



Losses in Aging and Our Remaining Hope

It is hard to witness the decline of our aging spouse or parent. Loss of hearing makes communication difficult. Loss of sight limits enjoyable stimulation. Loss of memory swells safety concerns for the caregiver and agitation for our loved one. Chronic pain brings dependence on pills. Dr. Nancy Copeland-Payton in her book, *The Losses of Our Lives* says, "Maturing is losing things we have outgrown. We now lose things we haven't outgrown -- things we need to sustain our lives".

Our culture values independence and fights against aging. We spend billions of dollars to fight aging. For many, old age brings frailty and dependency. We don't want to be a burden on our children or our spouse.

Losses in Aging means a changing agenda in our lives. Instead of feeling worthless because we cannot do what we used to do, there is a new agenda to be discovered. We may not be able to cook a meal or care for the yard like we used to. Those who age gracefully come to terms with self and accept loss as part of aging. We name, mourn and let go of the things and abilities we lose.

The new agenda brings wisdom that should come with age. Our old wounds and painful memories can finally heal as we see the past anew. As our fears, displeasures and disgust for those aspects of our selves heal, we loose the poison we spew out at others. When we stop trying to control the uncontrollable, when we release our endless complaining, and we accept what life brings to us, we learn to see life by a different light that isn't earthbound. In our pain and suffering we are still called as Christians to live more from our "created in the image of God" center. As we approach our true home we also allow our selves to focus on our soul as much as our body. Phil. 3:12-14, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Paul wrote this while in prison)

Phil 1:21, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

I Cor. 13:12-13, "Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

We must never lose sight of the eternal goal. Our bodies waste away, it is our spirit and soul that remain forever. Caring for the soul is more important than caring for the body. Caring for the soul calls us to focus on our hope.