

Get Out Of the 'Lift Chair!'



By Rob Pue

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My message today is directed to a specific group of people: the OLD people. I realize the term "old" is, perhaps, relative. But I consider myself in that category, so it's not meant as an insult. On the contrary, God's Word holds "old people" in high esteem. Proverbs 16:31, *"Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life."* Job 12:12, *"Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days."* Psalm 92:14, *"They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green."* Deuteronomy 34:7, *"Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed and his vigor unabated."* Psalm 71:18, *"Now that I am old and my hair is gray, don't leave me, God. I must tell the next generation about your power and greatness."*

Friends, no matter what age you may be, if you are a true Christ-follower, understand that if Jesus is truly your Lord, then He has called you, and you have work to do for His kingdom. You're not too old. You're not without value. On the contrary, you have tremendous value and more to offer than you realize. Your work on this earth is not, by any means, finished – as long as you're still breathing air.

But I meet so many people who, after they retire, feel that their work is done. Now it's time to sit back, relax, rest and perhaps travel for recreation. But for far too many that I've spoken with recently, it seems they're simply waiting to die, or for Christ to return. When He DOES return, will He find faith in the earth? Will He find faithful workers and

servants? Will YOU be among them?

I'd suggest that there's no such thing as "retirement" for Christians. If anything, the fact that you no longer have to work full time at a job or career, should open up tremendous opportunities for you to have the greatest impact for Christ you've ever had. Now you can REALLY start your ministry! Yet, as I speak with so many who are older than me, I hear things like, "*Oh, I'm 70 years old and retired.*" Or "*I'm in my 80s...I can't do that.*" I don't mean to sound disrespectful, but these sound like excuses to me. I know you're old. I know you're tired. Believe me: I'm old and tired too. But that's no excuse.

Do you realize that Moses was 80 years old when he first appeared before Pharaoh, demanding "*Let my people go?*" Yes, he was 80 years old when God called him and made him a leader of his people, and used him mightily – not only leading his people out of Egypt, but God did many amazing miracles through him. He also wrote much of Scripture, writing down biblical history and great wisdom that we all benefit tremendously from today. (Or at least we WOULD benefit, if we would simply read and study the timeless truths he wrote).

Retirement is really a cultural thing, and in many ways, a particularly "American" thing, which came about as our government began engaging in social engineering, instituting such things as "social security" and "medicare." In the old days, families stayed together, the younger people learned from their elders, and as the elderly eventually became too frail to work, the younger ones took care of them and saw to their needs. It was not uncommon for households to consist of not only young children but also Grandparents and even Great Grandparents. I can only imagine now, what great benefits the family unit derived from such relationships. The older people teaching the younger ones; the younger ones gleaning great wisdom from their elders, and learning to have great respect for them in the process.

Nowadays, the “old folks” have little to no connection with their precious Grandchildren. Instead of living in the same home, they’re often placed in nursing homes, assisted living centers or “Senior Apartments.” The young people lose out so much on the knowledge, wisdom and life lessons their elders could impart to them, if only they were given the chance. Sadly, between the Grandparents and Great Grandparents and the Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren, stand the parents – who no longer honor their fathers and mothers. Much too often they see the “old folks” as having little to no value, and little or nothing to offer. Worse than that, the old folks pretty much feel the same way about themselves. Like I said, many times it’s as if they’re just waiting to die. They’ve given up.

For so many, their lives consist of television and sleeping. The highlight of their week is their doctor appointment. It should never be this way.

I really believe we NEED the input and wisdom and experience of our elders – more now than ever before. Because our elders have been relegated to the dustbin of history – tossed aside as irrelevant with nothing to offer – today we find ourselves in a world where everything has been turned upside down. We are living Isaiah 59:14, *“Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far off. For truth has stumbled in the street and honesty cannot enter.”*

Indeed. Do you realize that today, 39% of 18-24 year-olds now identify as “LGBTQ?” After years of public school indoctrination, we’re closing in on nearly HALF of our young people thinking they’re born sodomites! And in our modern American CHURCHES today, 54% agree that homosexual so-called “marriage” is just another alternative lifestyle, just another “choice,” which we must lovingly accept and embrace. History has been re-written, and a majority of our young people now believe socialism is much preferable to freedom. WORK has become a “four-letter-word,” and unless a new college graduate

can use their degree in 13th Century Lesbian Art Studies to immediately obtain a \$100,000-a-year job with a massive load of "benefits," they choose not to work at all.

They don't even know their Grandparents – or the wealth of knowledge and wisdom they could glean from them, if they simply had any relationship with them at all. And in many cases, our families are fractured beyond repair. I speak with many Christian parents who have lost their children to the pagan world of debauchery and sin and no longer have any contact or communication with them. While they mourn over this, they don't see any correlation to the fact that THEY don't communicate with their own elderly parents either. Family relationships are not only fractured, they've completely broken down.

Old folks: you HAVE work to do. You HAVE a tremendous amount of value in this world, whether you realize it or not. How will you use your remaining years? Are you waiting to die or are you serving the Lord until your last breath? You may be in a situation where, sadly, your children no longer value you and you don't even know your Grandkids. That breaks my heart, as I know it surely breaks yours. But often times, we can have a greater impact on SOMEONE ELSE'S kids than we can with our own. Often times, young people will listen to US – strangers – and allow their eyes and hearts to be opened through the wisdom WE share with them, much more readily than they'd ever listen to their own parents or Grandparents. So don't underestimate yourself. God's not done with you yet, and it's up to you how you will use your remaining years.

Let me share with you some stories of people I've known. When I first met Zaida, she was in her 80s. She had contacted me because she wanted to offer to help distribute our Christian newspaper in public news racks in her part of Wisconsin. She began with 25 copies, but she worked diligently, visiting with store managers and owners and she quickly built her delivery route to the point where she was faithfully delivering over

1,000 copies of *Wisconsin Christian News* every month.

She had a heart for people and ministry, and she not only delivered over a thousand copies of our newspaper each month, she also hand-made warm blankets and then went out and gave them to homeless people sleeping under bridges and in dark alleys in the “bad” parts of a big city – always sharing the Gospel of Christ wherever she went. Not only was she OLD, but she also did all of this confined to a wheelchair! She was 93 when she has a massive stroke, which landed her in a nursing home for a few days. I went to visit her there, and found her sleeping. I held her hand and whispered in her ear and immediately, her eyes lit up brightly and she was so excited to see me. Though she could not get the words out clearly, I understood she was trying to tell me she needed to get out of there and get her newspapers delivered. I assured her it was ok, that I would take care of things this time, and she should just rest. The next day, she entered her eternal rest in Jesus’ arms.

Now, let me tell you about Jim. I’m not sure how old Jim actually is, but I’m pretty sure he’s in his 90s too. For years now, he’s been doing God’s work, for the “least of these.” He’s sold scrap wood and held special events, he’s sold artwork and crafts, using the money to pay for water wells and essential items for orphans and widows in Africa. He also works with jail inmates and men who’ve recently been released from jail, giving his all to help them know and embrace Christ as Savior. God has used him mightily and often times miraculously. He’s suffered several strokes and pushes through all the health challenges that come with being in his 90s. He, too, faithfully delivers over 1,000 copies of *Wisconsin Christian News* to news racks in Northwest Wisconsin and into upper Minnesota. I know it’s hard work for him, but he – like Zaida – does this with great joy because he understands he only gets one chance in this world to make a difference and impact lives for Christ. Everything he does,

he does as unto the Lord.

There are others I could mention, but I think you get the idea. If a 93-year-old lady in a wheelchair can do what Zaida did... if Jim can do what he does, then what is YOUR excuse? I ask this not to be condemning but I do hope it is convicting. I hope that your heart is convicted to the point that you'll examine yourself and ask yourself how you intend to spend the rest of your days... actively serving God, or sitting comfortably, as a spectator while the world passes by on the broad road to hell? Understand that most likely you will have to begin your OWN ministry, because sadly, most churches today do not see the value of their elders either. They offer social gatherings, potlucks and "senior saints" meetings – but they never put you to work.

Wouldn't it be WONDERFUL if our churches would team up older people with the young ones? Instead of offering silly game nights for the kids, and social gatherings for the old folks – what if they began programs where the old folks began to mentor the young ones? Imagine 90-year-olds sharing their wisdom and knowledge and love for the Lord with 15-year-olds, one-on-one. No "entertainment," no worldly distractions, no silly games – just building relationships, learning *about* and *from* each other... and the elders sharing a lifetime of wisdom with those who so desperately need it.

You see, that's the ONLY way we're going to be able to change the course that America is on now. It can only happen if us "old folks" start teaching the young ones the things their public schools and the carnal world, and even their church youth groups never, ever will. Jeremiah 6:16 tells us, "*Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths: 'Where is the good way?' Then walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.*" So, old folks – you are NEEDED in the battlefield of spiritual warfare for the hearts and minds of our young people. Will you be a good steward of the life God's given you? Or are you "retired?"

And young people, I'd like to share some Scriptures with you as well, that I hope you'll take to heart. And then I pray you will SEEK OUT an elderly person that you can learn great wisdom from. If not your own Grandparents, then someone else's. Leviticus 19:32, *"Stand up in the presence of the aged. Show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD."* Deuteronomy 32:7, *"Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father and he will show you, your elders and they will tell you."*

1 Peter 5, *"Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders."* And Hebrews 13, *"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."*

Old folks: we NEED you in this battle for the hearts and souls of our children and grandchildren. Never give up. Ask the Lord and He will direct your path, so that YOU can be the minister He's calling you to be. And by the way, our school boards, city councils and county boards need you to show up and speak truth to them too. They need you desperately. Isaiah 46:4, *"Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you. I will sustain you."* And now, I encourage you – get out of the "lift chair" and go serve your King!

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