

Growing Old and Waxing Faint

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2 Samuel 21:15-22 Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel. And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant. And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of great stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant. And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him. These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

Intro: We are going to consider two things about this passage of Scripture: 1. How David dealt with getting old and weak. 2. How the people dealt with David getting old and weak.

- I. Old age is a blessing which not everyone gets to enjoy.
 - A. Many die in the strength of their youth or as adults and never experience what it is like to grow old.
 - B. It is something that comes on gradually but there is usually a certain moment when we are shocked into realizing that our physical strength is fading.
 - C. Almost all older folks will tell you that they are the same person inside, it is just that their body can no longer keep up with them.
 - D. So it happens one day that we go out as at other times and find out that we cannot do what we have always done.
 1. Time has cut our hair like Delilah cut Samson's.
 2. The feeling is sort of like when you step on the gas and nothing happens.
 3. It is a surprise that scares us and throws our mind into a turmoil.
 - E. This is what happened to David here – even though he was an older man now he thought he could do what he had always done.
 1. But when he engaged the giant this time his physical strength failed him.
 2. Had it not been for his faithful and more youthful friends and family by his side the giant would have killed him that time.
- II. David's response to this development in his life was the right kind of response.
 - A. Many people start feeling sorry for themselves and begin to seek pity and sympathy from others.
 - B. They give up and count themselves as invalids and worthless to others.
 - C. They cease to dream dreams and have any vision for anything ahead of them or their children and grandchildren.

- D. The devil then is able to rob them of the last opportunities they have in this life to leave something behind that made their life worth living.
- E. Others refuse to acknowledge that there is anything different in their life and they stubbornly try to keep doing what they are no longer able to do.
- F. Many times they injure themselves and end up crippled and in pain the rest of their lives and often confined to a nursing home or a wheel chair.
- G. They throw away what good life they had left by refusing to face reality and act their age.
- H. David showed no signs of this kind of behavior.
 - 1. He had as much ambition to fight the Philistines when he was old as he did when he was young, but one close call with death because of his weakness was enough for him to take his proper place as an old man now.
 - 2. Although he still knew how to fight, and he still had the desire to fight, he realized that it was just too dangerous to try it anymore.
 - 3. He did not stubbornly insist that he be in the battle because he was wise enough to realize that he was a liability there now and would put the others in danger by insisting that he be there.

III. There are different stations for different times of our lives.

- A. The men of Israel swore unto him that he would no more go out with them to battle, "...lest thou quench the light of Israel."
- B. Many older folks would have their feelings hurt and would be angry with their friends and family that told them that.
- C. The men of Israel were not just kicking the old man out – that was not their attitude at all.
- D. "Lest thou quench the light of Israel." – They were saying, "We cannot afford to lose you."
 - 1. "What will we do if something happens to you?"
 - 2. "You are too important to us and to the nation to risk your life in these battles."
- E. The waxing faint of old age is compensated for by the riches of wisdom and knowledge that the experiences of a long life have given him.
- F. There is a time when the old man needs to sit down and let others carry the load that he can no longer carry.
- G. There are cups in life that need to be passed to those behind you.
- H. This does not diminish your worth as an old person, but it means you take the place that belongs to you at this stage of your life.
- I. The wise and godly person will pass the cup and not cling to it until he takes the whole ship down with him trying to do what he is no longer able to do.
 - 1. And keeping everyone else busy just looking after him instead of fighting the enemy that is trying to destroy them all.
- J. The responsibility of the younger is to take the cup, also.
- K. They should step up and take the load, just like Abishai did when he saw David was in trouble and was not going to be able to do it himself.
- L. We live in a world now that does not value the aged people, but rather despises them.
- M. There are many in this world now that think it would be a good thing to abort the old people like they abort their babies – and it is coming to that soon.
 - 1. What fools! How do they not understand that they will be old soon, also?

- N. But among the older people are some of the most valuable treasures that exist in this world.
 - O. David was one of them when he was old.
 - 1. He was worth far more when he was old than when he was young and slaying giants.
 - P. He was the light of Israel.
 - Q. Many older folks are the light of their family, or their church, or their town.
 - R. When they are gone it is a darker place than it was when they lived.
- IV. There is much about the work of God that is for the strength of youth.
- A. But there is much about the work of God that, when we are young, we lack the wisdom to do in God's way.
 - B. Youth has zeal and strength, but is woefully short on experience.
 - C. Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, come only by experience and are the treasures of a good old age.
 - D. This makes the aged among us a priceless resource in the work of God.
 - E. David still lead his kingdom – he was still the king, and he called the shots.
 - F. He knew better now than ever how to deal with Philistines and how to win battles.
 - G. But more battles would be won with him directing from the throne than with him in the midst of the battle..
 - H. There will be less casualties with David governing from the throne than swinging his sword in battle.
 - I. Remember, “wisdom is the principal thing...” Proverbs 4:7
 - 1. Not zeal, Not strength, Not courage, Not work, Not enthusiasm.
 - J. Young men can fight, and they are ready to fight at the drop of the hat.
 - K. But old men know how to avoid fights, and when to fight and when not to fight.
 - L. But above all, they know how to win fights.
 - M. So let us live our lives preparing to take our place when we are old.
 - 1. Live a righteous life for God and before others.

1 Samuel 12:2-5 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.

Proverbs 16:31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

- N. And that will make it easy for your friends and family to rise up before your grey head and honor you and protect you and take the load off of your shoulders.

Leviticus 19:32 Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.