

The Golden Years

Job 17:11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. 12 They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness. 13 If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. 14 I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. 15 And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? 16 They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust.

Do you remember the teens when someone over thirty was an ancient? Do you remember the twenties when 40 was an old person, over the hill? Do you remember the 40s when thoughts turn to the “golden years” and retirement along with a determination not to become like the old people you pass each day with nothing to do but sit and gossip? Do you remember the 50s when 60s really isn't that old? Do you remember the day you laid aside your work gloves and began the glorious retirement all dream of?

Aw, the golden years, when life's challenges not only come new each day the old ones hang on forever, like those rightus brothers that came to visit in the fifties and have never left.

Such is the nature of life in this temporal world and the flesh of mere men. Solomon wisely said there is nothing new under the sun and there is a season for all things. Then again, our mother warned us about such days, she just forgot to tell us how many came in a row.

From somewhere in our 50s forward we can begin to see an end to things and our thoughts do change and dreams that once were are put away and new thresholds open before us. Grandchildren return us to our own childhood, but with an eye on our own frailty we pray we see them grow to adulthood.

When the end can be seen things can get a bit down cast for awhile. This is the normal ebb and flow of life. Nonetheless this normal ebb and flow isn't all that normal for many if not most people. Unrealized dreams and without the active means to make them happen anymore we set our feet upon the earth, perhaps for the first time in decades. The mind gets stuck in the mire of the ebb days and the days of active flow seem fewer and further apart.

Our physicians say we are depressed and dispense the proper magic pill to fix the problem. Really? I suppose some may have gotten to this point by chemical intervention but most came quite naturally to this place in the pit. While proper medications can assist with getting one on their feet they for the most part will fail miserably at setting them on their feet long term. They are a weak crutch at best.

Thus, for far too many the golden years with the silver tipped heads of her citizens are far from golden. This is not a problem that the toils and frugality of years gone by to provide just for these days can repair. Depression crosses all socio-economic barriers with ease and assails all mankind almost at will.

Pragmatically speaking what is one to do when they find themselves at the bottom of this pit that defies description much less explanation? The answer isn't in the pill bottle so familiar to silver haired warriors of yesteryear. Yes, these props may be needed from time to time or even on a more regular basis as the great unexplored mind of man defies understanding. You came here quite naturally and for the most part it is quite natural means that will set you free from the bondage the devil lays for all in this pit called depression.

No paper of this nature can answer all questions for all people all of the time. Our libraries are filled with tomes dedicated to the subject, yet this robber of our greatest resource (the human mind) marches ever forward. However, there are things we can do to offset the progress of this enemy and perhaps even defeat him in a more permanent and lasting way. This list is far from complete and is not intended to be an answer to all conditions for all people. However it will work for everyone who consistently uses the methods given. I dare not say empirically it will cure any, but it can help all and to a certain extent the success is in our hands.

1. Depression is the great isolator; it separates us from family and friends as we retire within our own hurting minds and frustrations. Often we are unable to do even menial tasks well if at all. Refuse the invitation, get out and go, do even when it is the hardest thing you will ever do and have no desire to do.

Go where and do what you ask? Go anywhere and do anything you physically can. Never be alone unless of necessity. Mow the grass, pull weeds, go fishing (with a friend – remember never alone), or any of a thousand other things that gets you on your feet and out the door as much as possible.

2. After we have experienced this messenger of the devil a couple of times we know the signs (feelings) that preceded his visit. When these signs begin to appear sit down and make a full schedule for your every waking moment and then as the devil increase his pressure stick ever closer to this plan of resistance. Having a plan in advance and then working that plan will carry the day when you do not even want to think much less plan future events.

3. Talk to anyone you can corner. You do not feel like listening much less talking, but this is therapy to the soul. The time will come when any word whatsoever, good, bad, or indifferent is not wanted, your head is full and spinning. Ignore the impulse and talk anyway. This requires a support network of loved ones and friends who understand the need and will be there for you. Being married helps if the spouse understands what is going on. If they do not understand talk with them about depression, pick up the pamphlets etc. at the doctor's office and share in the good times so they can be there for you in the bad times.

Though it isn't on the top of your agenda being able to talk through things is a great help. When we internalize these self defeating thoughts they can dominate our lives. As we share (externalize) the thoughts they become objects we can hold and examine. I call it naming your demon. Once we know his name we have control and can defeat him. Be patient with and kind to yourself! Often it is in the hundredth repeat of a train of thought the light bursts forth and we are set free. We were created in the image of God. While this has nothing to do with what we look like it has everything to do with having a reasonable mind and the ability to think and plan. The Bible clearly says, "*1Cor 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace...*"

Turn down the noise in your life. Where strife and harsh words abound, confusion reigns. Avoid places of confusion (arguments) and loud noises. It may be that you need to repair other relationship areas in your life to conquer this visitor from hell. Make these golden years golden. Remember the directions of God in the Bible; *so much as lies within you live at peace with all men*. This is especially true in our own families!

4. Remember these bouts with the devil do pass too! They are temporary setbacks not the end of the matter or our eternal home. There is light at the end of the tunnel and where there is light there is hope. Four times the Bible uses the same phrase in four different books across both Testaments; *The just shall live by faith*. By faith we know that no matter the appearance of things we are not alone even in this desolate place because Christ is ever with us. That is His promise! By faith we have

access to this powerful tool in defeating anything life throws at us and this includes depression. We can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens us. Indeed we are more than conquerors in Jesus!

5. Read the Bible and pray, for this is a means of God's grace in our lives. Hard to do when we are hurting. I would suggest beginning in the Psalms. David a man after God's own heart suffered this malady quite often and his tear soaked experiences are in the Psalms. Seeing another from a source we know and trust as truth is good medicine for the hurting soul. By prayer we access the power of God in our lives and He will set us free.

Five little things that make what will be the hardest hill you ever climb, but this will take you out of the pit and return you to fight another day to the joy of God, self, and others.

Need help climbing out of this pit? Call me! My fee schedule is very reasonable: praise God our paths crossed that we might be a very present help and comfort to one another. God so allows His own children such experiences that we might help another through the same place to His glory.

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