



*Chapter
One*

Getting Older?

It happened when I was shopping. I had picked up a box of herbal tea and headed to the checkout line. My eyes focused on the clerk as I stepped up to the counter. *Probably about sixty, a genteel woman with a smoky-silver tint to her gray hair.*

She smiled at me. "\$2.93."

I frowned. "Really?" I asked. "The price on the box says \$3.25." I held the box up.

"That's with your senior citizen's discount," she explained.

"But I don't qualify for that," I replied.

2 Faithful at Fifty

“Oh!” she returned uneasily. “It’s your hair. I’m gray too. I just help mine a little.”

I hurried out of the store with a discounted box of tea and a discounted sense of self-worth, because really—I had about fifteen years to go before I would be a senior citizen.

Did I really look *that* bad?

I laugh about the story now. My hair started turning gray when I was thirty-five, and by this time I am well on my way to having my “crown of glory,” as the Bible describes a hoary head.

But when my little grandson sits on my lap and points at the pictures in the book we are reading, I know I am getting older. His bright eyes light up, and he smiles into my face. How I love Ryan! No one could have told me how much joy there would be in being a grandmother. I could never have experienced this at twenty!

Recently I was talking to my eighty-year-old mother. With congestive heart failure, she is in her declining years—ten years past the threescore years and ten the Bible allots for a normal lifetime.

“Do you feel old?” I asked, as she sat in her recliner, supported by pillows.

“No,” she answered.

Apparently age is relative to a number of other factors. And the meaning we find in life will be determined more by the purpose and fulfillment we perceive than in the number of birthdays we have celebrated.

Yet we are growing older. Our bodies remind us that they are not machines to be driven by our wills. Our children are adults, and the changing roles we fill in life remind us that we are moving progressively forward in the journey. That is the only direction to go—forward!

In the next chapter we will look at the bottom-line foundation for any life—knowing Jesus Christ. In following chapters, we will look at specific issues that face us in the midlife period.

May we go forward with Christ!

Importunity

We reach for God,
Not knowing what
our questing hearts shall find;
But knowing that
unless our hands can clasp,
brimful,
the object of our search—
We never shall be satisfied!
For to find God
and clasp
the reality of the great "I AM"
Is our objective;
The sole purpose of our existence.

He who finds God finds all!



*Chapter
Two*

Fundamentals for Living

Man, spoiled and broken, has lost Eden. Dread thunder rumbles ominously in life's amphitheater. Lightning flashes across the sky in jagged lines of pain. Curses rain down like hail. Horrified, mankind flails in terror, caught helplessly in the quicksand of sin. Is there no answer? No deliverer? No recourse from the revolting cycle of evil and destruction?

But wait! Hope rises on the horizon. Beams of light infiltrate the choking gloom, and a kingly Presence steps forward. Jesus—alive and vibrant—stretches out nail-scarred hands of love and forgiveness. And from the shadow of a cross flows the divine paradox of mercy and healing.