

The Key to Staying Young

Retirement. We can't escape the topic. Television, radio, Internet and even billboard ads remind us that we're closer today than we were yesterday. The prevailing message is this: If you haven't begun to plan, you'd better start soon. Some even stir up anxious thoughts. They make us wonder, "Will I be ready?" "Will I have enough cash?"

No doubt these are valid questions. With about 10,000 people turning 65 each day, it's certainly something to consider. But don't be misled. Yes, prepare for the future. But keep the right perspective. Retirement is a time to blossom, not wither. To create, not vegetate. So along with all those financial strategies, plan for a future of purpose.

Consider Caleb. When he was 40, he, Joshua and ten other men were sent to spy out the Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb came back with a good report. Yes, the land was occupied, but it was ready for a takeover. Yes, the people dwelling there were tall and fierce, but the Lord was with them, and God promised to deliver.

We know the story. The children of God believed the bad report, fear prevailed, and they ended up wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. Caleb and Joshua were the only two men from that generation to enter the Promised Land. Notice what Caleb says to Joshua when the time finally came for his tribe to possess their allotment:

"I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land ... and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in" (Joshua 14:7, 10-11)

Caleb, at age 85, took over the land he was promised, and he

took it by force! Growing *older* does not mean we grow *irrelevant*! His work was as significant in the second half of his life as it was in the first. Now don't get me wrong—we should all plan for retirement. But let's keep our priorities in order. A 401k and an IRA are fine, but they won't make your days meaningful. If you want a lifetime of purpose, then model your retirement plans after Caleb's: serve the Lord, and drive out the enemy!

Kara Davis *is a doctor of internal medicine and a former assistant professor of medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She currently practices at the Christian Community Health Center in the Chicagoland area, and she is also the author of Spiritual Secrets to Weight Loss (Charisma House).*