

OLD, NOT OBSOLETE

2 TIMOTHY 1:5; 3:15

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. August 30, 2026.

Dismiss the Middle School

STUDY GUIDE

As you came in this morning, you should have received a bulletin. Inside, you'll find a simple study guide you can use in a few different ways: to follow along with today's teaching, to reflect on during your personal devotions this week, or to spark conversation in your small group.

More resources are available online. The link is in your study guide.

Let's get started on today's teaching ...

AGING: OPPORTUNITY OR OBSTACLE?

I don't know what happened; one day I was thirty-something, then I woke up, and I was 67.

That's old. I don't feel old, but all my friends my age are retired or about to retire. Last year, Kim and I became grandparents. There's no avoiding it; I'm not young anymore.

I've had some intense internal dialogue about how I feel about growing older. I'll admit, some of it has been difficult. I have no plans to retire. I've got big ministry dreams. But time is not on my side.

I realize that many in the Cornerstone family are also aging, and maybe you've had some struggles with that: health, finances, finding purpose. Also, many of us are grandparents, and maybe you want to make the most of that.

And I wonder how the younger members of the congregation view us grey hairs? Are we fossils? Irrelevant? Past it? Or are we sources of encouragement, wisdom and experience they can come to for guidance?

So ... today's teaching is called Old, Not Obsolete because I believe older people have too much to offer their family, their church, and their community to be written off as fossils.

We're going to look at the influence of a grandmother on a man named Timothy, a close associate of the apostle Paul. And we'll find three applications to take home with us, whether we're young or old.

TIMOTHY'S BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Let's begin with a quick overview of Timothy's life.

His grandmother and mother greatly influenced his faith, laying the groundwork for the gospel by teaching him the Old Testament Scriptures.

Timothy first surfaces in Acts 16, which describes what happened when the apostle Paul visited Lystra, Timothy's hometown, during his second missionary journey, around AD 49-50:

Acts 16:1-5 (CSB) Paul went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek. 2 The brothers and sisters at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him. 3 Paul wanted Timothy to go with him; so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for the people to observe. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Here are some relevant biographical details:

- Scholars suggest that Timothy was born around AD 28 in what is now Turkey.
- His father was a Greek or gentile, meaning a non-Jew, so he was probably a polytheist, steeped in the Roman pantheon of gods. He had authority in the household, so he did not allow Timothy to be circumcised in the Jewish tradition.
- His mother and maternal grandmother were originally devout Jews who later came to faith in Jesus; we don't know how, where, or when.
- Paul first brought the gospel to Lystra in Acts 14, around AD 47-48, and that's possibly when Timothy came to faith in Jesus.

- By Paul's second visit, a couple of years later, Timothy had matured into a well-regarded **disciple** or follower of Christ.
- Paul must have appreciated Timothy's commitment to Christ, because he made him a member of his traveling mission team.
- Eventually, Paul and a council of elders (we don't know where or when) set Timothy aside for ministry through the laying on of hands; today, we call it ordination:

1 Timothy 4:14 (CSB) Don't neglect the gift that is in you; it was given to you through prophecy, with the laying on of hands by the council of elders.

2 Timothy 1:6 (CSB) Therefore, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands.

- Paul assigned Timothy to carry messages to the churches in Corinth and Philippi. He also sent Timothy to Thessaloniki to encourage the believers:

1 Thessalonians 3:2-3 (CSB) And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you concerning your faith, 3 so that no one will be shaken by these afflictions.

- Finally, Paul sent Timothy to sort out the church in Ephesus:

1 Timothy 1:3-4 (CSB) As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach false doctrine 4 or to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies.

- All in all, Timothy had a remarkable ministry. He was Paul's trusted "**co-worker**" (Romans 16:21), and his "**dearly loved son**" (2 Timothy 1:2).

His grandmother was a huge factor in this. She laid the early foundation for it all. So, let's talk about her influence for a moment.

AN INFLUENTIAL GRANDPARENT

First, she modeled genuine Christian faith:

2 Timothy 1:5 (CSB) I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also.

His grandma had *sincere faith*; it was genuine, tested, not fake. She lived like a Christian, and was the same person in public and private: a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ, saved by the blood and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

She was a model for Timothy to respect and follow. She couldn't control his response to Christ, but she could give him a believable picture of faith.

Secondly, she taught the Bible to Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:14-15 (CSB) But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, 15 and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

She began teaching him in *infancy* - when he was a baby. Maybe at first, it was from the perspective of a devout Jew, but after she heard the gospel connecting all the Old Testament passages to Jesus, she converted and began teaching Timothy about Jesus, which made him ***wise and ready for salvation through faith***.

It's never too early for grandparents to start teaching Jesus and the Bible to their grandchildren. In God's time, it will bear eternal fruit.

THREE TAKEAWAYS

What can we take away from these biblical insights?

1. WE MAY BE OLD, BUT WE'RE NOT OBSOLETE.

We can do so much for the Lord in our advanced years. Yes, our roles may change, our jobs may change, our situations may change, but have so much to offer the next generation. Retired pastor Derek Prime writes:

“... old age can be the most fruitful period of our life (Psalm 92:14; 103:5) ... To the end of our life we may discover the good works God has prepared for us to do in whatever circumstances we find ourselves ... How sad it is if we so regret not doing what we have so much enjoyed doing in the past that we fail to see what God has for us to do in the present.”¹

Don't listen to the inner voice that says you're not needed. Don't let anyone tell you that you're past your expiration date.

Many of us remember Marilyn Fenner. She was such a vital part of the Cornerstone family in our early days, keeping the books, calling guests, recruiting volunteers, encouraging the sick. If we named rooms or buildings after people, her name would be on there. As her health faltered, Marilyn refused to go quietly. She kept serving as best she could, praying, encouraging me, whatever she could do. She grew old and frail, but she was never obsolete.

As you get older, pray for and take every opportunity to influence people for Jesus. Volunteer for ministries here at the Cornerstone. Go to the Welcome Center and ask for ideas. Get involved in community ministries like BWARM. Whatever you do, do not fade away.

¹ A Good Old Age. Derek Prime. 10Publishing. 2017.

2. WE HAVE HAVE DECADES OF WISDOM TO OFFER

One of my pastor friends retired as soon as he turned 65. Now, I know he may have had good reasons to step aside, but me being me, I said, “Why would you do that? You still have so much to offer your church. You’ve spent years studying the Bible, learning to preach and counsel well, and developing as a leader. Why walk away now?”

What if Timothy’s grandma had decided she was too old to guide Timothy into the Christian faith?

Jen Wilkin has written a book on aging well.² In an online article drawn from the book, she exposes six myths of aging, including the idea that older people “become has-beens, marking time until our bodies give out on us.”³

The truth is this: older folks have decades of knowledge, experience, skill, and wisdom. And God gave it to us to share with the next generation as trusted guides, happy to be asked for insight.

Pray that the Lord gives you opportunities to share your wisdom and knowledge with the next generation.

We can be extremely fruitful in our later years:

Psalms 92:14-15 (CSB) The righteous will still bear fruit in old age, healthy and green, 15 to declare, “The LORD is just; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.”

² Dust to Dust: Aging Wisely in an Anti-aging World. Crossway. 2026.

³ <https://www.crossway.org/articles/6-lies-culture-wants-you-to-believe-about-aging>

3. IF YOU'RE YOUNGER, FIND AN OLDER MENTOR

Timothy was blessed with a godly mother and grandmother. I hope you are blessed in this way also, but you should also consider looking for another mentor; someone who is a good example of a Jesus-follower. Like Paul was to Timothy.

The ideal mentor is humble but experienced. They have been through some things and learned some things they can pass on to you. Remember, Moses was 80 years old when he began mentoring Joshua.

There are two big rules of mentoring:

1. **Don't ask them, "Will you be my mentor?"** That's the scariest thing to be asked, but the easiest question is, "Can I ask you something?"

In seminary, I asked a pastor to mentor me. His face went white, and his eyes grew wide. I know now that he didn't have time to take me under his wing, but he would have been happy to answer my questions about seminary or the Bible.

Find an older person you trust, who you believe has knowledge or wisdom to share, and ask for guidance for a situation you are in. If that goes well, keep on asking. The word mentor never needs to be spoken out loud.

2. **Don't wait for the mentor to speak into your life.** Instead, ask them questions. Because an ideal mentor is humble, they won't be pushy about speaking into your life. No, they are waiting for you to ask a question.

The Cornerstone family is full of senior, wise, and godly saints who would be delighted to help, encourage, and guide you. Pray about it, and ask.

MORE INSIGHTS ON AGING

When I started researching for today's teaching, I quickly realized that I couldn't possibly cover all there is to say about aging well in Christ.

So I looked for some helpful books to share with you. Two of them are on the Book Table today.

- **Living in the Fly Away Zone** is written by David Roseberry, who is a retired pastor and Christian leader. He continues to mentor pastors and church leaders, drawing on decades of knowledge and wisdom. The book is divided into forty short chapters, and I highly recommend it. Maybe you could get a few friends together to read through and discuss it.
- **A Good Old Age** is written by Derek Prime, who is also a retired pastor and church leader. I believe he mentored Alistair Begg. This book is divided into 26 short chapters on aging well. I highly recommend it, and it may also be good in a small-group setting.
- I also recommend a book on grandparenting. It's only available in digital format. It's called **Christian Grandparenting** by Lawson Murray. I've included the link in the study guide.⁴

On Thursday morning, I received an update email from a "retired" missionary. He is 75 years young and still very active in ministry. This summer, for four weeks, he preached the evening sermons to the high schoolers at Lake Ann Camp. It's his 39th summer of preaching there, and 200 students indicated a decision for Christ. In September, he and his wife are headed to Europe for seven weeks of ministry.

He's old but now obsolete. Let me leave you with some quick thoughts:

⁴ <https://christianbookscanada.ca/products/christian-grandparenting-digital?>

- Retiring from a job doesn't mean we're retired from serving Christ.
- As we get older, our roles may change, but our influence increases.
- Think of advancing age as an opportunity (though it may come with some challenges).
- Your years of walking with Jesus, gaining wisdom, and learning priceless faith lessons were never meant to end with you.
- **Remember: We're not done until we're done.**

This week, I'm conducting an experiment. I'm going to send a short daily devotional, Monday through Friday, based on today's teaching. It will go out to the church's email list. Please take a look and share your feedback with me. If you're not on the list, please go to the Welcome Center and add your contact information.

Six Lies Culture Tells Us About Aging

Our culture often treats aging as a loss to fear rather than a season to embrace. In an online article⁵, Bible teacher Jen Wilkin identifies six cultural lies about growing older—and the biblical truths that counter them. Here is a summary:

1. **Lie 1: Aging strips identity.** Culture says we shift from "is and does" to "was and did." Scripture calls aging a completion instead, noting the righteous "still bear fruit in old age" (Ps. 92:14).
2. **Lie 2: The elderly are obsolete.** Like outdated gadgets, culture discards the old as irrelevant. The Bible calls them invaluable, worthy of honor for their wisdom (Lev. 19:32).
3. **Lie 3: Wisdom belongs to the young.** Social media elevates youthful "influencers" over experience. Yet Job 12:12 insists, "wisdom is found among the aged."
4. **Lie 4: Aging is a disease to medicate away.** Culture pushes concealment through injections and surgery. Scripture calls gray hair "a crown of glory" (Prov. 16:31), a gift to steward, not hide.
5. **Lie 5: The elderly are a burden.** Radical individualism frames dependency as failure. The Bible names caregiving for aging parents a sacred, expected duty (Ex. 20:12).
6. **Lie 6: Age is just a number.** This popular platitude denies time's impact. Psalm 90:12 urges us to "number our days" wisely, treating each one as precious.

⁵ ⁵ <https://www.crossway.org/articles/6-lies-culture-wants-you-to-believe-about-aging>

The world's anti-aging story runs on fear; the Bible's story of aging runs on joy—growing in wisdom, depth, and value with every passing year as we follow Jesus faithfully until the end. Run the race and do not give up.

Written with AI assistance.