

Enjoying the Later Years

By Scott Edgar

With “old age” coming on, I’ve realized that my life is changing. While I still want to be involved with my family and the Church, I’m not as physically active as I used to be, and everything seems to move along just fine with or without me.

But here’s something else I’m learning: this season of life is not all bad. Sure, there are aches and pains and other challenges, but this aging is part of the natural flow of life, and this chapter brings with it new and rewarding opportunities. I find comfort in knowing that I’m loved by family and friends. I trust that I’m still valued at church. And, most importantly, I know more than ever that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true.

Accepting Change

Clearly, life doesn’t stand still. It’s dynamic. So while we may not want our circumstances or relationships to change, changes *will* happen. As the scriptures so eloquently say:

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

“A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; . . .

“[God] hath made every thing beautiful in his time” (Ecclesiastes 3:1–2, 11).

We may have become comfortable with the way things were, and it’s OK to miss earlier times. But we can also have faith that there is still more to learn as we continue to walk this path of happiness. How we adjust to and deal with change will determine our growth in these later years. By accepting changes instead of fighting them, we free ourselves to notice new opportunities and understand new things.

I’ve noticed that as I keep trying to follow Jesus Christ, I am drawing closer to Him in ways that I didn’t in younger years. From His own time

*Old age can be
a beautiful time of
progression and growth.*





on earth, Christ understands what it feels like to approach the end of mortal life (see Matthew 16:21). And in a way we don't fully understand, He knows perfectly what *we* are specifically feeling because of His Atonement. We can ask Him to help us become what He wants us to become with whatever time we have left (see Moroni 7:48).

Continuing to Serve

No matter how old we are, we can still look for service opportunities every day to help us prepare for service after this life. President George Albert Smith (1870–1951) once taught, “We are not here to while away the hours of this life and then pass to a sphere of exaltation; but we are here to qualify ourselves day by day for the positions that our Father expects us to fill hereafter.”¹

As we grow older, these “qualifying” experiences will be different from what they once were. I've watched as younger men step into their roles and fulfill many of the

tasks I used to perform. My children have their own busy lives and family challenges, and I'm less involved. But I can trust that if I keep helping others in whatever ways I am able, these experiences will continue to teach and refine me according to God's plan.

Blessings and Questions

What blessings have you noticed from growing older? Below, I've listed some that I've noticed. I've also listed a few questions for us older folks to think about, although I suppose they really could apply to anybody.

I testify that each of us can choose to focus on what is most important as we follow Jesus Christ throughout our rewarding golden years.

Aging has blessed me with:

- Greater awareness of what is around me.
- More quiet time to read the scriptures, ponder, and pray.
- Sensitivity to the promptings of the Spirit.
- Occasional family visits that are especially sweet.
- Kinder feelings toward other people and animals.
- Interest in family history and temple work.
- Less temptation to disobey the commandments.

Ask yourself, “How can I . . .”

- Serve my church and family in meaningful ways?
- Draw closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ?
- Influence others for good?
- Stand spotless before God when I see Him again? ■

NOTE

1. George Albert Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1905, 62; see also *The Teachings of George Albert Smith*, ed. Robert and Susan McIntosh (1996), 17.