



Strengthening Your Grip on Key Areas of Your Christian Life

Introduction:

1. We're continuing our **NEW** series this morning -: **Strengthening Your Grip on KEY AREAS in your Christian Life**

- The goal is to help us to follow through on our theme: *Gearing Up for Greater Effectiveness* which implies staying on top of KEY AREAS in our Christian walk

Q: What's going to happen to our church/ministry if we are not strong in key areas of our Christian life?

2. Our emphasis is: 'people, people, people' – reaching out, building bridges, getting out of our comfort zones, and 'Gearing Up for the fall' if the Lord allows us to minister then

❖ Our goal is NOT 'pleasing people' – but to glorify God by showing love to one another, demonstrating we are the disciples of Christ, and reaching out to others!

3. Review our two key verses: Matthew 28:19-20 (quote) and Eph. 4:11-16 (quote)

> meeting people where they are and helping them take the NEXT step of growth

4. We want to keep the following question in front of you!

Q: What is the NEXT step of growth for you?

[serving, leadership, evangelism, hospitality to others, prayer life, study of the Word, etc.]

5. I want to do a brief review of the last couple of weeks: [keep it moving!]

⇒ Two weeks ago: Luke 10:38-42 – "Strengthen Our Grip on Relationships"

- I. Establishing and Building Relationships with People Is Important to God.
- II. Relationships Don't Just Happen; You Have to Establish and Build Them on Purpose.
- III. Recognition That God's Love for Us Motivates Us to Show Love for Others.

⇒ Last week: Isaiah 6 – *Strengthening Your Grip on Missions*

Key point: "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't." - [Let the Nations Be Glad](#), Piper, p. 17

* Isaiah 6:1-8 gives us a great model for missions (in the CONTEXT of worship):

- ✓ Seeing the Lord (holy, holy, holy) – high and lifted up!
- ✓ Seeing himself (Woe is me! – unclean lips, live among people of unclean lips!)
- ✓ Volunteering to proclaim the message (*Here am I, send me!*)

Point: While all of us may not be '*sent*' [i.e. officially commissioned by the church to represent the church because you've met the qualifications) as Paul and Barnabus in Acts 13, we all bear the responsibility to fulfill Matthew 28:19-20!

6. Today, our study focuses on a rather interesting subject – maybe even one you wouldn't expect to hear about , but it's important for several reasons

Study: *Strengthening Your Grip on Aging!* [adapted from *Strengthening Your Grip*, by C. Swindol]

- Open your Bibles to Psalm 92 – a psalm of praising the LORD for His lovingkindness and faithfulness (v. 2) and His acts (v. 4)

[Read 92:1-4] – v. 5-11 Summarize: God's greatness over His enemies & the impact on the Psalmist

[Read 92:12-15 – the results of being a righteous man – i.e. doing things God's way – not man's!]

- ❖ **Key Verse: Psalm 92:14 They** (a righteous person – v. 12) **will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green!**

- let's consider 1st of all . . .

I. The Importance of the *Strengthening Your Grip on Aging*

- in his opening paragraph about this subject, Charles Swindol makes this comment:

“Numerous possibilities, few inevitabilities—that’s life. The sky’s the limit, but in that journey there are a few inescapable results. Growing older is one of them. Aging not only happens, it happens fast.” – Charles Swindol, *Strengthening Your Grip*, p. 128

- Job is responding to one of his friends regarding to his (i.e. Job's) trials, and Job said this:

- ❖ **Job 7:16 I waste away; I will not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are *but* a breath.**

- Solomon wrote these words about his subject:

- ❖ **Proverbs 20:29 The glory of young men is their strength, and the honor of old men is their gray hair.**

- You might be thinking: What – we're going to talk about getting old? Answer: YES

A. Some people are already there (not news to you) and need to ask some questions:

- ❖ **Psalm 37:25 I have been young and now I am old. . .**

- That's the reality of the curse of sin – ‘eat of the tree, you will surely die’ (Gen 2)

- But we need to ask some important questions:

⇒ ***How are you handling the aging process?***

⇒ ***Is God being glorified by your example?***

⇒ ***Can others make the same decisions you are making and God be glorified and people won to Christ and disciplined?***

⇒ ***Are you going to give a good account at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10) based on what you are doing or trying to do for the cause of Christ?***

⇒ ***Are you still growing spiritually? If not, why not? If so, in what ways?***

B. For others, ‘aging’ is not even on the radar screen . . . YET – which is the very reason WHY we're doing this study

- this is part of the ‘equipping the saints for the work of the ministry’ (Eph. 4:11-16) & helping each person be ready to give a good account at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10)

C. Aging has to do with TIME, and the clock is ticking

- the word of God makes several references to this issue of time and it being limited:

- ❖ **James 4:13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.**

❖ **John 9:4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work."**

Point: From the moment of conception, the aging process starts, and at some point (short of the return of Jesus) will continue till our final breath . . .

* **You can't STOP it, you can only RESPOND to it!**

- how does man typically view this particular area of life

II. The Human Perspective to the Aging Process

Input: What words would you use to describe the way most people respond to getting older? [various answers]

- think about the following 4 ways sin-cursed man typically responds to aging:

A. Uselessness

"I don't have anything to contribute any more"

"I'm too old to do THAT anymore"

- while that may be true in some areas, it's not true in ALL AREAS – the challenge may be to find the area in which a person CAN BE productive in their local church/community, etc.

B. Guilt

"I've made too many mistakes"

"If I had it all to do over, I'd really change _____"

- while there nothing wrong with learning from one's mistake, or even sinful choices, it can't control that person to the degree that they end up doing NOTHING for God while God gives them breath!

C. Self-Pity – the woe-is-me syndrome

"Nobody cares, so why should I?" // "I might as well just go ahead and die"

"Self-pity spans the extremes of blame and bitterness." – Swindoll, p. 131

Example: The Elijah syndrome – 1 Kings 19:4 – Elijah running from Jezebel who had threatened his life, he said, *"it is enough, O Lord, take my life ..."*

- this last one is probably the most common:

D. Fear

Input: What might a person fear in his/her latter years of life?

- Economic situation
- Losing health or deterioration of the mind
- Loss of one's spouse or children
- Housing & other provisions gone (especially ones a person is used to!)

Point: Aging is BAD – you want to avoid it as long as you can because it's so ugly and hopeless

- An interesting verse on the Proverbs 31 "Virtuous Woman"

❖ **Proverbs 31:25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future.**

- this doesn't indicate the attitude we've been talking about

- it's because she is viewing life from another perspective . . .

III. God's Perspective on Life & the Aging Process

- we need to remember that . . .

A. God is ageless! – He is eternal – He has always existed

- "time" as we know it, actually began at Creation – Gen. 1

- ❖ **Psalm 90:1 Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.**

- we have a hard time comprehending that because we don't fully understand the *eternal*

B. God clearly communicates about the brevity and pain of life

- Consider Psalm 90:3-10 – notice the different word pictures that describe this:

- ❖ **Psalm 90:3 You turn man back into dust and say, "Return, O children of men." 4 For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night. 5 You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; in the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew. 6 In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew; toward evening it fades and withers away. 7 For we have been consumed by Your anger and by Your wrath we have been dismayed. 8 You have placed our iniquities before You, our secret *sins* in the light of Your presence. 9 For all our days have declined in Your fury; WE have finished our years like a sigh. 10 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is *but* labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away.**

- so what do we do based on all this?

C. God's answer to strengthening our grip:

- ❖ **Psalm 90:12 So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom.**

- the original language suggests that we correctly '*account*' for our days – NOT our YEARS, but rather take life one day at a time!

Principle: SINCE EVERY DAY IS A GIFT FROM GOD, I LIVE EACH ONE ENTHUSIASTICALLY FOR HIM!

- another way to say that is this: *Live everyday of your life for the glory of God!*

IV. An OT Example of Someone Who Had a Good Grip on This Area: Caleb – Joshua 14

[READ Joshua 14:6-14]

[@ 45 years old] Served as spy in the land of Canaan (living by faith)

> he and Joshua were the only two men of 12 that had faith the God would do what He said He would do and give them the promised land!

> that attitude continued throughout his life...

[@ 85 years old] Sought to conquer the land (still living by faith)

- ❖ **Joshua 14:12 "Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken." 13 So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb . . . for an inheritance.**

* Caleb's life reveals two truths about aging:

1. It is possible for life's greatest achievements to occur in old age.

2. There is no retirement from the Christian life – you keep living by faith every day!

Example: My Dad? That's EXACTLY what he's doing – and God bless him for his example

- It has been said: ***Retirement doesn't mean you've earned the right to be useless!***

Note: Maybe we need to change XYZ (eXtra Years of Zest) to S.O.C (Sons Of Caleb!)

V. How to Strengthen Your Grip on Aging

A. Think of life as a challenge, not a threat

Input: What are some of the words used to describe our Christian life? [various answers]

⇒ Race // fight // warfare // battle // wrestling // course // journey //

Input: What are some of God's promises you can claim during this 'challenge' of life?

⇒ His grace, wisdom, strength, never leave you, etc

B. View every stage of life as an issue of stewardship

Stewardship = God-given responsibility with accountability

Input: How would you fill in this blank?

- ***Every stage of life is stewardship of _____.***

[Time, gifts, abilities, resources, influence, health, opportunities, etc.]]

C. Follow the Lord wholeheartedly at every stage, one day at a time.

- Caleb was an example of this:

- ❖ **Joshua 14:14 Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb . . . until this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully.**

- David would later give that same admonition to his son Solomon:

- ❖ **1 Chronicles 28:9 As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.**

- Paul would write this words to the church at Colosse:

- ❖ **Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,**

D. Trust the Lord to do His part while you are doing yours!

- ❖ **Psalm 71:9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails.**
- ❖ **Isaiah 46:4 Even to *your* old age I will be the same, and even to *your* graying years I will bear *you!* I have done *it*, and I will carry *you*; and I will bear *you* and I will deliver *you*.**

Conclusion:

Q: *How does your view of aging need to change?*

Q: *What do you need to be DOING at this stage of your life that will bring glory to God?*

Strengthening Your Grip on KEY AREAS in your Christian Life Aging — Psalm 92

Introduction:

Q: What is the NEXT step of growth for you?

❖ **Key Verse:** Ps. 92:14 *They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green!*

I. The Importance of the **Strengthening Your Grip on Aging**

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B. For others, 'aging' is not even on the radar screen . . . _____

C. Aging has to do with _____, and the clock is ticking

* You can't _____ it, you can only _____ to it!

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A. _____

"I don't have anything to contribute any more" // "I'm too old to do THAT anymore"

B. _____

"I've made too many mistakes" // "If I had it all to do over, I'd really change _____"

C. _____ – the woe-is-me syndrome

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Example: The Elijah syndrome – 1 Kings 19:4

D. _____

Input: What might a person fear in his/her latter years of life?

III. God's Perspective on Life & the Aging Process

A. God is _____!

B. God clearly communicates about the _____ and _____ of life

C. God's _____ to strengthening our grip:

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Principle: SINCE EVERY DAY IS A GIFT FROM GOD, I LIVE EACH ONE ENTHUSIASTICALLY FOR HIM!

** Live everyday of your life for the _____ of _____!*

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"Retirement doesn't mean you've earned the right to be useless!" – Pastor Bill Goode

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D. Trust the Lord to do _____ while you are doing yours!

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