

DECADES VS. DAYS

HEBREWS 12:1-3 – ERIC SIMPSON – JULY 29, 2018

Hebrews 12:1-3

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

resilience = getting stronger as you get older

A resilient life is built when...

- We live in light of the large arc of life.
- We listen for and respond to God's call.
- We lighten the load by repairing the past.
- We cultivate a circle of lingering friendships.

➤ **Remember the saints who have gone before you.**

By 2020, 18% of America will be over the age of 65.

By 2040, 1 in every 4 Americans will be over the age of 65.

The most spiritually productive decade of your life = 60's

Second most productive = 70's

Third = 50's

➤ **Keep your eyes on Jesus who set the ultimate example of resilience.**

Jesus spent 30 years *preparing* for 3 years of public ministry.

Hebrews 5:7-8

⁷ During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered



E Stanley Jones was a missionary to India for nearly 50 years. Near the end of his life he had a debilitating stroke which took away his ability to talk. As he got close to his final days, he **whispered** these words...

"There are scars on my faith, but underneath those scars there are no doubts. Christ has me with the consent of all my being and with the cooperation of all my life. The song I sing is a lit song. Not the temporary exuberance of youth that often fades when middle and old age sets in with their disillusionment and cynicism...No, I'm 83, and I'm more excited today about being a Christian than I was at 18 when I first put my feet upon the way." – E Stanley Jones (age 83)

THINKING *DECADES VS. DAYS*

20's: preoccupied with clarifying identity, can no longer get away with irresponsibility & unsocial behavior

- What do I want to do with my life?
- What parts of me and my life need correction?
- Where can I find a few friends who will welcome me as I am?
- Around what person/conviction will I organize my life?

30's: longer-range responsibilities accumulate, personal freedom compromised as more commitments are made

- How do I prioritize the demands being made on my life?
- Who are the people I will walk through life with?
- What does my spiritual life look like?
- I thought I'd be over "that" by now, why am I not a better person?

40's: expectation is that I am solid, handle bumps & bruises of life with an unshakable courage, complexities of life further accelerate

- Why do some people seem to be doing better than I am?
- Why am I often disappointed with myself and others?
- Why do I face so many uncertainties?
- How can I make a greater contribution?
- What would it take to do what I've always wanted to do?

50's: time for sober thinking, a sense that time is running out and I must come to terms with my life

- How do I deal with my failures and successes?
- How do I adjust to my ever-changing physical body?
- What's marriage and family life look like now that the kids are gone?
- What do I do with my doubts and fears?
- Will I have enough money for the retirement years?

60's: what is yet to be accomplished and do I have enough time to do all the things I dreamed I'd do

- When do I stop doing the things that have always defined me?
- Why do I feel ignored by a large part of the younger population?
- Are the things I've believed in capable of taking me to the end?
- Is there really life after death?
- What have I done that will outlive me?

70's & 80's: the journey of letting go

- Does anyone realize, or even care, who I once was?
- How much of my life can I still control?
- Why this anger and irritability?
- Is there any place for me to contribute, to make a difference?
- Is God really there for me?
- When I die, how will it happen?
- Heaven? What's it like?

"One of the saddest experiences is to awaken at old age and discover that one has been using only a small part of self." – Gordon Macdonald