

DARE TO WONDER: *Growing Older Gracefully...*
Ecclesiastes 12:1-8

- i. We are older than yesterday, which is why this is relevant for all of us.
- ii. A really fun text
 - Before everything grows dark* = more memories than days yet to live
 - Keeper of the house tremble* = Hands start to shake
 - People stoop* = posture diminishes
 - Grinders cease* = teeth decay
 - Windows grow dim* = eyes begin to lose focus
 - Sounds of grinding fade* = retire
 - Afraid of heights* = lose our footings
 - Grasshopper drags* = pace slows
 - Desire fades* = well, you know – loss of virility

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS OBSOLETE PEOPLE WHEN WE LIVE THESE TRUTHS FROM THE TEXT

- I. DISCOVER A HEALTHY EGO (12:1a)
 - A. A healthy sense of self, a self-differentiated, that I am one among many, and God is at the center.
 - B. Not a narcissistic, deity-like center of the universe – social media isn't helping.
 - C. The problem with purpose and idealism, we try too hard and fall to angry activism and overwork (Thomas Merton).
 - D. The purpose of life is to have one rightly ordered enjoyed. Westminster Confession.
- II. COLLABORATE WITH THE YEARS (12:1b-5)
 - A. Isn't this a great expression.
 - B. When the Ego is in charge, everything is a struggle. The options are: denial, angry defiance, or collaboration.
 - C. When God is in charge I can collaborate with the years and enjoy it, I am in the sandwich generation currently.
 - D. When young and old collaborate it's like the two poles of a battery.
- III. LIVE ON THE BRINK OF EVERYTHING (12:6a)
 - A. When you live out on the edge you can see all kinds of things you can't see at the center.
 - B. Leonard Cohen says, "Well, my friends are gone and my hair is gray/I ache in the places where I used to play." And that is okay.
- IV. PREPARE WITH GENTLENESS (12:6b-8)
 - A. Have a *gentle plan*, borrowed from Thomas Merton
 - B. Because "there is a simplicity that lies on the other side of complexity," according to Oliver Wendall Homes and it is called heaven (penultimate) and the new heaven on earth (ultimate).

As a result of this teaching, I WILL _____