

## **MORNING DEVOTIONS**

### **DOES LIFE GET BETTER AS YOU AGE?**

I came across an interesting fact just recently. It was a letter written by the famous Nobel Prize winner Albert Einstein. He had written a letter to his son Eduard in 1936 sharing how old he felt.

He was not feeling youthful even though he was only 57, which is not really old in today's terms anyway. He was sitting in his study at Princeton university. "I am running out of steam," he wrote, "another physicist from Zurich probably sees me as some sort of fossil". The letter was auctioned off for 7000 pounds. Albert Einstein died aged 76 in 1955. On that particular day in 1936 he was feeling his age.

And this prompted me to ask the question – does life get better as you get older? One woman who was struggling with the reality of her age asked a friend, "I don't think I look forty-years-old, do you?" Her friend answered, "No, but you used to!" George Burns said, "By the time you're eighty, you know everything, but the problem is you just can't remember it."

All of us are getting older. Each day we age. There are heaps of articles to read on the art of ageing well. An unknown author once said, "To know how to grow old, is the master work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living." I would agree with that.

Many of us struggle with getting older. But if you want to compliment someone, say, "You don't look to be getting older at all". That would make my day. Some enjoy joking about aging—but deep down inside growing old is something many dread; and fear and are willing to do anything to avoid.

Those selling cosmetics have built multimillion dollar businesses telling people how to do it. Exercise enthusiasts have sold millions of dollars worth of books and equipment, showing people how to do it. Health food manufacturers have built huge businesses producing special foods that promise it. Genetic scientists are researching ways to prevent it.

Dr Martin Gumpert wrote a book back in the 1950s entitled *You are Younger than you Think* and said that "idleness is the greatest enemy of the aged and presents them with their ticket to death". A bit confronting, I thought—but again it's a warning that we need to keep active as we age. Some of the greatest achievements in the world were accomplished by older people. Michelangelo was writing poetry and designing buildings right up the time of his death aged 89 years. Thomas Edison was busily seeking out new inventions when he died at 85.

I don't know what age you are but remember: Everyone who lives long enough becomes 'old', but not everyone 'grows' old, i.e., continues growing despite physical old age. You can still think like a younger person, even though physically and mentally you are

ageing. The many supports open to us when we were younger are either no longer there or weakening.

Our bodies no longer have the strength or the sustaining power they once had. Worse than that, the older we are, the more likely we will have fewer friends, especially those lifetime friends. The longer we live the more of them die—especially close friends or family. They are no longer there to inspire us, support us, be company for us.

Each stage of life has its own set of troubles. The troubles that seniors experience, as they see themselves getting older, include loneliness, sickness, failing eyesight and hearing, and feeling vulnerable. We can't do what we once could.

God's Word, the Bible, has quite a bit to say on this theme, and I like the story of Caleb. When he was 40, he was one of the 12 spies Moses sent into the promised land. Only Caleb and one other returned to say all would be OK to proceed on a dangerous mission. Fast forward to his 85<sup>th</sup> year and he said, "I completely trusted the Lord God. I am just as strong today as I was then, and I can still fight as well in the battle" (Joshua 14:11).

It is an amazing story worth reading from the Old Testament. Caleb did not lose his zest and enthusiasm for life. Back in those days if you were 80 plus, you were living on borrowed time.

Isaiah 40:30-31 says, "Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."

Regardless of age, committing yourself to follow God and accepting Jesus into your life will keep you on track even as you get older—something you can't stop happening. If you resent old age, remember what Corrie Ten Boom said: "When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer."

Are you still trusting God for each day and experiences you have? Don't become bitter—instead resolve to learn new experiences and trust in God's providence to give you good days, in spite of how you may feel sometimes.