

Aging Gracefully, Part 1

How does a disciple age gracefully? How does a ministry leader live an eldership worth emulating as the birthdays pile up?

I'm 61 years old. The question of aging gracefully is becoming ever more relevant in my own journey. Maybe it is in yours too. *Aging gracefully is a work of the indwelling Spirit as we walk with and listen to the Lord Jesus under the benevolent gaze of the Father.* It happens by abiding. What then are some good questions to gauge whether or not that abiding is taking place in a disciple of a certain age? Here are eight to consider with Scripture references on which to meditate. (Credit to Richard Rohr, Arthur Brooks and others for guiding my thinking.)

1. Am I learning to receive the inevitable suffering that comes with age (pain, loss, failure, disappointment, frustration and the like) as necessary for my maturing and as a source of grace? (2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Romans 8:28)

2. Does it feel more and more like home simply to be in the conscious presence of the Father, Son and Spirit? (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10, 16-24)

3. Am I giving life energy – love – more often and more generously to others? (Matthew 7:12; John 13:34-35)

4. Am I leaving behind with greater frequency and less fear things that won't contribute to my soul's health and won't matter in eternity? (Matthew 13:44-45; 16:25-26)

5. Am I growing more tolerant of imperfection in myself and others? (Ephesians 4:1-3, 32; 1 Peter 4:8)

6. Am I trusting in the Lord and his good intentions for me more and with less urge to try and control things myself? (Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalm 131)

7. Is my posture toward younger people becoming more patient, inclusive, understanding, forgiving, compassionate and kind? (1 Peter 5:1-5; Mark 10:13-16; Eph. 6:4)

8. Am I becoming more benevolent toward others and less tribal? (Matthew 5:43-48)

That's enough for now. I'll have eight more aging-gracefully questions for you next month. In the meantime, I'd love to hear from you on this subject, especially those of you who are further down this road than I am.

God bless you, dear sisters and brothers, of all ages.