

Fullness of Life



THE SECRET OF JOY, GRACE AND HOPE IN ADVANCED AGE IS THE TIME OF CLOSE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CREATOR.

HOPE IS THE POINT OF SUPPORT FOR THE ATTITUDE AND POINT OF VIEW OF SENIOR ADULTS, AND HELPS THEM PREPARE FOR THAT NEARBY TIME OF SEEING THEIR CREATOR.

PRESENTATION

It is a pleasure to present a compilation of 10 biblical principles that have to do with the realities of old age and that give hope for senior adults, written for those who care for the elderly, for those who minister to the elderly and for those who want to prepare for that time of their life.

It will give each one of us grace, joy and hope because when the truths of the Word of God and His love for seniors come true and transcend their weaknesses and limitations, their spirits will also jump and be born again in the Spirit and by the Spirit.

We must understand that there is no reason for this stage of life to be sad or lonely. We have to prepare for when that day comes and help others who are already going through it.

It is a call to the church to extend its ministry to these people who need to feel loved and accepted by others, to help them live their last years with dignity. But it is not only a call to churches and families, but also to the elderly to live a full and dignified life.

Enjoy this compilation with the desire that God speaks to you and challenges you to do something for people of this age.

With my love,

Raquel Ramos



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1. BECOMING FRIENDS WITH OLD AGE

As I sat down at my desk to write about senior citizens and thinking about a title for this lesson, I was reminded that I am a senior citizen! When I turned 61, I was working as a volunteer and went to give workshops in Baja Verapaz, Guatemala. Upon returning home after the activity, I said to my sister: "Let's see what happened in the capital this weekend." I turned on the television to one of the national channels, which gave the following news report: "Old man of 61 years dies from being hit by a car." It was then that I realized that for the society where I was, I was considered an old woman.

During adolescence in the town where I grew up and my parents pastored, there were many people who were not so old, but who loved to act as if they were. My sister Tita and I decided that we were going to age "with dignity." Since then, I have been observing people older than me. At first, I did not do it with the purpose of helping them but to see how bad they appeared and write it down so that in the future I wouldn't make the same mistakes. But God changed my purpose.

In the societies we live in, senior citizens are synonymous with burden. That makes many worry to such an extent that this has become the "syndrome of the third age". There is reason for this, because when one retires or reaches a certain age, it is suggested that he or she is on the threshold of death.

I was waiting for my turn at the doctor's clinic, and in the waiting room magazines were articles with the following titles:

1. Do not leave your loved ones in debt; we offer burial places in installments.
2. Plan your funeral: experts help you in our offices.
3. Nice place for retirement: Lots available for a "Home on the Lakes"
4. Assisted Living for 55 years and up.

And as if that were not enough, even jokes were directed at us:

An old man went to the doctor and the doctor told him, "I have bad news and good news. Which do you prefer to listen to first?" The old man replied, "give me the bad news, doctor." The doctor told him that he had Alzheimer's disease. And the old man asked him, "what about the good news, Doctor?" The doctor replied, "the good news is that after a while, you'll forget the bad news."

An old woman who could no longer read, saw a cockroach and called out to her son shouting, "Son come and spray insecticide on that cockroach." The son took a can of air freshener and sprayed the cockroach. The old woman smelled the scent and

shouted at him: "That's air freshener, not insecticide!" To which the son replied: "Don't worry mom, the cockroach can't read."

"What can I do for you, Mr. Silvano?" the doctor said when he saw the old man return to his office. "Doctor, I forgot to tell you that when I go to the market, to the pharmacy, or to church, I get very tired. What should I take? The doctor replied: "you should take a taxi, Mr. Silvano, a taxi."

As you can see, being a member of the elderly is not so bad. We are the ones who help the economy and emotional well-being of the community. Without us, there are no sales or laughter.

I like to recite, and whenever I can I do it, I especially like to quote Psalm 71, known as the "Psalm of the Elder."

One day while reading a magazine, I found this prayer which I liked a lot because it describes some feelings that may appear in life as the years go by. It is an anonymous prayer, very beautiful, and I want to share it.

Teach me Lord to age
(anonymous)

Convince me that those who take away my responsibility are not unfair to me,
Those who do not ask me for my opinion, those who call another to take my place.
Take away the pride of my past experience;
Take away the feeling of believing that I'm indispensable.

In this gradual taking away of things, I only see the law of time, and consider this relief
in the works as an interesting manifestation of life, which is revealed under the impulse
of your providence.

But help me Lord, to still be useful to others, contributing my optimism and prayer,
joy and enthusiasm, to those who now have responsibility;
living in humble and serene contact with the world that changes,
without regretting the past that has already left;
accepting my departure from the fields of activity, as I naturally accept the sunset.

Finally, I ask you to forgive me if only in this now I realize how much you have loved
me. Grant me to look with gratitude towards the happy destiny that you have prepared
for me and towards which you oriented me in the first moment of my life.

2. THE TWO MEN IN YOUR LIFE

The apostle Paul describes these two men in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

The weak outside man

The outer man and the inner man ... We who love Jesus tolerate one and nurture the other; although sometimes we can spoil the one and stop nourishing the other. But as we get older, it is very obvious that "Mr. Outside "gradually perishes. We look in the mirror and we get a little scared. There are too many wrinkles, lines and warts. Our bones are in agony, as the psalmist so aptly describes it in Psalm 6:2. We feel the joints out of place and the aches on rainy days; penetrating pain as the cartilage in them wears more and more. Our eyes see less and our ears need small hearing aids. We ask others to help us remember phrases, or not to repeat them too often, and avoid complaining too much or not showing habits that distract others, always indicating that "Mr. Exterior " truly perishes.

Solomon in his despair at not finishing his life well, because he had surrendered to tactics of the enemy as he grew older, said so clearly in Ecclesiastes 2:1. His descriptive phrases about the aging process continue in most of the verses of chapter 12, with its primary purpose in verse 7.

Our outer man perishes! Is this our only hope? Not in any way! Paul says that "We do not faint" while all this happens. I think he was being encouraged by the Lord as he wrote his letter to the Corinthians. After all, his body aged, and he no doubt thought about the gradual loss of his abilities.

The renewed inner man

Then suddenly, it seems that Paul receives an increase in faith when he divides the two men with a small but powerful word in verse 16: YET. This is a daily renewal. The Helper, the Holy Spirit, tells me that while I wait on Him, my strength is renewed (Is.40:31) and I can be renewed in the spirit of my mind (Eph. 4:23), and so I can be transformed. Even my youth is renewed by the good things that the Lord gives me (Ps. 103: 5). Renewal, what a wonderful and hopeful word. It is our promise, it is our right, and our Lord promises it to us no matter how old we are.

So, how do we, those of us who have physical abilities that are decreasing, be renewed in the inner man? The renewal of the inner man always begins with a time in the Word of God. You have to recognize your need, first. Admit that you do not depend on or desire the preeminence of the outer man, and tell the Lord that you want Him to nourish and renew your inner man. After all, "Mr. Interior" is the real you, while "Mr. Outside", with its perishable situations, is only here temporarily; His presence is as short as described in Psalm 39:4.

The real me

But the inner man is the soul, the spirit, who communicates with the Spirit of God; The real you who will live forever. It is the true self that needs to eat from God's Word daily, that needs a daily dynamic expression of faith, a daily communication with the Father, a daily devouring of God's commandments, its challenges and its promises; Daily rains of blessing received from Him by faith.

Let us determine to increase the nutrition of our inner man. It is true that we must love God with our whole body, soul and mind; and that we need to be diligent in taking care of our physical body, whether with good nutrition, exercise if possible, and so on. But this care of our perishing outer man must never exceed in importance the care of the inner man who is eternal. As we balance the importance of our outer man and nurture the inner, we are yearning for things that are not seen; that place where "the abundant wealth of His Grace" is, which will be shown to us through all the coming ages, our home with all its glory.

Cheer up. The word renewal accompanies another wonderful word in the Bible: restoration. The Lord has the wonderful ability to restore years of neglect or ignorance (Joel 2:25-26). Meditate on Joel and you will feel very lively. How encouraging it is then to read the Word of God, trust Him, pray frequently, believe in Him all the time to be obedient, love our friends and enemies, and in general serve the Lord as best we can, because we know that we are truly taking care of what is eternal.

Let's pray

FATHER, I LOVE YOU!

Today I just want to thank you and praise you for your beautiful Word to me, which affirms and renews my "inner man."

You renew me in singing.

You renew me when you tell me that you love me.

You renew me with your wonderful promises.

You renew me when you tell me that my life is in your hands.

You renew me in fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

You renew me when you remind me that my "outer beauty" is not as important as my "inner beauty".

I am blessed and encouraged.

Thank you! Thank you!

3. PREJUDICES, PREPARATION, PRIVILEGES AND PERSPECTIVE

PREJUDICES

Poor Solomon! Poor King Solomon! In his time, he was the richest person on earth, but he could not hold on to the wisdom and power that God gave him to finish his life with happiness and satisfaction. His description of old age in Ecclesiastes 12 raises our pity, sadness and horror. How could he express so much hopelessness and depression in his old age? All his wisdom did not include spiritual preparation to reach old age.

Look at Solomon's prejudices against old age:

v.1 "the days of trouble ... I find no pleasure in them"

V.4 "doors to the street are closed ... their (the birds') songs grow faint"

V.7 and 8 "the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

8 'Meaningless! Meaningless!' says the Teacher. 'Everything is meaningless!'"

Why didn't Solomon abide by his own advice: "remember your Creator in the days of your youth"? If he had agreed and prepared for his old age, he would not have been filled with so many prejudices.

PREPARATION

Before you say to yourself, "I'm not going to let that happen to me," ask yourself these questions:

- Am I preparing enough for the days ahead?
- Do I have the habit of a daily time of prayer, praise and communion with the Lord Jesus, so that this habit takes root within me and doesn't change in my old age?
- Am I building a deep trust and faith in Him that will be able to withstand anything that He allows in my life?
- Am I striving to complete my reward in heaven, which is "reserved" for me as Peter said in Philippians 3:10, knowing that I may have to participate in His suffering?
- If Solomon with all his wisdom and wealth grew old with depression and prejudice, what is the possibility of the same thing happening to me?

Look at some of the preparations the Bible gives us concerning old age:

- Obedience and faith (Abraham Genesis 15:15).
- Living in the Word (King Solomon forgot his own advice. Prov. 3:1 and 2).
- The Wisdom of God (again Solomon. Prov. 3:16; 9:11).
- Loving God and Knowing His Name (Psalm 91: 14,16).

If some of these attributes of preparation are lacking in our past, it is not too late to confess our failures to the Lord and ask him to help us incorporate them into our lives now. At the same time, we can thank him wholeheartedly because he has allowed us to live so long, even if we have failed in this. It is only by his mercy and his grace that that happens.

We too often talk to others about our problems, concerns and griefs. But speaking about our special privileges, great perspectives and abundant blessings with words that live with a true flash of life and joy is not always easy for us.

We have privileges and important perspectives that should literally amaze us when we actually think about them. Many of the holy saint never think of those unique privileges to which we have access. David mentions some in Psalm 71.

PRIVILEGES

Declare Your Strength and Power

What better way to help "this generation," as David says, than to declare what God has done for us? Our mouth says so (v. 15); our music praises him (v. 22); our tongue declares it (v. 24). We must talk about him much more than about ourselves.

Advise others. (1 Samuel 12: 2,7)

This old prophet told his people to be still and listen. In today's world, do we dare exercise our divine privilege and do the same? Many times our children, grandchildren and friends have very little time for counseling. Of course, to do this, we have to practice extensively one of the preparation exercises mentioned above: that of wisdom. Pray long before telling other people how to stop, calm down and listen to you.

One of the best biblical examples of counseling is in Psalm 37, which is a treasure trove of counseling for the young and for the elderly as well. Topics such as fears, anxieties, attitudes, what to do with abusers, comfort and much more were mentioned by this ancient psalmist of Israel.

Bless Our Families or Others.

This is the right of an old saint to pronounce a special blessing on the head of those of whom God has spoken to them. Look at Genesis 48:16, speaking here of Jacob giving a blessing to his family, and Genesis 47:10, a pagan king was blessed by a servant of God.

Teach the Young. (Titus 2: 3,4; Psalm 71:18).

Be wiser and more understanding. (Job12: 12).

PERSPECTIVE

How many times do Christian senior adults battle against the enemy's attacks when they are told that all that awaits them before going to heaven is only weakening, loss of body functions, perhaps loss of speech or hearing and diction, despised by younger relatives and friends, seen as old without balance and feel that all they want is to die. To think like this is to surrender to the devil's assaults.

Dear saints of God, make your greatest effort to practice the presence of God in your life, meditating on his Word and trying to "pray without ceasing." Don't neglect those smile muscles. Remember that you are winning more and more prizes in the celestial kingdom, and when you get there, every effort you have made here in this world will be worth a thousand times more.

Vigor renewed. Am I like a tree?

Have you ever meditated on Ps. 92: 12-15? The perspectives of the future have wonderful analogies to a living and vibrant tree. I challenge you to read these verses again and again, allowing them to enter into your own being. Doesn't this make you want to take a step with more courage and declare to your grandchildren: "Look at me, I have vigor and vitality; Jesus gives me this." You don't need to be pampered any more.

Complete Maturity.

In Job 5, the Holy Spirit makes a list of ten special blessings for Job, because he surrendered to God's correction. One of them is in verse 26. Look also at Philippians 1:6.

God compares us to the TREES and the MATURE GRAIN, to the sheaves. Doesn't this make you want to give a shout of joy? As you ask the Holy Spirit to reveal more of those two aspects, you will praise the Lord more and more, even as the older King David says in Psalm 71:14 "As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more." HALLELUJAH!

Heaven Perspective.

To win heaven, it is worth living on earth. It is the most wonderful perspective and the best of all. Our eternal home awaits us, our loved ones and our precious Savior await us.

Beloved, raise your face and begin to give thanks and praise and sing and express yourself with voices of joy. You reached it! And the glory of heaven awaits!

Let's pray

FATHER, WE LOVE YOU!

We confess that in our preparations for old age, we worry more about being physically and financially ready, than being spiritually ready. We ask you to forgive us. We also ask that you fan our minds to realize that at this age, you are more interested in my BEING than DOING ... To be right in integrity and faithfulness, rather than doing something every day to promote our own earthly desires, or even spiritual expectations.

Thank you for pointing out our weaknesses. Help us to understand our position in you. Our identities in you is not summarized in the number of things we do, but in humble communion at your feet, and in understanding who you really are.

Help us also to realize our privileges in you, because there are many.

We love you so much, Father.

4. THE RADIANCE OF GRACE

There are times when we surrender to the temptation to enlarge ourselves, especially if our relatives and younger friends sit with us and ask us about our lives and experiences. How easy it is to paint colorful pictures of our courage and accomplishments. But added to those special qualities of calmness, stillness and confidence that some holy seniors have in their faith is what I have called "aging with grace." We cannot boast in any way; all the glory must go to our Lord and Savior.

This kind of grace is a gift from God; I know that I desire it earnestly. I want my years of old age to be filled with this Gift; I want Him to be present at all times. Some refer to this gift with a phrase "mercy of Jesus Christ"; this description gives us more light on that gift. What I do know is that "if I don't have it, it's because I don't ask for it," so from now on, I ask for it, I prepare myself for it, and I think He will give it to me.

GRACE IN WRITING

It is difficult to define the word "grace." It has intrigued me for many years. There are different measures of grace (Jesus himself was FULL of it). There are different kinds of grace. I believe that there is a very special grace that is sometimes given to the eldest children of God, and they have the opportunity to deploy it through His guidance to those people He chooses to benefit from it, and to those difficult times in life when only His Grace sustains us. It is not only described with words such as "surrender" or "continuous blessing," but also as "established grace," which we find in Hebrews 13:19; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:16; James 4: 6; 1 Peter 5: 5. This "grace to grow old" has some definitive distinctions that we should learn and meditate upon. On the one hand, it is always associated with humility (James 4: 6 and 1 Peter 5: 5)

THE GRACE THAT ONLY GOD GIVES

The "grace to grow old" is also accompanied by HOPE; this is expressed in "hope for grace," mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:16 and 17. This grace does not allow negative words, but always tries to include "graceful" speech at all times. We also read about this in Colossians 4: 6 and Jeremiah 31: 2.

There are many words that describe Grace: humility, hope, positivism and survival combined with the divine presence of Jesus, like Moses in Exodus 33:14,17; Wonderful and unique grace that the Lord has in store for us and our last years. This grace is a real anointing that envelops the person. No objections, questions or sorrows are heard from it, but it is filled with Jesus' love for lost souls, love for the Word and prayer, trust in Jesus Christ, faith and hope are bestowed by the wonderful "grace of aging."

THE GRACE OF THE SPIRIT

A living and active spirit that wishes to pray and worship the Lord in any opportunity that presents itself is the "grace of the spirit." If we fill our spirit with the grace of God, that grace will shine, even if the "outer man" is impaired. Regardless of the problems that come, if our spirit communicates with his Spirit, we are safe.

GRACE WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Maybe my personality, my fears, or the oddities of humanity don't always glorify the Lord, but Jesus Christ will do it for me, and the Lord gives us this too if we ask. There is a wonderful grace for us at any age. However, we who have left most of our lives behind have to ask, pray, trust, wait, believe and fervently wish to be dressed in this mantle called "the grace of aging." I know that the Lord has it for each one of us.

Let's pray

FATHER, I LOVE YOU!

Oh Father, if there is one thing I desire, it is to grow old with beauty and grace, not in ugliness and bitterness. You have been so good to me. My cup is really overflowing.

Help me to never forget to say "please" and "thank you" and show my gratitude. Let the radiance of your grace shine around me to the point that those who live in contact with me see you, not me.

I wish very much to give you all the praise and glory dear Father, and I am doing it at this moment.

In the name of Jesus, the giver of grace, amen!

5. FEAR: OUR UGLY ENEMY

Perhaps the greatest test or temptation that the elderly children of God have to endure is fear.

1. Fear of the unknown
2. Fear that there won't be enough money
3. Fear that their children will forget them
4. Fear that their grandchildren won't follow the Lord.
5. Fear that those who care for them will be insensitive to their needs

The list can go on and on. No wonder the Bible says that fear is a torment. Understanding and compassion for the elderly has been replaced by selfishness, overly busy agendas and a careless attitude.

Jesus Christ can take away the fear listed in those lines. He tells seniors that during such terribly sad times, there is One that will come to visit, there is One who is not too busy, there is One who will stay for a while and listen to him and speak with him any time he wants for however long he wants. His name is the Lord Jesus Christ.

DIVINE DIRECTION

It is a great comfort to realize that our Lord will guide us at every step as long as we follow him and keep our eyes on Him. He is the rod and the quiet that leads us. This symbolizes our comfort and direction along the way. He keeps us behind his back for two reasons:

1. We are directly behind Him and we continually need to receive challenges that remind us that we depend totally upon the Word and the Holy Spirit.
2. If a fog of dark circumstances or black evidence suddenly prevents us from seeing the Shepherd, his staff and his silence will always be clearly visible to guide us. No mountain of fear can eliminate that. We are not alone.

Any kind of fear, be it known things or unfamiliar things, even if it is a "death sentence" that could be so black that it overshadows our vision of Jesus, fear has to yield to the rod and the silent instruction and comfort of the Shepherd. Fear must yield under the continuous presence of the Shepherd who never guides us where He has not gone first. Jesus Christ was not only given a "death sentence," he also carried all our diseases. He is the "Ancient of Days"; he identifies with us fully in our sufferings and in our old age; we are his followers and we have to keep our eyes fixed first on Jesus, on his Word and on the Holy Spirit.

TWELVE TREASURES IN THE DARK

- He calls us by our name: mentioned twice in Isaiah 45:3 and 4.
- His presence is there: 1 Kings 8:12; 2 Chronicles 6:1 - "“The LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud.”"
- There are hidden treasures and secrets to discover: Isaiah 45: 3 already mentioned before, and Psalms 18:11 “He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him— the dark rain clouds of the sky.”
- His glory is there: Isaiah 60:2 “See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.”
- Justice and righteousness are there: Psalm 97:2 “Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.”
- The chains are broken: Psalm 107:14, “He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness, and broke away their chains.”
- There is light in the darkness: Micah 7:8, “Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.”
- Trust and dependence are there: Isaiah 50:10, “Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on their God.”
- Freedom is there: Isaiah 42:7-8, “to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. I am the LORD... ”
- Jesus Christ himself is the great Light: Matthew 4:16, “the people living in darkness have seen a great light.”
- There is light in the shadow of death, rising when we fall: Matthew 4:16, “on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” Micah 7:8, “... Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.”
- God Himself speaks in the darkness: Exodus 20:19-21 “and they said to Moses, ‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.’ Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.’ The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.”

No matter how dark it is around me, I have all those treasures that I can take to heart. My deepest desire is for others to see the Word as well. No wonder Jeremiah cried in his heart in Jeremiah 22:29, “O land, land, land, hear the word of the LORD!”

Let's pray

FATHER, WE LOVE YOU!

I have to apologize for distrusting you, because that is fear: distrust. It is so easy for us to see the wind instead of the windmaker; the high waves instead of the creator of water.

David said: "When I am afraid, I will trust you." I say the same. I say it out loud, right now in your presence and you are listening to me. You say to me again and again: "Do not fear, do not fear ... I am with you"

"I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." (Psalm 91:2). Please, help me today and take away from me the enemy who wanted to bring me down with fear.

Thank you, Jesus Christ, for your peace!

6. HOW TO DEAL WITH REGRETS

There is no elderly child of God who, realizing that his life is ending, has no remorse; there is none that is going through this desert of knowledge who does not feel that he would like to remedy the forgetfulness of the past, rash actions, unkind words launched at loved ones and that can no longer be erased, etc.

Have you ever thought why God allowed the devil to drag Peter through that awful swamp of despair and remorse? Why did God choose Saul, a man full of hatred and ugliness, murderous and angry, who never forgot the terrible persecution he carried out against the church? Why did God allow his beloved friends David, Abraham and Moses to make so many mistakes in life and then live the rest of their lives remembering them, even though they had already experienced forgiveness? Let's think about why the Lord chose any of us, as human as we are?

Regrets! It seems that as a person ages, the enemy accelerates those thoughts and tries to quench his demonic thirst for destruction and despair by telling us that it is too late. Already the friends and relatives we need to talk to are gone. It's too late! But even so, both the characters named above and we are precisely the people that God uses!

GOD LOVES ME IN SPITE OF MY FAULTS

Remember, all the people that God has ever used for his glory and honor here on this earth have been weak human beings who have brought some memories with regrets to their old age. Can you think of any person except Jesus who has served the Lord, and who does not have even one remorse? There are some whose failures are not mentioned, but it seems to be the will of the Lord that He chooses to use for his glory those who have on occasion failed miserably and then experienced the sweet relief of forgiveness. How else could his servants identify with fellow believers?

Our Heavenly Father sees the swirl of thoughts and our sincere desires of always wanting to have been more pleasing to Him. He also sees our remorse and our repentance because he not only forgave us long ago, but also erased such sin and cast it into the depths of the sea to never ever be remembered again. When the enemy tries to remind you of your failures, perhaps through a letter or a call, or a visit from a selfish and bitter relative, let me encourage you to read Galatians 5:1,13,14.

The bonds of remorse are different from the bonds of which Paul speaks in this chapter, but the warning of standing firm in your freedom and claiming your release by the love of Christ flowing through you to that victim of past mistakes have the same validity. You are forgiven, you are free; stand firm against the devil who wants to tell you otherwise. Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to cover your mind and thoughts with His.

COMMITMENT NOT FULFILLED

It is characteristic of the enemy to generalize, and these faults seem like a dark cloud over us. On the other hand, the conviction of the Holy Spirit is clear and specific. If there is any commitment that has not been fulfilled in your heart, ask the Lord to speak to you specifically and search your heart. Perhaps what is needed is a sincere apology. Not only to the Lord, but also to a specific person. He will tell you what to do. Pick up the phone, write a letter, send a conciliatory message ... There is no age limit to being humble. Once you have done what the Lord has asked you, feel free! Not only will you be an example of genuine humility, but you will also be respected. Take the high road, don't let the situation turn into another regret later. It is never too late while there is still breath!

Remember that you have been totally and completely forgiven. It does not matter if subsequent circumstances remind you of those dark times when you lost your balance or gave in to the enemy. In Jesus, for Jesus and for the saving grace of his work on Calvary, you are wonderfully forgiven. Focus on the love of the Savior and his heart in restoration. Keep in mind that He does not want you to suffer anymore; His blood on the cross took care of all that.

So you have to follow these steps and trust, trust, trust.

One of those restorative attitudes, which the Holy Spirit offers you if you'll accept it, is to remind you of God's goodness. There is something special about studying that word, which lifts our spirits and drives away depression. The Bible is full of verses about the goodness of God, and one of my favorite verses is Nahum 1:7.

A wonderful exercise is to make a mental list of all the good things that God has done for you. Begin with the words of Romans 2:4 and continue to fulfill what Philippians 4:8 says.

Dear Lord, I know you have beautiful things for me. I love who you are and what you do.

Job chapter 5 says the following:

- He bandages your wounds. V.18
- He brings you relief. V. 18
- He rescues you from afflictions. V. 19
- He will save you from the death of hunger. V. 20
- He will save you from the sword. V. 20
- He will protect you from verbal abuse. V. 21
- He will keep you from fear when destruction comes. V. 21
- He will keep you from the wild beasts. V 22
- He will make your house a safe place. V. 24
- Your children will be alive, well and blessed. V. 25
- You will not die young, but we will die in a vigorous old age. V. 26.

Let's pray

FATHER, I LOVE YOU!

My tears are a mixture of joy and sadness as I look at my life. You have made it possible for me to get out of those regrets with humility and honesty, and now I am free.

That's why I can cry with joy: It's YOU JESUS, it's YOU! First of all, with your sacrifice on the cross, you accomplished everything for my salvation, and then the coming of the Holy Spirit into my life filled all the corners and depths of my heart. Now any chains or condemnation that I could feel are gone. Thanks a million thanks!

Father, please, continue doing the same work in me until you call me to my heavenly home. The enemy of my soul tries to accuse me or condemn me as much as possible, but I am under your blood shed on the cross and I am totally free.

Thank you Jesus!

7. FINDING THE SECRET PLACE

As we get older, peace and stillness are more and more attractive. Some of my favorite verses are found in Isaiah 32:17,18 and Psalm 91:1

PEACE AND QUIET

We older believers need to know how to enter the stillness of the secret place of His presence. The noise and turbulence of the frustrations and abuses we coped with in the days of our youth are already too frustrating for us. The nerves have been damaged and are not so elastic, because they take more time to recover, and they protest, sometimes insistently.

How the enemy likes this! He knows that the ways of the world are no longer attractive to us, so he tries to attack us by disturbing our minds and emotions. Only he can rob us of peace and quiet trust in Jesus Christ if we allow him. Of course, he hates peace and trust with vehemence, and will use any means, any circumstance, anyone, to turn our quiet times into zones of mental warfare.

But there is a wonderful truth that the Lord wants to reveal to us. In the midst of this turbulence and emotional storm, "we can dwell in the secret place of the Most High."

First of all, what is that "secret place?" Here are some definitions:

- It is the place of "covering." Psalm 139:5
- It is the place of the "secret of his presence." Psalm 31:20
- It is the place of "protection against the scourge of the tongue." Job 5:21
- It is the place of "help" and "support" Psalm 63:7,8
- It is the cave where David wrote inspired words of trust and faith.
- It is Abraham saying to his son, "God will provide himself with a lamb"
- It is the cleft in the rock where Moses hid to see Jehovah pass when he received the great and glorious promise. Exodus 33:12, 14
- It is the place where Adam and Eve walked in the afternoon with Jehovah God.
- It is the place where Isaiah said "Here I am, send me"
- It is the place of Jeremiah's unwavering trust even while sinking in the mud.
- It is coverage: Isaiah 4: 6; Isaiah 32: 2
- It is the place of peace. Isaiah 26:3
- It is to listen to God's heartbeat for the needs of his children and to connect with Him. Song 2:14; Ezekiel 22:30.

IT IS TO BE IN HIS PRESENCE TOGETHER WITH HIS WORD AND HIS FAITH TO BELIEVE HIM.

How can we find this secret place?

1. Ask for it and look for it, David says in Psalm 27:4,5.

If you really want to find the secret place of his presence, you will find it! The Lord is pleased to meet you. He loves communion and fellowship. The Holy Spirit is pleased to teach you; there are many treasures that await you.

2. Apart from the time to do it, choose when and where. It doesn't have to be something very elaborate; you can quickly enter His presence. You can be sure that He knows what your agenda is, but be prepared for Him to sometimes change it. He knows the value of his time with you more than you know it.

3. Enter with emotion, expectation and determination. Always keep your Bible close so that you can find that secret place as you listen to what He wants to tell you, because when He speaks, you will feel more and more hidden under his wings, protected, blessed and completely isolated from the noise and tumult of daily life. Even 20 minutes at lunchtime might be enough to hide in his love.

4. Practice it daily. If you forget it, the Holy Spirit will gently push you and whisper: "Let's get together." When you begin to hear his sweet voice, joy will overflow and you will have to get out of the present circumstances to seek your Heavenly Father in pure praise and worship.

When you emerge later with a song and with that glow of serenity, others will notice and ask you questions.

This will give you an opportunity to testify about the source of your calm and peace. My mother sang a chorus that said: "Wonderful, wonderful Jesus, He is my faithful friend to the end ..."

You will soon find your own melody of praise, adoration and emanation of your love for Him. If you can, write what He gives you. Then you will be very blessed and encouraged when you read it again.

FORWARD, DEAR FRIEND!

Let's pray

FATHER, I LOVE YOU!

I love you I love you. At the same time, I realize that you love me much more. I adore you because you have made it possible for me to enter the secret place of your presence.

The veil of the temple was torn in two at the time of Jesus' death so that we could enter with confidence before the throne of grace.

I cannot express in words how wonderful this is ... Being able to hide in you, far from any kind of disturbance. What a wonderful privilege!

Please teach me more, I have a lot to learn!

Thank you!

8. WALKING TOWARD OUR HOME WITH JESUS

"... people are destined to die once" Hebrews 9:27. Those words seem to be so dry and so cold. At some point in my life, it will be inevitable to have a date with death. If I read only those words, they leave me stunned and fearful.

But thank God, there are other wonderful words for those of us who face that event in the coming years. This gives me a smile and even fills me with joy. The apostle Paul was in a dilemma. He wrote to the Philippians in chapter 1:23,24. He was already old when he wrote those words, and he knew how much better heaven would be. Peter talks about this in 2 Peter 1:11 when he says that we will receive a "rich welcome" into the eternal kingdom.

RICH WELCOME

This descriptive phrase "rich welcome" highlights within us a vivid picture of an escort angel, dressed in a splendid cloak, our parade with indescribable beautiful music, the very pure and free air, such that we will want to stop and burst into exclamations of admiration; first of all, beginning with the gold under our feet, while our angels smile at each other, watching our reaction to their work assigned by the Father. They protected us and fought for us while we lived on earth and now their reward is to have a part in our "rich welcome."

Then comes the supreme moment. Jesus awaits our arrival while a solo angel sings "welcome to your home" and "precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his saints." The melody is like a waterfall and if it were not because our bodies are already glorified, we simply could not bear it, it would be too much. The moment when we bow at his feet to say again and again "thank you, thank you" will be the greatest moment we have ever experienced. There are no words to describe it.

So where is the fear we mentioned before? It has been completely lost in the loving embrace of our Savior. Even before making that trip, leaving here, we have the biblical assurance of his tender and loving embrace for our last days and times. In Deuteronomy 33:12, the Lord implies that He, lovingly and tenderly, envelops us as we undertake this journey of life and death. "Let the beloved of the LORD rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the LORD loves rests between his shoulders."

Here is a picture of the Lord Jesus carrying his sheep close to his heart in more than a brief hug. His arms are around us for as long as we allow him to guide us.

It is interesting to note that in Scripture, death is sometimes mentioned in the context of walking or using the feet, as if death were the sign of a cessation of earthly mobility, to the point where the Holy Spirit wants to emphasize our final resignation and our complete giving in to Him without struggle. In Genesis 49:33, shortly before the patriarch Jacob died, the Bible says he picked up his feet in bed. It was his final sign of trust in his Lord and Creator.

WHERE MY FEET CARRY ME

Zechariah and Luke spoke of that rising Sun from above, referring to Jesus the Savior, who has visited us from heaven. "Way of peace." Beautiful words!

We meditate on Jesus "leading our feet" and "walking with us" and feel so much peace. His presence is there. He is Emmanuel, God with us at all times and places. We have walked many kilometers with Him and have put on the footwear of the "preparation of the gospel of peace" time after time, according to Ephesians 6:15. It has been declared that our feet are beautiful, according to Romans 10:15.

We have also read about our feet, which are like feet of servants in Psalm 18:33. We have thought of our feet that are "above the heights" in a safe place, and ample space to use them in the "preparation of the gospel of peace".

Yes, we have given "careful thought to the paths for our feet" as Prov. 4:26 says, and upon reaching the end of our lives, we realize with joy and emotion that the Lord is there to guide our feet and lead us through this process.

What a wonderful hug that will be! Believe it, dear friend: we don't have to fear death. There is another hug that excites me, a hug from the Lord as we cross from this life to the other.

THE BREATH OF GOD

It is problematic for us to understand that our life is like grass or like a flower (Isaiah 40:6-7). We see how it withers and fades before our own eyes. We do not have to do more than look at ourselves in a mirror to see that. Since the Lord made the grass and the flower to last for such a short time, they are precious to Him. So precious that He blows his breath upon them when their little function on earth ends. The Lord says that our flesh is like this: we experience his breath upon us as we wither and fade away.

I always thought that God's breath indicated LIFE, and not death. After all, when God created Adam, he breathed in him the breath of life. So what is this breathing on us as we fade and wilt? I felt that the Holy Spirit said to me: The Father breathes on his children while they die to prepare them for ETERNAL life! That is the true life for which we were first created.

Our few years on earth are just like the stones that are placed to cross a stream into real life that begins in heaven for us when we enter. Oh, I want him to breathe on me when that time comes. Don't you? Surely there have been many dear saints who have had a glimpse of heaven. Some in near death experiences, others in dreams and visions, and have said:

1. The air was very pure and clean.
2. I could see far away; my vision was incredibly clear.
3. The light was indescribable; there were no shadows and in the distance there was as much clarity and radiance as where I was standing.
4. There was no noise; It was not a fearful silence, but rather a very peaceful stillness.

Jesus will be our guide even beyond our own death (Psalm 48:14), or the death of our loved one. What a comfort this is! So, there should be no fear for any of us.

May the Holy Spirit in those moments remind us of these promises. He is such a beautiful friend. If we prepare for that moment and ask him to bring his Word to our mind, he will surely do it and we will soon be in heaven.

Hallelujah!

Let's pray

FATHER, I LOVE YOU!

Precious Lord, you welcome me. I put my hand in yours. Actually, you have always had my hand and have never released it during my whole life, but I have not always been aware of it. I guess what I mean is that now especially when I'm on that final walk with you, as far as the world is concerned, I needed to feel your wonderful, strong, warm hand taking mine, now more than ever (Isaiah 41:13).

I believe with all my heart and I am so grateful for the supreme joy that awaits me, my new body too. The one I have now is very much in need of repair, you know it. I thank you for keeping me from pain in my body and for giving me the grace to cope with it, you are so wonderful and I hope to see you soon. I love you I love you, Jesus.

Thank you for your great love for me, amen!

9. FAITH THAT I WILL NEVER LOSE

Bible Passage: Genesis 17:15-17; 18:11-12

Let's analyze the background:

Abraham had received God's promise that he would have a great number of offspring. However, years and years passed and Abraham and Sarah did not conceive. In the course of this time, Sarah decided to hand over her servant Hagar to lay with Abraham, with the hope of conceiving the promised son. Ismael was conceived from that relationship.

Let's analyze the passage:

When Abraham was already very old, God spoke to him and told him to change Sarai's name to Sara and explained that they would soon have a child. Abraham doubted what God said because he and his wife were already elderly. However, God assured him that He would bless him through the generations through the son he would have with Sarah and whom they would call Isaac. God explained that he would also bless Ishmael, but that He would establish a covenant with Isaac. Some men sent by God arrived and Sara listened when they announced to Abraham that Sarah would have a son. Sara doubted it because she and her husband were old and even she had stopped menstruating. However, God kept his promise.

Activities

- Greet each person and talk about how things are going. Listen carefully.
- Explain that you will be talking about the doubt that two people had that God could keep his promise of giving them a son. Ask them if at any time they have had doubts that God would respond to a request, and then the way that God responded. Listen carefully.
- Read the Biblical passage together. Ask them if they know the story. If someone knows it, ask them about the background. If not, please summarize it for them. Then talk about Abraham and Sara's attitude of doubt.

Highlight the following points:

- Abraham and Sara doubted because it was unnatural that at their advanced age, they could have a child.
- God always keeps his promises, regardless of obstacles.
- It is necessary to believe in the promises of God because God fulfills even though we believe that it cannot be done. Read Genesis 15:15.

- Don't forget that it is important for the class members to speak. This is a study, not a sermon.
- Pray, prayer time is important. Include a special request for your well-being and for God to strengthen our faith to wait for his promises.

Application:

God wants us to:

- trust His promises, no matter how impossible they may seem to us. Let's recognize that God can do wonderful things in our lives, whenever he wants, no matter our advanced age or our limitations.
- understand that God grants our requests according to his will for our lives.

Finish with prayer.

10. COUNSELORS THAT SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY AND TRUTH

Biblical Passage: Esther 4:1-17

Let's analyze the background:

Esther was educated by her uncle Mordecai. He taught her to obey God. Esther grew up and became a beautiful and intelligent woman who feared God. That is why she was brought before King Ahasuerus to be his wife. The king took her as his wife. But inside the kingdom there was a man named Haman. He was a very important person of the kingdom who wanted to harm the people of Israel. Haman got the King to sign a law to kill all the Jews. At that time, the King's wives could not appear before him unless he himself called them.

Let's analyze the passage:

Knowing the threat to his people, Mordecai dressed in mourning clothes and stood in front of the King's palace. Queen Esther sent a servant with clothes for Mordecai to stop his mourning and go in to see her. But, he sent a message to her saying that he would not stop his mourning, and he needed her to talk to the King about what was happening. Upon learning this, Esther became very concerned but sent her uncle a message saying that she could not go to the King because the law indicated that she could only go to the King if he ordered it. Then, Mordecai reminded her that she was also Jewish and God knew it.

It is important to note that Mordecai spoke with authority and truth to Esther, despite the difficult situation. Mordecai wanted Ester to understand the delicate thing of thinking only of herself at that moment and forgetting about her people.

Understanding what Mordecai was telling her, Esther told him, "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

God listened to them, and the King listened to her, and all the people were saved. Haman was punished.

Activities

- Greet each person and talk about how the last week has been. Listen carefully.
- Explain that they will discuss the importance of advising with authority and truth.

- Ask the class members to share a little anecdote about when they have had to admonish and advise someone with authority. Listen carefully.
- Read the Biblical Passage together. Ask them if they know the story. If someone knows it, ask them about the background. If no one knows it, please summarize it for them. Then discuss the attitude of Mordecai as an advisor to Esther, as leader of the people of God, and the fearful and then determined attitude of Esther.

Highlight the following points:

- Experience allows us to advise young people and other adults.
 - The knowledge acquired over the years and the study of the Word of God allows us to speak with authority based on the truth.
 - The truth is sometimes hard and difficult, but it must be said with love and authority.
- Don't forget that it is important for the class members to speak. This is a study, not a sermon.
- Pray. Prayer time is important. Include a special request that God will give the class members to opportunity to counsel young people, and especially leaders, with authority and truth.

Application

God wants us:

- To understand that we are valuable because we have the necessary experience to advise.
- To recognize that the wisdom we have acquired throughout our lives allows us to advise leaders with authority.
- To use the experience well and that we advise based on the truth.

Close with prayer.

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SUPPORT MATERIAL FOR TOPICS 2-8

Questions for consideration and study:

Topic 2: "The two men in our life"

1. What can I do to look beyond my weakness and strengthen my inner being?
2. How can I stop thinking about my ailments and glorify God in my spirit?
3. How can I prove to others that I am more than a body?
4. What is the fabric of my inner man?
5. What are the strong values already present in your life, and what do you need to nurture?
6. What areas of my spiritual life come to my mind immediately that I need the Lord to renew?

Topic 3: "Prejudices, preparation, privileges and perspective"

1. Review the prejudices against old age expressed by King Solomon. Do you feel that any of those are applicable to your situation? Write them down and add others that come to your mind.
2. How can you change these prejudices, so that they are rather preparations for the future?
3. With the perspective of renewed vigor in your spirit, what privileges do you walk in now? Choose a privilege or a biblical character under this section, with which you identify most and tell the group why.

Topic 4: "The Radiance of Grace"

1. There is more to this life than me. I can't be totally focused on me.
2. What qualities do you think you show by being "gentle"?
3. What characteristics would an elderly person full of hope demonstrate compared to one who does not have hope?
4. Which of these positive characteristics do you want the Lord to give birth to and nurture within you?
5. Ask the Lord for the radiance of His wonderful grace in your life.

Topics 5: “Fear, our worst enemy”

- Ask the Lord to reveal your own heart and show you what deep hidden fears you have.
- Write them down.
- Now take them one by one to the foot of the cross.
- Confess your selfishness of distrusting his love.
- Pour out your feelings before Him.
- Leave those fears there, knowing that the Lord Jesus died to set you free.
- Receive his love and comfort as he renews your trust in Him. He will give you a fresh revelation of his presence and the freedom of his peace.

Note: Take each of the preceding sentences as a step-by-step process, and you will see what the Lord will accomplish in you!

Topic 6: “How to deal with regrets”

1. While you were studying this topic, did you think of some regrets? They could be from years ago or as recent as today. Write them down and then look for that topic and follow the suggestions given under the paragraph that talks about "Commitment not fulfilled".
2. We can let ourselves be consumed by the negative and by the regrets of our life, or we can manage them and move on to focus on the good things, with a heart full of gratitude. Make a list of 20 outstanding points of what the Lord has done for you. Put it in a visible place so you can review them during the day or night, and while doing so fill your heart with praise and thanks.

Topic 7: “Finding the secret place”

1. “The key is not to prioritize the points of your agenda, but to arrange your agenda according to your priorities.” What things (such as interruptions, casual reading, television, recreation, etc.) interfere with you setting aside a time of intimacy with Jesus?
2. Is finding that secret place a priority in your life?
3. Does the Lord Jesus appreciate your time with Him? Do you?
4. Do you set aside a special time with the Lord to have communion daily? If not, start today, follow the steps outlined in this topic to find a secret place.

Note: if you have a heart for intercession, look for some resources or lists of needs or requests.

Topic 8: "Walking towards our home with Jesus"

1. Death is a very personal event. The questions that should be asked personally before the Lord are:

- Am I ready for death?
- Do I have my house in order?
- Have I put my hand in His?
- If I honestly look at my heart, how would I feel when facing my date with death?
- Do I have the security of heaven?
- Have I allowed the Lord to take my hand to walk with me in this final stage of my life?

"Sir, if there is anything in my life that I still have to fix, show me. If not, take me by the hand and never let go. "

2. Reference is made to 2 Peter 1:11, with the "rich welcome" that we will have when we walk to our home with Jesus. What do the words "rich welcome" mean to you in this context? Does your answer fill your heart with hope?