

# Staying Fresh and Green

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## A Word for Senior Citizens:

*The Word of God speaks of bearing fruit in old age. Are we listening?*

The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,  
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;  
planted in the house of the Lord,  
they will flourish in the courts of our God.  
They 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." [Psalm 92:12-15 NIV]

The phenomenon has been called "the graying of America." As a nation, we're growing older, living longer. And we're feeling better in our senior years. As a result, these years promise to be more productive.

This is no surprise to God. He has known all along that He would have for Himself a people who could "stay fresh and green" and would indeed be prepared to "bear fruit in old age." It's a promise and a forecast for the righteous of any age, any country, any social status.

Does staying fresh and green mean that we will be able to do at 70 what we could do at 40? Certainly not -- not in a physical sense. But far more significant, the righteous should be prepared to do much more *spiritually* at 70 than at 40. Experience will have taught us much about life and about God. We will have spent so many more hours with Him, feeding on His Word and being filled with His Spirit -- why should we not stay fresh and green? Why should we not bear fruit, in abundance, in old age?

The arena may be different; almost certainly it will be. Our physical energies may be limited. Our stamina may be reduced. Our desire for exertion will surely have waned. But our intellectual and spiritual powers will only be greater and more alive than ever before. That's how it was with Caleb and with the Apostle John -- and with others of God's choice servants throughout history.

### **The senior years may be the best of all**

In what sphere of our lives will we "flourish like a palm tree," as the Psalmist says? Perhaps in mentoring younger Christians. In sharing with pastors and teachers and new disciples the wisdom God has given us.

But above all, *in prayer*.

How many mature Christians, for health reasons, now reside in nursing homes or other care facilities? What can they do? They can pray! Hour upon hour spent in prayer, by a mature Christian, can change the course of life for others. It is in prayer that we are able to call down the power of God for ourselves and for those we love. How many seniors, concerned about the lives of their children and grandchildren, could make a major difference in those precious lives if they would pray as much as they worry?

How many individuals, having lived many years observing the foibles of the fallen race, are now equipped to do battle with Satan on the only battleground where we are sure to win? Hours spent in prayer for our nation, our cities, our missionaries, our churches, can make a mighty difference in this world and in the world to come.

Don't waste the golden years, beloved friends! Spend them in quiet contemplation, in wrestling for those you love and for a decaying world that desperately needs your loving concern at this critical moment in history. This is how you will stay fresh and green. And you will indeed bear fruit in your old age!

Stay fresh. Bear fruit. Make maximum use of the life God has granted you in these green and golden years. Here are some suggestions:

- Expand your quiet time every morning. Allow God to speak directly to you through His word and through the quiet moments when you stop talking and listen. Ask Him how you may honor Him with your life that day. And let Him open doors of joyous service for you.
- Seek God in His Word as you've never done before. Get to know Him better. You will meet Him, perhaps sooner rather than later, and it will be glorious to enter His presence filled with anticipation of what He may reveal to you about His creative and redemptive work and His eternal plan for you.
- Watch for opportunities to share your wisdom and faith with others. You may be very much alone, or you may be spending time with family -- children and grandchildren -- and with your friends and theirs. You'll almost certainly be getting better acquainted with your doctor and others you meet in the waiting room. Give them a smile and a word of encouragement, direct from the God you may know much more intimately than they.
- Anticipate meeting the Savior. This is not a morbid thought. He has conquered death. You will not die, did you know that? "Whoever lives and believes in me will never die," Jesus said [John 11:26]. The "death" of a child of God is merely a crossing of a line -- a step from the limitations of this physical life into the glory of eternal presence with the Lord, a far safer, more secure life than you now experience. Learn from Him how exciting that is going to be!

Don't wait or waste another day. Pray, and grow. Spend every moment "flourishing like the palm tree," and God will be your daily companion to make these the best years of your life!