

Growing Old Gracefully

*“Stand up in the presence of the aged,
show respect for the elderly and revere your God.*

I am the Lord.”

Leviticus 19:32 (NIV)

From the beginning of my ministry to today, I have kept busy visiting the residences of senior citizens. Some of these people lived at home and some in large facilities especially designed for the elderly.

I have been privileged to witness most of these people *growing old gracefully*. Occasionally one or another of these wonderful people would not have any family nearby to visit and take them home for overnight visits. My wife and I have often had one or two such people in our home for Christmas and shared our family time with them. So we have observed many older people up close and in relaxed atmospheres.

Now, as I look in the mirror, I see an old man, grey haired, slightly stooping and using a cane. Where did all those years go, I wonder? How can I accept gracefully this phenomenon of my body gradually

wearing out and my memories always going back 50-60 or more years?

What is the secret of *growing old gracefully*? How can we assist the elderly to pursue the Lord's best for them at their age and stage in life? Our verses today have information to help us as we deal with the elderly.

Scripture instructs us to show honour and respect for the elderly. In a world that makes youth its god, senior citizens can be pushed aside in an unintentional or even rude manner.

The first thing we see in Leviticus is the cultural practice of standing in the presence of the elderly. This social courtesy is not practiced in western society today. When I was young I was trained as a young man to not only stand when an older person enters the room, but to offer them my chair and wait until they are seated before

sitting down again.

Also, I was taught that all gentlemen stand in the presence of a lady and ensure she is seated before being seated. My father always opened the door of the house or family car for my mother and I assumed as a child this was what all well mannered men did. As I grew up I realized that not many men actually act in this way.

Perhaps you know a lonely elderly person who would be blessed by a visit or an evening in your home for dinner and conversation. It is the godly thing to do to attend to such people and in this manner “revere your God”. Make a date with some senior citizen today and be blessed by showing respect and love to them.

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