

# CONFRONTING THE IDOLS OF COMFORT AND EASE

## COMFORT AND EASE AS BLESSINGS FROM GOD

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- We have discussed the intrinsic value and dignity of work

**Genesis 2:5** ~ Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground.

**Genesis 2:15** ~ Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

**Ephesians 6:5-8** ~ Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

**Colossians 3:17, 22-24** ~ Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father...Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve

**1 Timothy 6:1-2** ~ All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. 2 Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.

**Titus 2:9-10** ~ Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect

- Work remains a constant expectation of human experience...it is an opportunity to worship the Lord
- However, we want to consider the ways in which we as believers can fall into sinful attitudes toward work ...often we can develop unbiblical approaches to the nature of work and its place in our lives
- One of the ways we can miss God's design for work is by setting up a temple of comfort and ease in our hearts
- But we must first recognize that the desire for rest and comfort is not necessarily evil
- God blesses his people with both physical and spiritual comfort

### The Blessing of Comfort

- God promises to bring comfort to his people, primarily through the gospel of Jesus Christ

**Isaiah 12:1** ~ Then you will say on that day, "I will give thanks to You, O LORD; For although You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, And You comfort me.

**Isaiah 40:1** ~ "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God.

**Isaiah 49:13** ~ Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people And will have compassion on His afflicted.

**Isaiah 51:3** ~ Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and sound of a melody.

**Isaiah 51:12** ~ I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies And of the son of man who is made like grass

**Isaiah 52:9** ~ Break forth, shout joyfully together, You waste places of Jerusalem; For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.

**Isaiah 61:2** ~ To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

**Isaiah 66:13** ~ As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; And you will be comforted in Jerusalem.

**Jeremiah 31:10-14** ~ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, And declare in the coastlands afar off, And say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.” 11 For the LORD has ransomed Jacob And redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he. 12 “They will come and shout for joy on the height of Zion, And they will be radiant over the bounty of the LORD— Over the grain and the new wine and the oil, And over the young of the flock and the herd; And their life will be like a watered garden, And they will never languish again. 13 “Then the virgin will rejoice in the dance, And the young men and the old, together, For I will turn their mourning into joy And will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow. 14 “I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people will be satisfied with My goodness,” declares the LORD.

**2 Corinthians 1:4** ~ who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

## The Blessing of Ease

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- Ease is also mentioned in the OT as something which Israel will experience in the future

**Jeremiah 30:10** ~ ‘Fear not, O Jacob My servant,’ declares the LORD, ‘And do not be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar And your offspring from the land of their captivity. And Jacob will return and will be quiet and at ease, And no one will make him afraid.

**Jeremiah 46:27** ~ But as for you, O Jacob My servant, do not fear, Nor be dismayed, O Israel! For, see, I am going to save you from afar, And your descendants from the land of their captivity; And Jacob will return and be undisturbed And secure, with no one making him tremble.

## The Blessing of Rest

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- Rest is often spoken of positively in the Bible
- God himself demonstrates that rest is necessary and appropriate in the Creation Week, a practice he intended his people to practice in their lives

**Genesis 2:1-2** ~ Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

**Exodus 20:9-11** ~ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

**Exodus 34:21** ~ You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during plowing time and harvest you shall rest.

**Exodus 35:2** ~ For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy day, a sabbath of complete rest to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.

- God blessed his people with rest when they settled in the Promised Land

**Joshua 1:13** ~ Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God gives you rest and will give you this land.’

**Joshua 1:15** ~ until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as He gives you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

**Joshua 21:44** ~ And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand.

**Joshua 22:4** ~ And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan.

- Rest is also promised for all those who place their trust in the Lord and look forward to their eternal rest one day in his presence

**Matthew 11:29** ~ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

**Hebrews 4:9-10** ~ So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

**Revelation 6:11** ~ And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

**Revelation 14:13** ~ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”

## **The Blessing of Physical Sleep**

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- Sleep is a necessary human function and that which is frequently spoken of in Scripture as a gift from the Lord

**Psalms 4:8** ~ In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.

**Psalms 127:2** ~ It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.

**Proverbs 3:24** ~ When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

**Ecclesiastes 5:12** ~ The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.

## **THE ABUSE OF COMFORT AND EASE**

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- Human nature tends to turn the blessings of God into sinful extremes by abusing and misusing them
- “[L]ike all good gifts, the depravity of men finds ways in which to pervert these good gifts of rest, ease, and comfort and to make them into something they were never meant to be – idols of the heart. This is not simply a concern because laziness, gluttony, and greed (and other manifestations of the idols of comfort and ease) are all sins spoken against in the Bible. The greater concern is how the idols of comfort and ease have had such a

great impact on the Church and how these idols, like weeds choking the life out of a rosebush, have cut into the work that our Lord has given us and perverted her from more fully advancing the cause of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

- Technically, idolatry “refers to the worship of an image or figure considered a representation or copy of a deity. Due to Yahweh’s prohibition of images, the worship of any image was worship of a god other than Yahweh—an act that amounted to rejection of and rebellion against the only true God.”<sup>2</sup>
- However, idolatry does not result only when an image or statue is worshipped...it is always rooted in the heart and always stems from a greater love for those things than the glory of God
- Idolatry always begins in the heart and is a worship disorder

**Ezekiel 14:3-8** ~ “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all? 4 “Therefore speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols, 5 in order to lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols.” ’ 6 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations. 7 “For anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I the LORD will be brought to answer him in My own person. 8 “I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among My people. So you will know that I am the LORD.

- The Lord, through Ezekiel, diagnosed idolatry as primarily a heart issue
- Over time, something took the place of God and came to govern their lives
- For this reason, God doesn’t distinguish between physically bowing down before an actual statue and idols erected in the heart
- The idols of comfort and ease threaten us on a daily basis
- George Whitfield famously said, “I would rather wear out than rust out”
- “I know that many would say that Whitfield would have had a longer life and may have had a greater impact on the world had he taken better care of his health and added rest to his schedule. That is probably true. But for many Christians today, the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction, and all too many are in danger of rusting out instead of wearing out. On that day when we stand before our beloved Savior, I for one would rather answer for pursuing too much for God rather than too little.”<sup>3</sup>

## The Sin of Ease

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- The quest for a life of ease can subtly creep into our hearts...we can easily become comfort worshippers
- This often results in disastrous consequences

**Daniel 4:4, 29-30** ~ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace...29 Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king reflected and said, ‘Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?’

**Luke 12:15-21** ~ Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” 16 And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 “And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 ‘And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” ’

<sup>1</sup> Richard Bargas, “The Idolatry of Comfort and Ease,” in *Voice*, July/August 2023, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Mangum, “Idolatry,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Richard Bargas, “The Idolatry of Comfort and Ease,” in *Voice*, July/August 2023, 8.

20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ 21 “So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

- There is danger in simply pursuing pleasure in life

**1 Timothy 5:5-6** ~ Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. 6 But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.

**1 Timothy 5:11-14** ~ But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, 12 thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. 13 At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. 14 Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach;

## The Sin of Sloth

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- While Proverbs commends diligence and industriousness, it condemns laziness and sloth

**Proverbs 6:6-11** ~ Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, 7 Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, 8 Prepares her food in the summer And gathers her provision in the harvest. 9 How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest – 11 Your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man.

**Proverbs 12:24** ~ The hand of the diligent will rule, But the slack hand will be put to forced labor.

**Proverbs 12:27** ~ A lazy man does not roast his prey, But the precious possession of a man is diligence.

**Proverbs 13:4** ~ The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.

**Proverbs 19:15** ~ Laziness casts into a deep sleep, And an idle man will suffer hunger.

**Proverbs 19:24** ~ The sluggard buries his hand in the dish, *And* will not even bring it back to his mouth

**Proverbs 21:25** ~ The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work

**Proverbs 26:13-16** ~ The sluggard says, “There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!” 14 As the door turns on its hinges, So does the sluggard on his bed. 15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again. 16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can give a discreet answer.

- “[We] need to ask ourselves if we are using our gifts, talents, and time to the fullest for the glory of God, or if we have allowed the idol of sloth and the chasing after comfort and ease to take over. Are we accomplishing all we can for the glory of God?”<sup>4</sup>
- “Idleness is the devil's best friend! It is the surest way to give him an opportunity of doing us harm. An idle mind is like an open door, and if Satan does not enter in himself by it, it is certain he will throw in something to raise bad thoughts in our souls. No created being was ever meant to be idle. Service and work are the appointed portions of every creature of God. The angels in heaven work—they are the Lord's ministering servants, ever doing His will. Adam, in Paradise, had work—he was appointed to dress the garden of Eden, and to keep it. The redeemed saints in glory will have work, ‘They rest not day and night singing praise and glory to Him who bought them.’ And man, weak, sinful man, must have something to do, or else his soul will soon get into an unhealthy state. We must have our hands filled, and our minds occupied with something, or else our imaginations will soon ferment and breed mischief.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Bargas, The Idolatry of Comfort and Ease,” in Voice, July/August 2023, 7.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/dutiesofparents.html>

- “Idleness made Sodom what she was. ‘This was the iniquity of your sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her’ (Ezek. 16:49). Idleness had much to do with David's awful sin with the wife of Uriah—I see in 2 Sam. 11 that Joab went out to war against Ammon, ‘but David tarried still at Jerusalem.’ Was not that idle? And then it was that he saw Bathsheba—and the next step we read of is his tremendous and miserable fall. Truly, I believe that idleness has led to more sin than almost any other habit that could be named! I suspect it is the mother of many a work of the flesh—the mother of adultery, fornication, drunkenness—and many other deeds of darkness that I have not time to name. Let your own conscience say whether I do not speak the truth. You were idle, and at once the devil knocked at the door and came in. And indeed I do not wonder—everything in the world around us seems to teach the same lesson. It is the still water which becomes stagnant and impure—the running, moving streams are always clear. If you have steam machinery, you must work it, or it soon gets out of order. If you have a horse, you must exercise him; he is never so well as when he has regular work. If you would have good bodily health yourself, you must take exercise. If you always sit still, your body is sure at length to complain. And just so is it with the soul. The active moving mind is a hard mark for the devil to shoot at. Try to be always full of useful employment, and thus your enemy will find it difficult to get room to sow tares.”<sup>6</sup>

## The Sin of Loving Money

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- Money itself is not inherently evil...however, the love of it is

**1 Timothy 6:6-10** ~ But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

**James 5:1-5** ~ Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! 4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

- Money is merely a tool that should be used to care for our family and loved ones, as well as advance the cause of Christ

## WHAT ABOUT RETIREMENT?

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- The Bible only mentions retirement once:

**Numbers 8:23-26** ~ Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 “This is what applies to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall enter to perform service in the work of the tent of meeting. 25 But at the age of fifty years they shall retire from service in the work and not work any more. 26 They may, however, assist their brothers in the tent of meeting, to keep an obligation, but they themselves shall do no work. Thus you shall deal with the Levites concerning their obligations.”

- The Levites were to begin helping the priests at age 25 but were to retire from that work at age 50...thus, anyone younger or older was not eligible to serve
- We are not given the specific reason for this age limit, but it may have been to ensure that only those with the physical strength necessary for setting up, taking down, and transporting the tent of meeting served in this role

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

- In addition to needing stamina for their job, Jewish priests would often need the strength to help move large livestock as part of their involvement in the tabernacle
- The work the Levites did was back-breaking labor...and life expectancy for those that lived then was much less than it is today
- “The rules limiting priestly service to ages 25-50 were likely designed to ensure the men were old enough to have a certain level of maturity and strong and healthy enough to perform the necessary physical labor. Priests 50 and over were not excluded completely from service but were limited to less physically demanding tasks.”<sup>7</sup>
- It is important to note that Numbers 8:26 does not completely forbid the service of men over 50...they could assist as long as they were not doing the work themselves
- Although their roles changed after retirement, the Levites still served the Lord by assisting their fellow priests by serving as guards at the Tabernacle and teaching and training
- They could serve as assistants or in advisory roles
- “Levites above the retirement age of fifty were allowed on a voluntary basis to go back and assist their brother Levites in the guard duty, but they were not allowed to get back and do the heavy lifting; and I think it is a beautiful picture of how God cares for His servants. God never uses and abuses His servants. He knows their limitations, He knows their needs. He does not ask them to give what is unreasonable. He looks out for them. He protects them. And so I believe that what we have in Numbers 8:25 is a beautiful picture of God’s providential care for those who have reached an age where the duress and the demands of the labor of the Levites in the tabernacle service, well, it’s time for those labors to be over. There’s another labor waiting. Yes, they can continue to help their younger brethren guard the tabernacle; yes, they can serve the Lord in other ways. But now their days of heavy lifting are over. So it’s a reminder to us, isn’t it, that in the Lord’s service we never have the right simply to use someone up. We must always think of their best interests, even as the heavenly Father cares for His servants.”<sup>8</sup>
- So, we must recognize that there are limitations to what we can do as we get older
- Our capacity for work and labor will likely change as we grow older...seasons of work
- However, retirement, as we understand it today, is a cultural concept rather than a Biblical one
- “In the years after World War II, Americans developed the idea that the good life meant having a fulfilling career followed by a lengthy retirement. The ideal of retirement seems to be a life of leisure and ease, occasionally interrupted by travel and entertainment. That is a fundamentally dangerous concept. In the first place, it is unprecedented in human history. The idea of a long period of unproductive leisure at the end of life is a modern invention, and it flies in the face of the Bible’s exhortation to meaningful work and service for the kingdom. This retirement ideal is also financially irresponsible, since improved health and the extension of life – good things in themselves – have lengthened the typical span of life after retirement by many years. This is not economically viable for a large population over the long term. This does not mean that we expect workers to stay in the same job until they drop of exhaustion, or that leaders must stay in positions of leadership until death. It does mean that the American ideal of retirement does not meet the Christian standard of faithfulness. For Christians the issues should be redeployment rather than retirement.”<sup>9</sup>
- In other words, from a biblical perspective, retirement should not be about stopping work altogether, but rather about continuing to serve God in a different way

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/priest-age.html#:~:text=Numbers%208:24%E2%80%9326%20commands,their%20involvement%20in%20the%20tabernacle.>

<sup>8</sup> <https://rts.edu/resources/lamps-levites-and-retirement/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CNow%20the%20Lord%20spoke%20to,%27%E2%80%9D>

<sup>9</sup> Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead*, 211-212.

- Even though we may retire from our vocations (including “full-time” Christian ministry), we should never retire from serving the Lord, although the way we serve him may change
- This might include serving others and the church in a way not possible during full-time employment...using financial resources to further the kingdom more fully...disciplining others...praying more is perhaps the most fruitful ministry for those who have retired
- “The Christian never retires from Christ’s service; he only changes the address of his workplace. In summary, as one reaches ‘retirement age’ (whatever that is) the vocation may change but one’s life work of serving the Lord does not change. Often it is these ‘senior saints’ who, after a lifetime of walking with God, are able to convey the truths of God’s Word by relating how God has worked in their lives.”<sup>10</sup>
- “Christians may be free to ‘retire’ from their occupation, but as disciples of Christ we aren’t ever free to retire from serving God and others. If we’re fortunate enough to be freed from the demands of working for a living, that opens a door of opportunity to do more work for the kingdom using the wisdom, experience, talents, and resources the Holy Spirit has given us through a lifetime of discipleship.”<sup>11</sup>
- Retirement may mean a new season of life, but it doesn’t mean we should stop growing and using our resources in God’s kingdom-building work
- Biblical examples of those who served the Lord well into old age:
  - Noah
  - Moses
  - Daniel
  - Simeon
  - Anna
- Even in retirement, all of our time, talents, and treasures should be leveraged for use in serving others and bringing glory to God

## Stewardship of Personal Growth

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- Although we may eventually retire from our careers, we never retire from being a disciple of Christ
- We are to continue growing and maturing in our relationship with the Lord
- We are to be increasing in godliness and holiness, fighting sin and putting on Christlikeness

**John 15:5, 8-11** ~ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing...8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

**Colossians 1:9-11** ~ For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

- Spiritual growth comes through continued exercise of the spiritual disciplines...time in the Word, prayer, fellowship, reading, and listening to and applying the preaching and teaching of God’s Word

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/retirement-Christian.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/christians-should-never-retire/>



## Stewardship of Time

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- Using time wisely in retirement is critical to maximizing usefulness in the kingdom

**Psalm 90:10, 12** ~ As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away...12 So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.

**Ephesians 5:15-16** ~ Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

- One of the greatest dangers of retirement is not using time wisely, withdrawing from the mainstream of life, and decreased involvement with others
- Thus, it's vitally important for the retiree to stay engaged in life with others and being strategic with the time God has granted

## Stewardship of Gifts

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- “Many imagine retirement as a time to finally do whatever they want (subject to physical and financial limitations). They envision endless hours of rest, relaxation, and recreation with few responsibilities or obligations of any kind. This is inconsistent with the Bible’s God-glorifying vision of work.”<sup>12</sup>
- God has granted all believers spiritual gifts to be used in the life of the body

**1 Corinthians 12:11** ~ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

**1 Peter 4:10-11** ~ As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

- This also assumes continued active participation in the life of a local body of believers

**Hebrews 10:24-25** ~ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

## Stewardship of Discipleship

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- There's much that older Christians can contribute by being an excellent example of godly character
- Older, godly believers are instructed to pour their lives into younger believers

**Titus 2:2-8** ~ Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. 6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; 7 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, 8 sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/christians-should-never-retire/>

## Stewardship of Finances

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- Although being on a fixed income might make generosity more difficult, the “retired” Christian has the opportunity to use their finances to invest in the things of eternity

**Matthew 6:19-21** ~ Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- John Piper, in his booklet *Rethinking Retirement*, captures the danger of retirement as our society knows it:
  - “Finishing life to the glory of Christ means finishing life in a way that makes Christ look glorious. It means living and dying in a way that shows Christ to be the all-satisfying Treasure that he is. So it would include, for example, not living in ways that make this world look like your treasure. Which means that most of the suggestions that this world offers us for our retirement years are bad ideas. They call us to live in a way that would make this world look like our treasure. And when that happens, Jesus is belittled. Finishing life to the glory of Christ means resolutely resisting the typical American dream of retirement. It means being so satisfied with all that God promises to be for us in Christ that we are set free from the cravings that create so much emptiness and uselessness in retirement. Instead, knowing that we have an infinitely satisfying and everlasting inheritance in God just over the horizon of life makes us zealous in our few remaining years here to spend ourselves in the sacrifices of love, not the accumulation of comforts.”<sup>13</sup>
  - “There are different ways of dying. And there are different ways of living just before we die. But for the Christian, all of them—the final living and the dying—are supposed to make God look glorious. All of them are supposed to show that Christ—not this world—is our supreme Treasure. So finishing life to the glory of Christ means using whatever strength and eyesight and hearing and mobility and resources we have left to treasure Christ and in that joy to serve people—that is, to seek to bring them with us into the everlasting enjoyment of Christ. Serving people, and not ourselves, as the overflow of treasuring Christ makes Christ look great.”<sup>14</sup>
  - “How many Christians set their sights on a ‘Sabbath evening’ of life—resting, playing, traveling, etc.—the world’s substitute for heaven since the world does not believe that there will be a heaven beyond the grave. The mindset of our peers is that we must reward ourselves now in this life for the long years of our labor. Eternal rest and joy after death is an irrelevant consideration. When you don’t believe in heaven to come and you are not content in the glory of Christ now, you will seek the kind of retirement that the world seeks. But what a strange reward for a Christian to set his sights on! Twenty years of leisure (!) while living in the midst of the Last Days of infinite consequence for millions of people who need Christ. What a tragic way to finish the last mile before entering the presence of the King who finished his last mile so differently!”<sup>15</sup>
  - “When I heard J. Oswald Sanders at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School chapel speaking at the age of eighty-nine say that he had written a book a year for Christ since he was seventy, everything in me said, ‘O God, don’t let me waste my final years! Don’t let me buy the American dream of retirement—month after month of leisure and play and hobbies and putzing around in the garage and rearranging the furniture and golfing and fishing and sitting and watching television. Lord, please have mercy on me. Spare me this curse.’”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <https://document.desiringgod.org/rethinking-retirement-en.pdf?ts=1446648026>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.