Live Long,
Finish Strong

The Divine Secret to Living Healthy,
Happy, and Healed

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How Old Is Old?

How would you respond if a divine messenger showed up at your house today and promised you a long and blessed life? What would you say if a prophet, a minister, or an angel of God looked you squarely in the eye and said:

Your days will be long on the earth. Your days will be strong on the earth. If the Lord tarries His coming, you will live in length of days and strength of days.

Some years ago, that’s exactly what happened to my husband, Kenneth. A dear friend of ours, an established minister who was visiting our home, spoke those words to him by the Spirit of God. Because we’ve learned some things about how to receive God’s promises by faith, we knew just how to respond.

We said, “We receive it! We believe it!” We rejoiced!

That’s a message anyone would like to receive. It’s a powerful and encouraging message.

Best of all, you don’t have to wait for a prophet or for some special
message to come to you because this message is already confirmed in the Bible. It’s God’s promise to you. In recent years, I’ve spent many hours studying what the Word of God has to say about longevity and have seen for myself that the promise of a long, strong life isn’t reserved for just a few special people. It’s not meant for a select number of people who are divinely ordained to live to a ripe old age.

The promise of a long and blessed life belongs to every obedient child of God.

If you are a believer, it belongs to you.

God doesn’t have to send an angel or a prophet to deliver that promise to you. All you have to do is open your Bible to find a multitude of verses that tell you God wants you to live a long, long time. As you read them, they will say to you much the same thing the Lord said to Kenneth:

It’s My will for your days to be long upon the earth. It’s My desire for your days to be strong upon the earth. If Jesus tarries His coming, My plan is for you to live in length of days and strength of days.

How you respond to that message will make all the difference. If you shake your head in disbelief and only wish it were true, it won’t have much effect. If you respond in faith and say, “I receive it! I believe it!” it can revolutionize your life.

But, as most of us have discovered at some time in our lives, that kind of faith response isn’t always automatic. It must be cultivated and developed on purpose.

How do we do that? By studying and meditating on what God has to say about this issue. For as Romans 10:17 tells us, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

The pages you are about to read are full of that Word. They are packed with scriptural promises that will help you build your faith for longevity. They are sprinkled with inspiring examples, both from the Bible and from the lives of ordinary people who lived long
How Old Is Old?

How Old Is Old?

Bible old is much older than most of us think it is. It’s older than medical science says it is. And it’s far older than the way it used to be portrayed in the movies a generation ago.

That realization hit me a few years ago while I was watching an old John Wayne western that included a scene where a white-haired, bun-wearing old lady was celebrating her birthday. To me, the woman looked at least eighty years old. Imagine my shock when they announced she was sixty!

Whoa! I thought with great gratitude. We’ve come a long way since that movie was made. Sixty looks a lot better these days.

According to recent statistics, sixty doesn’t just look better these days, it is better. In 1960, the year I graduated from high school, the average life expectancy in this nation was only 69.7 years. These days, the average life expectancy has increased to 77.8 years. So, even from a natural perspective, old today is at least seven years older than it was forty years ago.

If we answer the question How old is old? with those statistics, we might conclude that seventy-eight qualifies as old in our generation. Many Christians believe even the Bible backs up that idea.

But are they right?

The devil would certainly like for us to think so. He’s worked overtime to convince believers that when they celebrate their seventieth or eightieth birthday, they should start preparing to check out
of earth and into heaven. But he has had to twist the Scriptures to sell us that deceptive bill of goods, because nowhere in the Bible do we find the average life span of God’s obedient people to be a mere seven or eight decades.

In fact, from a biblical perspective, eighty isn’t old at all. A number of famous saints, including Abraham and Moses, were just starting to fulfill the call of God on their lives at that age. In God’s eyes, an octogenarian is just a “spring chicken.”

If you doubt it, study the first few chapters of Genesis. There we see that God designed Adam’s and Eve’s natural bodies to live not just seventy or eighty years, but forever! Even after they sinned and death entered the picture, their life spans were astonishing—as were their children’s, and their grandchildren’s, and their great-grandchildren’s. Consider this:

According to Genesis 5, Adam lived 930 years.

His son Seth lived 912 years.

His grandson Enos lived 905 years.

His great-grandson Cainan lived 910 years.

His great-great-grandson Mahalalel lived 895 years. (He died a little younger than the others. Maybe he had some bad habits!)

Mahalalel’s son Jared lived 962 years.

Jared’s son Enoch never died at all. He walked so closely with God that he was caught up to heaven at the tender age of 365.

Enoch’s son Methuselah won the old age award by living 969 years.

Excluding Enoch, those people had an average earth life span of more than 926 years.
They lived almost a millennium. Think of it! For us today, that’s like living from 1009 to 2009. In 1009, the Vikings were still roaming around, raiding villages. The world was in the throes of the Middle Ages. Can you imagine living from then until now? That puts the concept of biblical longevity in a whole new light!

Living Long in Dangerous Times

“But Gloria, that was before the Great Flood,” someone might say. “Conditions on the earth were much better back then. It was easier to live a long time.”

Not really. According to the Bible, the years before the Flood were the most violent years this earth has ever seen. Genesis 6 says during that era, as men began to multiply on the face of the earth,

God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark. (Verses 5–7, 11–14)

We think we live in dangerous times today, but the years just before the Flood beat anything we’ve ever seen. People were so wicked, they didn’t have any good thoughts. They were plotting evil all the time. Even so, God, in His great mercy and patience, put up
with them as long as He could. Jewish sages tell us that one reason Methuselah lived so long was because his name meant “When he dies, judgment will come.” That’s exactly what happened. The Flood came the year Methuselah died.

What a wonderful testimony to God’s mercy! It endures a long, long time.

God is so merciful, He refused to send the Flood until the last possible moment. He waited until there was only one God-fearing family left on the earth that He could depend on. He postponed judgment until just one man, Noah, stood between the annihilation of the human race and future generations.

I’m telling you, Noah lived in a dangerous era!

That ought to encourage us today because we’re living again in a time where violence is rampant in the world. Wickedness is again increasing. As a result, a certain amount of judgment is going to come. Many people who are committed to sin and refuse to repent and honor God will die early. They’ll fall prey to disease or catastrophe. Romans 6:23 says the wages of sin is death, and for those who work hard at sinning, payday comes too early. But we, as believers, are like Noah. We’ve found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8), and we have been forgiven and cleansed of sin by our faith in the blood of Jesus. We have an ark—a covenant with God—through His Word, that will protect us from suffering the effects of sin that are coming on the world.

Of course, for us to enjoy that protection and the long life that comes with it, we must build our ark by faith in God’s promises and stay there by obeying His Word. We’re not going to live long just because we’re born again, although that certainly helps. The new nature we received when we were saved will empower us to know and do what’s right. But to receive the full benefits of our salvation, we must walk with the Lord and obey His commandments.

If we ignore the instructions in the Bible, our consciences, and the promptings of our spirits and give ourselves over to the evils of the world—born again or not—we’ll get caught up in those evils
after a while. If we put our eyes and ears in places they don’t belong, we’ll be pulled off into sin. If we feed on television programs and movies full of adultery and fornication, we could end up wandering away from the ark of God’s protection and living like sinners, even though in our hearts we don’t want to.

No one thinks that will happen to them. Most Christians, when they’re first tempted to compromise their standards, say to themselves, *Hey, I know I shouldn’t watch this stuff. I shouldn’t go to those places or associate with those people, but I’m a Christian. It’s not going to affect me.*

We’ll look at that in more depth later, but I’ll warn you right now, that’s what every Christian thought who ever fell prey to adultery or some other sin that wrecked his life. He didn’t think he could ever do such a thing. But because he looked at, listened to, and thought about things he knew were evil, he eventually did them. He let that ugly stuff stir up the lusts of his flesh, and then he shocked himself and everyone else by acting on it.

Don’t let that happen to you. If you haven’t already, make a quality decision today to sell out to God and get your spiritual house clean. Get rid of sin, straighten up your life, and set your mind on the Lord. Feed on the Word of God until that’s the biggest thing in your life. Put God first and love Him with all your heart, soul, and might.

If you’ll do that, He will keep you in perfect peace no matter what’s happening in the world. Isaiah 26:3 says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” He’ll keep you in the center of His plan for your life if you will listen and obey. And in dangerous times like these, that’s the safest place on earth to be.

Ask Noah. He can confirm it. When the Flood came, there was only one safe place on the planet, and God made sure Noah and his family were in it. As a result, they were protected from the violence around them and the judgment of sin. In a day when everyone else was dying, they not only survived, they went on to live a long, long time.
Post-Flood Longevity Heroes

Even before the rain began to fall, Noah had already attained what we could consider an impossibly old age. He was six hundred years old the “day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened” (Genesis 7:11 NKJV).

Six hundred years is a long time to live. Considering the conditions Noah faced during those years, and the strenuous labor involved in building the ark, it would have been no surprise had Noah died a few years after the Flood. But he didn’t. The Bible tells us that “Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died” (Genesis 9:28–29).

Some of Noah’s descendants weren’t quite as hardy as he was, however. His son Shem, for example, lived only six hundred years. His grandson Arphaxad passed on at the early age of 438, and his great-grandson Salah died at 433 (Genesis 11:10–15). As you can see, people’s faith for longevity was beginning to slip by then, and creation scientists believe conditions on the earth after the Flood were not what they had been before the Flood.

Even so, God’s people continued to enjoy such extended lives that patriarchs born centuries apart lived at the same time. According to Jewish historians, Noah’s father (Lamech), for instance, knew Adam. And Noah, who was born 1,056 years after the time of Creation, knew Abraham, who was born 1,948 years after Creation. In fact, Abraham was fifty-eight years old when Noah died.

Talk about good examples of longevity! These people lived so many years that the oral tradition about what happened at Creation was passed down from Adam through only seven people until the time it was written down by Moses, who received it on Mount Sinai directly from God.

Job, too, who is believed to have lived during the same era Abraham did, enjoyed a life span that would shock us today. Although Job’s friends are famous for criticizing and speaking wrong things about him, one thing they said of him came true: “Thou shalt come
to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season” (Job 5:26).

Job’s longevity is especially impressive because, as everyone knows, he had to survive some dangerous times. The devil came after him with a vengeance. He put Job through a terrible time of troubles that lasted somewhere between nine months and a year.

During that time, Job’s wife told him to curse God and die. In so doing, she sided with the devil. That’s just what the devil wanted. Satan told God that if Job suffered loss, Job would curse God to His face. (Wives, we don’t want to follow Mrs. Job’s example. When our husbands are having a hard time, we don’t want to join up with the devil and discourage them further. We want to join with God and encourage them.)

Thank heaven, Job didn’t heed his wife’s advice! When trouble came, he stayed with the program. He refused to dishonor God, and he refused to give up and die.

As a result, he not only made it through, but “the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before….After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons’ sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days” (Job 42:10, 16–17).

The Bible doesn’t tell us how old Job was before his trouble started, but historians estimate he was at least sixty years old. That means Job lived to be about two hundred…and the last 140 years turned out to be even more enjoyable for him than the early part of his life. He ended up richer than ever (which is remarkable since he started out as the richest man in the East). He had a whole houseful of beautiful children and lived to see his great-great-grandchildren.

Not bad for a man most people refer to as “poor old Job.”

Back to the Garden of God’s Goodness

What does all that have to do with us?

We’re descendants of these people!
Every one of us can trace our ancestry back to Noah. We’re of the same species. We come from this same family of people who lived two hundred, four hundred, five hundred, six hundred, and even nine hundred–plus years.

So when the devil tries to convince us that seventy or eighty is old, we ought to laugh in his face. “No, Methuselah was old,” we should say. “Noah was old. I won’t be old for a long, long time!”

“But what if God’s will for those people is different from His will for us?” you might ask. “Can we really be sure God wants all of us to live long lives?”

Yes, we can, because, as I’ve already mentioned, God has spelled out His will in His written Word. He has revealed to us, through the Bible, that from the very beginning His desire for humankind was not just long life, but eternal life.

God never wanted any of His children to die. His plan was for them to live in His goodness and blessing forever. He wanted things to be well with them. He wanted them to enjoy a life without stress or strain in an environment full of everything good. His plan was and still is the Blessing Plan.

The account of Creation in Genesis 1 tells us exactly what that good environment included. It says:

- God created light and saw that it was good.
- He divided the land from the waters and saw that it was good.
- He made the earth bring forth plant life and animal life and marine life and saw that it was good.
- He created humankind, blessed them, gave them dominion, and when He was finished, God stepped back, looked one more time at everything He had made, “and, behold, it was very good.”
  (Genesis 1:31)
He put Adam and Eve in a garden of that goodness and gave them one command. He said, “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2:17)

Some claim death is natural. They say it’s just a part of God’s good creation and we should embrace it. But the Bible presents a different picture. It tells us that death was not a part of God’s original design. It was not included in His perfect will. In fact, He specifically commanded Adam and Eve not to open the door to it.

But Adam and Eve disobeyed. They bowed the knee to Satan by succumbing to his temptation. Through their sin, they introduced death—the foul offspring of the devil—into God’s beautiful world.

Had the story ended there, there would be no reason for this book. We would all be helpless victims just waiting for death to overtake us. But thank God, the story doesn’t end there. Before Satan could slither out of the Garden of Eden after the Fall, God warned him that death’s days were numbered. He foretold the coming of Jesus and said to the devil:

Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:14–15)

As we all know, Jesus came to earth and fulfilled that promise two thousand years ago. Through His life, death, and resurrection, He defeated Satan and paid the price for the sin of all humankind. He was made “sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Through Jesus, God has set every believer back into the garden of His goodness. He has made available to us exceedingly great and
precious promises that are divinely designed to help us escape the corruption that is in the world through sin (2 Peter 1:4). Many of those promises offer us long, strong, and blessed lives. They teach us how we can live to a ripe old age.

Again and again, God makes His will and His ways clear to us through Scriptures like these:

- You must serve only the Lord your God. If you do, I will bless you with food and water, and I will keep you healthy. There will be no miscarriages or infertility among your people, and I will give you long, full lives. (Exodus 23:25–26 NLT, italics added)

- Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever. (Deuteronomy 4:39–40, italics added)

- Fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. (Deuteronomy 6:2)

- He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. . . . With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation. (Psalm 91:1, 16, italics added)

- [Wisdom] is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. (Proverbs 3:15–16, italics added)
Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. (Proverbs 4:10–11, italics added)

The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. (Proverbs 10:27, italics added)

Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. (Isaiah 46:4)

Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. (Ephesians 6:2–3, italics added)

Since the New Testament guarantees all the promises of God in Jesus are “Yes, and in Him Amen” (2 Corinthians 1:20 NKJV), when we read those verses, we should agree with them. We should say, “Yes, Lord! I’ll obey those instructions. I receive those promises. I believe I’ll have a long, strong enjoyable life.”

Years of a Life Worth Living

Notice I didn’t say we should just believe for a long life. I said we should expect good years, years we can enjoy, because that’s what the Bible offers us. It says if we keep God’s commandments in our hearts and obey them, we’ll have “length of days and years of a life [worth living] and tranquility [inward and outward and continuing through old age till death]” (Proverbs 3:2 AMP).

Some Christians haven’t experienced that kind of inward and outward tranquillity, so they don’t want to live a long time. They’re not happy. Things aren’t going well for them. Their lives are riddled with misery, and heaven looks like the only escape.
But those folks are missing out on God’s plan. His plan includes many years of a life worth living. He has a divine design for us that will give us not just quantity of life but quality of life while we are on the earth. He wants our lives to be satisfying (Psalm 91:16).

It doesn’t matter how spiritual you are, it’s hard to be satisfied when you don’t have the money you need to take care of your children. It’s hard to be satisfied when your body is sick, your family is in a mess, and the bill collector is knocking at the door.

Life is just more enjoyable when your needs are met and you have a nice home; when you don’t have to crowd six children into a two-bedroom house. It’s more fun when you’re strong and healthy, when your relatives are all saved and loving one another, when you have peace on the inside as well as on the outside.

Psalm 91 says that’s the kind of life God desires for us. It also tells us that to have that kind of life, we must dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty (verse 1).

Exactly what is involved in dwelling and abiding in God?

To abide in God means we stay attached to Him. We take up residence in Him and in His Word. We’re not living for God one day and living for the devil the next. We live for God every day. When we do sin or stumble out of His will, we repent and get right back on the path of righteousness.

God can do great things for an abider. He can work wonders for the person who will stick with Him, as Job did, in good times and bad. That kind of person opens the door for God to fulfill the promise in Psalm 91:14: “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he knows and understands My name [has a personal knowledge of My mercy, love, and kindness—trusts and relies on Me, knowing I will never forsake him, no never]” (AMP).

Those verses reveal another key to abiding in the secret place of the Most High. They tell us that the abider has faith in God and His Word. He isn’t stressed out in fear and worry about what the future will bring. He isn’t focusing on what the devil happens to be saying
at the moment, or what the economy is doing, or what the doctor’s report contains. He is trusting God’s promises. He is praying in faith and calling on the Lord with confidence.

God leaves no doubt about how He will respond to that kind of person. He says, “I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation” (verses 15–16 AMP).

When God tells us He’ll be with us in trouble, that covers a lot of territory. It covers sickness, disease, accidents, storms, lack, poverty, children getting off course, husbands becoming difficult, wives becoming difficult. Without God’s help and deliverance, those things can steal the joy from life. They can make us wish for an early entrance to heaven. But God promises the abider that He will deliver him from those things and satisfy him with long life.

The word **satisfy** means “to have enough of, to fill up, to have plenty.” To be satisfied is to have your desires fully gratified, to be made content.

If you’re not satisfied in life, keep growing in the Lord until the things that dissatisfy you get taken care of and you’re fully gratified. You can’t be satisfied if your child isn’t in the kingdom of God. You can’t be satisfied if he is on drugs and headed for hell. It doesn’t matter how old you are right now, don’t leave this earth with your children unsaved. Stick around; keep praying and believing God for them until they’re born again and living for Jesus.

If you’re not satisfied in your occupation, you may not have found the job God has for you yet. So keep seeking God. Keep believing and obeying His Word until He maneuvers you into the right position.

“But I’ve been working this job for twenty years!”

That may be so, but if you’re dissatisfied, something is wrong. A self-adjustment needs to be made either on the inside or on the outside. If you don’t make that adjustment and instead stay in a place of dissatisfaction, you’ll get weary of life on earth. You’ll develop a premature longing to go to heaven. You’ll be tempted to give up on this life and go on to the next too early.
Don’t do that!

Live until your needs are met, your family’s needs are met, and you’re satisfied. Live until nothing of vital importance to you is lacking in your life. Live until you’re at peace.

The Hebrew word for peace, *shalom*, means “nothing missing, nothing broken.” It means fullness and wholeness in every area of life. So set your sights on *shalom*. Be determined to stay here on earth until you can look around you and say, “Praise the Lord! There is nothing missing and nothing broken. I am full and whole—spirit, soul, and body.”

Finish your life in victory as a testimony to other people. Buy up all the time you can here on earth so you can give maximum glory to God.

After all, you have an opportunity to serve Him during your life on earth that you’ll never have again. Here you have a choice between good and evil. You can decide to either obey God and give Him honor or yield to the devil and give him honor. In heaven, you won’t have that choice—there’s only good. In heaven, there’s no devil to resist.

Remember, we can’t win faith battles for Jesus on the other side of the grave. The good fight of faith takes place here on earth. What’s more, we have what it takes to win. We have the power to tell the devil, “No, you’re not getting me. I’ll not leave this life depressed and dissatisfied. I’ll not be unfaithful to God. I’ll not walk in darkness just because people around me walk in darkness. I’m going to obey the Lord. I’m going to give God glory in this body for a long, long time!”

So, let’s do it. Let’s live in victory over the devil, year... after year... after year. Let’s get our hearts set on living for God until we’re old.

Really old.

*Bible* old.

Then, when we’re fully satisfied, we can leave here and go to heaven.

Or, better yet, maybe we can live until Jesus comes to catch us
away. Wouldn’t that be fun? We might be in church…or out shopping…or cooking dinner, when all of a sudden, we hear God’s trumpet and, in an instant, we’re gone! We might just leave the potatoes boiling on the stove, shoot skyward to meet Jesus in the air, and take all our loved ones with us.

What a way to go!

Start Eating from the Tree of Life

“Gloria, do you really believe it’s possible to enjoy the kind of longevity our scriptural ancestors did? Do you truly think you’ll get ‘Bible old’?”

I’m not expecting to give Methuselah any competition, but I have my sights set a lot higher than I once did. After I read and studied what the Bible has to say about it, my perspective on aging has changed in a dramatic way. Eighty years old is looking much younger to me these days.

At the writing of this book I’m in my sixties and can say I feel better now than I did at forty. In fact, I feel more full of life with every passing year. Do you know why? It’s because I partake of the tree of life every day.

If you’ve read the first few chapters of Genesis, you know about that tree. God planted it in the middle of the Garden of Eden. According to Genesis 3:22, if Adam and Eve had eaten of that tree, it would have been a source of everlasting life for them.

They didn’t do it…but we can. Because we have access to the Word of God, we have the opportunity to eat every day from the spiritual tree of life described in Proverbs 3:13–18, which says:

Happy is the man who finds wisdom,
And the man who gains understanding;
For her proceeds are better
than the profits of silver,
And her gain than fine gold.
She is more precious than rubies,
And all the things you may desire
cannot compare with her.
Length of days is in her right hand,
In her left hand riches and honor.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her,
And happy are all who retain her. (NKJV, italics added)

Though the literal, physical Garden of Eden is long gone, you
and I can partake of the tree of life today by attending to the wisdom
of God. We can open our Bibles and learn how He thinks and how
He does things.

God’s written Word is full of His wisdom. As we partake of
it—heed, believe, and obey it—that wisdom becomes a wellspring of
life to us. It renews our youth like the eagle’s (Psalm 103:5). It makes
our lives a joy.

If we, as believers, aren’t enjoying life, we aren’t doing it right.
Jesus said, “I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in
abundance (to the full, till it overflows)” (John 10:10 AMP).

Through the years, I’ve discovered the more I find out about
the Word and the wisdom of God, the more I partake of that tree
of life, and the more joyful my life becomes. It gets better every
year!

In 1967, when Ken and I first started putting the Word first, our
lives weren’t nearly as much fun as they are now. We had the joy of
the Lord in our hearts, but our circumstances were not enjoyable.
We were broke, in debt, making about one hundred dollars a month,
and had no natural way to change the situation.

All we knew to do was follow God’s pattern in the Garden of
Eden and center upon the tree of life. So we did. We fed on the
Word every day. We kept that Word in our eyes and ears almost
all the time because we knew it was the key to success, prosperity, health, and every other good thing God has to offer.

We didn’t just read the Word. We determined to believe and obey it.

Now, forty-three years later, I can tell you that life is far more enjoyable than it used to be. God’s goodness surrounds us on every side. We still feed on the Word daily. We have tranquillity within and around us. The longer we live, the more blessed we are. We’ve proven for ourselves that God’s Words “are life to those who find them” (Proverbs 4:22 NKJV).

It’s a No-Brainer

Of course, Ken and I could have chosen to live another way. No one forced us to put God’s Word first. We could have ignored it. We could have left our Bibles lying unopened on the coffee table and spent all our time watching television, instead of partaking of the tree of life.

God always gives people that choice. He says to everyone what He said to the people of Israel through the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 30:

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land. . . . I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice,
and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your
days. (verses 15–20 NKJV)

Moses got straight to the point. To paraphrase, he said, “If you choose to follow God and His ways, you’ll live long and be blessed. If you don’t, your lives will be short and miserable.”

You’d think that choice would be a no-brainer. Given the option of life and blessing or death and disaster, who in his right mind would choose the latter?

Amazing as it may seem, countless people do.

That’s not God’s will for them, however. He doesn’t want anyone to choose death. He wants us all to choose life. He said it again and again, “Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29 NKJV). Still, because God created us with free wills, the decision is ours. We can do what we want.

If we’re not happy with our lives, we can go for more of the Word of God. If we have sickness in our bodies or can’t pay our bills, we can open the Bible and renew our minds with God’s wisdom. We can start thinking more the way He thinks so we can act as He acts and enjoy a greater level of satisfaction and blessing.

If we want to live long, strong lives, we can start partaking of the tree of life…or choose not to.

God has already done His part. He has made His wisdom available to all of us. He has written down in black and white the Word that will set us free and prolong our days on the earth.

God’s Word will correct and teach us. It will strengthen us. But if we don’t give it any attention or partake of a continual, fresh supply by getting it into our hearts and expressing it through our actions, we’ll miss out on the wonderful, long lives God has planned for us.

Don’t make that mistake. Choose to center your life around the Word of God so you can enjoy many years of a life worth living and
grow old—real old! Bible old!—before you depart this earth and go on to heaven.

Choose life!

Start by Choosing Jesus

“But I’m not absolutely sure that I’ll be going to heaven when I die,” you might say. “I haven’t always been a perfect person. I’ve done some things that were wrong. How can I be sure that heaven is my eternal destination?”

It’s simple. All you have to do is put your trust in Jesus. Receive Him as your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Choosing Jesus is the first step in choosing God’s wisdom because it’s impossible for any of us to obey God’s Word without Him. We might desire to obey it, but we can’t. Romans 7:18–20 describes the dilemma this way: “To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”

Before we’re born again, our fallen nature keeps us enslaved to sin. When we receive Jesus’ saving grace, however, we are spiritually re-created. We receive a new nature—the very nature of God Himself. Suddenly, we have the inward power to live a life entirely different from the life we lived before. We have the ability to understand and obey the Word of God.

If you’ve never been born again, don’t wait another moment. Pray this prayer from your heart by faith right now:

Lord Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God who became a man and came to earth to save humankind. I believe You lived a perfect life and died to pay the penalty for my sins. I believe You were crucified, rose again, and are now seated at God’s right hand as King of kings and Lord of lords.
I receive You today as the Savior and the Lord of my life. I receive the cleansing power of Your shed blood that frees me from the bondage of sin and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit that makes me a new creation in Christ.

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me new life. Thank You that I’m born again. Fill me now to overflowing with Your Holy Spirit. From this day forward, begin revealing to me Your perfect will. Teach me through Your Word how to walk and talk with You. Show me how I can give You glory and live a long, strong life in Your service. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**Points to Remember**

- The promise of a long and blessed life belongs to every child of God. The Bible assures us of it.

- Many of God’s Old Testament people lived from two hundred to nine hundred–plus years, and we are their descendants.

- God’s will for us is to enjoy length of days and years of life worth living. If we’re not enjoying life, we’re not doing it right.

- Adam and Eve would have lived forever if they had eaten of the tree of life. As believers we can eat of that tree every day by spending time in the Word of God.

- When we choose Jesus as our Lord and Savior and abide in His Word, we are choosing life.

**Scripture**

I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live. (Deuteronomy 30:19 NKJV)
Confession
I receive today God’s promise of a long and blessed life. I make a choice to put God’s Word first in my life, to spend time in it, obey it, and receive the years of a life worth living and the satisfaction it promises me. I will live in victory over the devil and give God glory on the earth for a long, long time. I choose life!