



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

HOW TO STAY YOUNG AND USEFUL ALL YOUR LIFE

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 92:12-15 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Deuteronomy 6:5 | Psalm 37:1, 7-8 | 1 Peter 5:7

► SUMMARY

Aging is inevitable, but it doesn't have to make us unfruitful and useless.

The secret to living a productive life is not found in a pill, a drink, or an exercise routine, but in heeding what the Lord says. None of us know how long we'll live, but while we have breath, we should desire to be useful and fruitful for God. He is the one who ultimately determines the number of our days, but we have the responsibility of doing what we can to live long and productive lives.

► SERMON POINTS

In Psalm 92:12-15, the Lord explains how to stay young and useful throughout our lives, however long we may live.

- **"The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree"** (v. 12). This passage doesn't apply to everyone but only to those who are righteous and godly. To flourish signifies abundance of growth and fruit. The palm trees in this passage are date palms, which not only produced fruit, but whose leaves were used for fences and roofs.
- **"He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon"** (v. 12). These trees grow as high as 120 feet, and their branches extend straight out to a circumference of 30 feet. They are truly a majestic sight that symbolizes great strength.
- **"Planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God"** (v. 13). Spiritual abundance comes to those who stay close to the Lord.

- **"They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green, to declare that the LORD is upright"** (vv. 14-15). Instead of being dry and of little use, the righteous person can continue to produce fruit throughout his or her life.

The key to making this passage a reality in our lives is found in 10 essential attitudes.

- **Keep Learning.** When we cease to learn, we stop growing because a lazy brain is an aging brain. So much has changed over the course of the years. As technology advances, we must continually learn skills our parents and grandparents never had to know. But the most important pursuits in life are learning the Word of God and memorizing Scripture.
- **Keep Loving.** The first and foremost commandment is to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and might (Deut. 6:5). And Jesus taught and modeled love for one another as well. When we stop loving God and other people, bitterness, resentment, hostility, or hatred take up residence within us and damage our emotional, mental, and spiritual health. God created us to love Him and others. That's why maintaining a loving spirit promotes good health within us.
- **Keep Laughing.** Laughter affects every part of our body, including our nervous system, and sets us free from discontentment and grumbling. Of all the people in the world, Christians should be the happiest because we have the joy of the Lord within us and the greatest reasons to be grateful.
- **Keep Leaving.** To stay youthful and productive, we must leave yesterday's cares and problems behind

us instead of dragging them with us into the next day. Since past experiences and situations have the potential to discourage and pull us backwards, we must learn to cast all our anxieties on the Lord, knowing that He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7). Hanging on to past hurts, disappointments, and discouragements negatively affects our bodies, minds, and emotions. And if we're anxious about the future, we must also leave these concerns with Jesus and trust Him to handle them.

- **Keep Longing.** As we get older, we must keep dreaming about the future. Instead of looking at all the things we can't do, we should concentrate on what we can accomplish and look forward to what awaits us in the future. As children of God, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to do whatever He desires. Though we may not feel adequate, we should never underestimate what the Lord can do through us when we're willing and obedient.
- **Keep Looking Ahead.** We should plan for tomorrow even if we don't think we have many active years left. Looking forward to what God would have us do and pursuing activities we enjoy energizes us to continue being useful and productive.
- **Keep Looking Your Best.** There's something about looking and doing our best that stimulates and encourages us to keep going.
- **Keep Laboring.** Although we may not be able to do what we once did, retirement from a career is not a time to cease working. It may be a time to change what we do, but telling ourselves that we no longer have to work sends a message to our bodies that they can stop functioning. In the Christian life there is no retirement because we can still bear spiritual fruit and make a difference in people's lives until the day we die.
- **Keep Leaning on the Lord.** Each day should be lived in dependence upon and trust in God. He's the one we

rely upon for wisdom, direction, and provision. There is no need to fret when we lean on the Lord in prayer. We can trust Him with all our concerns, knowing that He is always present and faithful. Hudson Taylor, the head of the China Inland Mission, once said, "Bear not a single care thyself; one is too much for thee. Thy work is Mine and Mine alone; thy work is to rest in Me."

- **Keep Listening.** The most important thing we can do is listen to the Lord. Though we cannot hear Him audibly, He speaks to us in our hearts through His Word and His Spirit. As we open the Scripture and pray for guidance and wisdom, He'll answer us. But if we don't listen to Him, we'll be spiritually crippled throughout our lives and unable to discern His will. However, if we heed His voice, He will help us make wise decisions, guide us into the right relationships, empower us to avoid temptations, and convict us when we sin.

► RESPONSE

- Review the 10 essentials for staying young and useful throughout your life. Which ones are you already practicing? Which ones do you need to implement into your life?
- If you are a young person, you may not think these practices are essential for you at this point in your life. However, what are the advantages of making these attitudes a part of your life as early as possible?
- If you are an older person, you may think it's too late for you to become productive again. Instead of focusing on productivity as the world defines it, consider God's description of a righteous person in Psalm 92. What spiritual fruit would you like the Lord to produce in you during your later years?

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