

# THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE SERIES

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

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THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

## THE DISCIPLINES OF DECLINING DAYS

*A PRACTICAL SERIES ON CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES  
AND HOW WE SHOULD BE LIVING IN THE WORLD AROUND US*

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

**Christianity 101, Faith, Wisdom, Discipleship**

**Introduction to the Text;**

**1 Samuel 8:1**

**Matthew 28:18-20**

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **:19 Go therefore and make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **:20 teaching them to observe all things** that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

**1 Samuel 8:1**

Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he...

**For the Christian – We're here for a specific moment,  
We're waiting to hear certain words from the mouth of our Jesus Christ....**

**Matthew 25:21**

His lord said to him, "**Well done, good and faithful servant;**

**All of us, to some degree or another, will, eventually  
begin to take stock in "the days of our lives" and how they've been spent.**

**"Time" is a Bandit; - Just Ask Mick Jagger...**

when you're young, you think you know more than the old guys  
When you're an old guy who knows everything - you're too tired to do anything with it.  
And when you're middle aged – you're too busy to care !

Time, Life, Opportunity, Age & Responsibility  
***All these things will be something that you deal with sooner or later***

## THE DISCIPLINES OF THOSE CHILDHOOD DAYS

**Are days of learning. From crawling to reading to getting a job to making decisions, coming to faith in Christ to being responsible...**

### **Ecclesiastes 12:1**

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them anymore":

### **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**

To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: **:2** A time to be born, And a time to die; A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted; **:3** A time to kill, And a time to heal; A time to break down, And a time to build up; **:4** A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance; **:5** A time to cast away stones, And a time to gather stones; A time to embrace, And a time to refrain from embracing; **:6** A time to gain, And a time to lose; A time to keep, And a time to throw away; **:7** A time to tear, And a time to sew; A time to keep silence, And a time to speak; **:8** A time to love, And a time to hate; A time of war, And a time of peace.

**The Issue has been, is and will be "Time"**

## THE DISCIPLINES OF DECLINING DAYS

### **1. The days of declining strength**

*are to be met with the eyes of greater vision*

corporate, creative & spiritual vision should never die of old age. The more seasoned a leader becomes, the greater the vision is available to share.

There's a lot of Awesome Stuff in the Bible About the Lord using Old Guys...  
*(Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel got Old...)*

### **Acts 2:17**

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh... Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream **(divinely inspired)** dreams.

# There's a stillness that comes with years...

*(Lord, please keep me usable)*

## Luke 2:25-27

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the **Consolation** of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

**:26** And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that **he would not see death** before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **:27** So he came by the Spirit into the temple

## Luke 1:5-7

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias.... His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. **:6** And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. **:7** But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well

**advanced in years.**

in the days of our youth, so much energy is wasted on empty and meaningless things.

## 2 Corinthians 4:16

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our **outward man** is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.

## THE DISCIPLINES OF DECLINING DAYS

### 2. The days of declining **responsibilities**

*are to be met with the hands of increased delegation*

**wisdom** and **experience** cannot be gotten with a PHD or a Masters. It has to be lived out. A planned, systematic **handing over of the baton** is what's needed today.

### **All it takes is a careful eye. Watch and Learn.**

If you're in your 40's or 50's start now to develop an exit strategy for your business, ministry, for your son or daughter, for husband or wife...

the more a man or woman achieves in this life, the more difficult letting go can be. There is a human tendency to hang on to things longer than what the Lord has intended. We can get lost in what we've accomplished, thinking that it needs us when in reality, we come to need it.

The Delegating of your responsibilities unlocks  
the next door to new ministry.

Not “Feeling” Needed Any Longer is a  
Fear... but

being available to the Lord, for the Lord changes everything.

Bob (83) Ushers on Wednesday Nights  
Catherine (Mid-80's) serves all over this church

## THE DISCIPLINES OF DECLINING DAYS

### 3. The days of declining opportunities

*are to be met with the joy of passing on the mantle*

eventually, the phone will ring less  
or the e-mails will drop off. Fewer visitors will stop by and there's a temptation for  
loneliness to set in.

But Wait - Body Ministry is the Will of The  
Lord for You.

### Samuel Learned a Wise

but no doubt painful truth – “a man can stay too long at a task”

Hannah, Samuel's mother had  
dedicated him to the Lord at birth.

He grew up around the ministry. He was called by God to be both a Prophet and Priest  
and a King Maker for Israel – He was in the “spiritual spotlight”

#### 1 Samuel 3:19-20

So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the  
ground. :20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel *had been*  
established as a prophet of the LORD.

### 1 Samuel 7:15-16

And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. :16 He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places.

## THE DISCIPLINES OF DECLINING DAYS

### 4. The days of declining resources

*are to be met with the spirit of deeper things*

money, houses, and power – they all must give way to reality and reality is a very simple thing. The value of relationships is what matters in the latter days.

In the end – the old ways, the ancient ways prevail.

This is one of the hardest things in life to learn as our days decline...

“that young men and woman are often **immature** and **inexperienced** to follow our examples – saving them from what we have so brutally learned.

### 1 Samuel 12:20-23

Then Samuel said to the people, “Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. :21 And do not turn aside; for then you would go after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing. :22 For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name’s sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people. :23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.

This was Spoken During His Retirement

## THE DISCIPLINES OF DECLINING DAYS

### 5. The days of declining activity

*are to be met with days better spent*

all of us will eventually become less and less in demand.  
We won't be able to perform this or to do that.

Declining years bring a decline in  
Activity.

**It's Been Said That;**

The Spirited 20's press toward to the Tireless 30's  
And the roaring 40's and 50's make way for the sensible 60's  
while the slackening 70's prepare to yield to the Quiet 80's  
until that day comes..."

*to grow old gracious and gratefully is a triumph,  
to not do so is a tragedy.*

Go thru the scriptures and listen to their **giant prayers**  
That only the oldies can pray for their families & nation.

**Ephesians 3:14-17**

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, :15 from whom  
the whole family in heaven and earth is named, :16 that He would grant you,  
according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in  
the inner man, :17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being  
rooted and grounded in love,

An old man wrote that – from a cold,  
damp, rat infested roman prison...

**Philippians 1:3-6**

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, :4 always in every prayer of mine  
making request for you all with joy, :5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day  
until now, :6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in  
you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;

there is a God-ordained ministry that has been preserved for the elderly that no one else  
can perform.

# THE DISCIPLINES OF DECLINING DAYS

## 6. The days of declining numbers

*are to be met with the words that bring new life*

Jacob Spoke a Blessing in His Old Age... any Grandpa's Here ?

### **Genesis 49:22**

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a well;  
His branches run over the wall.

We Rarely Think of a “Grey Haired” Apostle Paul -  
But he was an old man when he wrote...

### **2 Timothy 4:7-8**

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. :8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

He was an old man when he wrote...

### **Romans 8:28**

And we know that **all things work** together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

## **God's Patriarchs are no longer distracted**

or burdened with the day-to-day problems of the busy - - they're free of it, above it.

They Have “Lived” the  
Faithfulness of God

### **Psalm 37:25**

I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.

## It's Your Words Now That We Need From You

(grandpa and grandma tell me when...)

### It's wise to let go

And let the next generation run with the vision. Hand it over to them while you're still around to help them learn it. – guide them along

### Proverbs 16:31-32

Gray hair is a crown of glory; **it is gained by living a godly life.** :32 It is better to be patient than powerful; it is better to have self-control than to conquer a city.

## Are you older today?

Then we need you. we need your wise words and your,  
“if I had to do it all over again...”

we learn from 1-Samuel 19 and 2-king 2,4,6  
that Samuel, after retiring started a ministry of prophets  
that carried on and on into the nation of Israel.

- (1) Pray that those who are **lost right now** will be found.
- (2) Pray that those who are **wayward will come back** home to Christ right now
- (3) pray that the Lord would receive our worship of Him

\_\_\_\_\_ *End of Study* \_\_\_\_\_