

The Later Season of Life = The Bonus Years!

It is so wonderful that we have our senior adult fellowship here at GCF. Participating in these gatherings is a strong protective factor for your mental health and well being.

Some stats on senior mental health from WHO include:

- By 2030, one in six people in the world will be aged 60 years or over.
- Loneliness and social isolation are key risk factors for mental health conditions in later life.
- A sense of loss of purpose is often to blame

Many people live well into their 90s and an increasing number are passing 100. Retirement is no longer a short pause between work and the grave. It is now a long major stage of life. Most "seniors" have healthy active decades left to live. Yet this season does differ from other seasons of our lives. Think of life having 3 seasons. Childhood when you grow up. Adulthood when you are productive make large purchases raise families etc. then the third season formerly called retirement. Did you know AARP dropped the word retirement from its name? This third season can last decades. We can think of them as our bonus years. Ponder thinking of the third season as more than an endless vacation. God has purpose to every day and every breath. We are alive today because He has a good plan and purpose for our lives regardless of our age.

It is said there are 5 top level categories to this third season:

Mind

Body

Relationships

Soul

Finances

Author Eric Thurman suggests looking at our hands as a way to remember these 5 parts.

Thumb represents mind

Index represents body

Middle represents relationships

Ring represents soul

Pinky represents finances

Your grip is strong when each finger is fully functioning. With a firm grip you can grasp all God has for you in this third season. I challenge you to do a self assessment of these areas. Here is a link to the quiz <https://20quiz.com> This is taken from a book by Christian author Eric Thurman "Thrive in Retirement: Simple secrets for being happy for the rest of your life" and it goes into this in depth and I highly recommend it.

The Bible has a lot to say about this third season of life and often uses the analogy of ending a running race well. A few verses I want to share include"

"Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!" 1 Corinthians 9:24 NLT

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful." 2 Timothy 4:7 NLT

Thinking of your later life as running a race with discipline is the opposite of the world's way of thinking that retirement only means leisure. In sports, the end of a game is often the most exciting, whether basketball or an Olympic foot race. Athletes turn up their determination and give their very best as they near the end of the game. Look at your life that way. The end of the game means it is time to muster up your best. Run the race. Live fully. Thrive for all the days of your life and finish your race well. Seek out help when you need it, we all do at times.

Eric Thurman in his book "Thrive in Retirement" gives this piece of advice: *Decide how your story ends. You write the last chapter.* You've read books and watched movies with endings that finally enabled the plots to make sense. Disconnected and confusing scenes from earlier parts of the stories finally resolve. Will your life make sense? It will when you seek the Lords direction and follow His lead. How will you write the conclusion of your story? If we think of how Gods Holy Spirit spoke to the writers of scripture we can be assured that the Lord will speak to us as we write our stories of our time here on earth. For believers we know the ending - spoiler alert we will have the unmatched joy of spending eternity with Him in heaven! God enables us to fulfill His will as we pray for wisdom and direction. If you've had a tough life, ask Him for a surprise ending for it turn out happier than expected. Or, if you've had a great life to this point, take care to finish it well. Whether your think of your life as the heroic conclusion of a race or the delightful last chapter of a long story, end well. Learn to cultivate the delights that satisfy deeply within. You are meant to thrive!

I want to end with you more verse from Paul that he shared with his young mentee Timothy as he finished his race:

"But you, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance." 2 Timothy 3:10 NLT
May this be said of us all and if you find yourself struggling in this season reach out for support. The Lord is here for You and He uses your church family to help so please do not struggle alone.

Donna