



From Age to Age

By Michelle Heckmann

How old are you? Depending on the one to whom the question is asked, the answer and attitude could vary tremendously. A new mother may answer for her newborn with the precise number of days. A soon to be kindergartener may answer with a “whole hand.” A 16-year-old may proudly show off their driver’s license. Someone in the middle years of life might have to do some math before giving an accurate answer. And someone in their later years may answer with “old enough to remember a time before _____.” Regardless of answer or attitude, age is consistent. Each year is 365 (or 366) days lived under God’s grace here on earth.

Read the following verses and make notes about what God’s Word says about age...

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

There are blessings in all ages and stages.

Isaiah 46:3-4 “Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; ⁴ even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.

No matter what age children are at, whether born or those yet unborn, God is with them. He is not more with the senior members of our society than He is with the children, or any age of adults.

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Age does not define faith, nor the ability to serve God and His people and show His love.

2 Timothy 3:14-15 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

While society believes wisdom comes with age, that wisdom is not the wisdom that faith in Christ gives. The sacred writings, God’s Word, make us wise. We are wise, through the work of the Holy Spirit to have faith in Christ and by His grace receive salvation.

When we look at these verses, we see that at different stages of life, our energy levels, abilities, and looks may change, but God values them all.

God is with us from the time we were conceived...

Read **Psalms 139:13-14** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

God has known us, not simply from our birth, but from the very moment of conception when our lives truly began. God makes us, as He makes all things – wonderfully! May we know and respect the joy of the intricacies of our amazing bodies which God has given to us.

God is with us through this earthly life...

Read **Jeremiah 29:11-12** (additional verses for explanation) **Psalm 33:11** and **I Corinthians 2:9**

Jeremiah 29: 11-12 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare^[a] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.

Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.

I Corinthians 2:9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” –

God didn't simply make our bodies and send us on our way. He is with us. He knows not only our activities for today, but he knows what is planned in His heart for us in the future. It doesn't matter what those plans contain; He will be with us. He will be our Hope. There may be trials, but, through them, we can call on our Lord, and He will hear us. Those plans for us include our vocations and locations, our level of health and wealth, and things we cannot even imagine. The plans also include us being in the Word, for many of us being Baptized, and also receiving forgiveness through God's gift of Holy Communion.

And God is with us to the final days of our pilgrimage here on earth...

John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Our life doesn't end on our last day on earth. That will be just a new beginning. Our life with Jesus in His heaven, in the rooms He has prepared for us, will be a place where we live in perfection, by the grace of God.

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Come. It's a simple word, but so much invitation, love, and compassion will be shared – and has been shared – as God calls His children to Him. He has made great things for us. He has made us, and gives us life in Heaven.

God is with us, and He has given a purpose and task for our lives.

Read **Matthew 28:19-20** to find this purpose.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

God has made us, called us, and prepared us with His wisdom not simply to enjoy the gifts of His grace, but to share them – to tell of them to those around us. We can share God’s Word with our neighbors and family, *and* also those far away from us, as He calls us to do.

What a calling: to make disciples of all nations. It’s our mission, but how do we begin? The LWML League Pledge gives us some insight. *We pledge our Savior our willing service, we consecrate our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voice to sing His praises, and our silver and gold to extend His Kingdom.* When we consider serving God in those ways, age doesn’t matter!

As a PK (Pastor’s Kid) my mission mindedness started when I was proud to be a “whole hand old,” in the basement of St. John Lutheran Church, in Kramer, NE, where each September I would choose the perfect construction paper color combinations to be placed in school kits. The color combinations didn’t really matter, but my parents and the ladies of that LWML group were pouring mission mindedness into me, supporting my service to the Lord in even the smallest ways. In that same basement, I tied more knots in quilts than I could count and decorated Jell-O to serve the ladies who faithfully attended each monthly LWML meeting. As a kid, this was all “fun” to me, but, at the same time, it was instilling in me that serving the Lord brings great joy and was strengthening my desire to keep serving as I grew up.

What does God’s Word have to say about starting mission training with the young?

2 Timothy 1:5-6 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. One of our most important Gospel sharing missions is to pass the faith to our families. We all can share the faith as we teach Bible verses, sing songs of faith in Christ, and share our own prayers and stories of how God has given strength with the next generations that God has placed around us.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

When we are surrounded by God’s Words and taught the way to go, we, prayerfully, will stay living in that Word as we go through life.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Each moment of our days and lives can be used to share the Word and love of Christ with others. Our lists of times to talk about God’s Word could include driving our cars, tying quilts with friends at church, cheering on our children or grandchildren at sporting events, or going out for lunch with friends. So many opportunities exist for us to speak God’s Word.

What are some ways your mission training started as a child?

Who encouraged and served with you?

As I grew older, my mission opportunities continued. LWML opportunities such as dropping nickels in our family mite box whenever I got change, trimming stamps, or packing baby care kits, and community service opportunities such as adopt-a-highway, visiting nursing homes, or gathering items for local organizations, continued to bring joy as I served alongside my family.

Fast forward to my 20s when I entered the working world as a Lutheran educator (another mission field). I began traveling abroad for mission opportunities. As I traveled to Kazakhstan, Kenya, and Haiti to serve beside those in local ministries, it wasn't always easy – passports, visas, immunizations, accounting for things stateside – and jetlag definitely takes its toll! When I look back on these opportunities with joy, thankful for the chance to serve, I can say with confidence that I wouldn't have been ready to jump into these opportunities without my prior mission experience.

What does **1 Peter 2:2-3** have to say about growing in faith and service?

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

As babies our first food is milk, and from it, we grow. Then are ready for solid food. As people who share the Word, we first share simple words and then move to deeper passages of Scripture. The message from simple to complex is the same. The Lord is good.

At this stage of life, what mission opportunities are currently being placed in front of you?

Fast forward another 10 years, and my mission roles have changed a bit. I've traveled to Work Camps as a chaperone, I've served the residents in those communities with house repairs, but I've also poured into the High School youth who give up a week of their summer to serve, hopefully encouraging them to continue in their mission mindedness.

How are you encouraging people in your life to serve with gladness regardless of their age? Whatever stage of life, our mission minded encouragement comes from the promises in God's Word.

What encouragement can be drawn from the following verses as you continue to be mission minded and encourage those around you to be mission minded?

Romans 10:14-15 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

We, as God's people, are given the task of sharing the Words of faith so all may know of Christ's love for them. We are given the task, humbled, honored, and directed to tell others about Jesus.

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So neither he who plants, nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸ He who plants, and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

We are not in this task, of sharing God's Word, alone. God gathers His people to plant and water. But, as this verse shares, God is the One who allows growth to happen. We can trust that this happens in His time and by His plan.

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

God does do far more than we can even dream up. Our earthly minded ideas of success and growth, even when dealing with matters of faith, can not

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

As we live as Women in Mission throughout all our days, we, with King David, “Sing to the Lord... [and] tell of His salvation from day to day,” knowing that His favor is upon us from generation to generation (1 Chronicles 16:23, Deuteronomy 7:9).

Option: Listen to The Blessing by Kari Jobe

Closing Prayer: Lord, we thank You for mission minded mentors. You have placed them in our lives to tell us of the opportunities we have to share Your Word and to support others who do the same. We ask You to engage our eyes to see the times, people, and places where we can be Your lips, and voice. Help us to find others that we can mentor – those who will spread Your Word. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Michelle Heckmann teaches at Trinity Klein Lutheran School in Spring, Texas. Having grown up in a pastor's home, with many ties to the LWML, helps Michelle to see the opportunities God has for her to serve Him and His people of all ages – at any age in her life..