



A Crown  
of *Glory*

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A Bible Study for Older Adults

Leader's Guide

# A Crown of *Glory*

## A Bible Study for Older Adults

*Gray hair is a crown of glory;  
it is gained in a righteous life. Proverbs 16:31*

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## INTRODUCTION

The title of a book by Christian author Gilbert Meileander asks, *Should We Live Forever?* The book addresses the ethical questions involved in “radical life extension,” the scientific and medical efforts to extend human life beyond its current known limit of about 120 years. As Christians, we know that we will live forever—in the presence of our Savior. But would we want to live forever on this earth, as we are now?

After the fall into sin, God decisively answered that question: “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—‘ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken” (Genesis 3:22-23). After eating from the tree that was forbidden to them, they were forbidden to eat of the tree of life. Adam and Eve, and their descendants after them, were subject to aging, and eventually, to death: “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19).

We don’t know how things would have worked out—so far as aging and eternal life are concerned—had our first parents not rebelled against their Creator. But with those two forbidden trees the stage was set for an act of mercy beyond all human imagination. The story didn’t end there—it was only beginning.

## Leader's Guide For Session 1

**BEFORE CLASS:** Read through this session yourself. Read through the Bible readings listed and become acquainted with them. If you plan on having members of the group read any of the Bible readings, assign them prior to class.

**READ:** Have a member of the group read the Introduction (on p. 4) aloud.

**READ:** Have someone read the Opening Prayer or read the prayer in unison.

**DISCUSS:** Discuss positive aspects of aging.

**READ:** Read or have someone read the introduction.

## SESSION 1 AGING SAINTS

*Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature  
and in favor with God and man. Luke 2:52*



### OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as we experience the uncertainties of aging, help us to cling to your sure and certain promises. Lead us in the study of the Scriptures so that we will find encouragement in your Word and in the sure hope of eternal life through Jesus our Lord. Hear our prayer in his name. Amen.

### DISCUSSION

Aging has its negative aspects. What positive aspects of aging have you experienced?

### INTRODUCTION

A young shepherd named David was anointed King of Israel (1 Samuel 16:11-13). The prophet Jeremiah protested: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am

only a youth” (Jeremiah 1:6). Paul told Timothy, his child in the faith: “Let no one despise you for your youth” (1 Timothy 4:12). God often chose young people to accomplish his divine purpose—but not always. The ageless God, who himself once lived among us and experienced aging, worked in his Word—and still works today—through the lives of his aging saints.

## AGING SAINTS, AGING SAVIOR

1. We may wonder, as we age, if there is any purpose in our lives, but the age of his servants does not appear to be an issue for God. **Read Acts 7:22-23 and 30-34.** How old was Moses when the Lord called him to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt? What did God accomplish through his elderly servant Moses? How has God been at work in your life, especially during your life as an older adult?
2. **Read Luke 2:22-38.** Scripture does not tell us Simeon’s age. Why do we usually assume he is elderly? What do we know about Anna and her age? How does God use these two saints to reveal his plan of salvation? How might God work through you to reveal his plan of salvation to others? God often works in unexpected ways, using aging adults (remember Abraham, Sarah, Zechariah and Elizabeth) to carry out his purpose within his unfolding plan of salvation. How has God worked in unexpected ways in your life?
3. The ageless, eternal God stepped into time and history. Jesus, true God and true man, was born of a woman. He grew and aged as we do. **Read Luke 2:1-7, 21 and 41-52.** We know very little about Jesus’ childhood, but what do these verses tell us about Jesus’ aging? **Read Luke 3:23.** How old was Jesus when he began his

## Aging Saints, Aging Savior

1. Moses was 80 years old when he was called at the burning bush. Answers will vary, but through Moses God led the Israelites out of slavery, handed down his Law, and brought Israel to the borders of the Promised Land. Answers will vary.
2. We may assume Simeon is elderly because of the Lord’s promise that he would not die until he saw the Messiah. Anna is a widow and is 84 years old (or possibly 91). Both Simeon and Anna praise God and speak of his promise fulfilled in the newborn Messiah. Answers will vary. When God works in unexpected ways, his name is glorified, and we can take no credit for what is accomplished or for saving ourselves. Answers will vary.
3. Jesus was born of Mary and circumcised when he was eight days old. When he was twelve he went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. He grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. Answers will vary. • Jesus was about 30 years old when he began his public ministry. • According to his human nature, Jesus grew tired as he traveled; he was thirsty. He grew tired and slept. He suffered and died. Answers will vary.

## Aging and Ageless

1. Gray hair is a crown of glory gained in a righteous life. Answers will vary, but people in our society often want to remain young and look young. Our society seems more willing to dismiss its older citizens. Answers will vary.
2. God knows everything about us, what we will do, what we will say. He is always present with us. • God chose us in Christ before he created the world. Answers will vary.
3. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love and in steadfastness. Older women are to be reverent, not slanderers or slaves to too much wine. They should teach what is good and train the younger women by their example to love husbands and children, and to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind and submissive to their husbands. Such training is important so that unbelievers will not revile the Word of God. Answers will vary.

public ministry? **Read John 4:5-6, Luke 8:22-24 and John 19:28-30.** What do these verse say about Jesus' human nature? Is it comforting to know that our God experienced life and aging as we do? Why or why not?

## AGING AND AGELESS!

1. We are subject to aging—as our Lord once was. **Read Proverbs 16:31 and Proverbs 20:29.** What does God say about our graying hair? In our society today, are older citizens more likely to be respected for their wisdom and experience or dismissed as useless and “out of touch”?
2. **Read Psalm 139:1-16.** As we age, what challenges may lie ahead for us? Health concerns? Loneliness? Loss of income? We don't know what may happen—but God does. What does the psalm say about God's knowledge of our lives? God has, in fact, known you for a very long time. **Read Ephesians 1:3-4.** When did God choose you to be his own? As God's chosen (aging!) people, we are “always abounding the work of the Lord.” We serve God as we go about our daily tasks—helping out at church, volunteering, shopping for groceries, mowing the lawn, paying bills, cleaning. By our daily work we bring order to God's creation (Genesis 1:28) and help and serve others (Galatians 5:14). Our lives are a witness to our Lord (Matthew 5:13-14).
3. **Read Titus 2:1-10.** In these verses specific age groups are addressed. How should older men and women live? According to verse 8, why is such training important? How does your example of holy living impact your own children and family? Where might your example be an influence the lives of those outside of your family?

4. **Read Isaiah 46:3-4.** God made you and redeemed you. In your experience, how has he carried you in life? **Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-17.** Although we experience the physical, mental and emotional effects of aging, what other changes are taking place within us? How has your faith aged and grown over the years? The “light momentary affliction” (an inspired understatement!) that we now endure is “weight-training” that prepares us for the weight of glory yet to come!

### SUMMARY

“For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night” (Psalm 90:4). It is clear from Scripture that God’s calendar is nothing like our own. The passing years that often weigh so heavily on us are for him “as yesterday when it is past.” Yet our eternal God took on human flesh and experienced the passing years with us. Jesus was born and grew and aged. When he was 33 years of age, he suffered and died for our sins and rose bodily from the dead to share with us the gift of endless life. Until then, we live and work and grow older as his holy people.

RESPONSIVE READING..... PSALM 71:17-21

**L** *O God, from my youth you have taught me,*

**C** **and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.**

**L** *So even to old age and gray hairs,*

**C** **O God, do not forsake me,**

**L** *until I proclaim your might to another generation,*

**C** **your power to all those to come.**

**L** *Your righteousness, O God,*

4. As our “outer self” is wasting away, our “inner self” is being renewed daily. Answers will vary.

READ: Read or have someone read the Summary.

READ: Read the Psalm responsively.

# A Crown of *Glory*

## A Bible Study for Older Adults

In a society that values youthfulness, this six session study for older adults reminds us that, according to God's Word, "Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life" (Proverbs 16:31). This study will examine the ways in which God works through the lives of his aging saints as they respond to his grace in love and service. Each session includes Scripture readings, questions, prayers and suggested activities for service.

