

Items Which Promote Growing Old Gracefully

by Bob Winton

Be Physically Active

It is obvious to everyone that inactivity leads to physical weakness, makes one an easy target for disease and accident, and can shorten our days. Physical activity promotes good health and strength, and gives us a sense of happiness and usefulness. "Bodily exercise profiteth for a little . . ." (1 Timothy 4:8, ASV).

Lead an Active Spiritual Life

“. . . Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That-they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children" (Thus 2:1-4). God blesses his faithful servants. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (1 Peter 3:10-13).

Keep Your Mind Active

Our thoughts determine how we live. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). What is in a man's heart determines the kind of person he is or will become. If we fill our minds with godly thoughts and motives, a godly person we will be. But the converse is also true: evil thoughts and motives will corrupt us. The "little voice" inside you is the real you; it is called the inner man, the soul, the spirit, the heart. What it says, plans, and purposes will determine your conduct, words, life, and eternal destiny. It will always be present, even though the body is dead. You cannot get away from your spirit for it is you. What we do not use, we lose. This rich truth applies to our muscles, our talents, and our mind. If we do not keep our mind active, it will lose some of its normal powers.

Maintain a Positive Attitude

If we fill our minds with negative, bitter thoughts we will inevitably talk and act accordingly. The dangers involved can be serious. We may lose our friends, for no one enjoys being around a bitter person. We can' alienate our family. We might grow so morose that we lose our peace of mind. One who is bitter and negative cannot at the same

time be content, a trait that each Christian is expected to maintain. We must avoid complaining too much about our health and personal problems. Just because one is a senior citizen does not mean it is too late to accomplish more. Cato was 85 when he began a study of the Greek language. Tennyson was 83 when he wrote "Crossing the Bar." Verdi was 85 when he wrote "Ave Maria." Abraham was 75 when he began his sojourn in Canaan (Genesis 12:4). , Moses was 80 when he was called to lead Israel from Egyptian bondage. Elderly Christians can know they are still worth much to the Lord, especially during this time when apostasy is rending the body of Christ asunder. Even in the face of declining health, financial problems, and other difficulties, there may be a silver lining. "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (Psalms 119:67). "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. (Hebrews 12:11-13)..

Be Interested in Other People

We are told to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mark 12:31); we are to be helpful to others. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and, to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). If we turn inward on ourselves, we are bound to think our problems are greater than anyone's problems. The greatest single problem of society is selfishness. This can afflict older people. There is the danger of withdrawing from others and filling ourselves with self-pity. There are great advantages we have, despite our ailments and personal problems: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalms 37:25; cf. Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:13, 19; Romans 8:31-34).

Have a Healthy Sense of Humor

The Bible speaks of the value of laughter. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Proverbs 17:22; cf. 15:13, 15). The Bible reports some events that appear humorous to us: Elijah's statement to the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:25-27); the story of Belshazzar's knees knocking because of fear (Daniel 5:5-6); the report of what the demon did to the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-16). Someone needs to collect and put in a book many of the humorous stories that uplift and encourage. The stories and illustrations are manifold that have done this for us through the years. How dreary our life might otherwise be if we did not have an outlet for our God-given gift of laughter! Since we are made in God's image, the Father of our spirits must have a sense of humor.

These six points were gleaned from interviews with people who were over one hundred years of

age. These several people had these six points in common. The principles promote a happier and healthier life on earth. They can help us in our quest for immortality in Heaven.