

The Value of the Golden Aged Among Us

Sarah bore Isaac when she was 90 years old. Moses led the Israelites out of bondage when he was 80. God cared for them, carried them, and used them!

If you are nearing or are already in your golden years, don't despair. You have much to offer to those behind you. You are a living testament and a walking treasure chest of testimonies and miracles.

Perhaps you are reflecting on your life, taking an honest assessment of the ways you've overcome challenges and examining your shortcomings. Remember all God has done!

Regardless of your past, your life experiences have become your life lessons that are producing a life message for the next generation. You have great value and much to impart. Your purpose is far greater than you may realize.

God has not forgotten you! He has a special place in His heart – just for you. Whatever your present circumstances, His thoughts toward you are good and full of hope for your future. Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that He has a plan and a purpose for you greater than any temporary situation. He will fulfill His promises to you.

He Carries You

This season of life is not without concerns. Many people carry personal burdens. What will happen to loved ones? Are they prepared for their future?

Tom can relate. A successful small businessman nearing retirement, he is concerned about the future of his company. His employees are like second family; many have been with him

for more than two decades. Challenging economic times have brought him to a crossroads, wondering if the company will survive. Will it be there for future generations? It's not about the company; it's about the people.

A mother prays for her wayward child. A grandfather watches as his grandchildren live without regard for their future. These are real issues that sometimes separate family members. But amid that pain and disappointment, there is hope. Relationships can be restored. A child can turn his or her life around. A grandchild can find the way to turn the passion of their heart into a path for their 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 challenges alone. Think on Isaiah 46:4, which says, *"Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you."*

God is watching out for you. He promises to be your protector and defender. You can hold on to His commitment to you. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

If you are being mistreated, know that the Lord is looking out for you. He hears your cry and will vindicate you. It breaks His heart when the vulnerable are taken advantage of or harmed. He will bring justice to pass on your behalf.

Good and Faithful

Mary lives on a fixed income and carefully plans her monthly budget. Because of her advanced years and health issues, she does not cook often. Thankfully, a local "meals on wheels" program provides a hot meal for her each day. In fact, she used to volunteer for the program that now helps her!

Since her husband of nearly 50 years passed, Mary has lived alone. But the small community where she has lived most of her

life serves as her extended family. Friends and neighbors check on her. They are aging, too, and some are passing. She trusts in God, and He always provides those to lend a helping hand. As she has cared for many through the years, others are now coming to her aid in time of need.

Her story reminds me of a principle in the Old Testament. When the crops were ready for harvest, God instructed the people to leave some behind for widows, orphans, and foreigners. Throughout Scripture, we read of God's intimate concern for widows (and widowers!) and all who are vulnerable. His heart and principles have not changed. He has bound Himself to look after and care for you. He won't change His mind or turn His back on you.

In the midst of your challenges, 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, to the hope or dream yet to be fulfilled.

Press In, Possess the Land of the Lord's Promises

Psalm 92:14-15 says the righteous *"will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.'"*

Caleb took a mountain in his later years; Elisabeth bore John the Baptist; God gave an older Apostle John a vision to pass down to future generations that still speaks to us today; and so on and so on....

I think of how one of my spiritual fathers, Dr. Ed Cole, began a ministry in his 60s that continues to impact men and families across the globe. His years as a pastor prepared him to lay a foundation upon which others continue to build and carry on to the next generation. God can produce great fruitfulness in our latter years. They can be even more significant than our former ones.

As I think about the future and where I am heading, I often 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 decisions I've made before, the decisions I make now, each day, give clarity and definition to my future. 2 Corinthians 4:16 is a good reminder: *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."* 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. Reach out to Him with the burdens of your heart and be renewed.

Doug Stringer is founder and president of Somebody Cares America and Somebody Cares International, a global network bringing hope and healing to communities through prayer initiatives, compassion outreaches and cooperative efforts. He is author of numerous books, and host of the podcast A Word In Season with Doug Stringer and Friends.