

Honoring Our Elders on National Senior Citizens Day

While many may not have heard about **National Senior Citizens Day**, it occurs every year on Aug. 21. Initiated by President Ronald Reagan in 1988, this day is set apart to acknowledge the life-long contributions our nation's seniors have made to their community and country. President Reagan in Proclamation 5847 stated"

"For all they have achieved throughout life and for all they continue to accomplish, we owe older citizens our thanks and a heartfelt salute," Ronald Reagan said. "We can best demonstrate our gratitude and esteem by making sure that our communities are good places in which to mature and grow older—places in which older people can participate to the fullest and can find the encouragement, acceptance, assistance, and services they need to continue to lead lives of independence and dignity.

"Now, Therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, president of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Aug. 21, 1988 as National Senior Citizens Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities."

Take Your Shoes Off ...

Growing up, Mom had a rule for anyone who walked into the house: "Please take your shoes off at the door." Perhaps this request was rooted in Japanese custom but mom believed it kept her house clean. When Mom became a widow, she chose to move in with her eldest son—me. The rule had not changed over the years and to honor Mom, whenever anyone entered my home, we took our shoes off.

The reasons why this was the custom really did not matter.

What was important was showing Mom the honor, respect and love she was due throughout her entire life. For no other reason, I did it simply because she was Mom.

If I as a son understood the importance of honoring my Mom, God valued her so much more. He knew every step she would take and every challenge she would face. It's true for each one of us. God knows you, loves you and is looking out for you.

We Need Your Wisdom

God has not forgotten you! He has a special place in His heart—just for you. Whatever your present circumstances may be, God's thoughts toward you are good, and full of hope for your future. He has a plan and a purpose for you that are greater than any temporary situation. He will keep and fulfill His promises to you.

Perhaps you are reflecting on your life and taking an honest assessment of the ways you've overcome challenges and also examining your shortcomings. Regardless of your past, your life experiences have become your life lessons that are producing a life message for the next generation. You are of great value and have much to impart to us. There is purpose for your life far greater than that which you may realize.

As I think about one of my spiritual fathers, Dr. Ed Cole, I am reminded that all his years as a pastor served as preparation for a ministry that he began in his 60s that continues to impact men and families across the globe. He laid a foundation from which others have continued to build and carry on to the next generation. God can produce great fruitfulness in our latter years and those years can be even more significant than our former years.

Concerned About Family

I can only imagine some of your concerns in this season of life. Not only are there personal burdens, you may wonder what will happen to loved ones and how well prepared they are for

the future.

A mother still prays for her wayward son. A grandfather watches grandchildren living without regard for their own future. These are real issues that sometimes separate family members. But in the midst of that pain and disappointment, there is hope. Relationships can be restored; a son can turn his life around. A grandchild finds the way to turn the passion of her heart into a path for her life.

God is concerned for your well-being and the well-being of your loved ones. But perhaps your spouse or loved ones have passed and you're dealing with being alone or other challenges. God is watching out for you. He promises to be your protector and defender. You can hold onto His commitment to you. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

If you are in any way being mistreated, know that the Lord is looking out for you. He hears your cry and will vindicate you. It breaks God's heart when you or anyone who is vulnerable is being taken advantage of or harmed. He will protect you and your property. He will bring justice to pass on your behalf.

God is Faithful

In the midst of the challenges you face, God is good and faithful. I encourage you to turn your focus from your circumstances to God. Trust Him to carry you through your current difficulty, the hope or dream yet to be fulfilled.

As I think about the future and where I am heading, I often take time to reflect on the landmarks of my past. God has brought me through every step of the journey just as He has you. Even though I can't change my past or erase some of the decisions I've made before, the decisions I make now, each day, give clarity and definition to my future. Even in our human frailties, shortcomings and mistakes, God demonstrates His love and faithfulness. He never changes.

You can trust Him with your disappointments, concerns, hurts,

fears and pains of this life. God has not forgotten you or His promises for your life. I encourage you to reach out to Him with the burdens on your heart.

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is to pull away and rest. Jesus modeled this lifestyle. Throughout His ministry on earth, He often took time to get away by Himself to pray. That time spent with His Heavenly Father gave Him the perspective, clarity, and resolve He needed to continue.

Jesus invites you to come to Him and lay your burdens down and as you do, you find rest for your soul. In the stillness of His presence, you will receive His perspective and clarity. Expect God to intervene on your behalf. Even when we don't see it, God is working things out for our good and watching out for our loved ones too.

You Are Not Alone

When you trust in Jesus and His word, your eyes are opened to things unseen to the natural eye. You will experience the heart of God for you and for your family. And soon, you will begin to see His presence and His provision in your life in practical and tangible ways. I firmly believe that what God started in your life, will be fully completed because our hope is in Him. It's not based on our human ability but on God's intervention. Always remember, God has special grace and care just for you!

Whatever may have happened in your life up to this time, know that God is here for you. His mercies are new every morning; great is His faithfulness. His sole desire is that you would know Him and the depth of love He has just for you. You can enter into or perhaps reconfirm a relationship with Him, even now. Maybe you simply need the reassurance that you are not alone.

You are not alone and remember that somebody cares every day and God has not forgotten you.

Doug Stringer is the founder and president of Somebody Cares America/International. You can find him online at .