. Pennington, M.D., Ola, Arkansas*

Life in preparation for eternity is finding our calling.  
The meaning of life: Prayer, assessment of abilities.

-- *Don Shackelford, Searcy, Arkansas*

Through prayer and self-assessment, we will find our calling. To seek the will of God and obey it is the meaning of life.

-- *Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas*

Do your best and trust in the Lord.

-- *Ed Bethune, Searcy, Arkansas*

Serve God and man.

-- *J. Bill Harris, Searcy, Arkansas*

## Finding Our Calling -- The Meaning of Life

### SUMMARY

Freedom -- whether spiritual, intellectual, political, or economical -- is indivisible. People who enjoy private economic freedom have greater liberty to search for intellectual truth and personal spiritual growth in all its variety.

As a private enterprise educator, I have spent my life encouraging people to join me in preserving and spreading the word about the human side of free enterprise, so that those of us who have been blessed so abundantly can commit ourselves to leaving our country and our way of life a little better for the next generation than it was when we found it.

I want to go on record that the successful pursuit of a professional career in business, in education, or in any other honorable vocation is inherently consistent with a righteous life. Furthermore, I believe the close adherence to New Testament principles enhances -- not hinders -- the probability of professional success.

In the course of the last 26 years of teaching economics to young people, and in order to be sure we're keeping them on the *"straight and narrow,"* I make it a point to include the following question at some point in one of their multiple choice examinations:



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*If you gained the whole world and lost your soul, you would:*

- a. be a fat cat*
- b. be a big-man-on-campus*
- c. have made an excellent trade off*
- d. have made a poor bargain indeed*

(If you did not pick the last option from the above choices, please start again at the beginning of this topic.)

I sometimes kid my students by saying that “... *you have to be an Economist to go to heaven.*” Far from it, actually. What I do want for them is that they consider “*going into their Father’s business,*” whatever their vocation.

We must be honest with ourselves regarding earthly riches. I hope that they don’t really believe that they can convert it all to traveler’s checks and take it with them. Neither can the unbeliever, not even in an asbestos-lined suitcase.

If you would chance to visit my office, you would see that I collect plaques that quote bits of time-honored wisdom (and maybe even some occasional humor). One of my favorites is this one which helps us with our priorities:

*Yesterday is a cancelled check  
Tomorrow is a promissory note  
Only today is ready cash*



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*How would you spend it. If it were  
the last shopping day you had  
left?*

Herein, I have tried to give the reader some of the possible keys to God's storehouse of wealth. If this topic can contribute to helping you unlock the true wealth that comes from righteousness, and thus make life pleasant and eternity happy, then my purpose shall have been fulfilled.

Remember that real charity doesn't care if it's tax deductible or not. If you do it right, with good integrity and stewardship, there's no reason why fulfilling one's self and making money hand-over-fist can't be synonymous. Be the laborer who is worthy of his hire. Be worth your sodium chloride.



## VI. ENJOYING TRUE RELIGION AND GAINING INNER RENEWAL

In 1787, James Madison's illustrious political career almost came to an abrupt, early end when he broke an important promise to the religious people of Virginia. He had promised to get the "*free exercise of religion*" written into the Constitution, but he changed his mind. Patrick Henry and George Mason branded him to be unreliable and unfit for election to public office because of that one scandalous broken promise.

Consequently, Madison promised the preachers and voters that he would never break his promise again and that he would work hard to correct his mistake. There are those who say that the incident resulted in our First Amendment liberties, and possibly the entire Bill of Rights!

The lesson? Politicians in any country do their best only when the decent voters of the land level with them. Edmond Burke said it best, "*The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.*"

A half century later, Alexis De Tocqueville journeyed to the United States in an attempt to discover the secret of democracy. He wanted to know what it was that made the democratic experiment in the New World a success.



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He visited our people in the mines, in the fields, in the forests, and in the great halls of commerce. But he wrote that, *"Not until I went into the churches of America and saw her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good -- and if America ever ceases to be good, it will cease to be great."*

American church religion, he wrote is "... a political institution which powerfully contributes to the maintenance of a democratic republic among the Americans ..." by supplying a strong moral consensus amidst continuous political change.

The main passage dealing expressly with civil government is Romans 13:1-7:

*Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

*For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from*

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*fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.*

*Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment, but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.*

Christians are strangers and sojourners on this earth. All of us are but passing through; none of us are staying. We look to the city whose builder is God. Our citizenship is in heaven. We also have earthly responsibilities. There is a duty to Caesar as well as to God. In fact, in the duty which we owe to God, He has bound on us obedience to civil government.

This chapter is not about the plan of salvation. However, it is a good requisite starting point to securing the goal cited in our chapter's title:



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1. *Hear -- Rom. 10:17*
2. *Believe -- Jno. 8:24*
3. *Repent -- Luke 13:3*
4. *Confess Christ -- Matt. 10:32-33*
5. *Be Baptized -- Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, Acts 22:10 & 16*
6. *Continued faithfulness to Christ -- Rev. 2:10*

That's it in a nutshell. We make our peace with our Creator on His terms, and then try to live with His Word in our heart and on our lips. Our contributors have provided a wealth of advice here; test it against the scriptures of the New Covenant -- may we all live as to neither regret yesterday nor fear tomorrow.

Sometimes our own young people rationalize their behavior by saying, "*Well, I'm only human.*" Only human? Do we know what we're saying? We are the best of God's creation -- a royal people -- made in His image. We are the only ones who can think His thought, the only ones who will survive this planet. We live, move, and have our very being because of God. That's the "*Good News*" we want to pass on to our young people.

We, their learning partners, believe that the honorable pursuit of a professional career in education, in science, in business, or in any other area, is consistent with a righteous life. We want so much for our young people to be



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able to discern right-from-wrong, wise-from-unwise, good-from-bad, righteousness-from-unrighteousness. It is important to remember that the greatest of all gifts is the power to estimate things at their true worth.

We want them to plan their lives to take advantage of the uniqueness that church leadership positions will provide them. We want them to continue to develop their identity with the Restoration Movement. We ask them to accept their Brethren as well as they will come to accept their mate -- not only because of, but in spite of. Be partners with God in all that you do.

All the while they are with us, we encourage our young people to develop a set of convictions that will guide them through any situation or temptation. Be worthy -- not worldly. Develop a quick conscience.

Going away to college gives our young people a taste of "*Freedom!*" Freedom is a great thing, but freedom isn't just the right to do as we please. It is "*... the opportunity to please do that which is right.*" So said former Chaplain of the Senate, Peter Marshall.

And if young people are in my Economics class, I try to convince them that money should not be in First Place in life. It should be in Fifth Place, behind God, integrity, family, and

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country. If money is in First Place, then we should have pronounced on us that Old Middle East Curse: *"May you make a million dollars -- may you spend it all on doctors."*

There is also a difference between *"filthy lucre"* and just plain *"lucre."* One is ill-gotten gain. The other is honest money earned honorably with integrity and stewardship.

And this is what I say to our young people on behalf of all Moms and Dads. We who are parents do apologize for not always being there. We've had to work so hard and long to try to pave the way for a bright and promising future for them. Sure, it has been frustrating for all of us. But here's how we hope to make it up to them in the decades that follow -- We're going to be terrific Grandparents.

Our young people have completed the First Quarter of the human race. And at this point, they are ahead! But it is an awfully long trip through Eternity, and we do want them to make it as sure as they can. We know our young people have committed the Golden Rule to memory; they must now commit it to life, for they are long on desire but short on experience. Our desire is that they, and we all, may view every day, every effort, every activity in the context of Christian living.



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We're all involved in Christian Education. Now, I could say, *"But, I'm not a Bible teacher. I teach Macro- and Micro-Economics, Comparative Economic Systems, and Economic History of the U.S. Therefore I'm not really involved in the actual process of Christian education."* But I am -- in a real and most vital way! It is in my teaching of the secular subjects that the student gains the Christian perspective. The principles of the Bible become the principles of life indeed!

For example, if I am an instructor of economics, though I do not actually teach the Bible as a text, it is in my showing of the relationship of economics to Christ's teachings that the student obtains the Christian view of economics. Unless we who teach secular subjects in Christian schools relate those subjects to Christ, we fail our unique position as a teacher in a Christian school. Students can obtain business and economics, and all other secular subjects at any state college at a lower cost.

I want my students to develop an indomitable spirit that they can achieve anything. That's the theme of the book of Ecclesiastes: enjoy life, and never break with God. I remind them that although it's great to be young, it is their responsibility to outgrow it (try outgrowing old age). They must learn from the mistakes of others. They won't live long



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enough to make them all themselves -- as resourceful as some of them are behind our backs.

My goal for them is the same that I have for the Diffine young people -- I want them to be successful and go to Heaven forevermore. Live and enjoy, I tell them -- And remember that the only purpose for your being here on Earth is to determine where you will spend Eternity.

Our desire is that they view every day, every effort, every activity, every dream, and every aspiration in the context of Christian living ... so that every facet of their lives is knit together in a harmonious, continuous, and consistent system of values.

In Economics, I also tell them that poor people (or poor nations) can't help poor people (or poor nations). Prosperous people (or prosperous nations) can help poor people (or poor nations), as we give out of our abundance and love. Getting involved in people's lives takes time and money earned through exercising marketable skills.

We admonish students not to leave their religion behind when they leave and enter a not-so-lovable world, desperately in need of the "Good News" they have. We instill in them that we all were created to love God. And if they

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don't, nothing can fill the hollow, emptiness inside.

Our lives as teachers encourage students to be partners with God in all that they do. We realize that our students are often long on desire but short on experience. We realize that most students want to know what's right, even if some are indifferent about doing it. We plead for purity in all things, that they may truly be the famed "*back to the Bible*" people. We know they have committed the Golden Rule to memory; here, we try to get them to commit it to life.

We try to be the kind of teacher we'd want our children to have (without neglecting our own families in the process). We know that these years are crucially important in determining their future direction. Generally what they are now is what they will become. Four years from now, they will be products of the books they read ... the people they meet, etc.

We are aware that some of them still falsely believe there is no life after death. And life, to them, has become a very cruel joke. We tell them that there is a God, and man is His child. And we will all die someday, because our mother and father were human. We will live someday, because our Father in Heaven is Eternal.



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We remind our young people that there are 1001 ways in the work-a-day-world to slip across Christian principles to others we meet, before they can realize what has happened. We ask them to judge everything that is said, written, and done -- judge it all by the Book of Books. There are so many issues today, but they all come back to one -- the authority of the scriptures.

We try to remind our students that there's a "*Christian way*" to do everything we need to do. We can do the right thing with the wrong attitude, and it won't be Christian. We always stress that integrity is in short supply and in very Great Demand. (It's a seller's market!) We constantly remind them that the best thing in life is to be a Christian -- there's nothing quite like it. It's better than anything else.

And with our help, encouragement, and prayers, hopefully none of them will need to be ashamed of yesterday, nor fearful of tomorrow. We have a guarantee that no hostile power in our universe can lead the Christian away from God. Adversaries may advance, maybe even in pairs, but God's love is so great that we have full and complete salvation when we are found in Christ. This is Romans 8:35-39:



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35. *Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*
36. *(As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.)*
37. *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.*
38. *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor to come,*
39. *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

So, if God is for us, and Jesus is our advocate at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, who shall separate us from the love that so guards us. Shall we let the things brought upon us discourage, dishearten, and turn us back, and cause us to forfeit these

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honors and glories purchased for us by the blood of Jesus Christ, our redeemer? Surely not.

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### **Our Contributor's Advice on Enjoying True Religion and Gaining Inner Renewal**

True religion is a religion of total submission to a higher authority -- God. It is also a religion of service to others. It is very easy to become smug and quite comfortable in our "good living", so that we forget to serve others, thereby teaching them not just in word, but indeed what Christianity truly is. I believe selfishness, laziness, and a lack of total surrender to God are some major hindrances to our having "true religion." Many of us go through life with a "stunted growth" in the area of religion. Giving of ourselves, really giving of our time, talents, money, and our all is difficult to achieve! And very few of us ever do really achieve that level of "true religion."

Spiritual awareness comes by knowing God. The best way to know God is through His word and by talking with Him in prayer. The more we know God and His ways, the more "spiritual awareness" we will have. This earth and all of the worldly ties that trap us and grip us so tightly will not have such a hold the more we become aware of God. My strongest counsel in this area is study, study, study the word of God, and truly pray without ceasing. Make God real -- not some far off fantasy that we may or may not really believe in.

Probably inner renewal is a bit different for every person. It may come as a result of a series of problems that have drawn us closer to God, or by the birth of a child, or the conversion of a loved one. For myself, inner renewal comes and goes with life situations. I am



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more "renewed" during a very "high" in my life or right after a "crisis" that God has helped me through. The renewal itself comes mainly from reading God's word, prayer, and remembering the workings of God in my life. It is so important to see God in nature, in all of His creation, and to constantly thank Him for all He has done. That truly renews me day by day.

-- Clara Hinton, Shanksville, Pennsylvania

With all the corruption of televangelism and religiously war-torn countries, many earnest individuals are asking what is true religion? They are seeking a purified form, stripped from all the glitz, not adulterated by power-mongering. James 1:27 says, "Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." How can I improve that concept?

Awareness is the key to success in any endeavor. I believe the popular phrase of this generation for the concept of being aware is involved in the notion of "being focused." Athletes may improve their own relationship to the game by seeking individual training or coaching. Members of an orchestra are encouraged to watch the conductor and become more aware of how their part fits into the whole. In both the above examples, practice, practice, practice increases the focus. The same holds true for increasing spiritual awareness. Hours and hours spent with the Word of God, coupled with daily practice of its principles, is the only way toward true awareness.

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Many have trouble with the concept of the trials of life bringing about Godly patience (James 1:2, 3). Peter was told he would "be sifted as wheat." Upon emerging from this experience, was his inner man not renewed? Maybe this concept of patience will be better understood if thought of as "waiting upon the Lord." But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint, (Isaiah 40:31). Without looking to God and successfully overcoming trials, I believe no inner renewal can take place.

— Eric Hedden, Brunswick, Tennessee

*Some people's religion is like a wooden leg. There is neither life nor warmth in it; although it helps them to hobble along, it never becomes a part of them, but has to be strapped on every morning.*

True religion is not an appendage of ritual on our lives. It is the day to day conscious and unconscious acknowledgment that it is God's ruling in mercy, truth, justice, and love. It is the giving over of our lives to that rule and the conforming of our actions to the character of the ruler.

1. You must be born again. John 3:3 -- "Unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."



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1 Corinthians 2:14 -- "The man without the Spirit does not accept things that come from the Spirit." 2. You must feed the spirit as opposed to the flesh. John 3:6 -- "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." Deuteronomy 8:3 -- "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." Prayer, worship, Bible studies, and spending time with other believers all contribute.

Inner renewal is what I feel each Lord's Day. Monday is my favorite day because I have a fresh, new start and an opportunity to correct the mistakes of last week. I try to be positive because I know our "attitude determines our altitude." I want to renew myself because Heaven is a goal I try to keep ever before me.

-- Susan French, Sarasota, Florida

Be yourself, be true to God, be true to yourself, and learn all you can from others. Investigate all teaching by searching scriptures before you take someone's word for it. Then, not only is worship necessary, but you must also put into practice the things you learn by teaching, giving, and working to relieve others who are suffering from illness, hunger, or anything that someone needs. Do those things that you're good at doing. Pray without ceasing. My greatest help has been to attend as many lectureships as possible, go to all good gospel meetings, read good books by good men and women, and study what they say and what the Bible says. That has and does help me understand better how God and the Holy Spirit works in my life.



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Some of these things I was never taught and did not understand. The Bible is clearer to me, and I'm closer to God now than I was. There's nothing better than attending a lectureship at colleges, or elsewhere to build you up. The messages are wonderful and being with brothers and sisters from all over the world is just a tiny bit of Heaven. You don't always agree with all you hear, but you're better for going and listening.

-- Sallie Dawson, Sulphur Springs, Arkansas

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as your self. There is no greater commandment than this." Mark 12:30-31. The growing of spiritual muscle is one of the great challenges of Christian living. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," Romans 8:19. Spiritual growth requires constant reference to the resources available. I join Apostle Paul who stated, "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength."

An important component of inner renewal calls for self examination. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," Proverbs 23:7. "Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things," Phil. 4:8. Receive constant encouragement from Christian friends.

-- Mr. and Mrs. Dean Carlton, Portland, Oregon

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Inner renewal is God's work in our lives. We can only change the outside. Inner renewal is actually a completed work, finished on the cross. II Corinthians 5:17, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come." We must only incorporate the truth of God in our lives instead of picking through the world's psychology. We must find God's truth in His word about who we are in Christ, hold it to be true for us if we are indeed a child of God, and then, "Let go and let God."

Inner renewal is what I feel each Lord's day. Christ took time for Himself to be with God and to rest. Sometimes a few moments will do, or a couple hours, or maybe a couple days. Recognize that our God made the world, made man, all the different animals, and all the different colors and shapes of flowers. Take time to be with God and enjoy His gifts with Him.

Don't get caught up in traditions of men. Recognize what is of man and what is of God. If you can't separate the two, you will have much difficulty in knowing God as He would have you know Him. We can't give God glory if we are glorifying men. Get to know God, Christ, and the Spirit. Make sure they are walking along with you. Love them with all your heart, mind, and soul. Pay attention to what is taking place in your life, and you will see the handiwork of God.

*-- Bob Little, Abingdon, Maryland*

Inner Renewal is very important. Most of us rarely, if ever, completely spend ourselves, but a "reviving," a "refreshing," is necessary almost on a daily basis.



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Identify your times, moments, and places that invite you to relax or rejoice. Make sure you indulge yourself regularly. One of my inner renewals is the 4 p.m. shadow of the sun as it comes through my living room lace curtains, the click of my central heat as it warms my home, and a mug of melted cocoa to be enjoyed with the incredible beauty and wisdom of the scriptures.

To be renewed, we have to learn to be thankful for our blessings, and to know that after a time of enjoying, we will “go therefore into all the world and enlighten (teach).” Often I am lazy and procrastinate, and have good intentions, but these don’t really warm anyone else do they? The meaning of life is for each of us to “Fear God and keep His commandments” in our own unique way (we are unique). The pattern and the plan is the same for us all. Our lives are the unique part. How we take His truths and apply them to each moment is the meaning of each life.

*-- Janece Holland, Munsford, Tennessee*

*Sometimes a nation abolishes God, but, fortunately, God is more tolerant.*

There are many religions in the world, but the inspired word of God says there is one -- one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There is one name, Jesus Christ, Son of God, by which salvation is possible. Read and search the scriptures for yourself, and judge the spirits by them. Read God’s word, and pray daily for a better understanding of his words and will. Let the



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spirit of Christ dwell in you richly and your faith will become stronger and stronger, enabling you to resist the efforts of the evil one. Rid yourself of any thoughts or habits that would hinder you from glorifying Christ in your life. Make some quiet time for yourself. Hear the Word of God as often as you can. Fill your mind and soul with it, and let your conversation be guided by the Spirit. Worship with and socialize with Christians.

*-- Margaret Garrett, Tucker, Georgia*

Go to the source. Find out what God had to say on the matter. Don't rely on the opinions of your parents, your friends, your children, your spouse, or even your minister. After all, they won't have to answer for your life someday. You will! Give yourself a break and allow yourself to relax. Read the Bible, and share with someone how you felt the day you became a Christian. Listen to hymns, go to a retreat, or a marriage enrichment seminar. Ask your parent, child, or spouse to articulate what they love about you. Set in on a class of small children learning about God. Read inspirational books. Volunteer in a homeless or battered women shelter. Invite a stranger for a meal or family holiday. Read the Bible. Take your dog to visit the aged in a nursing home. Ask a co-worker to go to church with you.

*-- Kim Swieciki, Portland, Maine*

"If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but he deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God is this -- visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and keep yourself unspotted from the world," (James 1:26, 27). People will not know we are

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Christians by how many church services we attend or whether we have a piano or not, etc. They will know us by our love and what comes forth from our lips.

There's no substitute for study. Also, surround yourself with Godly people. Paul said, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." Listen to the counsel of the wise (also, making sure you check what they say against what God says). There are inspirational books, tapes, and speakers. "Be still and know that I am God." "Restore unto me the joy of my salvation," (Psalms 51:12) -- How? "Be still and know that I am God," (Psalms 46:10). We get so busy with the necessary things of life that we forget the most important things. Stop, reflect, and be convinced again of the majesty and wonder of God. Be still; get away from the "merry-go-round" of every day, if only briefly.

-- Tina Bigelow, Marshall, Minnesota

*The most uncomfortable person on earth is one who has just enough religion to make him uneasy and not enough to make him happy.*

Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and he will manifest myself to him." I believe the commandments there are those of the New Covenant which are written on the heart and mind, and that deal



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with what God wants us to be and to do with our lives; and that affect our day to day decisions. When we are sensitive to the impulses of the Spirit and follow them, I believe we may expect manifestation. The manifestations are only for those who keep the commandments, and are not for publication."

Inner renewal begins with the new birth of which Jesus spoke. After that, we must follow Paul's admonition when he said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God," Romans 1:1, 2. That requires making the Bible our daily companion, praying for illumination and practical application of its teachings, and being sensitive to the leading of the Spirit. I think Micah stated it well when he said, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" Micah 6:8

*-- Paul Easley, San Antonio, Texas*

Submit to God and be at peace with Him, Job 22:21. As your faith weakens, remember that you are only normal, and that life is full of difficult times that God knows one can withstand. Your faith will rebound, and you will ultimately achieve wisdom and an understanding of "true religions."



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"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths," (Proverbs). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit," Galatians 5:22, 25. Only through prayer and by putting to rest our guilt will we find inner renewal. We must follow our hearts and do things that we know are "right." To maintain a renewed feeling, we must talk about our struggles.

*-- Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas*

True religion is not merely an outward exhibition of worship. True religion comes from the heart. It is not merely knowing about God, but knowing God by drawing close to Him through prayer, meditation, study, and the lives of fellow Christians. To gain spiritual awareness, a person needs to desire knowledge and growth in order to be open to receive it when it is gained through study or through the insight of fellow Christians. Inner renewal is gained from a sense of hunger to want to be closer to God. It can be achieved through study, life-changing experiences, and listening to the wisdom of others.

*-- Peggy Usery, Grenada, Mississippi*

There is indeed one true and living God who is both a loving Father and a religious judge. He has preserved His word, the Bible, through the centuries as the inspired Guidebook. In it we find the truths and commands to believe and obey. Both the promises and the consequences are found in this Book of Books. Wise is he who heeds. Look at nature around you.

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Perceive the miracle of conception and birth. Contemplate the way our bodies work in such intricate detail. There has to be a God, and He is a Spirit, for we cannot see Him. Read the book of Job, especially the last few chapters! You will become aware of a power greater than yourself. Read and meditate on God's word. Therefore, come to the realization of who we are in relationship to Him. Realize that while we are failures, He still loves us and accepts us once we come to Him in repentance to be renewed to begin anew each and every day, through the grace of Jesus Christ and what He died for, to take our place.

*-- Kathy Lacefield, Jacksonville, Arkansas*

Complete honesty with self, willingness to learn different principles; i.e. gain a better and more accurate understanding of God's will and not having a closed mind helps one to find inner renewal. Try to avoid preconceived interpretation when studying the Bible. Study to see what the Bible really teaches instead of trying to prove up prior teachings. Get to know yourself by facing your strengths and your weaknesses. Forgive yourself. Forgive others. Develop a deep, spiritual relationship with a friend. Finally, let go. Just let go. The inner renewal that works for me is quiet time. Try to get some aside. Mine is in the morning before others awaken and while I'm out walking. Take time alone to think about life, God, and our purpose on earth. Count your blessings.

*-- Danny Skipper, Tyler, Texas*

For the category of "True Religion" -- Don't question too much... I guess I can talk. I never lost a child, a



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husband, or even my mom and dad. But, I have been through many tests, and my husband and I have suffered many times, and one thing we have found out is that down the road, maybe 2 years or 10, we will understand why it all happened. And without exception, we have found God's hand was working in our lives. For the category of "Inner Renewal" -- Do not become bitter. Bitterness over circumstances for which we have no control is a real killer. It kills peace of mind, it kills the healing process, and it eats your insides away. I know from whence I speak. When one needs to be renewed, I have found that it really is true that starting in the pit and slowly working your way out is the most complete and cleansing renewal one can achieve.

-- Mrs. Tom Hancock, Pasadena, Texas

*True religion can be both a steering wheel and brakes; it can guide you along the right road and stop you at the wrong one.*

Seek and maintain friendship with God, and know Him. Accept God's gift of adoration by grace. Do the loving thing in every situation, even if it is tough love. Make yourself a part of a body of Christians, and make that a priority. Become a part of a small Bible study group. Learn to be honest with self and God. Refuse to be deceived about your own power or your own goodness. Take a long look at your own helplessness in the universe. Know every minute that Satan is at work. Draw close to God in prayer, study, and



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meditation. Praise and worship our Maker. Read Psalms and Proverbs. Remind yourself that God loves you and will never forsake you.

*-- Gail Tomlinson, Senatobia, Mississippi*

To find true religion, look in the person's heart. Are they striving to obey Jesus and live like Jesus? Is Jesus important every day in their life? Do they strive to be a servant or to be served? Are they honoring others with respect, love, and sharing Jesus' love? To aid in spiritual awareness, have a daily Bible study. Prayer is a life. Listen only when others expect you to. For inner renewal, use of your talent. Devotion to God, prayer, and daily commitment all lead to inner renewal.

*-- Kathy Seeber, Newberg, Oregon*

True religion is as defined by James, keeping a tight reign on the tongue, visiting the widows and orphans in their affliction, and keeping oneself unspotted from the world. Help others and don't let the world's values suck us into the whirlpool of self destruction. Trust in the Lord, worship Him in Spirit and Truth, and try to be "real." Fill one's life with spiritual "food" and influences, Christian friends, uplifting thoughts, Christian magazines, wholesome music, and movies. Dwell on things that will build us and others up, and avoid things that will tear us down.

*-- Janice Martin, Hope, Arkansas*

Accept the authority of God in matters of religion and morality. Love everyone as God loved us. Don't defile the body which is the temple of the spirit that God has given Him children. Study always (the scriptures).

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Let God do the speaking. Acknowledge that there needs to be a renewal, learn what needs to be changed, and then work on it.

-- Lee Ashby, *Granite City, Illinois*

How I wish I had learned the beauty and freedom found in God's law at an earlier age. I used to be skeptical of the Psalmist in regard to Psalm 119. But as the years pass, and I see how God has blessed and protected me through His word, I share the Psalmists' joy. I see the lives of friends and acquaintances who insisted on grinding their own footsteps, and I hurt for the unnecessary disasters they found. This is an old simple formula, but it works: discipline in prayer, Scripture reading, meditation, service to others, and hard work.

-- Marquita Moss, *Austin, Texas*

*Religion should be the motor of life, the central heating plant of personality, the faith that gives joy to activity, hope to struggle, dignity to humility, and zest to living.*

Be open to the Holy Spirit. Don't try to pretend you have no sin. Let God examine your heart. He can already see through it, so come to Him humble and willing to learn. Sometimes the lessons are hard, but they can be so sweet and precious when we are willing.



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All God wants to do is love us and give us the very best. If you are sincere and willing, you will have no problem gaining spiritual awareness. For spiritual awareness, have a personal relationship with God. To increase inner renewal, read the Bible, and get to know your Savior. Don't just be told about Jesus, but experience Him.

-- *Danny and Barbara Hayes, Searcy, Arkansas*

A great deal can be gained from a regular study of the scriptures. Even the basic beliefs looked at again will heighten your spiritual awareness. Discussions with other people about what you believe and why will increase your spiritual awareness. If you can, make time early in the morning to read scripture and reflect on it. If you can, tie the reflection time into an early morning walk or jog. There is no better way to prepare yourself and renew your strength to face the world. Live your life (at work, at home, or in the community) so that by your life they will know you are a Christian. The deeds you do and how you deal with people will show your true religion.

-- *Bill Sowell, Brandon, Mississippi*

Romans 12:1 and 2, "Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing, and perfect will." True religion is more practical than spiritual (James 1:27). True religion is not so much a



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philosophy as it is a way of life. True religion is always active. Realize God is everywhere. Realize that everywhere you go, God is already there. Realize that everything is a spiritual test. Realize there is a spirit made in the image of God. Realize that only spiritual things last.

*-- Bill Watkins, Dolthan, Alabama*

Ask God to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Seek to get a fresh word from God. Daily renew your mind by setting it on God's word. "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God," Matthew 4:14. You will not find life except in Jesus Christ and being related to Him, for "In Him is life," John 1:4. In His prayer Jesus said, "Now this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent," John 17:3. Know that God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must do so in Spirit and truth. Let the word of Christ live in you by meditating on it.

*-- Paul Knopp, Staunton, Virginia*

We can see the difference between the good people of God, the evil doers, and people of the devil. We should be made aware quickly of what we should be doing and with whom we should associate. We must use our road map (the Bible) from earth to Heaven. What the scripture says, do! Not what some men say! The devil is destroying true religion. We must read, study, and then obey the word of God. Study the Bible, and attend as many Bible classes as possible. Pray for help each day to guide our thoughts and our ways.

*-- Jean Gregg, Little Rock, Arkansas*

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Read and meditate in God's Word. Be willing to put into practice what you read. Read a wide variety of Christian authors. Compare what they say with what the word says. Eat the hay, leave the sticks, and be open to the fullness of what God may have for you. Don't put God in a box (denominationally). Be ready to move with God when the cloud moves. Spend quality quiet time every morning when possible with God. True renewal can only come from a daily vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ.

*-- Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas*

*Why is it that so many church members who say "Our Father" on Sunday go around the rest of the week acting like orphans?*

Study the scriptures, but be aware that it covers a small world within the whole world that God created. Study enough about the whole world to know God wants all men to be saved. The Bible is full of examples. Follow Christ's example. Everyone must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Use the Bible study to show that what you believe is what you know. Share your faith. Inner renewal is aided by providing yourself quiet time, prayer, or books on tape.

*-- Ed Birch, Painesville, Ohio*



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True Religion: Setting aside some part of the day for quiet meditation. "Keep our motors running" all the time to grab a minute or two to thank God for His infinite grace and mercy to us. Keep a prayerful attitude. Spiritual Awareness is found in James 1:27. Pure religion is to look after orphans and widows, and keep oneself unspotted from the world. Inner Renewal: Open mindedness, continual Bible study (especially in-depth study of the nature of Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit).

*-- Eloise Muncy, Searcy, Arkansas*

First, we must recognize our weakness and dependability on a strength coming only from God and Jesus Christ. Renewal to self seldom comes without first of all realizing that we have helped another to the same level. Christ must be the foundation of our religious beliefs. If you have kept your convictions a secret, you haven't found them. If you pursue them, others will know without making an announcement. Awareness comes from acquaintance with the scriptures, a first hand relationship with God, and fellowship with those of a similar conviction.

*-- Virgil Gingrich, Roanoke, Illinois*

True religion speaks with action. Put your faith into action. It will have more affect on leading others to Christ. Be patient with nonbelievers. Love them and allow God to work in their lives according to His will. Use the Bible as your guide in all areas. Inner renewal is very close to spiritual awareness. Time with God renews you both spiritually and physically. Change your activities and create new ways to do everyday



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activities. Go for a walk and enjoy God's creation. Spiritual awareness comes from meditating on God's word, fellowship with other believers, worship, and praising God with prayer.

-- Carol Wilterdink, Aurora, Colorado

*Our forefathers built this country with three tools: an ax, a plow, and a book. That book was the Bible.*

There are a lot of opinions out there, and they can be very dangerous. My advice is to depend on Scripture study beginning at a very early age. Be a faithful Christian and keep a prayerful attitude. At the end of the day I try to look back at what I've done and said. Is there anything that I can change to make me a better person? Did I do anything I was not proud of? If so, I try to correct it, pray for forgiveness, and watch that I don't repeat mistakes. Daily scripture search and constant prayerful mind: surround yourself with spiritual people and environment.

-- Janie Barber, Batesville, Arkansas

True religion doesn't start in the church building. It starts in the heart. Walk closely with God each day that you live. Take time to pray each day. Realize there are still goals we have to reach at any age. This can only be done through hard work and God's help. Study the Bible every chance you can. Take time to be involved in helping others.

-- Opal Burton, Paragould, Arkansas

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Learn the Scriptures. Don't try to modernize the church. Don't try to jazz up the church. The church is not to fit or suit people. People are to suit the church -- Christ's teachings. Practice pure and undefiled religion. Be faithful to the word. Constantly return to the scriptures for spiritual renewal. Stay fit for physical renewal. Associate with great people for social renewal.

*-- Tom Gaskins, Palmdale, Florida*

Develop and maintain a true faith in God, then practice Christ's example of servanthood as much and as often as possible. Going to church is very important, but is not an example of finding true religion. Spiritual faith keeps inner renewal assured. Don't ever get too high or too low; have confidence in yourself with the Lord's help. Read, study, and practice the example of Jesus; keep life and its meaning in perspective.

*-- Max Reiboldt, Alpharetta, Georgia*

You will have to get to the point where you fully understand you have no control over anything or anybody, and that you are totally dependent on God. Most commonly, it takes a loss of something dear to learn this. Study about other beliefs, dogmas, and doctrines. Study the Bible to learn what you believe and why. Remember that you are special to God.

*-- Robert Lewis, Nashville, Tennessee*

Remember you're a sinner and you have absolutely no hope without God and Christ. Then, don't worry about your sin. Set about loving, serving, and teaching



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others in all that you do. Spiritual Awareness: learn unselfishness.

*-- Ken Dunn, Monticello, Arkansas*

Challenge yourself daily with what the Word says. Always try to surround yourself with people who are able to build up, and then when you're alone during the day or night, you'll have great things, positive things to think about.

*-- Jeff Earnhart, St. Louis, Missouri*

Worship God and constantly praise Him. Pray a lot and fill your mind with the Word. I also listen to a lot of spiritual music. Consistently work to keep your mind on the spiritual things in life and serve Him. True religion is when you live your faith. When you become more like Christ, then you will have true religion.

*-- Lois Jenkins, Prior Lake, Minnesota*

Be consistent in church attendance and Bible study. Avail yourself of a good Bible dictionary and commentaries, and study them in conjunction with your Bible. Practice what you preach. Conduct yourself in such a manner that no one would need to ask if you are a Christian. The inner man is renewed day by day by the abundant grace of God. By taking up our cross daily and following Christ in obedient faith.

*-- Cecile Key, Searcy, Arkansas*

Inner renewal can only be achieved by having faith in God, knowing that He loves each one of us, and He desires that we be a new person because of our love for Him. Rediscover the fabulous universe in which we

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live and re-examine your purpose and goals in life. The divine creator has included us in His plans, making us a vital part of His future creative works. "Buy the truth and sell it not." Mankind can never be satisfied until he learns his identity, purpose and destiny, and then heeds to it.

*-- Alton Howard, West Monroe, Louisiana*

Look for role models. Read about role models. Emulate role models: Joseph of Egypt, David, Daniel, Jesus, A. Lincoln, Teresa, Corrie Ten Boom, A. Schleitzer. Read. Read. Read. I've grown to distrust the word "religion." Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Love God and keep his commandments this is the whole duty of man." Awareness of sinfulness, confession of selfishness, and repentance of sinfulness all lead to inner renewal.

*-- William Waugh, Dallas, Texas*

Study to show thyself approved with an open mind and ask for God's guidance. Pray, pray, pray, when things are good as well as bad. Pray without ceasing. Don't get too tired and lose perspective. Find something unusual to focus on.

*-- Jack Alexander, Mulberry, Arkansas*

Learn that real inner joy comes by helping others grow and be happy. Your greatest joy comes through the joy you place in another's life. We pray and meditate. We get away from the everyday work and routine, and get away to our condo on the lake. It helps us to read the Bible more and help others.

*-- Carol Levi, Dermott, Arkansas*



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Believe in yourself, and don't ever let anyone convince you otherwise; a little meditation and a lot of prayer can go a long way. Understand yourself. Like yourself. Bring your problems to the Lord and let him handle them. Follow as closely as possible to what the Bible teaches.

-- *Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas*

Allow God to speak to you in his still small voice, by His Spirit, by His Word, through His Grace, and by your faith. You should experience faith in the true God. Daily, through life experiences of mountain tops, and valleys, and growing in spiritual maturity helps me achieve inner renewal.

-- *Larry Moree, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

*Christianity has been studied and practiced for ages, but it has been studied far more than it has been practiced.*

Spiritual awareness: You can't legislate it on someone else and it can't be legislated on you! Don't talk about it, live it! Understand church history, reformation, restoration, and denomination. The sun always burns through the clouds. Sleep well and often and stay diversified! Enjoy now; it may not get any better than this.

-- *Jimmy Behel, Searcy, Arkansas*

## True Religion and Inner Renewal

Study to show yourself approved unto God. A workman needs not to be ashamed. Rightly dividing the Word of God will provide inner renewal. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit and is our absolute guide. Prayer and God's mercy are like two buckets in a well; while one ascends, the other descends.

-- *Gloria Evins, Bartlett, Tennessee*

Beware of the devil, for he works in a number of ways. Read your Bible and pray to God for wisdom. Do not take anyone else's word as gospel. Just go outside and look at the trees, plants, and birds, or go out at night and look at the stars in the sky, and you not only get help, but gain spiritual awareness.

-- *Bob Wright, Judsonia, Arkansas*

Take time to be alone with yourself, retreat and reflect on God's word and your basic values. Review your goals and accomplishments. Gain forgiveness for your failures. Think positive thoughts. Be aware of your blessings. Be bound to God by his laws, and give oneself to mankind.

-- *Roy and Cassandra Dickson, Bartlesville, Oklahoma*

"Fear God and keep His commandments," Eccl. 12:13. You must spend time in reading and studying the Bible to know God's commandments. Study God's word. Keep company with Christians. When I attend the gathering of Christians, it is a great way to renew myself through singing, praying, and studying God's Word.

-- *Mildred Horton, Midvale, Idaho*



## **True Religion and Inner Renewal**

Make time to meditate and think about where our lifestyle and actions are really leading us and the results that come our way. Listen to God, not man. Follow our hearts as we study and pray. Prayer, study, and re-evaluations of self and values all lead to inner renewal.

*-- Holly Cooper, Grand Junction, Colorado*

Bible study, prayer, attendance at all church functions, and fellowship with the brethren all contribute to true religion. Prayer and devotion to God and a great relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ lead to inner renewal.

*-- Randy Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*

Remember where you would be without Christ: No joy, without hope, no purpose, surrounded by friends that do not care. Be interested and active in people and service. Focus on what Christ was interested in. Read and reflect on the Bible.

*-- Jackson Coker, Atlanta, Georgia*

Be loving and act on that love. Help others in their time of need. Lead by example. Pray, listen for, and expect an answer. Consider the setbacks in life stepping stones to greater spiritual awareness.

*-- Mrs. William Shadel, Savannah, Tennessee*

Follow the Lord in His time and His pace. To do this you must be in His word. Be in Christ! Colossians 2:18. Be on your knees and pray. Listen for the Lord. Don't be in a hurry. Spend time with Him.

*-- Bill Renton, Stuarts Draft, Virginia*

## True Religion and Inner Renewal

Being an active member at church helps greatly, but if you want true spiritual awareness, personal study is a must. Stand up for your beliefs. Start the day with God and end the day with God.

*-- Ron Montague, Arvada, Colorado*

Inner renewal can be achieved by hard work and examining one's life often. Read and understand the Word of God; steer away from false religions. Spiritual awareness is knowing and understanding what life holds.

*-- J.D. Williams, Newport, Arkansas*

*Christianity requires the participants to come down out of the grandstand and onto the playing field.*

Search the Bible. Search your heart. Long for Christ to reveal Himself to you. Believe He has control of your life. Serve others. Develop a deep dependence on God. Pray, Read, and rejoice.

*-- Debbie Poss, Judsonia, Arkansas*

To me, inner renewal comes only after several things: quiet Bible study and prayer, being alone and quiet. "Be still and know that I am God." Eccl. 12:13 -- "Fear God and keep His commandments."

*-- Connie Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*



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Know the Bible. Don't follow anyone's tradition or man-made ideas. Know that God is in control, not you. Take time off on vacations. Read often on many subjects.

*-- Ron Keeth, Westminster, Colorado*

We need to love one another. Stand in the meadow and thank God. Regardless of your state, always be thankful and grateful.

*-- Gus Reynolds, Edgemont, Arkansas*

As it says in Philemon, teach others so that you may come into a full understanding of all God has in store for us. True religion must be practiced. You can't talk your way into it. You must live it.

*-- Joe Stork, Doraville, Georgia*

I wish I knew the real way to achieve the inner renewal. Some can be gained by getting away from all pressures for short periods of time. Look to the Bible for what is right.

*-- Sarah Nell Pomerenk, Memphis, Tennessee*

Ask questions of older Christians. Then, listen to answers. Study and listen during sermons. Focus your mind. Do what you can with what you have where you are.

*-- Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*

Study and obey God's word. Pray daily and ask God's guidance in all things. Only say and do the things that you would feel free to do if Jesus were with you.

*-- J. Bill Harris, Searcy, Arkansas*

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True religion is about people: God's will for people and my responsibility to people. Listen to the counsel of godly people. Pray, observe, listen, and pray.

-- *Dwight Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*

True religion is a way of life, an attitude. To have spiritual awareness, read the Bible, and talk with others. Inner renewal is achieved by praying and striving.

-- *Jeremy Thompson, Clarkston, Minnesota*

*Some people carry their religion like a burden on their backs, when they should carry it like a song in their hearts.*

Know God's love and share it. Pray for wisdom and courage. Count your blessings and don't allow self pity.

-- *Sheryl Rainwater, Jay, Oklahoma*

True Religion: Ensure that it is based on the Bible.  
Spiritual Awareness: Study the Bible. Inner Renewal:  
Self discipline.

-- *Don Helms, Russelville, Arkansas*

True Religion: John 3:16. Spiritual Awareness:  
Study the Word. Inner Renewal: Open your Bible.

-- *Bert Jones, Hawkins, Texas*



## **True Religion and Inner Renewal**

Do the best you know how to do. Study, pray, and seek the guidances of the Holy Spirit. Read good books. Pray.

*-- Bill Cox, Rowlett, Texas*

Faith and daily Bible reading aid in spiritual awareness. My admonition on true religion: Faith.

*-- Ed Bethune, Searcy, Arkansas*

You must withdraw from people and noise occasionally. Spiritual Awareness: A meaningful relationship with God through Christ.

*-- Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas*

Inner renewal is received by prayer, good reading material, and the Bible. Love God and keep His commandments.

*-- Rheba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas*

Constantly turn to the scriptures for spiritual renewal. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

*-- Tom Gaskins, Palmdale, Florida*

You either accept the Bible as the revealed Word of God, or you have nothing. Have a daily time for reading (Psalms, etc) and prayer.

*-- Don Shackelford, Searcy, Arkansas*

We must take God's Word; We must read the Bible more.

*-- James Pennington, Ola, Arkansas*

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The qualification "true" is confusing. Everyone will find what they need.

-- John Sparks, Kirkwood, Missouri

Regularly read and study the Scriptures to see what they are really teaching.

-- Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Altig, Long Beach, California

Read God's words, not man's.

-- Eugene Smith, Jr., Duncanville, Texas





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### SUMMARY

A boy of nine was being questioned by an older lad about his religion in a somewhat cynical vein, and the youngster acquitted himself with credit. Finally, the older one challenged: *"I'll give you two dimes if you tell me where God is!"* *"I'll give you two dimes if you tell me where God Isn't!"* Oh, to have that wonderful faith of a child. A little girl, repeating the 23rd Psalm, said it this way: *"The Lord is my Shepherd, that's all I want."*

From the *Christian Leader* comes this account:

*"An old mariners' chart of the East coast of North America and adjacent waters, drawn by an unknown cartographer in 1525, and now in the British Museum, has some interesting and fearful directions on it. The mapmaker wrote across great areas of then unexplored land and sea the following inscriptions: "Here be giants." "Here be firey scorpions." "Here be dragons."*

*At some time in its career the chart fell into the hands of the scientist Sir John Franklin. He scratched out the fearful old markings and wrote across the map: "Here is God."*



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*"The Little Faithful Christian"* was written by Jimmie B. Hill as published in the *Firm Foundation*:

One evening, the little faithful Christian was teaching other church members a lesson on visitation. He took his lesson from Matthew 25:34-46. During the lesson, many church members gave him hearty "Amens!" for truths that he pointed out from God's word. At the close of an excellent lesson, the little faithful Christian asked the other church members several questions.

"Who will help me feed the hungry and quench the thirst of the thirsty?" he asked. "Not us!" replied the other church members, "We have too many fellowship meals to plan." So the little faithful Christian took it upon himself.

"Who will help me to house the homeless?" said the little faithful Christian. "Not us!" said the other church members, "We're expecting guests from out of town." So the little faithful Christian opened up his home to the homeless.

"Who'll help clothe the naked?" the little faithful Christian asked reluctantly.

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*"Not us!" cried the other church members, "We've got to buy new Easter outfits and you know how tight money is." And so the little faithful Christian took his own money and bought and gathered clothing, and gave to those in need.*

*And finally the little faithful Christian asked, "Who'll visit the sick, the fatherless, and those in prisons?" And the other church members said, "Not us! We're going on vacation for a much needed rest." And so the little faithful Christian visited as many as he possibly could.*

*Not too long after the little faithful Christian presented this lesson, the Lord returned. He asked, "Who'll go with me to heaven?" and all the church members said in unison, "We will, we will."*

*But the Lord said, "Depart from me, ye cursed. To him that knew to do good, and did it not, to him it is sin. You were to be doers of the word and not hearers only and inasmuch as ye did nothing for the poor and less fortunate, ye did nothing for me. Depart into everlasting fire." But to the little faithful Christian the Lord said, "Come ye*



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*blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

What is the moral of this story? Well, you figure it out.

Paraphrased after the gospel hymn "*There is a Sea*," by L. I. Zahn, the following piece by Bruce Barton titled "*Two Seas*" compares and contrasts the processes of getting and giving:

*There are two seas in Palestine.  
One is fresh, and fish are in it.  
Splashes of green adorn its banks.  
Trees spread their branches over it and  
stretch out their thirsty roots to sip of its  
healing waters.*

*Along its shores the children play, as  
children played when He was there. He  
loved it. He could look across its silver  
surface when He spoke His parables.  
And on a rolling plain not far away He  
fed five thousand people.*

*The river Jordan makes this sea with  
sparkling water from the hills. So it  
laughs in the sunshine. And men build  
their houses near to it, and birds, their  
nests; and every kind of life is happier  
because it is there.*

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*The river Jordan flows on south into another sea. Here is no splash of fish, no fluttering leaf, no song of birds, no children's laughter. Travelers choose another route, unless on urgent business. The air hangs heavy above its water, and neither man nor beast nor fowl will drink.*

*What makes this mighty difference in these neighbor seas? Not the river Jordan. It empties the same good water into both. Not the soil in which they lie; not the country round about.*

*This is the difference: The Sea of Galilee receives but does not keep the Jordan. For every drop that flows into it another drop flows out. The giving and receiving go on in equal measure.*

*The other sea is shrewder, hoarding its income jealously. It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps.*

*The Sea of Galilee gives and lives. The other sea gives nothing. It is named the Dead. There are two kinds of people in the world. There are two seas in Palestine.*



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Sometimes in this life and, in an attempt to give God the credit, we shortchange Him. We pray, but we don't spring into action and put feet to our prayers. With the hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes of late, I am reminded of the fable of the man who was stranded on his front porch by rising flood waters. The rescuers arrived in a four-wheel drive vehicle, but he declined, saying *"The Lord's going to take care of me."*

Hours later, we find him sitting on his roof as the rescue boat comes by. *"No thanks,"* he said. *"The Lord is going to take care of me."* Late that night he is sitting on his chimney, with the flood waters lapping at his feet. The rescue helicopter makes one last attempt to get him to climb aboard, but noooooooo, *"The Lord is going to take care of me."*

Picture him in the next scene arriving at the Pearly Gates, and Saint Peter says, *"What are you doing here -- it's not your time."* And the man replied, *"I don't know -- I thought the Lord was going to take care of me."* And Saint Peter indicted him with this reply, *"Man, the Lord sent you a four-wheel drive vehicle, a boat, and a helicopter -- what in the world do you want more than that?"*

## VII. ALL-TIME FAVORITE SCRIPTURES, POEMS, OR QUOTES

I have my favorite quotes and scriptures and have included them here in the introduction and also in the summary. Several of our founding fathers, while they were still very young men, penned codes of conduct. Here is George Washington's "CODE OF CIVILITY" -- written at the age of 16:

*When your superiors talk to anybody, hear them; neither speak nor laugh...Speak not when others speak, sit not when others stand, and walk not when others stop...Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive...Strive not with your superiors in argument, but always submit your judgement to others with modesty...When a man does all he can, though it succeeds not well, blame not him that did it.*

*Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of another, though he were your enemy...Detract not from others, but neither be excessive in commending...If two contend together, take not the part of either unconstrained, and be not obstinate in your opinion...Reprehend not the imperfection of others, for that belongs to parents, masters, and superiors...Let your recreations be manful, not sinful.*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of anyone...Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.*

Ben Franklin also documented his pursuit of excellence. As a young man, he made a list of 12 qualities, and proudly showed that agenda to his preacher. What qualities made the list? *"Temperance, Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality, Industry, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquility, and Chastity."*

Ben was so proud of his list that the preacher suggested that Ben add *"Humility."* Franklin then concentrated each week on one of the items on the list; he went through the list four times a year, once a quarter. How did it work out for young Ben Franklin? His statement later was that, *"I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined, but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish."*

Here is *"FREEDOM'S CODE"* which was developed by the American Institute for Character Education. These are the standards of informed and self-reliant people of good will:

*Be honest -- be generous -- be just --  
and live honorably among all people.  
Be kind to those whose lives you touch,*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*and do your fair share to help those in need. Have convictions and courage, and yet be tolerant of other people's faults and opinions.*

*Make credible use of your time and talents, and provide reasonable security for yourself and your dependents -- understand your obligations as a citizen and fulfill them credibly.*

*Stand with all people of good will everywhere for truth and be an unyielding defender of the basic human rights that provide freedom, justice, and equality for the people under an honest government of law. This is the measure of a good life among free people. These are the standards people must live by to be free.*

*And, yes, there is a "CODE OF THE WEST." "Write it in your heart. Stand by the code and it will stand by you. Ask no more and give no less than honesty, courage, loyalty, generosity and fairness. Ask no more and give no less."*

*Secular examples are pretty good, if we find the right ones. But if we want to make our very salvation "as sure as we can," what about some examples from the New Testament?*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

In this first example, the Apostle Paul concludes his letter to the Church at Phillipi with a list of Christian duties. Here is Philippians 4:8 --"*Brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there is any virtue, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*"

The second example of a *code of conduct* is, of course, "*The Beatitudes*" from Matthew 5:3-11. There are nine beatitudes; each pronounces a blessing upon those who have certain characteristics:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . .  
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth...  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy...Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. . . Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*Blessed are you when they revile  
and persecute you, and say all kinds of  
evil against you falsely for my sake ...  
Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for  
great is your reward in heaven.*

Our third example of a code of conduct is from Galatians 6:22-23 -- the well known passage on "The Fruits of the Spirit:" "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such there is no law." How many other examples could you find?

Here is "THE DISCIPLE'S CHARGE (author unknown):"

*I'm part of the fellowship of the  
unashamed. The die has been cast. I  
have stepped over the line. The  
decision has been made. I'm a disciple  
of His. I won't look back, let up, slow  
down, back away, or be still.*

*My past is redeemed; my present  
makes sense; my future is secure. I'm  
finished. I'm done with low living, sight  
walking, small planning, smooth knees,  
colorless dreams, tame visions,  
mundane talking, chintzy giving, or  
dwarf goals.*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, platitudes, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now love by presence, lean by faith, walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by power.*

*My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few, my God reliable, and my mission clear.*

*I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, meander in the maze of mediocrity!*

*I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, preached up for the cause of Christ. I'm a disciple of Jesus. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me.*

This was a favorite of Del Belden, our benefactor. It is titled "THE GUY IN THE GLASS."

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*When you get what you want in your  
struggle for self, And the world  
makes you king for a day,  
Then go to the mirror and look at  
yourself,  
And see what that guy has to say.*

*For it isn't your father, or mother, or  
wife,  
Whose judgement upon you must pass.  
The fellow whose verdict counts  
most in your life,  
Is the guy staring back from the glass.*

*He's the feller to please, never mind all  
the rest, For he's with you clear up  
to the end,  
And you've passed your most  
dangerous, difficult test,  
If the guy in the glass is your friend.*

*You may be like Jack Horner and  
"chisel" a plum, And think you're a  
wonderful guy,  
But the man in the glass says you're  
only a bum if you can't look him  
straight in the eye.*

*You can fool the whole world down the  
pathway of years and get pats on  
the back as you pass.*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*But your final reward will be heartaches  
and tears if you've cheated the guy  
in the glass.*

An entrepreneur extraordinaire, this was also a favorite of Del Belden -- *THE ENTREPRENEUR'S CREDO* by Dean Alfange:

*I do not choose to be a common man.  
It is my right to be uncommon, if I  
can.*

*I seek opportunity, not security.  
I do not wish to be a kept citizen,  
humbled and dulled by having the  
state look after me.*

*I want to take the calculated risk; to  
dream and to build, to fail and to  
succeed.*

*I refuse to barter incentive for a dole; I  
prefer the challenges of life to the  
guaranteed existence; the thrill of  
fulfillment to the state calm of  
Utopia.*

*I will not trade freedom for beneficence  
nor my dignity for a handout.  
I will never cower before any master nor  
bend to any threat.*

*It is my heritage to stand erect, proud  
and unafraid;*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*To think and act for myself, to enjoy the  
benefit of my creations and to face  
the world boldly and say:*

*This, with God's help, I have done.  
And this is what it means to be an  
Entrepreneur.*

I especially wish I knew the authorship of  
"THE TEACHER OF THE CLASS:"

*I dreamed the pearly gates were  
opened wide,  
And I entered in, for I had died;  
And now must give account for all my  
acts,  
I saw a Book there opened with these  
facts.*

*I thought, "My role upon this earth was  
small,  
Just teaching a Bible School my call."  
For I saw all the saints of God up there,  
And mine was, at most, a meager  
share.*

*I heard the Master call for my report;  
I stood afraid, for mine ... was short.  
I trembled and felt I would not pass.  
Then whispered, "I just taught a  
Bible Class."*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*And from the Throne I heard His voice,  
"Well done, Come in and share  
eternal life, my son;*

*Although your place was humble and  
obscure,  
You led the thirsty to the Waters Pure."*

*And then it seemed that from eternal  
plains,  
There came the sound of voices in  
refrain  
That rolled across the mighty sea of  
glass,  
"There are the great ... the teachers of  
a class."*

*When I awoke, I thought of those I'd  
taught.  
And their lives, what glory God had  
wrought,  
I prayed to God, and all that I could say,  
"Make me a better teacher day by  
day."*

*And you who teach the Christian way to  
live  
May feel sometimes you're asked too  
much to give.  
But someday you will reap eternal joys.  
Because YOU led to Christ these  
girls and boys.*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

The following is attributed to an unknown Confederate soldier:

*I ask God for strength, that I might  
achieve*

*I was made weak, that I might learn  
humbly to obey*

*I ask for health, that I might do greater  
things*

*I was given infirmity, that I might do  
better things.*

*I ask for riches, that I might be happy  
I was given poverty, that I might be  
wise*

*I ask for power, that I might have the  
praise of men*

*I was given weakness, that I might feel  
the need of God*

*I ask for all things, that I might enjoy life  
I was given life, that I might enjoy all  
things*

*I got nothing that I ask for -- but  
everything I'd hoped for*

*Almost to spite myself, my unspoken  
prayers were answered*

*I am among all men, most richly blessed.*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

### **RULES FOR HAPPY LIVING**

-- Author Unknown

1. Count Your Blessings, Not Your Troubles. Other people don't need your troubles. They have enough of their own:

*Bring the whole tittle into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. "Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." Malachi 3:10.*

2. Live One Day At a Time. You can control and conquer any sin if you will learn to live one day at a time.

*Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*will, we will live and do this or that." James 4:13-14.*

3. **Learn To Say, "I Love You."** Break the "alabaster box" of kindness to as many people as possible each day.

*While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? If it could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her: She has done a beautiful thing to me." Mark 14-3-6.*

4. **Learn To Be Giver and Not a Getter.** If you are failing to get out of life what you want, it is because you are expecting to get instead of give:

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*Give, and it will be given to you.  
A good measure, pressed down,  
shaken together and running  
over, will be poured into your lap.  
For with the measure you use, it  
will be measured to you. Luke  
7:38.*

5. **Seek For Good In Everyone and In Everything.** Be a "good" seeker and not a "fault" finder:

*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you owe, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay not attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Matthew 7:1-5.*

6. **Pray Every Day.** Reserve a time in your day to thank God for His many blessings and ask for His guidance:

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. Luke 18:1.*

7. Do at Least One Good Deed Each Day. Plant the seed of "goodness" and it will produce after its kind.



# THE HISTORY OF THE

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## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

### ***Our Contributors' All-time Favorite Scriptures, Poems, Quotes***

"The Christian must resist the spirit of the world in the form it takes in his generation." -- Francis Schaeffer. "In Christ we are deeply loved, completely forgiven, fully pleasing, totally accepted, and complete, because he died for me and was raised from the dead to give me new life." -- Adapted from *The Search for Significance* (2nd ed.) by Robert S. McGee (Houston, TX: Rapha Publishing, 1990), p. 187. "I'd rather be gobbled up by a whale than to be nibbled to death by minnows." I want to give myself to tasks that count for something in eternity, not just be about things which sap my spirit and amount to nothing. Favorite Scriptures: Rom. 13:11-12, Eph 3:20-21

-- *Dwight A. Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*

"If" by Rudyard Kipling. "Never say never." "We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails." "The sky is the limit when your heart is in it." "There is an island of opportunity in the middle of every difficulty." "The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is the little extra." Prov. 15:13; Prov. 16:24; Prov. 17:22; Prov. 24:10; Prov. 27:1; Prov. 29:17; Prov. 15:1; Psalm 40:1; Psalm 34:4; Psalm 19:4; Psalm 23; James 1:4; Phil 4:13; Hebrews 4:16; I Thess. 5:14-22; Col. 3:23, 24; Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:26; Eph. 4:23; Gal. 6:9; I Cor. 13; Rom. 8:28; Rom. 8:38,39; Rom 5:8; Rom 2:4; Luke 12:34; Luke 11:10; Luke 11:10; Luke 6:38; Luke 6:30; Mark 4:24,25; Matt. 10:30,31; Matt. 6:33,34; Matt. 5,6,7; I John 4:19; Rev. 21:4.

-- *Clara Hinton, Shanksville, Pennsylvania*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

St. John 14:1-4; Romans 8:11, 28; Psalm 147:11; Psalm 41:1-3; Psalm 8; Hebrews 9:11-15; I Corinthians 1:25-29; I Corinthians 2:9. Favorite poems are a "Psalm of Life" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "The Tongue" by Phillips Burrows Strong, "The House By the Side of the Road" by Sam Walter Foss.

*-- Margaret Garret, Tucker, Georgia*

"For evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Dr. George Benson: "What the church needs is men of vision." Robert Welch: "Less government, more personal responsibility, and therefore a better world." My mottos: Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Lower your head and take it straight up the middle. Walk softly, but carry a big stick. He who follows another is always behind. It's the way you set your sails that determines your course.

*-- Tom Gaskins, Jr., Palmdale, Florida*

Do not doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light. Never attribute an action to malice when you can blame it on stupidity. If you are going through hell, keep going -- that's not a good place to stop. Life is too short to be little. If you must doubt, doubt your doubts and never your beliefs. To see God in everything is to make life the greatest adventure there is.

*-- Susan E. French, Sarasota, Florida*

The 23rd Psalm is one of my favorites. Other favorites would include, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all those things shall be added unto thee." "I can do all things through Jesus



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

Christ who makes me strong.” Jimmy Allen’s quip which I learned in freshman Bible at Harding -- Don’t put the emphasis (pronounced in-’fass-is) on the wrong syllable (‘sill-abull) -- meaning sometimes we get things out of focus or our priorities confused.

-- *Janice Martin, Hope, Arkansas*

“Go to now, ye that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get again: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say. If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boasting; all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” -- James 4:13-17

-- *Eric B. Hedden, Brunswick, Tennessee*

“On the Wings of Prayer” -- Helen Steiner Rice. Proverbs 3:5,6; Romans 8:35-39; James 1:5; Phil 4:13,19; Phil 1:21. “Such is life and we must live it, give and take but mostly give it!” “Two wrongs don’t make a right.” “Can’t never did anything.” “Go on the other side of the table and take a look.”

-- *Kathy Lacefield, Jacksonville, Arkansas*

Romans 6:1-4; I Tim 4:16; Psalm 23. “This town is a good place to raise children, but what about raising adults.” -- Robert Waller, Bridges of Madison County “It’ll grow back.” -- Erma Bombeck In response to air traffic controller strike 1980 -- “Everybody has got it

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

rough, if they are doing their job." -- Claude Allison  
(father-in-law).

-- *Jimmy Behel, Searcy, Arkansas*

I John 3:2 -- Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears we shall be like Him because we shall see Him just as He is.

-- *Larry Moree, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. -- Proverb 3:5; . . . for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. -- Hebrews 13:5; For God so loved -- John 3:16

-- *Danny and Barbara Hayes, Searcy, Arkansas*

*The Bible is the constitution of Christian civilization.*

The best is yet to come: the rest of life for which the first was made. Titus 2:7-8, 11-15. I Timothy 6:6. Hebrew 13:5. Matthew 6: 9-13. Psalm 23.

-- *Virgil Gingrich, Eureka, Illinois*

Romans 8:28 reinforces who is in control of my life. For God to be able to take the pain and sorrow that I must suffer and work it to my good gives me so much comfort and assurance.

-- *Peggy Usery, Grenada, Mississippi*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

"Footprints" has always been a poem I have admired. Not only because I know God has carried me much in my life, but that I know he will be there for me again when I need him.

*-- Ron Montague, Arvada, Colorado*

I love the Psalms and Proverbs. I John 1:9 is a great comfort, knowing that God will forgive us our sins if we confess them. The stories of Paul and the other apostles in Acts are encouraging. Poems by Helen Steiner Rice are full of comfort and encouragement.

*-- Mildred Horton, Midvale, Idaho*

Proverbs 31:10-31 -- the wife of the noble character. Psalm 118:5-6 -- crying to God and having our prayers answered and knowing if He's on our side, who can be against us? Ecclesiastes 12:13 -- "Let us hear the conclusion . . . ." The poem "Bits and Pieces" (author unknown) James 1:2,3,12. Phil 4:6-8. Quote -- "Remorse is the poison of life" from Jane Eyre.

*-- Tina Bigelow, Marshall, Michigan*

Ecclesiastes 12:13 " . . . fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man." Acts 2:38 " . . . Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

*-- Opal Burton, Paragould, Arkansas*

Romans 8:28. Serenity Prayer. "Life is like a box of chocolates -- you don't know what you're gonna get!" "Take the bull by the horn." All things are possible through Christ which strengtheneth me.

*-- Janie Barber, Batesville, Arkansas*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

I Corinthians 10:13 -- loosely paraphrased -- you won't be tested more than you can stand. The Lord gives you what you need to pass any test. Matthew 6:34 -- Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. Frost's "The Road Less Traveled."

-- *Bill Sowell, Brandon, Mississippi*

My favorite Scriptures are: Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 11:28-30. My favorite poems are "If," by Rudyard Kipling and "Home," by Edgar A. Guest.

-- *Paul Easley, San Antonio, Texas*

You can do anything you want to do if you want it badly enough. Knock and it shall be opened, seek and you shall find. In all things, God works together for the good of those who love the Lord. While we were yet sinners, Christ died that we might be saved.

-- *Danny Skipper, Tyler, Texas*

"There are victories of the soul and spirit. Sometimes, even if you lose you win." -- Elie Wiesel. "Count no day lost in which you waited your turn, took only your share, and sought advantage over no one." -- Robert Brault

-- *Kim Swieciki, Portland, Maine*

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13. "All things work together for good to those who love God." Romans 8:28. "If God be for us, who can be against us." Romans 8:31. Favorite poem -- "If," by Rudyard Kipling.

-- *Cecile Key, Searcy, Arkansas*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

There are so many. One very important one is John 3:16; without that, where would we be. Matthew 5:14, 16 "Let your light so shine." We need to do that. "Ye are the Light of the world." Do a day's work for a day's pay. It is very important that we are at the right place, at the right time, with the right people.

*-- Jean Gregg, Little Rock, Arkansas*

"I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me." The poem "If" -- "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you. . . ."

*--Roy and Cassandra Dickson, Bartlesville, Oklahoma*

*The Bible is not only the world's best seller, it is man's best purchase.*

John 3:16, realizing the depth of God's love for us. Philippians 2:12-16 -- A constant reminder of what I should be like, where we live, and why we must keep trying.

*-- Bill Renton, Stuarts Draft, Virginia*

Paul said, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." Christ's prayer: that we may be one with God as Christ was one with him.

*-- Ed Birch, Painesville, Ohio*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

"The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life... wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning." Proverbs 10:11-13. The entire book of Proverbs 15.

-- *Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas*

Psalm 1. "Crossing the Bar" -- Tennyson. Also, "You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool Mom; she's pretty nice and she's pretty smart." -- Captain Penney.

-- *Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas*

St. Francis of Assissi's "Prayer of Serenity;" "The Trial by Existence" by Robert Frost; Philippians 4:4-9; James 1:2-4; Romans 8:34-39.

-- *Eloise Muncy, Searcy, Arkansas*

Philippians 4:13 ". . . do all things in him . . . ." Romans 8:28 ". . . all things work for good. . . ." If you don't have time to do it right, when are you going to have time to fix it?

-- *Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*

Let a smile be your umbrella. Do unto others as they to you. Live and let live. Live . . . until you die.

-- *Rheba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas*

"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you."

-- *J. Vance Cox, Yucaipa, California*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

John 3:16. "When I Have Crossed the Bar" by Robert Browning. "Let Me go Gently By" by Marjorie Holmes.

-- *J.D. Williams, Newport, Arkansas*

I John 1:7, Matthew 6:33-34. Life is a journey, not a destination. Mistakes are always mistakes. Or so I've heard them say . . . But if it teaches a lesson, the mistakes will go away.

-- *Holly Cooper, Grand Jct., Colorado*

II Corinthians 5:14 -- "For Christ's love compels us because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died."

-- *Jackson Coker, Atlanta, Georgia*

"It's not what you don't know that hurts you but rather what you know that's not so."

-- *Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas*

Revelation 2:10; John 14; "The Footprints of Jesus." "The Prayer of Serenity."

-- *Randy Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*

My favorite verses -- Philippians 4:13, Romans 8:28, Proverbs 31:10-31.

-- *Sallie Dawson, Sulphur Springs, Arkansas*

I Corinthians 13. Do not keep the alabaster box of love sealed. God showed his love by giving the ultimate gift.

-- *Gloria Evins, Bartlett, Tennessee*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

Philippians 4:13; Hebrews 13:5; I John 4:7-10;  
"Ozymandius," Gettysburg Address.

-- *Bill Watkins, Dothan, Alabama*

Luke 6:38 -- Give and it will be given unto you.  
Psalm 145; Psalm 27.

-- *Gail Tomlinson, Senatobia, Mississippi*

The song, "My Task," is my favorite. Matthew 5:3 --  
the Beatitudes, is my favorite scripture.

-- *Sheryl Rainwater, Jay, Oklahoma*

*God writes with a pen that never blots,  
speaks with a tongue that never slips,  
and acts with a hand that never fails.*

Romans 8:28; I Corinthians 10:13; I Corinthians 13;  
Jesus' parables.

-- *Max Reiboldt, Alpharetta, Georgia*

"Be still and know that I am God." "Rejoice in all  
trials. . . ."

-- *Ron Keeth, Westminster, Colorado*

Matthew 25:35-46, book of James, Philippians 4:8,  
Matthew 5.

-- *Lois Jenkins, Prior Lake, Minnesota*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

Philippians 4:13, Proverbs 31, Romans 12:1-2,  
Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 6:10-20.

-- *Kathy Seeber, Newberg, Oregon*

Kipling's "If." Romans 8:26-28, 31-37

-- *Bill Cox, Rowlett, Texas*

23rd Psalm. Do unto others as you would have  
them do unto you.

-- *Bob Wright, Judsonia, Arkansas*

John 14:6, Romans 6:3, Hebrews 9:28, Matthew  
24:36, Matthew 23:27.

-- *Bert Jones, Hawkins, Texas*

Philippians 4:4-9, Matthew 6:9-13, 25-34, Psalm  
100, 23, John 3:16.

-- *Carol Wilterdink, Aurora, Colorado*

Scriptures: John 13. Poem: "Oh, to be Like You"  
(written for my daughter).

-- *Debbie Poss, Judsonia, Arkansas*

The poems "Let Me Give," "The Bridge Builder,"  
"Kindness," and "Lord."

-- *Mr. and Mrs. Dean Carlton, Portland, Oregon*

23rd Psalm. "If" by Rudyard Kipling.

-- *Gus Reynolds, Edgemont, Arkansas*

I Corinthians 13, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes.

-- *Bob Little, Abingdon, Maryland*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

"Footprints." Book of Ruth. Matthew 25.

-- *Tom Thompson, Clarkston, Michigan*

Gospel of John 10:10.

-- *Don Shackleford, Searcy, Arkansas*

*The study of the Bible is a postgraduate course in the richest library of human experience.*

The Gospel of John. Ephesians.

-- *Paul Knopp, Staunton, Virginia*

John 3:16. Ephesians 3:18-20. Ephesians 2:8-9.

-- *Alton Howard, West Monroe, Louisiana*

John 3:16. I John 1-2:6. Romans 6.

-- *Don Helms, Russelville, Arkansas*

John 1:1-14. Romans 10:9 and 8:32.

-- *Dr. and Mrs. Altig, Long Beach, California*

"Preach the Word," "The Bridge Builder."

-- *Eugene Smith, Jr., Duncanville, Texas*

Psalms 23. I Corinthians 13.

-- *Sarah Nell Pomeroy, Memphis, Tennessee*

Matthew 6:7-8. I Corinthians 4:1-6.

-- *Jack Alexander, Mulberry, Arkansas*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

**Mark 16:16.**

*-- James O. Pennington, M.D., Ola, Arkansas*

**II Corinthians 3:12-18.**

*-- Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas*

**John 14:1-3.**

*-- Ken Dunn, Monticello, Arkansas*

**Psalms 34.**

*-- Robert H. Lewis, Sr., Nashville, Tennessee*

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

1950-1951

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## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

### **SUMMARY**

Here are some more favorites that have caught my attention over the years:

#### **BEATITUDES FOR A HOUSEWIFE**

*Blessed is she whose daily tasks are a labor of love, for she translates duty into privilege.*

*Blessed is she who mends stockings and toys and broken hearts, for her understanding is a balm to humanity.*

*Blessed is she who serves laughter and smiles at every meal, for she shall be blessed with goodness.*

*Blessed is she who preserves the sanctity of the Christian home, for hers is a sacred trust that crowns her with dignity.*

-- Cheerful News

#### **MOTHERS**

*Mothers are life's richest treasures  
To be found anywhere on this earth;  
No mortal could bring greater pleasures,  
No mortal could measure their worth.*

*No one can bestow greater comfort,  
No person can show deeper care;  
Though the rest of the world may forsake you,  
You'll find that your Mother is there.*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*Mothers are rare combinations,  
They're teachers and nurses and wives;  
Mothers not only have babies,  
They baby them all of their lives.*

*Don't look at her wrinkles and wonder  
What caused them to be on her face,  
They are furrows where she has plowed under  
Life's troubles she wants to erase.*

*Mothers are creatures of habit,  
Their habit, to work with a smile;  
Mothers are angels in aprons  
Who God lends to us for awhile.*

*Whenever our Mothers must leave us,  
There must be a smile on God's face;  
He has no intention to grieve us,  
Mothers just help Him brighten His place.*

*-- Dave Wadley*

### **THE ART OF PARENTHOOD**

*Our children are watching us live, and what we  
are shouts louder than anything we can  
say.*

*When we set an example of honesty, our  
children will be honest.*

*When we encircle them with love, they will be  
loving.*

*When we practice tolerance, they will be  
tolerant.*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*When we demonstrate good sportsmanship,  
they will be good sports.*

*When we meet life with laughter and a twinkle  
in our eye, they will develop a sense of  
humor.*

*When we are thankful for life's blessings, they  
will be thankful.*

*When we express friendliness, they will be  
friendly.*

*When we speak words of praise, they will  
praise others.*

*When we confront failure, defeat, and  
misfortune with a gallant spirit, they will  
learn to live bravely.*

*When our lives affirm our faith in the enduring  
values of life, they will rise above doubt  
and skepticism.*

*When we surround them with the love and  
goodness of God, they will discover life's  
deeper meaning.*

*When we set an example of heroic living, they  
will be heroes.*

-- Wilfred A. Peterson

### **SAY IT NOW**

*If you have a friend worth loving,  
Love him. Yes, and let him know  
That you love him, ere life's evening  
Tinge his brow with sunset glow.  
Why should good words ne'er be said  
Of a friend -- till he is dead?*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*If you hear a song that thrills you,  
Sung by any child of song,  
Praise it. Do not let the singer  
Wait deserved praises long.  
Why should one who thrills your heart  
Lack the joy you may impart?*

*If you hear a prayer that moves you  
By its humble, pleading tone,  
Join it. Do not let the seeker  
Bow before his God alone.  
Why should not your brother share  
The strength of "two or three" in prayer?*

*If you see the hot tears falling  
from a brother's weeping eyes,  
Share them. And by kindly sharing  
Own our kinship in the skies.  
Why should anyone be glad  
When a brother's heart is sad?*

*If a silvery laugh goes rippling  
Through the sunshine on his face,  
Share it. 'Tis the wise man's saying --  
For both grief and joy a place.  
There's health and goodness in the mirth  
In which an honest laugh has birth.*

*If your work is made more easy  
By a friendly, helping hand,  
Say so. Speak out brave and truly  
Ere the darkness veil the land.*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*Should a brother workman dear  
Falter for a word of cheer?*

*Scatter thus your seeds of kindness  
All enriching as you go --  
Leave them. Trust the Harvest Giver;  
He will make each seed to grow.  
So until the happy end  
Your life shall never lack a friend.*

-- Unknown

### **GI JOE FINDS GOD**

*Look, God, I have never spoken to You,  
But now, I want to say, "How do You do."  
You God, they told me You didn't exist,  
And like a fool I believed all this.*

*Last night from a shell hole I saw Your sky,  
I figured right then they'd told me a lie;  
Had I taken time to see what You made,  
I'd have known they weren't calling a  
spade a spade.*

*I wonder God, if You'd shake my hand;  
Somehow I feel you will understand.  
Funny I had to come to his hellish place  
Before I had time to see Your face.*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*Well I guess there isn't much more to say,  
But I am glad God, I met You today;  
I guess the zero hour will soon be here,  
But I'm not afraid since I know You're near.*

*The signal --Well, God I'll have to go.  
I like You lots; this I want You to know.  
Look now, this will be a horrible fight --  
Who knows, I may come to Your house  
tonight.*

*Tho I wasn't friendly to You before,  
I wonder God, if You'd wait at the door.  
Look I'm crying. Me, shedding tears!  
I wish I'd known You these many years.*

Author Unknown, Wisdom Eternal

### **THE DISTINGUISHED TEACHER**

*Jesus is the world's most distinguished teacher. It was not an award that men presented to Him, but a recognition by millions who have sat at His feet for nearly 2000 years. He had no classroom, except the one the moment provided. It might be a hillside, a boat, or a garden.*

*He received no salary, for when John's disciples asked for His credentials, He responded, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them."*



## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*He set no age limit for His students. Little children were admitted as well as the aged. He had no textbook but His Father's Word. He held no college degree, yet scholars were instructed by Him.*

*Never a teacher had such KNOWLEDGE. He knew students and their needs. He knew all about the past and the future. He knew every atom of the universe. He even knew what students were thinking.*

*Never a teacher had such AUTHORITY. When He finished class one day, His students were "amazed at His teaching, because He taught them as one having authority and not like their other teachers."*

*Never a teacher had such INCENTIVE. There was a responsibility laid on Him that caused Him to teach, even if it meant public ridicule, arrest, imprisonment, and death itself. That incentive was always student-centered.*

*Never a teacher had such RAPPORT with students. He was "gentle and lowly in heart," and His students learned from Him. He used ordinary things and events like lamps, salt shakers, sowers and reapers, losing sheep and coins, and a*

## **Favorite Scriptures, Poems, & Quotes**

*young boy kicking up his heels, running off, and getting into trouble ... things students could identify with.*

*He never had a class too large or too small. One student who came to fetch a pail of water was given as much attention as 5000 hungry students in a class just before lunch. He had a night class when only one student showed up, and an early morning class when at least three students fell asleep.*

*His examinations were killers because each question called on the student to examine his own life within the context of the principles clearly taught in class.*

*Many failed, went back home, and "walked no more with Him." Even His twelve majors checked out before the end of the semester. Yet thousands thronged to enroll, with one little fellow willing to sit in a tree, just so he could see the teacher.*

*Scholars have come and gone, and sages have philosophized about the meaning of life and the purpose of the universe, but all must agree that "never a man spoke like this" Distinguished Teacher from Galilee.*

-- Dr. Ray Muncy  
April 24, 1991

## VIII. THOSE PEOPLE AND ATTRIBUTES MOST ADMIRED

*All the world's a stage,  
and we're the players,  
Shakespeare wrote.*

*To this I'd like to add  
a mere explanatory note.*

*Some are the stars,  
in leading roles.  
With praise and much attention,  
But most of us have merely  
walk-on parts  
And rarely get a mention.*

*-- Author Unknown*

As published in the *Christian Herald*, this letter to his unborn child was found on the body of a soldier. I appreciate so deeply his fond farewell:

*My child, sleeping now in the dark  
and gathering strength for the struggle  
of birth, I wish you well. At present you  
have no proper shape, you do not  
breathe, and you are blind. In time and  
through the life of your mother, whom I  
deeply love, there will be something in  
you that will give you power to fight for  
air and life. Such is your heritage, such  
is your destiny as a child born of woman  
-- to fight for light and hold on without  
knowing why.*



## People and Attributes Admired

*May you seek always and strive in good faith and high courage, in this world where men grow so tired. Keep your wonder at great and noble things like sunlight and thunder, the rain and the stars, the wind and the sea, the growth of trees, and the return of harvests. Keep your heart hungry for new knowledge; keep your hatred of a lie; and keep your power of indignation.*

*Now I must die, and you must be born to stand upon the rubbish heap of my errors. Forgive me for this. I am ashamed to leave you an untidy world. In thought, as a last benediction, I kiss your forehead. Good night to you -- and good morning and a clear dawn.*

Charles F. Banning states that *"If All the gold in the world were melted down into a solid cube it would be about the size of an eight-room house. If a man got possession of all that gold -- trillions of dollars worth -- he could not buy a friend, character, peace of mind, clear conscience, or a sense of eternity."*

According to Henry J. Taylor, *"Imagination lit every lamp in this country, produced every article we use, built every church, made every discovery, performed every act of kindness and progress, created more and better things for*

## People and Attributes Admired

*more people. It is the priceless ingredient for a better day."*

Louis Pasteur had this profound observation: *"I hold the unconquerable belief that science and peace will triumph over ignorance and war, that nations will come together not to destroy but to construct, and that the future belongs to those who accomplish most for humanity."*

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale observes this about human history:

*It is a magnificent pageant of success and failures. And we have always learned from the past the things necessary for going forward into the future. The first step on the moon was a dramatic achievement. But so was the discovery that man could grow plants to feed himself, or weave cloth to clothe himself. So it doesn't hurt to look back on the long history of mankind and the wonders that have been achieved. Look back on courage, on self-reliance, on endurance, on fortitude, all the heritage that the past has given us. This is the way to find a true evaluation toward a glorious future.*

Benjamin Franklin's advice is as useful today as it was two hundred years ago.

## People and Attributes Admired

Probably the most famous of these comes from his approach to someone bearing a grudge. A fellow Philadelphian had opposed Franklin's appointment as clerk of the Pennsylvania legislature, was outvoted, and then took offense.

Franklin, knowing that his disappointed adversary owned "*a certain very scarce and curious book*," wrote to him asking for the loan of it. The book was sent swiftly, and the two men gradually renewed their friendship. The lesson: Instead of trying to heal a personal falling out with gifts, ask your antagonist to do you a favor.

Mr. Franklin revealed his approach to raising money for a worthy cause in a conversation with the popular revivalist minister Gilbert Tennent:

*In the first place, I advise you to apply to all those who you know will give something; next to those whom you are uncertain whether they give anything or not, and show them the list of those who have given; and do not neglect those who you are sure will give nothing. In some of them you may be mistaken.*



## People and Attributes Admired

IT IS HARD:

To forget  
To apologize  
To save money  
To be unselfish  
To avoid mistakes  
To keep out of a rut  
To begin all over again  
To make the best of all things  
To keep your temper at all times  
To think first and act afterwards  
To maintain a high standard  
To keep on keeping on  
To shoulder blame  
To be charitable  
To take advice  
To admit error  
To forgive

BUT IT PAYS!!

Finally, there is a wonderful story about four people, called "EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY and NOBODY:"

*There was an important job to be done, and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.*

## People and Attributes Admired

*Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody, when actually Nobody asked Anybody to do it.*

## **People and Attributes Admired**

### **Our Contributors' Advice On People And Attributes Most Admired**

I admire my first grade teacher, Mrs. Milton Peebles, who taught me patience, perseverance, compassion, and many lessons in life. I admire my mother who is the most honest person I know. I admire her courage in raising me after my father died when I was only 6. I admire her perseverance and frugal ways. She saved money for me to go to Harding with very limited resources and taught me moral purity. She always made time for me and made me feel like a princess. I admire my husband for his faithfulness, patience, and good humor. I admire my son who is organized, steadfast, and unaffected by peer pressure, and my daughter who is eager, bright, beautiful, and good.

*-- Janice Martin, Hope, Arkansas*

I admire my Aunt Loquita who has suffered many hard knocks, the death of her older daughter, who was only five, the death of her husband when she was 29, etc, but who always taught me to see the beauty and loveliness of life in all situations. I lived with her when I went to college. She would take me for a drive on a rainy day to enjoy the beauty of God's creation. At 77, she is still full of life and adventure.

*-- Marquita Moss, Austin, Texas*

Attributes I most admire: sincerity, honesty, loyalty, gentleness, and courage. People I most admire are: Evelyn Eads, for teaching me by her actions about having a personal relationship with God; Nettie Latch, for teaching me to do my best, but give the glory to God



## People and Attributes Admired

if I was used by Him; my children for showing me how God can love us so much; my daughter, Danna Hayes, for her strong convictions when because of them she has been left to stand alone; and my husband, Danny Hayes, for his quiet faith and giving attitude.

-- *Danny and Barbara Hayes, Searcy, Arkansas*

I have never been a great "people admirer" as such, but I do admire such people as Abraham Lincoln, physicians and surgeons, Norman Vincent Peale, Dr. Dobson, Faulkner and Breechen, those people who make a difference. I also greatly admire the small people such as my Grandmother, the dearest person on earth, who lived each day giving to others quietly, and with very little notice, and no reward (not on this earth). I admire people with selfless dedication to a good cause, finding the cure of a disease, or spreading the Word of God in a foreign land. I admire and respect those who gave their very lives that we may live in a land of freedom. I admire those people who take risks, go through many failures, and then finally achieve their goal.

-- *Clara Hinton, Shanksville, Pennsylvania*

Christ and his inherent goodness tops my list of course. Peter, Paul, Stephen, and all the great Christian martyrs, who willingly gave up their lives in order to spread the gospel of salvation throughout the world have my eternal gratitude and admiration. I admire our gospel preachers and teachers and their helpmates today who have faithfully and tirelessly ministered to us. There are the truly dedicated physicians and nurses attending our physical and emotional wounds. And last, but not least, are the

## People and Attributes Admired

loving parents who are rearing their children to become adults we can admire.

-- *Margaret Garrett, Tucker, Georgia*

I admire my wife. She's been our family's stabilizing force. Many of my decisions that are made swiftly get tempered after discussions with her. When I look back, she's usually been right. I admire patience and strive for it.

-- *Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*

*A friend will joyfully sing with you when you are on the mountain top, and silently walk beside you through the valley.*

My friend, Dottie Spillman, who though in her 60's, is still striving to improve her spiritual life, and she encourages me to grow spiritually as well. Dr. Bob Reely, my friend and supervisor, who encourages respect and belief in oneself.

-- *Debbie Poss, Judsonia, Arkansas*

People who admit when they're wrong, forgive themselves and go on. People who really practice, "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake" and refuse to retaliate when mistreated. People who find joy in everyday living even in the face of trials.

-- *Tina Bigelow, Marshall, Minnesota*



## People and Attributes Admired

I admire my wife because she never gave up on me. I admire my children because they have done so well with so little help from me. I admire my mother because she has dedicated her life to her nine children and has never wavered on her support of them.

-- *Bill Renton, Stuarts Draft, Virginia*

My wife is the strongest person that I know mentally. She is brave in times of trials, hardships, and trauma, and provides strength for her entire family. She sees the good in situations as well as in people. She could run this country, yet holds herself back to care for our family, always putting herself last.

-- *Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas*

I remember a Brother Crenshaw who was such a sweet, kind gospel preacher, who could make you walk with Paul, Peter, or any other of the Bible people. He lived what he taught and I'll never forget him. I love the person who is the same every time you see them. Also, when you are able to talk about something that bothers you to someone knowing they won't tell others about it.

-- *Sallie Dawson, Sulphur Springs, Arkansas*

I admire my wife for her love and for putting up with me for 20 years. I admire my two sons, Matthew and Nathan, for loving me and making my job as a father easier. Also, I admire them for listening to me at least 75 percent of the time.

-- *Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas*

The attribute I most admire is the strength of character to stand (alone if necessary) and uphold and protect a cause. Therefore, the people I most admire



## People and Attributes Admired

are champions of causes: David, son of Jesse, in the valley of Elah, Horatius at the bridge, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain at Gettysburg, and Jesus the Christ for 33 years on the earth.

-- *Eric Hedden, Brunswick, Tennessee*

I admire my spouse, who is unable to preach a sermon, yet will assist in giving hope to anyone who has given up and has been given up on by society, will give a helping hand without judgement, and takes the million little things that drop into his hands, and makes small opportunities out of each day, yet goes quietly about his life without expecting any recognition, always giving credit to God.

-- *Gloria Evins, Bartlett, Tennessee*

I admire honesty, perseverance, usefulness, and self-control. I hate selfishness and ingratitude. (A man is characterized by his dislikes as much as his likes). The people I respect the most are those that have the ability to grow and change. To grow and to change takes a self reckoning of utmost honesty and a tremendous strength of character. What is really neat about this is that the one with the most "flaws" has the most opportunity for gain.

-- *Susan French, Sarasota, Florida*

I admire Margaret Thatcher, because of her courage and expertise in leading her country and accepting defeat when it came, Thomas Jefferson for doggedly pursuing liberty for America, and Ronald Reagan for approaching tough problems with humor and toughness, and leading a country torn by recession and self doubt to prosperity and patriotism again.

-- *Kim Swiecicki, Portland, Maine*

## People and Attributes Admired

The people I admire the most are people who are genuine, comfortable with themselves, gentle with others, reverant toward God, and who have no hidden agenda. The attributes to which I aspire the most are those that grow out of the fruit of the Spirit, which is love. The apostle listed them in Galatians 5:22: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and self-control.

-- Paul Easley, San Antonio, Texas

*A real friend warms you by his presence,  
trusts you with his secrets, and remembers  
you in his prayers.*

My mother is the person I most admire. She was truly a servant all her life. She always put everyone before herself. She set the right example for her children in every way. Each day when I get up, she would be sitting and reading her Bible. She took all 5 of us to church by herself and never wavered. My dad joined her late in life.

--Lois Jenkins, Prior Lake, Minnesota

I admire people who are honest and aren't afraid to stand up for what they know is right. You don't see enough of those today. I admire people who can be friendly to nearly everyone. People I admire: my children and grandchildren for making me proud, my brother and sister for always being there when I have needed them.

-- Opal Burton, Paragould, Arkansas



## People and Attributes Admired

The attributes I most admire include spiritual strength without religious judgement, living their faith, speaking and acting truthfully, knowing their true feelings, and being able to listen and make others seem of value rather than themselves.

-- Carol Wilterdink, Aurora, Colorado

I admire my mother; she never let life's problems get the best of her. She sang a lot and always found a way to cope without complaining. Humility, willingness to serve others, caring attitude, and optimism are qualities I admire.

-- Danny Skipper, Tyler, Texas

I most admire the truly dedicated Christians I've known. I most admire honesty, integrity, openness, love, and gentleness. I admire my parents and the hard work they did to better themselves and the way they loved and raised me.

-- Kathy Lacefield, Jacksonville, Arkansas

Calmness, wisdom, being consistent, being self-assured, not being pressured by materialistic things; people who are polite and well-mannered; families who honor one another, families who have their own traditions; and families who support each other, encouragers are all things I admire.

-- Gail Tomlinson, Senatobia, Mississippi

I admire those who are able to deal with life's struggles while keeping their faith strong, sense of humor intact, and maintaining a peace of mind.

-- Holly Cooper, Grand Junction, Colorado



## **People and Attributes Admired**

My grandfather was not a rich man, nor an educated man, but the thing I admire most about him was his will to never give up. If I had half his desire, who knows where I would be today.

*-- Ron Montague, Arvada, Colorado*

Ronald Reagan is one of the people I most admire. Also, honesty, sincerity, and smiles, a sense of humor, and people who don't take themselves too seriously are some qualities that I admire.

*-- J. Bill Harris, Searcy, Arkansas*

All who are engaged in improving all situations; people and conditions with whom they have contact have my admiration.

*-- Virgil Gingrich, Roanoke, Illinois*

I admire teachers who can work and have patience with "special" children. I also wish I had the ability to remember names as some people do.

*-- Sarah Nell Pomerenk, Memphis, Tennessee*

David Robinson and Fred McGriff are two athletes that excel at their job but don't go around bragging all the time. They are both Christians.

*-- Joe Stork, Doraville, Georgia*

People who give their all, they hustle, they smile, and never give up, and people who stand the heat against the crowd on issues on moral/ethical importance gain my admiration.

*-- Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas*

## People and Attributes Admired

The attributes that I most admire in a person are courage and determination. In many cases, the person rises above the expectatations of those around him or her.

*-- Peggy Usery, Grenada, Mississippi*

I admire honest, upright, strong, content, loving, and clean people. I am thankful my parents and grandparents were Christians. Where would I be today without their love and teachings?

*-- Jean Gregg, Little Rock, Arkansas*

*The true measure of a man is the height of his ideals, the breadth of his sympathy, the depth of his convictions, and the length of his patience.*

I admire Christ and His gift of love for the world, and people that can communicate. Abraham Lincoln had an insight that has amazed me. Arthur Ashe's life was beautiful, at least what I know of it.

*-- Bob Little, Abingdon, Maryland*

I admire those who overcome the challenges of life, and those who win despite the odds. Courage, calmness under fire, confidence, and love of the Lord are qualities that I admire.

*-- Ron Keeth, Westminster, Colorado*

## People and Attributes Admired

People and attributes I most admire are people who love in spite of short comings and imperfections. This takes an inward honesty rarely found.

-- *Larry Moree, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

Honesty, thoughtfulness, and a good work ethic are all qualities I admire. My parents (Blackie and Joan Berryhill), both deceased (but still living in my heart), were really good people. I'm still learning from them.

-- *Rheba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas*

Traits I admire are happiness, smiling eyes, well groomed, intelligence, and willingness to help. People I admire are George Benson, Erle Moore, and Dr. Hedrick.

-- *Ken Dunn, Monticello, Arkansas*

People and attributes I admire: Ronald Reagan, Jack Lawyer, Harvey Starling, honesty, responsibility, character, truthfulness.

-- *Don Helms, Russelville, Arkansas*

I admire Robert E. Lee -- strong character and a willingness to do what he believed to be right regardless of the consequences.

-- *Stanley Keown, Chattanooga, Tennessee*

I admire Jimmy Carr, Sr. -- never stopped growing; Ed Sewell -- genuine; parents -- didn't let me down; my children -- they still love me.

-- *Jimmy Behel, Searcy, Arkansas*



## People and Attributes Admired

I admire those who are honest, dependable, and well mannered, who are easy to get acquainted with, and smile readily.

-- Cecile Key, Searcy, Arkansas

I admire someone who is not too good or too proud to be a servant to others.

-- Jeff Earnhart, St. Louis, Missouri

Honesty, integrity, genuine kindness, goodness, morality, and otherwise are all traits I look up to.

-- Max Reiboldt, Alpharetta, Georgia

Optimism, loyalty (faithfulness), persistence, and trust are all qualities I admire.

-- Dwight Albright, Memphis, Tennessee

People and attributes I most admire: Job, Esther, Lydia, honesty, and Love of God.

-- Carol Levi, Dermott, Arkansas

Humble people, those who are joyful, and people who like to serve others are the ones I admire.

-- Paul Knopp, Staunton, Virginia

I admire people with patience, affection, and also funny people.

-- Janie Barber, Batesville, Arkansas

I admire meekness, loving, caring, gentle, and understanding.

-- Lee Ashby, Granite City, Illinois

I admire writers who include my thoughts in their book.

-- Eugene Smith, Duncanville, Texas

## People and Attributes Admired

Honesty, sincerity, and humor are attributes that I admire.

-- Robert Lewis, Nashville, Tennessee

Honesty, truth, and kindness are what I admire.

-- Ed Birch, Painesville, Ohio

I admire honesty, compassion, and forgiveness.

-- Kathy Seeber, Newberg, Oregon

*Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position, or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character.*

Humor and love are qualities that I admire.

-- Bert Jones, Hawkins, Texas

I admire selflessness.

-- Jackson Coker, Atlanta, Georgia

We admire honesty and humility.

-- Roy and Cassandra Dickson, Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Loyalty and my wife and children are what I admire.

-- Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas

## People and Attributes Admired

### SUMMARY

As an author and public speaker, I attempt to combine the following:

- *the simplicity of Adam Smith;*
- *the wisdom of Solomon;*
- *the depth of Lincoln;*
- *the patience of Job;*
- *the tenacity of a bulldog;*
- *the determination of a cab driver;*
- *the deductive powers of Sherlock Holmes;*
- *the persuasiveness of a job-hunting politician;*
- *the enthusiasm of a radio announcer;*
- *the alertness of a bird dog;*
- *the self-assurance of a mother-in-law;*
- *the tireless persistence of a bill collector;*
- *the tactical genius of Patton;*
- *and the showmanship of P.T. Barnum.*

How's this for tenacity? "KEEP ON KEEPING ON" is the word from James Corbett:

*Fight one more round. When your feet are so tired that you have to shuffle back to the center of the ring, fight one more round. When your arms are so tired that you can hardly lift your hands to come on guard, fight one more round. When your nose is bleeding and your*



## People and Attributes Admired

*eyes are black and you are so tired that you wish your opponent would crack you one on the jaw and put you to sleep, fight one more round -- remembering that the man who always fights one more round is never whipped.*

These are the "SEVEN SINS IN THE WORLD" by Mahatma Gandhi:

*Wealth without work  
Pleasure before conscience  
Knowledge without character  
Commerce without morality  
Science without humanity  
Worship without sacrifice  
Politics without principle.*

-- John Hoarse Rhodes

Recently I asked members of the "Golden Agers" Bible Class this question: "*Who of your generation do you admire the most? Why?*" Here are their responses (very personal references are abridged).

- *Winston Churchill*
- *Not sure -- admire so many ...*
- *My daughters are all three wonderful, brilliant, genuine Christians -- no hypocrisy.*
- *Besides my Mom, President Roosevelt.*

## **People and Attributes Admired**

- *Sister -- She is witty, zealous, honest, and willing to do things for others.*
- *The young people who show interest in working for the Lord when there is so much attitude against Christianity.*
- *The Elders that truly shepherd the flocks.*
- *All my good friends.*
- *My sister-in-law -- because she thinks about everyone.*
- *My wife most, but a lot second ...*
- *Bob Hope for his devotion to our armed forces.*
- *My ancestors. For the faith they taught me in Christ.*
- *President Bush -- because he is kind.*
- *Those that love the Lord.*
- *Outstanding gospel preachers*
- *A preacher like Mike Cope who has learned that no one has learned all the truth.*
- *Barbara Bush -- because she is so down to earth.*
- *My parents -- they taught me the difference in "do" and "don't."*
- *FDR -- he got this beautiful country through the Depression.*
- *Undecided -- need more thought.*
- *My children and grandchildren -- they are loving.*

## People and Attributes Admired

### *I WILL DO MORE*

I will do more than belong.  
    I will participate.  
I will do more than care.  
    I will help.  
I will do more than believe.  
    I will be kind.  
I will do more than forgive.  
    I will forget.  
I will do more than dream.  
    I will work.  
I will do more than teach.  
    I will inspire.  
I will do more than earn  
    I will enrich.  
I will do more than give.  
    I will serve.  
I will do more than live.  
    I will grow.  
I will do more than be friendly.  
    I will be a friend.  
I will do more than be a citizen.  
    I will be a patriot.

-- William Arthur Ward

This is titled "*IF YOU WERE MY FACULTY ADVISER.*" It was in a newsletter printed many years ago by the American College Testing Program -- ACT -- (written by Sally Felker, student). Here is how it reads:



## **People and Attributes Admired**

*This is what I would want you to know, as you work with me: Please realize that I am frightened of you -- I may hide my fear with hostility or apathy; the fear is still there. Society has taught me to fear you; I will distrust you at first no matter how compassionate and understanding you may be. I want you to know that I have much to offer, if only you can listen, make me feel safe, and give me the idea you sincerely care.*

*You can be clumsy with me, as long as you diligently work at helping me learn and grow. You can hurt me, as long as your intent is not to destroy me; but to help me realize things about myself which I may not know. Look at me and see that there are many possibilities lying deep down in me. You may be the one holding the key to unlocking them.*

*Know also that I probably will not appreciate you; that I may forget that you, too, are human -- but I do not want you to forget that about me. Confirm the best in me. I seem to need it. I become a better person when you do this to me. Help me see myself clearly. Please do not give up on me. If you do, I fear I may give up on myself. Believe in me, so that I may believe in myself.*

## **People and Attributes Admired**

It is because of wonderful teachers like this proposed model, and the one I married, that I am not in a penitentiary somewhere. I shall be eternally grateful.

## IX. IF I HAD TO DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN

Children enter our home and make so much noise for twenty years we can hardly stand it -- then depart, leaving the house so silent, we think we will go mad. Harry Chapin recorded "CATS IN THE CRADLE" in 1969. His wife wrote these haunting lyrics (she knew of that which she wrote).

*A child arrived just the other day  
He came to the world in the usual way  
But there were planes to catch, bills to  
pay,  
He learned to walk while I was away,  
And he was talkin' before I knew it and as  
he grew,  
He said, "I'm gonna be like you dad, you  
know I'm gonna be like you."*

Chorus: *And the cats in the cradle and  
the silver spoon,  
Little Boy Blue and the man and the  
moon.  
When you comin' home dad. . .I don't  
know when  
but we'll get together then son,  
you know we'll have a good time then.*

*My son turned 10 just the other day  
He said, "Thanks for the ball, dad, come  
on let's play,*



## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

*Can you teach me to throw?" I said not  
today,  
Got a lot to do, he said, "That's OK."  
He turned away but his smile never  
dimmed,  
He said, "I'm gonna be like him, yeah, you  
know I'm gonna be like him."*

*(Chorus repeats)*

*He came from college just the other day,  
So much like a man I just had to say,  
"Son, I'm proud of you,  
Can you sit for a while?"  
He shook his head and he said with a  
smile,  
"What I'd really like dad is to borrow the  
car keys,  
See you later, can I have them please."*

*(Chorus repeats)*

*I've long since retired, my son's moved  
away,  
I called him up just the other day,  
I said, "I'd like to see you if you don't  
mind."  
He said, "I'd love to dad if I could find the  
time,  
You see my new jobs a hassle and the  
kids have the flu,  
But it's sure nice talkin' to you dad, it's  
been sure nice talkin' to you."*

## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

*And as I hung up the phone it occurred to  
me he'd grown up just like me,  
My boy was just like me.*

*And the cats in the cradle and the silver  
spoon,  
Little Boy Blue and the man and the  
moon,  
When you comin' home son, I don't know  
when,  
But we'll get together then dad, you know  
we'll have a good time then.*

I hate that song. That's why I keep copies in my desk, files, briefcase. So, let's not forget this haunting message. Parents, redeem the time whenever you can, in any way you can, for as long as you can. Be there for them.

Ten Mistakes to avoid: REMORSE over yesterday's failure. ANXIETY over today's problems. WORRY over tomorrow's uncertainty. WASTE of the moment's opportunity. PROCRASTINATION with one's present duty. RESENTMENT of another's success. CRITICISM of a neighbor's imperfection. IMPATIENCE with youth's immaturity. SKEPTICISM of our nation's future. UNBELIEF in God's providence.





## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

### **Our Contributors' Advice on Doing It All Over Again...**

I would do it over again because, it's been great and I'm sure it would be great again. Who knows what the outcomes would be? I would not want to know what I know now. Although, as Mr. Murray found out in Ground Hog Day, you could have some fun with a little experience. I learned rather early that I like not knowing what is next. The feeling is motivating. It's like walking on a wet sponge and not knowing if it rests on a firm base. Not that the feeling is a comfortable one, just a feeling I've learned is the right one for me. Regardless of the thrills to relive, the missed opportunities, regrets, or correction possibilities, it's not the outcomes that are as important as the process of creating them. While the outcomes are valuable and certainly will be evaluated and judged, the process to go forward and create them without prior knowledge is life. So, I wouldn't pass up any opportunity to do more. Of course, before I go back to do it all over again, I would have a lot more wet sponge in front of me to walk on. I wouldn't want to miss any of that.

*-- John Sparks, Kirkwood, Missouri*

I would be more tolerant and understanding. I would have more patience with all people. I would be more confident in myself. I would not be such a people pleaser. I would not worry over bills and money. I would laugh a whole lot more. I would live much more relaxed in order to enjoy such things as sunrises and sunsets, and the warm sunshine on my face. I would not worry about dusty tables, or cluttered rooms, or a

## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

messy kitchen. I would learn to love "me." I feel so blessed by God for giving me the family that I have. In many ways I have had a chance to do it all over again -- My first baby was born when I was 20; my last baby was born when I was 43. I learned so much over the course of the years. It has been like God gave me a second chance, and we (my family) have all grown and benefited from it. Life is precious, and each day is special in so many ways. I feel so blessed that I truly fall down before God in grateful thanksgiving every day.

*-- Clara Hinton, Shanksville, Pennsylvania*

If I had to do it all over again, I think I would like to have had the opportunity to accept Christ at a much younger age. But then again, if I had never hit bottom, I might not have appreciated how high I stand now in Christ. I cannot take away the pain of my mistakes without lessening the joy of my salvation. I wouldn't want to do it all over again, but I wouldn't change my past either. As I wrote the things I have learned over the years, I discovered that there really is "no new thing under the sun." Someone somewhere has already learned these lessons. Look to the idioms and sayings of old. They really are true. Above and beyond that, look to Scripture where all wisdom has its roots.

*-- Susan E. French, Sarasota, Florida*

I would have liked to have been able to give my sons better advice, but I don't know what it would have been. I would have liked to have been a better provider for my family, but I don't know how I could have. I would have liked for things to have been a little easier (especially for my wife's sake), but maybe I'm a better man



## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

because they weren't. I guess I wouldn't change a thing. If I were to say one last word to Harding's youth, it would be . . . . It "ain't" going to be easy. Never, never, never, never give up. Lower your head and take it straight up the middle. Learn the full meaning of the word "finesse" and practice it. Jesus said it best -- "Strive unto perfection."

-- Tom Gaskin, Jr., Palmdale, Florida

*Keep your head and your heart going in the right direction and you'll not have to worry about your feet.*

I wouldn't be in such a hurry to grow up. I would take time to get a good formal education and find my calling. I would be sure I could take full responsibility for myself in every way including financial before bringing anyone in to share life with me. I would have had my children in my thirties instead of early twenties. I would have made better plans for coping with the "empty nest" syndrome. Grandchildren help to fill that void after a while, thank goodness. I would have been more faithful and dedicated to the Lord's service. There are many wonderful things I wouldn't change.

-- Margaret Garrett, Tucker, Georgia

I would want to learn sooner in life not to "sweat" the small stuff. I have learned to stop and ask myself the question, "Twenty years from now, will it make a difference?" If the answer is no, then don't worry about



## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

it. It's no big deal. If the answer is yes then do something -- make an issue of the situation. I would also want to learn to trust in the knowledge that "God is indeed in control and knows what He's doing -or allowing- even when we don't!" But then these things come with maturity and I don't know that maturity can come without experiencing life and its mistakes first.

-- *Kathy Lacefield, Jacksonville, Arkansas*

I would start my married life free from living dominated by my mother, and put myself in a life for my husband and myself. I would teach my husband how to take his part in the home and in taking care of his children. We would have family Bible times together. We would listen to our children before making judgments. I would help my husband learn that teenage mistakes must be met with love and work and not run from them saying they have disgraced me regardless of their mistakes. It takes love of both parents to help children become good Christians.

-- *Sallie Dawson, Sulphur Springs, Arkansas*

I'd have paid more attention to older family members. I'd be assured very early in life that I was okay and that I had no apologies to make to anyone. I'd learn early that I'm saved by God's grace and I'd live in that Blessed Assurance; I'd realize all families are uniquely dysfunctional; I would not be afraid of my children and think any little thing would harm their psyches. I'd stand for everything right and good and wise and let the chips fall where they may. I'd bring family problems to a head and demand solutions, not hope for them. I'd learn to speak in public earlier. I'd learn what worship is earlier.

-- *Gail Tomlinson, Senatobia, Mississippi*

## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

I would not have married at the age of eighteen. I would have worked to earn money to further my education. I would not have allowed my fear of failure to alter my ambition. If I could proclaim the message to our youth that so much knowledge comes from trial and error, then perhaps they would not be so afraid of failure. I also look back to see that I should have been more patient with my sons when they were small children.

-- *Peggy Usery, Grenada, Mississippi*

I wouldn't change a thing. I have many regrets, but it is my failures and wrong decisions that have revealed my deep need for God. What I have done in my life, both good and bad, create the person I am now and what I will become in the future. My wretched life is a testament to the love, power, and grace of God, for it is He who has overcome my past and guides my future. And I rejoice that he will continue to deliver me.

-- *Debbie Poss, Judsonia, Arkansas*

I would strive to develop a deeper love for others in Christ. I have a wonderful family with two very precious girls that any parent would be proud of. I don't feel anyone can grow enough in love for Christ. I would like to be able to help my children see Christ's love more in our home and to want to share it with others even if the world seems to go in another direction.

-- *Carol Wilterdink, Aurora, Colorado*

The poem "Man-Making" by Edwin Markham best explains it -- "We are all blind until we see that in the human plan nothing is worth the making if it does not



## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

make the man. Who builds these cities glorious if man unbuilt goes? In vain we build the world, unless the builder also grows."

-- *Gloria Evins, Bartlett, Tennessee*

I really wouldn't change a thing. I have a wonderful wife, good kids (a bit lazy though), and a good job. But occasionally I wish I would have been the Marine fighter pilot I started out to be, but I would probably have been taken out in Vietnam and missed all of this good stuff.

-- *Bill Sowell, Brandon, Mississippi*

I'd probably try to be more mindful of others, more open to serve, less prideful and selfish. I'd try to be more aware of life's truly important things and not be as interested in seemingly important things that really weren't. I'd try to be more patient with everyone, including the ones I love the most.

-- *Max Reiboldt, Alpharetta, Georgia*

I would have gone to college and earned a teachers certificate so I could teach music in our small school. The income would have helped our family in bad times. I would not let work keep us from mid-week Bible study, as it did sometimes.

-- *Mildred Horton, Midvale, Idaho*

I'd try to find a "pot of gold" to finance my Harding student . . . ouch! I think about this quite often. My mind wanders over the many things that I think I would do differently . . . but I usually come to the same conclusion that Solomon did. "All this but folly . . ."

-- *Randy Carr, Hetts Summit, Missouri*



## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

Starting at the same place and time, I would probably do pretty much the same. Starting now with acquired experience and assuming all the changes that are likely to take place, it could, in all possibilities, be pretty much the same. Life has been good.

-- *Virgil Gingrich, Eureka, Illinois*

*You can't have rosy thoughts about the future when your mind is full of the blues about the past.*

I would like to have gotten closer to God sooner (one never gets close enough, but this would mean I would be even closer now). I would like to have been more compassionate for others and less self righteous and self-centered. Even now, I wish I were more totally, consistently trusting of God and his purposes.

-- *Marquita Moss, Austin, Texas*

I would learn to be more organized so I would have time to smell the roses. I would not have hurried through college at Harding in just three years. I perhaps would have stuck to my original plan to get my masters in counseling and have become a Christian counselor instead of an English teacher. The world needs Christian direction more than it needs correct grammar skills or literary enlightenment.

-- *Janice Martin, Hope, Arkansas*

## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

I wouldn't worry about things the way that I have. My husband has always been so positive and encouraging and called me "his what-ifer." Most things we worry about don't happen, and in the grand scheme of life, they don't matter. We must put things in God's hands and let him take care of them.

-- *Lois Jenkins, Prior Lake, Minnesota*

I'm not sure I would change a thing; I've been loved and hated, poor and rich, healthy and frail, happy and sad, pretty and ugly, skinny and fat. I've experienced the upside and the downside and have learned from both.

-- *Larry Moree, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

I'd do everything almost the same. My one exception would be to eliminate the financial strain I put on my family by going into business for myself. (Note: other related family and education matters were good for our family, so I'd want that part to repeat.)

-- *Dave Bishop, Little Rock, Arkansas*

Never look back. If you don't like the past then ensure that the future is better. Do it right from this moment on. "When you concentrate on the path ahead you will not stumble. When you look back you will surely fall."

-- *Dennis Rhoten, Arlington, Texas*

I would have read and studied more. I did not read well in school, so therefore I do not read and study as much as I need to for myself and in teaching my children. I am still trying to do better.

-- *Jean Gregg, Little Rock, Arkansas*



## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

If I had to do it all over again -- before I ever got started -- I would beg, borrow, or steal a copy of Dr. Diffine's book, HOW TO AVOID BEING TOO SOON OLD AND TOO LATE SMART A Primer on "What I Know Now That I Wish Somebody Had Told Me Back Then;" and I would read it cover to cover.

-- Eric B. Hedden, Brunswick, Tennessee

I might reflect and name a lot of different things I could dream about, but actually, when it came right down to it, I more than likely wouldn't do anything different at those stages of life because of age, station in life, upbringing, etc.

-- Jeremy Thompson, Clarkston, Michigan

*Life's greatest failure is failing to be true to the best you know.*

I would try to be kinder, gentler, never to "break a broken reed or snuff out a smouldering wick." I would start looking for people to help at a younger age. I would be especially gentle with old people, children, my wife, parents, and children.

-- William Waugh, Dallas, Texas

I would never once feel sorry for myself: love, self respect, confidence, self-esteem; yes, but not self pity. Too much time and happiness was wasted on inferiority complexes and self pity.

-- Janie Barber, Batesville, Arkansas



## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

I wouldn't be in such a hurry. I would stop and smell the roses along the way; i.e., I would enjoy what I have every day instead of always trying to hurry tomorrow.

-- Joe Stork, Doraville, Georgia

I wouldn't change that much. I would have gotten out and seen more of the world. All in all I would have worried a lot less and lived a little more.

-- Mrs. Opal Burton, Paragould, Arkansas

Perhaps I would have made better preparation for the future and enjoyed the present a little more. But, all things considered, I probably would have made the same decisions.

-- Stanley Keown, Chattanooga, Tennessee

I would live earlier years with more self-confidence because it took me a while to learn that confidence comes from knowing you're okay in God's eyes, not other people's.

-- Holly Cooper, Grand Junction, Colorado

I'd listen more and talk a whole lot less. I'd try not to love my kids so much that I smother them to death. (Less control, I guess you'd say). I'd not work full-time. I'd take more time to "stop and smell the roses."

-- Tina Bigelow, Marshall, Michigan

I would try to make God a larger part of my life. I would try to avoid some of the mistakes I have made, especially with family relationships. I would try to be an encourager.

-- Danny Skipper, Tyler, Texas

## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

I would probably do exactly the same. I made some mistakes, but I also did some things really right and made good choices.

-- *Rheba Bohannon, Searcy, Arkansas*

I would start sooner to learn about Christ. I would become a Christian before marriage, only date Christians, and only marry a Christian.

-- *Kathy Seeber, Newberg, Oregon*

I would be more in focus and practice the things better which I have mentioned in answering these questions.

-- *Alton Howard, West Monroe, Louisiana*

I would watch less TV, complain less, change more, listen more, talk less, look for the silver lining in dark clouds of life, respect experience more, and love more people better.

-- *Kim Swiecicki, Portland, Maine*

I would get up everyday and do my best and be happy whatever the circumstances, just as I have tried to do.

-- *Jack Alexander, Mulberry, Arkansas*

I would listen to those older than me because they do know what they are talking about.

-- *Ron Montague, Arvada, Colorado*

I probably wouldn't change what I did, but I would change the way I did it substantially.

-- *Ken Dunn, Monticello, Arkansas*

## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

I would teach my boys more about the value of a dollar. I would save more for retirement.

-- *Sarah Nell Pomerenk, Memphis, Tennessee*

I would start my Christian walk earlier and strive harder for a better education.

-- *Cecile Key, Searcy, Arkansas*

I would reach further, risk more, love more, and regret less.

-- *Bill Watkins, Dolthan, Alabama*

I would elevate servanthood to a level that would imitate Jesus.

-- *Jackson Coker, Atlanta, Georgia*

I would change nothing; it is as it should be. I have truly loved it. I have been blessed.

-- *Gus Reynolds, Edgemont, Arkansas*

I would want to be taught true information so my foundation would be more accurate. It is hard to tear out and rebuild.

-- *Bob Little, Abingdon, Maryland*

I'd do lots of things differently. I'd praise my children more. I'd love my wife more. I'd still be me.

-- *Jimmy Behel, Searcy, Arkansas*

I wouldn't do it all over again. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." -- B. Franklin

-- *Raymond Wohlever, Derby, Kansas*



## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

I would not have married so young. I would have paid more attention in school, developed the habit of saving, and kept in better physical condition.

-- Ron Keeth, Westminster, Colorado

I would put more time in my studies. I would also try to have a better understanding of my parents.

-- J.D. Williams, Newport, Arkansas

I would spend more time in prayer and in Bible study as a young man.

-- Bill Cox, Rowlett, Texas

*Failures are divided into those who thought and never did, and those who did and never thought.*

Keep your eye on the good. You can't change what has past.

-- Eugene Smith, Jr., Duncanville, Texas

I would have found something I enjoyed doing and worked hard to develop it into an enjoyable career.

-- Don Helms, Russellville, Arkansas

I'd like to have known the Lord at an earlier age (I was 29 years old).

-- Tom Muccio, Fayetteville, Arkansas

## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

**I would try to give God a better chance at me.**

**-- Paul Easley, San Antonio, Texas**

**I would give God more credit than I have so far.**

**-- Bob Wright, Judsonia, Arkansas**

**I would probably do the same things and make the same mistakes.**

**-- Ed Bethune, Searcy, Arkansas**

**I would probably make the same (or worse) mistakes!**

**-- Eloise Muncy, Searcy, Arkansas**

**I would use my wisdom and been a much better wife, mother, and person.**

**-- Danny and Barbara Hayes, Searcy, Arkansas**

**I would be less serious and angry.**

**-- Pat Garner, Searcy, Arkansas**

**I would pray that the Lord would bring me to my knees at a much younger age.**

**-- Bill Renton, Stuarts Draft, Virginia**

**I would do largely the same, avoiding the mistakes.**

**-- Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Altig, Long Beach, California**

**I'd try to let God make me less self-centered.**

**-- Paul Knopp, Staunton, Virginia**

## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

I would study more, try not to hurt others, and "stop and smell the roses."

-- *Robert H. Lewis, Sr., Nashville, Tennessee*

I would ask that I not have to do it all over again.

-- *Dwight A. Albright, Memphis, Tennessee*

I would have stayed young longer.

-- *Ed Birch, Painesville, Ohio*

I might not be so lucky again.

--*Roy and Cassandra Dickson, Bartlesville, Oklahoma*

I would do it about the same.

-- *Don Shackelford, Searcy, Arkansas*

*Character grows in the soil of experience,  
with the fertilization of example, the  
moisture of desire, and the sunshine of  
satisfaction.*

I'd save more money for retirement.

-- *J. Bill Harris, Searcy, Arkansas*

I would suffer loss for right more.

-- *James O. Pennington, Ola, Arkansas*

Laugh more, love more, give more.

-- *Bert Jones, Hawkins, Texas*

No regrets.

-- *Sheryl Rainwater, Jay, Oklahoma*



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## If I Had It To Do All Over Again

### SUMMARY

Yes, there is much to reflect on as we go down the western slope. Because life is both fragile and precious, our Heavenly Father is aware of our needs, our will to keep on keeping on, our desire for balance and equilibrium in daily routines. Life is never going to be perfect. It wasn't before, and it won't be now.

The longer we live, we experience both an enlarged sense of both happiness and sadness. When Christ went to a funeral, these amazing words are recorded. "*Jesus wept.*" (John 11:35). Because he had our humanity, and was touched with the feeling of our infirmity when He went to the cemetery, He wept -- in spite of the fact that He intended to restore life.

At anxious times of life, it is okay to hurt, to cry, to rest, and to get away now and then. Our Creator's compassion is boundless. Sometimes, when words fail, tears start to flow. But that's okay. God takes special notice of those tears. We are told in Psalms 56:8 that God puts our tears in a bottle, and He records them. King David said, "*The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping.*" God will never forget the crises in our lives that cause our tears.

## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

And suppose, in retrospect, we know we have all made mistakes. Any sin you or I may have committed in the past that may make us feel unworthy -- God has already forgiven that in others before. Is it not the essence of the Gospel of His grace that He can repair the things that are broken, reset the joints of the bruised reed, and restore the broken heart? Let us, then, be grateful for the blessings God has permitted us to enjoy, and accept the painful experiences of life as also a part of His total Providence.

We are not to judge the inner secrets of any man's heart. We know not what emotions stir others' souls nor what secret communion they might have had with God. All any of us can do is make our peace with God on His terms and then live as to neither be ashamed of yesterday nor fearful of tomorrow.

We do know this. God is a great and loving God who always does that which is right and best. So with confidence, and when it is our time to go, we leave our loved ones in the hands of a merciful Heavenly Father, knowing that God's way is the best way and His thoughts are far above ours.

God has been so good to prepare us for the Great Adventure into the Beyond. He surrounds us with every influence to direct us and lead us to Himself. He gives us an open



## **If I Had It To Do All Over Again**

Bible, in which we learn the way of life everlasting. He gives us the church, where we learn of a hope in Christ, and whose direction points us to Heaven.

God gives us a conscience, which points out our sins and nudges us to the better life. He gives us the prayers of friends and loved ones. He gives us sorrow to bring us to Himself. Above all, let's be thankful for the hope which reigns in the human heart, and which knows no defeat.

Job, one whose tribulations were exceedingly great, put it this way: *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.*" Yes, some day we will all die, because our earthly parents were mortal human beings. More importantly, we can all live forever and gain immortality, because our Father in Heaven is Eternal.

The first of these was the discovery of gold in California in 1848. This led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The second was the discovery of gold in Nevada in 1859. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The third was the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1859. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The fourth was the discovery of gold in Idaho in 1860. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The fifth was the discovery of gold in Montana in 1862. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The sixth was the discovery of gold in Wyoming in 1869. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The seventh was the discovery of gold in Utah in 1871. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly. The eighth was the discovery of gold in Arizona in 1876. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

## CONCLUSION -- Taking Inventory

A feeble, old, rich man, confined to his bed with the infirmities of age, pointed out the window at a husky teenager who was having a laughing conversation with a pretty girl. *"I wish I was as rich as he,"* said the old man. *"But he has no job, his family has ten mouths to feed and he doesn't even know whether he'll be able to go to college,"* the rich man's nurse said. *"Yes,"* said the rich man, *"but he has health and youth and hope -- he is rich in all the things that money can't buy."*

Fifty years have gone by now since the end of World War II. We are survivors! Consider the changes my generation has witnessed (this is a blend from several sources -- all anonymous as far as I know):

*We were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, Frisbees and the pill. We were before radar, jet aircraft, credit cards, split atoms, lasers, and ballpoint pens.*

*Before pantyhose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, disposals, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes ... and before man walked on the moon. We got married first and then had the honeymoon. How quaint can you be? In our time, closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of." Bunnies were small*



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*rabbits and rabbits were not Volkswagens.*

*Designer Jeans were scheming girls named Jean or Jeanne, and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins. We were before house-husbands, computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages. We were before day-care centers, group therapy and nursing homes.*

*We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, CDS, faxes, cellular phones, word processors, artificial hearts, yogurt, and guys wearing earrings. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness ... not computers or condominiums; and "chip" meant a piece of wood, hardware meant hardware and software meant nothing.*

*In 1940, "made in Japan" meant cheap goods," "making out" referred to how you did on your exam. Pizzas, "McDonalds" and instant coffee were unheard of. We hit the scene when there were 5 and 10 cent stores, where you bought things for five and ten cents.*

*For one nickel you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards. You could buy a new Chevy*

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*Coupe for \$600, but who could afford one; a pity too, because gas was 11 cents a gallon! One car per family was just fine, thank you. Two meant you were living on credit or in the wrong neighborhood.*

*In our day, "grass" was mowed. "Coke" was a cold soda pop drink, and "pot" was something you cooked in, and then was scrubbable. "Rock music" was "Rock-a-bye-baby" and "Rock of Ages," and "aids" were helpers in the Principal's office.*

*"ERA" stood for Earned Run Average. The bully on the block was the kid who threw sand. Every kid in America wore mouse ears and wriggled with hula hoops. Howdy Doody and Uncle Miltie got top billing. Whitewall tires really had white walls. We got our first television set and sat for hours mesmerized by the test patterns.*

*If we needed money, we scrubbed floors, mowed lawns, baby-sat, dug weeds, ran errands (not drove, ran), raked leaves, or ironed shirts. A "joint" was an elbow or a knee, and "Give me five" means, "Could you lend me 5 dollars till payday?"*

## Taking Inventory

*"Snow" was shoveled, smack was what we got for talking back. "Fuzz" grew on a peach. "Speed" was what papa did if we were late for church. "Upper" was a happy story. "Downer" was a depressing tale. "Smoke" meant fire. "Pig" was an animal, and "Bad" wasn't good.*

No wonder there is a generation gap! But we survived. What better reason to celebrate?

There was also a time -- a very good time -- when people knew how to get along, and when Americans -- most of us -- knew what was important. Do you remember this? It's *"A TIME TO REMEMBER,"* by the Americanism Educational League:

- *When taxes were merely a necessary nuisance?*
- *When a man was a man and dressed like one?*
- *When a woman was a woman and dressed to please the men?*
- *When the poor were too proud to accept charity?*
- *When clerks and repairmen tried to please you?*
- *When the clergy really preached about religion?*
- *When songs had a tune and the words made some sense?*



## Taking Inventory

- *When people expected less and valued what they had more?*
- *When just about everybody knew the difference between right and wrong?*
- *When things weren't perfect in the United States, but you did not expect them to be?*
- *When hippie meant big in the hips. And a trip involved travel in cars, planes, and ships?*
- *Hooked was what grandmother's rugs may have been.*
- *When fix was a verb that meant mend or repair.*
- *When groovy meant furrowed with channels and hollows.*
- *And bread came from bakeries and not from the mint.*
- *When roll meant a bun, and rock was a stone.*
- *And hang-up was something you did with the phone.*
- *When the flag was a sacred symbol?*
- *When criminals went to jail?*
- *When you weren't afraid to go out at night?*
- *When a boy was a boy and dressed like one?*
- *When a girl was a girl, and dressed like one.*
- *When college kids swallowed goldfish, not acid.*

## **Taking Inventory**

- *When people knew what the Fourth of July stood for.*
- *When you never dreamed our country could ever lose a war.*
- *When you considered yourself lucky to have a good job, and proud to have it.*
- *When you weren't embarrassed to say that this is the best country in the world.*
- *When America was a land filled with brave, proud, confident, hardworking people!*
- *When you bragged about your hometown and native state?*
- *When not everybody felt they were entitled to a college degree even at the taxpayers' expense?*
- *When a Sunday drive was a pleasant jaunt and not an ordeal?*
- *When politicians proclaimed their patriotism and really meant it?*
- *When your government stood up for Americans everywhere in the world?*
- *When you knew the law would be enforced and your safety would be protected?*
- *When the law meant justice and you felt a little touch of awe every time you saw a policeman in uniform?*
- *When the United States were filled with courageous, honest, clean, confident, and proud people -- American people?*

## Taking Inventory

- *When charity was a virtue, not a telethon.*
- *When lights -- not people -- were turned on and off.*
- *When instant recall was a sign of good intelligence, not bad manufacturing.*
- *When trouble in the streets meant potholes.*
- *When movies were rated on how good they were, not on who was allowed to see them.*

So you didn't make it to the "top of the heap" in this life? Be ye grateful and "**BE THE BEST OF WHATEVER YOU ARE,**" says Douglas Malloch:

If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill,  
Be a scrub in the valley -- but be  
The best little scrub by the side of the hill;  
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

If you can't be a bush, be a bit of grass,  
And some highway happier make;  
If you can't be a muskie, then just be a bass --  
But the liveliest bass in the lake!

We can't all be captains, we've got to be crew,  
There's something for all of us here;  
There's big work to do, and there's lesser to do,  
And the task you must do is the near.



## Taking Inventory

If you can't be a highway, then just be a trail,  
If you can't be the sun, be a star;  
It isn't by size that you win or you fail --  
Be the best of whatever you are!

Great things sometimes come from obscure sources, such as this item from the Senatobia, MS church bulletin. It is titled "*RULES FOR DAILY LIFE:*"

Begin the day with God:  
Kneel down to Him in prayer:  
Lift up thy heart to His abode  
And seek His love to share.

Open the Book of God,  
And read a portion there  
That it may hallow all thy thoughts  
And sweeten all thy care.

Go through the day with God,  
What'er thy work may be:  
Where'er thou art -- at home, abroad --  
He still is near to thee.

Converse in mind with God,  
Thy spirit heavenward raise:  
Acknowledge every good bestowed  
And offer grateful praise.

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Conclude the day with God,  
Thy sins to Him confess:  
Trust in the Lord's atoning blood  
And plead His righteousness.

Lie down at night with God,  
Who gives His servants sleep:  
And when thou tread'st the vale of death,  
He will thee guard and keep.

The following "20 SECRETS FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING" are paraphrased from Romans 12:9-21:

1. Have no imitation Christian love.
2. Have a genuine hatred for evil and a real devotion to good.
3. Have real, warm affection between brothers.
4. Be willing to let the other person have the credit.
5. Do not allow slackness to spoil your work.
6. Keep the fires of the spirit burning as you do your work for the Lord.
7. Base your happiness on your hope in Christ.
8. When trials come, endure them patiently.
9. Steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer.
10. Give freely to fellow-Christians in want, never grudging a meal or a bed to those who need them.
11. As for those who try to make your life difficult, bless them. Don't curse, bless.

## Taking Inventory

12. Share the happiness of those who are happy; share the sorrow of those who are sad.
13. Live in harmony with each other.
14. Don't become snobbish but take a real interest in ordinary people.
15. Don't become set in your own opinions.
16. Don't pay back a bad turn by a bad turn to anyone.
17. See that your public behavior is above criticism.
18. As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone.
19. Never take vengeance into your own hands. Stand back and let God punish if He will.
20. Don't allow yourself to be overpowered by evil. Take the offensive -- overpower evil with good!

This is titled "*THE NEW YEAR.*" As with so many others, the author is unknown. For that we are disappointed, because we'd like to say "thanks." Perhaps we can by turning over a new leaf:

I am the New Year. I am an unspoiled page in your book of time. I am your next chance at the art of living. I am your opportunity to practice what you have learned during the last twelve months about life. All that you sought the past year and failed to find is hidden in me; I



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am waiting for you to search it out again and with more determination. All the good that you tried to do for others and didn't achieve last year is mine to grant -- providing you have fewer selfish and conflicting desires. In me lies the potential of all that you dreamed but didn't dare to do, all that you hoped but did not perform, all you prayed for but did not yet experience. These dreams slumber lightly, waiting to be awakened by the touch of an enduring purpose. I am your opportunity to renew your allegiance to Christ, who said, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). I am the New Year.

The *Christian Bible Teacher* related this account about 25 years ago:

*Charlie Brown in the famous "Peanuts" cartoon cried out, "How long O Lord?" And his friend Lucy proceeded to tell him his quotation was from Isaiah the sixth chapter. She then wore him down with her explanation and in her usual manner, jerked the football away when he kicked at it. Charlie Brown fell down and she explained, "How long? All your life, Charlie Brown. All your life." We see the wisdom of this character in explaining that all through life we face problems. All*

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*through life there is never a time when we are free of them.*

Dear reader, God had a unique purpose for our days to this time. To smile and touch a human being's life at his point of need, and to give him hope, are just some of the great things God had in mind for us. If we fear or question the future, we have not come to a true realization of Jesus' counsel, *"Let not your heart be troubled; I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there ye may be also."*

God is, even now, nurturing us as part of an Eternal Investment in us. He will give us the wisdom to make sound decisions regarding all the days of our life. As we go forward, may the Lord bless us and keep us; may the Lord make His face to shine upon us and give us peace.

Benjamin Franklin, before his passing, composed his own epitaph which reads:

*The body of Benjamin Franklin, printer (like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out, and stript of its lettering and gilding), lies here ... Yet the work itself shall not be lost, for it will, as he believed, appear once more, in a new and more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by The Author.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Wow! What started as an extra credit project with my students has grown into a two-volume, 800-page production. Some day when I retire, I'm going to sit down, re-read all this, and let it fully soak in.

In early drafts of this book and its predecessor, we considered giving separate credit for each of the gems of wisdom submitted. We also considered rejecting this notion for several reasons. First, a good rule of life should stand on its own and not rely on any one authority. If it is a valid rule, has stood the test of time in many forms, it does not matter who introduced it on this occasion.

Second, although some contributors thought they had created some of the rules of life, we could not be sure. After a while it is difficult to separate one's own thoughts from the accumulation of the thoughts of others. Third, many comments on survey forms, although excellent, were returned unsigned and/or with partial names and addresses for credit.

The final reason we considered not giving separate credit for each rule of life is that we do not have on file the source of all these pearls of wisdom. We have, however, tried to give credit where there was special input that was formative.



## Acknowledgments

Spearheading our book project, and assisting at the crucial stages of this monumental project, was our extraordinarily capable Belden Center Secretary, Mrs. Marcella Bailey. Without the superb administrative talents of Mrs. Bailey, this book simply could not have been fully developed.

At early stages of this extensive project, Helen Floyd, Marsha Burkett, and Paula Farley performed yeoman service in processing the primary information. Many other friends and colleagues, especially Whitney Long, Jennifer Miller, Larry Long, Jimmy Jones, Phillip Tucker, and Bob Kelly, also read the later versions of the book and gave helpful suggestions.

So, over the years, those of us adults in the harvest years have read extensively and lived long. Therefore, it would be difficult to attempt to give credit for all the axioms we have drawn from the literature and, indeed, life itself. Nevertheless, we have attempted to preserve and recreate an accurate list of contributors and sources without whom this project would still be a pipe dream. These are contained either in the text of each chapter or in the References section.

Many sources have been consulted in the preparation of this material, and credit has been given to various sources as they were available. Hopefully the References section

## Acknowledgments

will also give due credit and enable those who desire to do further study to consult those sources. If any such acknowledgments have been inadvertently omitted, the author would appreciate receiving information so that proper credit may be given in any future printings.

Every effort has been made to include only reliable information. The author would welcome knowing about any possible omissions or errors. Care has been taken to trace authorship of select quotes and poems, with gratefulness to past writers and collectors for their preserving and supplying us with such a valuable literary heritage.

Hopefully, the material herein will motivate people to further study and also toward a greater understanding of God's will on life's issues. One may not agree with every word printed in this book nor should one feel he needs to do so. It is hoped that the reader will think about the points laid out in the book, and then decide for himself.

1. The first part of the report is a summary of the work done during the year.

2. The second part is a detailed account of the work done.

3. The third part is a summary of the results of the work done.

4. The fourth part is a summary of the conclusions drawn from the work done.

5. The fifth part is a summary of the recommendations made.

6. The sixth part is a summary of the work done during the year.

7. The seventh part is a summary of the results of the work done.

8. The eighth part is a summary of the conclusions drawn from the work done.

9. The ninth part is a summary of the recommendations made.

10. The tenth part is a summary of the work done during the year.

11. The eleventh part is a summary of the results of the work done.

12. The twelfth part is a summary of the conclusions drawn from the work done.

13. The thirteenth part is a summary of the recommendations made.

14. The fourteenth part is a summary of the work done during the year.

15. The fifteenth part is a summary of the results of the work done.

16. The sixteenth part is a summary of the conclusions drawn from the work done.

17. The seventeenth part is a summary of the recommendations made.

18. The eighteenth part is a summary of the work done during the year.

19. The nineteenth part is a summary of the results of the work done.



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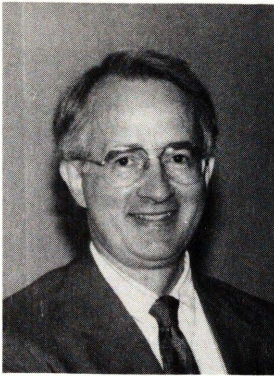
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Dr. Don Diffine is currently Professor of Economics at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, and Director of the Belden Center for Private Enterprise Education. Senior Research Associate of Harding's American Studies Institute, Dr. Diffine is listed in the Heritage Foundation's Guide to Public Policy Experts. He

has six books and 20 articles and monographs in print. A member of the International Platform Association and also an economic humorist, he is a frequent speaker for conventions, management clubs, stockholders' meetings, trade associations, and chambers of commerce.

The recipient of the \$7,500 Freedoms Foundation Principle Award for Excellence in Private Enterprise Education, Dr. Diffine has received 16 additional Freedoms Foundation awards in the categories of Non-profit Publications, Economic Education, Public Affairs-Advertising, Public Address, and Published Works. He is the faculty winner of a \$1,000 First Place prize in a national essay contest judged by Nobel Economist Milton Friedman.

In 1995, he received the "Champion of Enterprise" award and became the first inductee into the National Students In Free Enterprise Hall of Fame in Kansas City. The First Annual Distinguished Scholar Award was also presented in 1988 to Dr. Diffine in Cleveland, Ohio, by the Association of Private Enterprise Education. Dr. Diffine has provided Congressional testimony on business problems, economic impact statements, and inflation-recession dilemmas.

Dr. Diffine is married to the former Dion Hillman of Kailua, Hawaii. Dion is a math teacher in the Searcy public schools. The Diffines have two children: David, 26, who is a medical doctor; and Danielle, 24, who is an accountant.



Benjamin Franklin, before his passing, composed his own epitaph which reads:

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Yes, God had a unique purpose for our days to this time. To smile and touch a human being's life at his point of need, and to give him hope, are just some of the great things God had in mind for us. God is, even now, nurturing us as part of an Eternal Investment in us. He will give us the wisdom to make sound decisions regarding all the days of our life.

I have assembled quite a large task force composed of life's veterans and those in the harvest years. In this book, people will read the following:

- *Life's Dress Rehearsal*
- *Intergenerational Bonding*
- *The Aging Process and Physical Challenges*
- *Harvest Year's Retirement Strategies and Avocations*
- *Enjoying Life's Simple Pleasures with Quality Living*
- *Finding Our Calling and Learning the Meaning of Life*
- *Enjoying True Religion and Gaining Inner Renewal*
- *All-time Favorite Scriptures, Poems, or Quotes*
- *Those People and Attributes Most Admired*
- *If I Had To Do It all Over Again*
- *Taking Inventory*

As the earth rotates, Father Time stands still for none of us. Education lasts all our lives: womb to tomb. So, can we who are life's veterans think of a better reason for feeling good about putting our best thoughts in HOW TO AVOID BEING TOO SOON OLD AND TOO LATE SMART? If we could just get our young people to read this valuable time capsule, we'd be helping them to stay right side up and on track for their life's journey.

*DD Diffine*