

ENJOYING THE AUTUMN DAYS OF LIFE

“There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven—a time to give birth and a time to die . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh . . . a time to keep and a time to throw away.”
(Ecclesiastes 3:1ff)

This is a beautiful autumn day, just the kind that proved infinitely enjoyable when our son, his dog Smiley and I would go for long Sunday afternoon walks. Whenever fall crispness transfigures the leaves—and they begin to crunch under foot—I fondly recall those precious, delightful times.



On such a day as this, my mind carries me back, and we three are once again on one of our little jaunts. Old Smiley runs to investigate every rustle in the leaves and to chase every smell, covering three miles of back, forth and zigzag to our one. Then with a shout, my son suddenly brandishes a stick he has plucked off the ground and challenges me to a game of Robin Hood and Little John. We mount a fallen log, quarterstaffs clash, and I take a tumble. He guffaws about how he beats me every time.

Then we're back on the trail, encouraging Old Smiley with whistles and shouts to move toward the car—and the snacks waiting at home. Smiley huffs and puffs contentedly on the floorboard as we rehash the day's excitement on the return trip. Sometimes a treasure—a deer antler or jawbone with teeth—is waved before Mom, perhaps with a few embellishments of our adventure.

Old Smiley has been gone for years. My son now sleeps on Sunday afternoons to recuperate from a week of rigorous physical labor. And I am older and far less sturdy than I once was.

In one of his hymns, Isaac Watts penned this poignant line: "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away; they fly, forgotten, as a dream dies at the op'ning day." The significant people, times and places of the seasons of our lives come and go, leaving only memories—until time bears even those away.

Though autumn is my favorite time, I actually welcome each season of the year and look forward to the inevitable, predictable changes it will bring. Should it not be so with the seasons of life?

The writer of Ecclesiastes is right: each season and purpose of life has its proper place in God's grand scheme.

While I truly miss those past summer days of my life, shouldn't autumn bring its own unique perspectives and pleasures? Albeit the pace is slower, crunching fallen leaves underfoot without the ever-pressing responsibility of rearing small children imparts a different sort of joy.

I'm content to be in autumn and do not wish to relive spring or summer. Memories of them still linger—and suffice.

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