



STUDY GUIDES

I'M NOT DEAD YET

Scripture is taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

All rights reserved. This publication may not be copied, photocopied, reproduced, translated, or converted to any electronic or machinereadable form in whole or in part, except for brief quotations, without prior written approval from Time of Grace Ministry.

© 2015 Time of Grace Ministry

Printable downloads of these study guides for use in Bible study groups are available at timeofgrace.org/store.

I'm Not Dead Yet: You Have a Mission

Daniel 6:1-23

Nobody wants to get old, and nobody enjoys the aging process. We all complain a lot about how our bodies are slowing down and falling apart, but we are less perceptive about the *increase* in opportunities for being part of God's mission that comes with age. The story of Daniel is an inspiration to all who are looking for significance in their lives during their senior years.

God's Word

1. Read Daniel 1:1-7. Daniel was probably in his late teens when the Babylonians invaded Judah, plundered Jerusalem, and took him and many other captives back to Babylon. That was in 605 B.C. Now read Daniel 5:30–6:1-5. The Persians, with their allies the Medes, were the new masters of the Middle East. It was 539 B.C. Do the math: how old was Daniel, still in Babylon, now?

2. What reasons could Daniel have given for refusing the job that the Persian king, Darius, wanted to give him (6:3)?

3. Read 6:10-12 and 6:21-23. How did God use this older adult for his agenda?

4. What excuses do you hear from older people to avoid getting involved in their church and community?

Your life

1. Think about the older people you've known in the last ten years. What value have they brought to your life?

2. Think about how your life has changed in the last 20 years. What things are you able to do better and more effectively now than two decades ago?

3. Name some people in your congregation who are older than 70 who are still having an impact. What kinds of roles do they have?

Reflection

1. List the things you admire about Daniel's words and actions in Daniel chapter 6.

2. Have you ever been in a "lions' den," that is, under major pressure to be silent about your Christian faith or to deny or contradict it in word or deed? Tell the story:

3. Read 6:21,22. What do God's actions in the lions' den tell you about the reach of his power and the ultimate success of his plans?

What else does God say?

Psalm 91:11: "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways."

Psalm 91:15: "He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him."

Proverbs 20:29: "The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old."

Journal applications

What are the things about aging that you dislike or fear most? Write them down and pray about each one. Ask God for his help to conquer your fears.

Make a personal list of ten things that you want to do for your family before you leave this earth.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the splendid story of your senior saint Daniel. What zeal he had to serve you! How cheerfully he went to work in Babylon, serving the empire that had invaded and destroyed his land. He trusted that you had a bigger plan, and he waited patiently. At great risk he honored you above all things and fearlessly gave witness to you, the only God. Help me to have that same courage. May I give you glory always, and may your Word inspire me to find meaningful service in my later years. Amen.

God's encouragement for you

Leviticus 19:32: "Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD."

I'm Not Dead Yet: You Bring Value

2 Chronicles 22-23 and 24:1-19

Retirement age in our culture is around 65. We dream of the day when we don't have to get up and go to work. But one of the clouds over that scenario is that older people feel as if nobody needs them anymore. In God's view, there is no age limit to being useful to his kingdom agenda. In this amazing story from the 830s B.C., we see how an older adult held an entire nation together.

God's Word

1. Read 2 Chronicles chapters 22, 23, and 24. Identify the cast of characters:

Ahaziah:

Athaliah:

Jehosheba:

Jehoiada:

Joash:

2. What was the enormous value that Jehoiada brought to the nation of Judah?

3. Read 24:15. How old would Jehoiada have been during his leadership during the reign of King Joash?

4. Read 24:17. What disaster befell the people of Judah that caused their spiritual collapse?

Your life

1. Who is the oldest person you know? What value has that person brought to your life?

2. Why do people think that old age makes them unimportant?

3. Who are some people older than you whom you can encourage? Why?

Reflection

1. Jehoiada was only one individual. Can you think of other times in the Bible that God used just one person to bring benefit to many?

2. What most do you need from the older adults in your life? Why did God put them in your life?

3. Who are the mentors who had the greatest impact on your life? How?

What else does God say?

Hebrews 13:7: "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."

Proverbs 23:22: "Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old."

Prayer

Lord God, help me appreciate the older people whom you've sent into my life. How I've benefited from their maturity and wisdom! How I wish I'd listened better and not been so full of myself. Help me see my opportunities to lead and inspire those younger than I. May I never say that I'm too old for what you send me. Amen.

God's encouragement for you

I John 2:28: "And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming."

I'm Not Dead Yet: You Deserve Our Care

I Timothy 5:1-8,16

Parents love to give things to their children. They save and plan “so that they won’t be a burden on the kids when they’re old.” But sometimes the aging process goes slowly, and the longtime caregivers of others now need care themselves. God’s Word helps us see that this is not a terrible burden but a tremendous opportunity to show love in action and gratitude for their work and sacrifices of the past.

God’s Word

1. Read I Timothy 5:1-8. Paul says that care for the seniors in your family “repays” them. In what way do you owe a debt to the generation ahead of you?

2. In these verses from chapter 5, Paul gives some valuable advice on how to allocate limited resources for a potentially unlimited “need.” How do these verses help you decide where and whom to help?

3. In what ways does your congregation care for the needs of older people?

Your life

1. List the older adults in your family. Next to each name, list the three things you think they need the most from the family.

2. How is your financial planning for your senior years going?

3. Describe your family culture—are the older ones able to talk about the aging process, financial issues, assisted living, and someday having to leave the house, or is there a general culture of denial and avoidance?

Reflection

1. Christian social workers report that seniors who live in institutions are among the loneliest and most unchurched people groups in America. What does this suggest for your congregation?

For you personally?

2. How can you balance the needs of your crazy life and the needs of your children (and grandchildren) and still tend to the people older than you?

3. The older adults in your family have a library of people knowledge in their heads that will utterly disappear soon. How can you spend time with them to capture that information before it's gone?

What else does God say?

Ruth 1:11-16: “[The elderly widow] Naomi said [to her younger daughters-in-law, also both widows], ‘Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? Return home, my daughters.’ . . . But Ruth replied, ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.’”

Journal applications

Time slides by so fast. Write down the visits you’ve made to the older people in your family over the last six months. Be as honest as you dare.

List the seniors in your family and then pray for each one.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for all the members of my family who have gone before me. How much I have inherited from them—my support in early years, my education, my value system, and most of all my faith! Help me grow in my faith so that I don't stay just a "taker." Let me cheerfully and willingly give back to these older adults in their time of need without begrudging my time and energy. When I serve them, I know I'm really serving you. Amen.

God's encouragement for you

Proverbs 11:25: "Those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed."