

Ministry to the Aging

• Lesson Two •

A Ministry that Blesses Everyone

1. God is glorified as we carry out his commands
2. The aging are blessed
3. We are blessed

Worship

Read Psalm 67 A prayer for God's blessing.

A: May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

B: May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.

A: May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.

B: May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.

A: Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God, will bless us.

B: God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Prayer: Almighty God, we are unworthy of all your mercies. Yet you continue to pour out your blessings on us. Give us eyes of faith to see the opportunities to glorify you as blessings from your gracious hand. Amen.

Introduction

“Why?” This seems to be a favorite one-word phrase of many young children. Every answer given by a parent is greeted by either this bare word or a complete question that begins with the word, “Why.” How often in frustration doesn't a parent end up resorting to their favorite one word phrase, “Because.”

When we become adults we no longer say the word “Why” over and over as a response in conversation, but we do think it often. When it comes to involving lay people in a congregation's ministry to the aging we may find the question “Why?” coming to our minds. “Isn't that the pastor's job?” “Why should I get involved?” In our study today we will see God's answer to the question, “Why?” God's answer goes beyond a simple “Because.” We see today that as we serve God and his aging children everyone is greatly blessed.

Studying God's Word

God is glorified as we carry out his commands

1 Corinthians 10:31 tells us to do everything “to the glory of God.” We do things to the glory of God when we do things according to God’s will out of love for our Savior God. Let’s look at some of the “one another” verses to see what God’s will is for us in regard to our fellow believers. As we carry out his will God is glorified.

Read Colossians 3:15-17

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1. Who is being addressed in these verses? How can you be sure?
2. God tells us to do a number of things that benefit ourselves in these verses. What is it that he tells us to do for one another?
3. How are we to do these things for each other according to verse 17?

Read Hebrews 3:12-13

¹²See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

1. Who is being addressed in these verses? How can you be sure?
2. What are we to do for one another according verse 13?
3. What is to be the source of our encouragement? How can you be sure?

Read Hebrews 10:23-25

²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1. Who is being addressed in these verses? How can you be sure?

2. What tool has God given us that we use to “spur one another on” and “encourage one another”?

For Discussion

The church bulletin announces a meeting inviting all interested members to come and learn ways they can be a part of the gospel ministry to the aging in their congregation. After worship you are drinking coffee and visiting with other members. The topic of this meeting comes up. One man begins to complain, “That pastor just wants us to do all of our work for him. I remember when one pastor served this entire congregation fine all by himself. Is this new guy lazy or what?”

How would you respond?

A Christian is not an island. We are not isolated individuals; we are interconnected as a part of God’s design. In his wisdom, God has given all Christians the responsibility to help and serve one another. A special part of the help we are to give one another is to offer the encouragement that only the gospel brings. As we do this, God is glorified.

The Aging are Blessed

Read Colossians 3:15-17 again.

1. What blessings come to the aging as we carry out God’s commands in these verses?
2. How may the commands in these verses apply especially to our ministry to the aging?

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For Discussion

A lay person may not have the training that their pastor has been blessed with, yet God certainly equips us for the work to which he calls us. What “advantages” may a lay person possess when it comes to ministry to the aging that makes them a tremendous asset to the gospel ministry of the congregation?

These verses only scratch the surface of the many blessings that come to the aging as we use the gospel to minister to the aging. We can certainly see how the aging are blessed. We might be surprised at the blessings that come to us as we minister to the aging.

We are Blessed

“Blessed is he who is kind to the needy” (Proverbs 14:21). As we minister to the aging God tells us we will be blessed. These blessings from God may come to us in many different ways.

Read Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

1. What blessing came to the man who built his house on the rock?
2. What happens to the foundation of our faith as we live our faith every day? Why?
3. What special blessings may come to us as we “put into practice” God’s commands and minister to the aging?
4. How may some of these blessing help us when “the winds beat against our house”?

For Discussion

A pastor once remarked that whenever he began to feel down or discouraged in his ministry he would go visit his shut-ins. After sharing the gospel with them he always felt renewed in his service to the Lord.

Why do you think this pastor found this to be true? How can we help each other as lay people to find this joy in ministry?

One of the greatest blessings of the gospel ministry is seeing the effect the gospel has in the lives of others. God’s saving message in Christ is a power like no other. When we limit the gospel ministry to our called workers we cheat ourselves out of one of the greatest joys in this world. As we minister to others God blesses and strengthens us greatly as well.