

Older Each Day but Closer to Brand New

By Daryl Wingerd



I'm thankful to God that I am in fairly good health and still physically active at age 60, but even so, things just don't work like they used to. My eyesight, for example, as a 20-year-old, was 20/20, but by my mid-forties I needed prescription eyeglasses which have now become a regular fixture on my face. Physically, I simply can't do some of the things

I was able to do in my younger years, and each day I am reminded that my body is slowing down and will one day fail completely. Whether sooner or later, whether suddenly or gradually, one day in the not-too-distant future will be this old body's last day.

Sound discouraging? Not at all! It brings me great joy to remember that the body I live in now is not designed to live forever. In fact, if the perpetual extension of my present existence were what I hoped in—if my experience of eternal life were to be found in *this* body living in *this* present world—my “hope” would surely produce the most profound sort of discouragement.

Please don't misunderstand; I am not eager to die. I love my life in this body and in this world. But I can only love it enthusiastically and joyfully because of the comparison with what I truly hope in—being made brand new once what is growing older each day finally fails. And I can only have that hope because of Jesus Christ, who died for my sins and rose again to give me and all true believers the confident hope of our own bodily resurrection one day when He returns to take us to our everlasting home.

This is the Christian's true hope, the resurrection of the body to eternal life in “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:13). As Paul wrote to the Romans, “we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved” (Rom. 8:23-24).

Earlier in the same chapter Paul had written this: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to

us” (Rom. 8:18). To the local church in Corinth he wrote: “Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor. 4:16-17).

Paul wrote this to the church in Corinth about the resurrection of the body:

I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the imperishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” (1 Cor. 15:50-54)

Based on his confident hope of this glorious reality, and far from loving his present life in any ultimate sense, Paul described his own personal preference like this: “We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:6-8).

Christian, live your present life in light of the reality of your own mortality, the certainty that this life is not where your reward will be experienced, and the corresponding futility of pursuing ultimate satisfaction in things found only on this side of the grave. Consider three ways in which you should love this life while hoping in the next:

- Live your life faithfully for Christ, never allowing earthly pursuits to overshadow heavenly ones in terms of the use of your talents, the allocation of your time, and the distribution of your resources.
- Don't allow yourself to be overcome by the folly of storing up treasure here rather than in heaven. Like your mortal body, your earthly wealth will not follow you into God's eternal kingdom.
- Do your best to stay healthy and physically fit, but don't idolize health or fitness. Apart from the Lord's glorious return, you can only be made brand new after your present body fails.

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