Two friends and I — all women over 60 — recently met to discuss a book based on the prophet Jeremiah’s life. The book, written more than 40 years ago, was published about the same time the three of us were starting to “run with the horses” in our areas of Christian ministry and family life.

In each of our lives 40 years ago, we were defining and pursuing our passions and raising our children. Jennifer, in addition to raising two sons, was helping her husband in his business and later coordinated mentoring groups for young women. They retired four years ago from their work. Sandy, an accountant by profession, was home raising her children and didn’t even know her future would include church administration and multiple mission trips. She is about to retire after 20 years of service in our church. And then there is me: a mother, grandmother, therapist, and a church retreat leader for over 40 years. I, too, am starting to wind down my private practice.

As we reflected on this season of our lives, we remarked that many of the new Christian books we read seem to be directed at those who are starting the race. Young people are being encouraged to surrender their lives to God and to pursue whatever God is leading them to do, with passion and boundless energy. We agreed we really weren’t going to be running that fast, considering one in our group just had hip surgery and another needs knee surgery!

We began sharing insights of what could be contained in a book for those of us who have been running the race and pursuing our passion for most of our adult lives. We know we will never retire from running the race — God can and does use us at any age. But what might the race look like at this season?

• The three of us all have aging parents. Not everyone our age has parents who are still living here on earth, but there are widows and widowers in every church and community. 1 Timothy 5:3–4 says: Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. In this season, much of our race may well include doing errands, providing transportation to doctor appointments, and visiting with the elderly in our midst.

• For many it is time to “pass the baton” to younger people by sharing the skills and wisdom God has given us throughout our professional lives. Mentoring is an important part of that.

• Mentoring also includes sharing our experience and wisdom with younger women and young mothers. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God (Titus 2:3–5).
This part of the race allows us opportunity to pursue and enjoy things we never had the time to try. Those things we referred to when we uttered the phrase “one day I think I would like to try” range from taking an art class, going on a mission trip, learning a new language, travelling, growing our own vegetables, or volunteering. In Ecclesiastes 3:11–12, we read: He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.

We intentionally need to continue to pass the legacy of our faith to our children and grandchildren. I will sing of the Lord’s great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations (Psalms 89:1). This includes sharing our faith and our traditions with our families, setting aside moments to speak words of Scripture, singing hymns, and praying with each other in the name of Jesus. Look for opportunities, as an extended family, to serve Him and share His Good News with others.

At this time in our world, and especially in our country, we must learn to be grounded in our faith and in God’s Word. We already see opposition to biblical truth. 1 Peter 4:12a: Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you. We want to be able to give a testimony of our faith. 1 Peter 3:15: Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. This means standing for what we believe rather than railing against some issue that troubles us.

This season in our race should give us more time to pray as our schedules and commitments begin to wind down. Being an intercessor is one of the most powerful things we can do for the Kingdom of God.

And finally, as we enter this season of our lives, it should allow us more uninterrupted time to spend with Him in Word and prayer. Even though God is not bound by time or space, we are. Many of us have been so rushed and have had so many interruptions it has been difficult, at best, to carve out a consistent quiet time. As we look at the lives of those who have finished the race well, we can learn from them. What sustained them as they ran to the finish? When Billy Graham was interviewed at age 92, he was asked: “If you had it to do over again, what would you do differently?” His response was: “I would spend more time in prayer and meditation and telling the Lord how much I love and adore Him.”

We are encouraged and inspired by God’s Word. Please ponder these words as you reflect on how you might finish the race you are running: 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, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1–2). Q

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