

What Church Leaders
Have Said

about Aging Faithfully

Various Ways to Serve

"I express gratitude for our senior missionaries. They are young in spirit, wise, and willing to work. They even tolerate remarks from their fun-filled children who might change President Spencer W. Kimball's plea 'Lengthen your stride' to 'Hasten your shuffle.' . . .

"As I extol the work of senior missionaries, I realize that there are many more who would like to serve but are not able to do so. Limitations imposed by age or by poor health deserve realistic appraisal, as do the important needs of family members. When desire burns within yet such limitations exist, you can extend your service through others. They can be your arms and legs, and you can provide needed funds. Still others can contribute time and talents as live-at-home missionaries. Each will be pleasing to the Lord, and each will receive His praise."¹

—President Russell M. Nelson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



*Your service, whether
at home or abroad, is
pleasing to the Lord.*

We pray that you will feel the joy of a life well spent and one filled with fond memories.

The Need for “Finishers”

“There has always been a need for those persons who could be called finishers. Their ranks are few, their opportunities many, their contributions great. . . .

“I pray humbly that each one of us may be a finisher in the race of life and thus qualify for that precious prize: eternal life with our Heavenly Father in the celestial kingdom. I testify that God lives, that this is his work, and ask that each may follow the example of his Son, a true finisher.”²

—President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018), President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Appreciation for the Elderly

“I love the elderly who have faced into the storms of life and who, regardless of the force of the tempest, have gone forward and kept the faith. May your older years be filled with happiness and with satisfying remembrance of lives well lived.”³

—President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Wisdom and Rewards of the Golden Years

“The Lord knows and loves the elderly among His people. It has always been so, and upon them He has bestowed many of His greatest responsibilities. In various dispensations He has guided His people through prophets who were in their advancing years. He has needed the wisdom and experience of age, the inspired direction from those with long years of proven faithfulness to His gospel. . . .

“Our desires are that your golden years will be wonderful and rewarding. We pray that you will feel the joy of a life well spent and one filled with fond memories and even greater expectations through Christ’s atonement. We hope you will feel of the peace the Lord promised those who continue to strive to keep His commandments and follow His example. We hope your days are filled with things to do and ways in which you can render service to others who are not as fortunate as you.”⁴

—President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints





“Cast Me Not Off in the Time of Old Age”

“The older years may bring even more time for service as the hours once devoted to earning a livelihood or rearing a family can be used to enrich the lives of others through church and community service. . . .

“Some who reach retirement age seem to feel, ‘I’ve done my share. Now it’s someone else’s turn.’ But withdrawal, according to gerontologists and others who work with the aging, can actually hasten the aging process. . . .

“When the time of old age comes upon us—and it surely will, for ‘swiftly fly the years,’ as the song says—we need to come to that time with a courage born of faith and of preparation. Underlying all we do for ourselves and for our own, we must remember the aged with the compassionate spirit of Christ in whose work we are engaged.

“May the cry of the psalmist ring in our hearts:

“‘Cast me not off in the time of old age;

“‘Forsake me not when my strength faileth.’ (Ps. 71:9.)”⁵

—Sister Barbara B. Smith (1922–2010), Relief Society General President

Never Released from Being Active in the Gospel

“In your golden years there is so much to *do* and so much to *be*. Do not withdraw into a retirement from life, into amusement. That, for some, would be useless, even selfish. You may have served a mission and been released and consider yourself as having completed your service in the Church, but you are never released from being active in the *gospel*.”⁶

—President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Learning from Failure

“Every person, young and old, has had his own personal experience with falling. Falling is what we mortals do. But as long as we are willing to rise up again and continue on the path toward the spiritual goals God has given us, we can learn something from failure and become better and happier as a result.”⁷

—Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Dealing with Seasons of Sadness and Sorrow

“Like everyone else, I have had times in my life when it seemed that the heaviness of my heart might be greater than I could bear. During those times I think back to those tender days of my youth when great sorrows came at the losing end of a football game.

“How little I knew then of what awaited me in later years. But whenever my steps led through seasons of sadness and sorrow, my mother’s words often came back to me: ‘Come what may, and love it.’

“How can we love days that are filled with sorrow? We can’t—at least not in the moment. I don’t think my mother was suggesting that we suppress discouragement or deny the reality of pain. I don’t think she was suggesting that we smother unpleasant truths beneath a cloak of pretended happiness. But I do believe that the way we react to adversity can be a major factor in how happy and successful we can be in life.

“If we approach adversities wisely, our hardest times can be times of greatest growth, which in turn can lead toward times of greatest happiness.”⁸

—Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Please Share Your Feedback

Are articles such as these helpful to those of you who may be our older readers? What topics would you like to see covered? What other feedback do you have? To submit your comments, go to [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and click “Submit an Article or Feedback.” Or send a letter to *Ensign* Editorial, 50 E. North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024. We’d love to hear from you!

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Senior Missionaries and the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 79, 81
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Finishers Wanted,” *Ensign*, July 1972, 68, 70.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “This Is the Work of the Master,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 70–71.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 205, 206.
5. Barbara B. Smith, “In the Time of Old Age,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 85, 86.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “The Golden Years,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 84.
7. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Can Do It Now!” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 57.
8. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Come What May, and Love It,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 26.
9. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Dead Who Die in the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 107.

Gaining Eternal Life—Though Not Yet Perfect

“Those who have been true and faithful in this life will not fall by the wayside in the life to come. If they keep their covenants here and now and depart this life firm and true in the testimony of our blessed Lord, they shall come forth with an inheritance of eternal life.

“We do not mean to say that those who die in the Lord, and who are true and faithful in this life, must be perfect in all things when they go into the next sphere of existence. There was only one perfect man—the Lord Jesus whose Father was God. . . .

“But what we are saying is that when the saints of God chart a course of righteousness, when they gain sure testimonies of the truth and divinity of the Lord’s work, when they keep the commandments, when they overcome the world, when they put first in their lives the things of God’s kingdom: when they do all these things, and then depart this life—though they have not yet become perfect—they shall nonetheless gain eternal life in our Father’s kingdom; and eventually they shall be perfect as God their Father and Christ His Son are perfect.”⁹

—Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

