

“My desire and hope is that Spiritual Gold will reach our world with the positive message that God is alive and has the answers for the problems facing us today. In his messages at SpiritualGold.org, my husband, Richard, takes the Scriptures and breaks them down so that we can understand and receive practical advice as we live one day at a time.” —Mary Strauss



You Had a Birthday This Year, Didn't You?

Adapted from the *Aging Gracefully* 3-part series delivered in 1987 by Dr. Richard L. Strauss

A young student said to his friend, in judgment of his elderly teacher, “I don’t want to get old.” But the old woman’s hearing was still as keen as ever so she turned in his direction and said, “Oh, so you want to die young?”

You are probably creeping toward the “old” end of the spectrum, though some of us claim, like one 55-year-old man, that we are just “middle aged.” After all, we don’t feel old on the inside. “Oh really?” his wife questioned. “Who do you know that is 110?!”

When people get old, and their minds seem to have long outlived their bodies and they are racked with pain and disease, some wonder why God keeps them around. And for those whose minds confuse them so they don’t even know where they are or who anyone is, well, others wonder for them why God keeps them around.

We may never know that answer here on earth, but we can be sure that God is in control and keeps us around for exactly the right time. David declares, “My times are in Your hands” (Ps 31:15a).

So what to do in the time that God gives us?

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This ministry operates solely on gifts. In fulfillment of our ministry’s mission, our Board of Directors strategically supports pastoral training ministries here and around the world—including Africa and the Middle East.

You Had a Birthday (*continued*)

Dr. Strauss wasn't sure how many messages he would give on the subject, but by the time he concluded his three-part series called *Aging Gracefully*, he taught 11 Biblical principles on the topic. You surely will learn from these principles, so we encourage you to listen to each sermon, but here will focus on three that you can apply no matter your age.

Be Content in Your Circumstances

Learn to be content now. When you are old you will be a more intense version of the person you are now. If you have a critical spirit now, you'll be complaining all the more when you're old (likely leading your caregivers to spend minimal time in your company). If you're content now, you'll find the good in your circumstances when you're old. Are we letting the Spirit of Jesus Christ reproduce His character in us right now? It's not too late to start.

The Apostle Paul learned that, and he wasn't saved very early in life. "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ...I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want" (Phil 4:11-12).

Paul encouraged this. Writing to Timothy, he said, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that" (1 Tim 6:6-7).

The writer to the Hebrews said, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?'" (Heb 13:5-6).

The source of our contentment is the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's allow Him to take control of our lives. Let's live for His glory. That will bring joy to us.

Determine to Finish Well

You will probably do in your later years what you decide in your earlier years you want to do. Once you decide, you will likely trust God's grace and God's power to do it. So wherever we are at this stage in our lives, we have some choices to make. If we decide that it's really important to us to finish well for the glory of God, that will help us make decisions and help us lean on God's power and claim His grace to overcome sin and finish well.

But what if you think you're already old, or at least realistically on the downside of the hill from a true middle age? What if you've wasted or misused your time? What if you've had to change your plans because others interrupted them?

Keep Your Eye on the Future

Caleb could have gotten into the Promised Land when he was 45. Moses said the land of Hebron would be his after Joshua and Caleb had brought back a favorable report to Moses. But because *other* people didn't believe God, Caleb had to wander in the wilderness and didn't get in until he was 85. He requested the land of Hebron from Joshua, saying, "You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as He said" (Josh 14:12b).

Caleb had a sense of purpose. He was excited for the future. Perhaps people who are 85 today don't have the energy that Caleb had, but they've got the energy to do *something*. Dr. Strauss repeated the story of a man who, at age 80, decided to learn New Testament Greek because he didn't get that opportunity when he was younger. At 90, he brushed up on his Greek at a Toronto seminary. At 100, he was using this Greek to study while he prepared to deliver some messages at a Bible meeting.

You had one birthday this year and you'll likely have another in the upcoming year. So set some worthwhile goals and work towards them. Find something useful to do. Ask God for a vision. *Live* every day that God gives you.

Dear Spiritual Gold,

[My husband] has so enjoyed listening to [sermons online] every morning and Doc is still one of the best teachers we've been blessed to grow under.

R.

Last year, L. let us know that she and her husband went to a lake twice a week and listened to Dr. Strauss' messages while they picnicked. This year she writes:

R. and I are still going to the lake twice a week for "dinner and a sermon." How blessed we are to have Dr. Strauss' messages to glean from. We just finished the marriage series and are now doing 1 & 2 Peter, and the Psalms. His two messages on Psalm 27 are so applicable to what is going on in our world now. How comforting to know that everything is under His control.

L.

Each month, Mary writes a short note to email subscribers to tell them about the Sermon of the Month. In one response to one of them came this note:

Thanks so much, Mary, for sharing this message! I smiled through the whole thing thinking of you and I appreciated again Doc's wisdom and teaching. I especially like when Doc said to saturate our minds with God's Word. I love to read a verse out loud and personalize it to me or a dear friend needing prayer.

N. S.



Email Reminders

Need a friendly nudge to listen to the Sermon of the Month? Go to SpiritualGold.org to sign up for email reminders and a link to the message. Or type this link into your web browser: <http://bit.ly/2eKQ8WX>

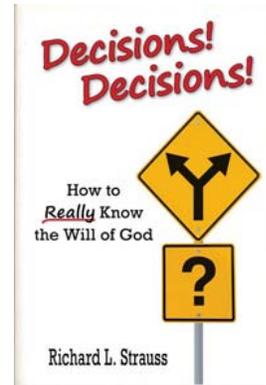
We posted a video version (music lyric style) of the first four sermons from the Revelation series on YouTube. In response, this was posted on our Facebook page:

I remember going thru Revelation with [Dr. Strauss]. Loved it and continue today to marvel at this book.

R. L.

Book Spotlight

Making decisions is a routine part of life, but we often don't look to God for guidance until we face a decision of supreme importance. A wise person prepares to handle big decisions by dealing properly with the small ones. The Bible is filled with practical suggestions for making right choices of all kinds. This book brings that information together for your encouragement. (ISBN 978-1593871772, 160 pages)



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