

**PROVERBS, USER MANUAL FOR LIFE IN CHRIST  
THE GLORY OF ELDERSHIP**

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IT'S SO IMPORTANT FOR THE BELIEVER TO CONSECRATE HIS LIFE TO CHRIST AND TO LIVE IN HIM AT AN EARLY AGE SO THAT HE CAN AVOID TRAGIC DECISIONS. THE NEXT ISSUE TO ADDRESS IS CONSISTENCY IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE. **IT IS GOD'S DESIGN THAT THE BELIEVER LIVE IN THE POWER AND KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST ALL HIS LIFE WITH LITTLE OR NO "DOWN-TIME."** THIS CONSISTENCY ALLOWS OUR YOUNG MAN (OR WOMAN) TO LIVE A REWARDING LIFE SERVING CHRIST.

BUT THE BENEFITS DO NOT STOP THERE. **THE ELDER BELIEVER NEVER CEASES TO SERVE THE LORD, NOR DOES HE "HANG UP" HIS SERVICE TO THE LORD. ELDERSHIP IS A GOD-ORDAINED TIME IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE WHERE HE CAN ENJOY A SPECIAL GRACE WHERE HE RECEIVES HONOR FROM THE YOUNGER BELIEVERS (INCLUDING HIS FAMILY) AND IS ABLE TO IMPART HIS LIFE-LONG EXPERIENCE TO THE YOUNGER.**

**THE GLORY OF THE ELDER BELIEVER**

Prov 16:31 **Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life.**

HERE'S ONE OF THE STRONGEST ARGUMENTS FOR LIVING A CONSECRATED LIFE UNTO OUR LORD THAT I CAN THINK OF. **GOD PROMISES A SPECIAL GRACE TO THE ELDER BELIEVERS AMONG US. THAT SPECIAL GRACE IS THE BLESSING OF HONOR AND THE PRIVILEGE OF SHARING A LIFE OF BIBLE APPLICATION WITH THE NEXT GENERATION!** WHAT A WONDERFUL MINISTRY THE LORD HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO THE ELDER BELIEVERS OF OUR CHURCH<sup>1</sup>.

NOTICE THE WORD "SPLENDOR." THIS ELDER BELIEVER HAS A CROWN OF "VALOR." INTERESTING WORD IN THE ORIGINAL - IT REFERS TO ALL THE TIMES OF TESTING, DIFFICULTY AND TO THE VICTORY. IT IS NOT UNLIKE A WAR HERO WHO WAS TESTED ON THE BATTLEFIELD AND COMES HOME TO A HERO'S WELCOME.

THE VALOR OF AN ELDER BELIEVER WHO HAS LIVED A LIFE OF GLORY TO THE LORD IS OF IMMEASURABLE VALUE. LET ME ILLUSTRATE THIS CROWN IN THIS MANNER (ALTHOUGH I FEAR THAT SOME WILL MISREPRESENT THE ILLUSTRATION TO PICTURE ONLY THE PREACHER). HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT THE YOUNG PREACHER IS FULL OF ENTHUSIASM AND IS GENERALLY TECHNICALLY CORRECT IN HIS HOMILETICS? AND YET LISTEN TO THE PREACHER WHO HAS HAD A FRUITFUL MINISTRY - ESPECIALLY ONE WHO HAS HAD TO RECOVER FROM SOME TRYING TIMES. HIS MESSAGE IS FULL AND ONE CAN SENSE THE EXPERIENCE THAT HE CARRIES WITH HIS MESSAGES! NOW TO CORRECT MY FEARED MISCONCEPTION - THE CHALLENGE IS TO ALL OF US (SO-CALLED LAY PEOPLE) TO LOOK DOWN THE ROAD OF OUR LIVES AND HAVE CONFIDENCE IN A MINISTRY OF SHARING OUR "SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE" WITH THE NEXT GENERATION. **GOD HAS A PLACE IN HIS LOCAL CHURCH FOR EVERY ELDER BELIEVER. A CHURCH THAT DOES NOT MAKE PROVIDE A PLACE TO EXPLOIT THE SPECIAL GRACE HE GIVES TO THE ELDERS OF OUR CHURCH IS MISSING OUT ON A VERY IMPORTANT MINISTRY TO THE YOUNG.**

**WHO IS AN ELDER BELIEVER?**

NOTICE THE PHRASE "...it is attained by a righteous life." GENERALLY FOR THE MAN IT CAN BE WHEN HE HAS ENTERED RETIREMENT AND HAS EXTRA TIME TO SPEND IN MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE. FOR THE WOMAN IT CAN BE AFTER ALL OF HER CHILDREN HAVE GROWN UP AND LEFT HOME<sup>2</sup>.

Prov 17:6 **Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.**

Prov 31:28 **Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.**

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<sup>1</sup> When I speak of "Elders" I am not speaking of the church office of Elders. Permit me to use this in regard to the special grace that the Lord places on mature, elder believers who have been walking with the Lord for years and have been much blessed in the application of God's word in many different experiences.

<sup>2</sup> Compare 1 Cor 7:34 with Titus 2:3-5

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HOWEVER, LET US NOT FORGET THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT THAT RECOGNITION OF AN "ELDER" IS ONE WHO HAS RECEIVED THIS CROWN FROM OTHERS. ESPECIALLY THE CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN. REMEMBER LAST WEEKS POINT. A CROWN OF VALOR IS NOT PLACED UPON ONE'S HEAD BY HIMSELF. IT IS PLACED THERE BY OTHERS IN THE FAMILY AND THE LOCAL CHURCH.

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ONE'S HEAD BY HIMSELF. IT IS  
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THIS CROWN OF SPLENDOR IS NOT EARNED BY THE CASUAL CHRISTIAN - NOR IS IT EARNED BY THE ABUSER OR THE BULLY OF THE HOME. IT CERTAINLY IS NOT WITHIN THE GRASP OF THE SELF-CENTERED, BITTER MAN OR WOMAN WHO IS NOT COMMITTED TO WHOLLY SERVING THE LORD AND THE FAMILY. NO, THIS CROWN OF SPLENDOR IS GIVEN BY THE ELDER BELIEVER'S CHILDREN AND THE LOCAL CHURCH IN RECOGNITION OF A LIFE THAT HAS BEEN WHOLLY GIVEN OVER TO SERVICE TO THE LORD, WHETHER IN THE HOME OR IN SERVICE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH. THE DUAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MARRIED IS CLEAR, PLEASE YOUR SPOUSE AND SERVE THE LORD. FOR THE SINGLE THE RESPONSIBILITY IS ALSO CLEAR - **SERVE THE LORD AND HE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU AND YOU WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF SPLENDOR FROM YOUR LOCAL CHURCH (IF IT IS A CHRIST-CENTERED CHURCH).** IT TAKES A LIFETIME OF SELFLESS GIVING, OF SPIRITUAL SWEAT, SOMETIMES OF SLEEPLESS PRAYER, OF CONSTANT VIGILANCE TO MAINTAIN A CHRISTIAN HOME AND HAVE A PERSONAL TESTIMONY THAT HONORS THE LORD - THIS IS THE ELDER BELIEVER, A MAN OF VALOR.

**AN ELDER BELIEVER HAS SPENT A LIFETIME  
IN INTIMACY WITH THE LORD**

1 John 2:14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Prov 20:29 The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old.

JOHN CALLS THE "ELDER" BY A SPECIAL NAME IN THIS TEXT. THE GREEK *pater* IS USED 12 TIMES IN THIS BOOK IN REFERENCE TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER WHO LOVES HIS OWN AND WHO DESIRES TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP THEM. THE SAME NAME IS GIVEN TO THE ELDER MAN TO LEND SPECIAL EMPHASIS. THE EMPHASIS IS FOUND BOTH IN THE DOUBLING OF THIS EXPRESSION (SEE VS 13) AND THE FACT THAT THE "FATHERS" HAVE A INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE IN "...him that is from the beginning..." OH YES, THE CHILDREN KNOW THE LORD, BUT ONLY THE EXPERIENCED "ELDER" HAS WORDS OF PRAISE OF HOW THE LORD HAS PROVIDED FOR HIM DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS. ONLY THE "ELDER" CAN SHOW THE SAME LOVE TO OTHERS THAT HIS LORD HAS SHOWN TO HIM. HE HAS THE SPIRITUAL CAPACITY TO *SHOW* THE YOUNGER GENERATION THE WAY TO A CONSECRATED LIFE IN CHRIST.

NOTE OUR PASSAGE IN PROVERBS AND HOW SIMILAR IT IS TO 1 JOHN 2:14. THE YOUNG MEN CORRESPONDS TO THE YOUNG PERSON TRYING TO START OUT IN LIFE, PROVIDING FOR THE FAMILY ON ONE HAND AND ON THE OTHER MAINTAINING A FAMILY WHERE THE LORD IS PREEMINENT. STRENGTH HERE IS THE KEY. THIS IS THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH. THE ROOT IN THE ORIGINAL REFERS TO THE STRENGTH OF AN ANIMAL SUCH AS AN OX<sup>3</sup>. YOUNG MEN NEED THIS KIND OF STRENGTH TO PROVIDE FOR HIS FAMILY TO OVERCOME THE TRIALS OF LIFE. IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE STRENGTH POINTS TO THE BATTLE WITHIN WITH THE SIN NATURE AND THE BATTLE WITHOUT WITH SATAN.

LET'S TURN TO THE ELDER PERSON. HERE WE HAVE THE SPLENDOR OF AN ELDER BELIEVER WHO HAS KEPT HIS LORD BY HIS SIDE IN EVERY TRIAL. HE IS OUR HERO - HE DID BATTLE WITH THE ENEMY AND WON. NOW THE BATTLE CAMPAIGN IS OVER. HE HAS ALL THESE WONDERFUL "WAR STORIES" TO SHARE WITH THE YOUNG. **HE IS TO RECEIVE THIS APPRECIATION AND OUR ATTENTION AS A HERO WHO CAN TELL FOR SURE THAT THE LORD PROVIDES IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE.**

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<sup>3</sup> Which, I hasten to add, requires the direction of a master.

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IT ALL HINGES ON OUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR LORD. ARE WE WALKING WITH HIM IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES? IT TAKES A LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO THE LORD TO RECEIVE THIS CROWN OF VALOR.

**NEXT TIME, WHAT ABOUT THE LADIES?**