

SEASONS

IN A MAN'S

LIFE:

AGING

WITH

PURPOSE

By Rick Willis

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.”

Introduction

THIS SHORT BOOK HAS BEEN WRITTEN FOR MEN. MUCH OF THE MATERIAL IS APPLICABLE TO WOMEN BUT THERE ARE GENDER DIFFERENCES THAT AFFECT HOW MEN AND WOMEN ARE MOTIVATED TO ACHIEVE AND/OR NURTURE. MEN EXPERIENCE SATISFACTION THROUGH ACHIEVEMENT; THIS DESIRE CAN BE TRACED BACK TO ADAM IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN. ADAM WAS GIVEN TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH: NAME THE ANIMALS, RULE OVER THE CREATION, TEND THE GARDEN. WOMEN DERIVE MUCH SATISFACTION THROUGH NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS AND DEEPENING ATTACHMENTS. BOTH GENDERS GO THROUGH SEASONS IN LIFE, THIS BOOK FOCUSES ON THE MALE JOURNEY.

In the world God created, there is a right time for things to happen. God made the world at the right time, “*in the beginning*”. At the right time He sent forth His Son. “*But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.*” (Galatians 4:4). There will be a right time for Christ to return; “*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*” (Matthew 24:36).

God created and designed time to pass in the context of stages and seasons. The ebb and flow of life in seasons are what bring order and balance to the world. Seasonal timing affects weather patterns, animal migration, planting and harvest, hibernation, reproduction, and much more. God splashes beauty through the timing of seasonal flowers in bloom. The harvest moon, the spawning of salmon, the falling leaves, “*He has made everything beautiful in its time.*” (Ecclesiastes 3:11a)

For human beings, seasons help people order their days, set goals, and prepare for what’s ahead. They bring rhythm to life. In the Old Testament, God instituted seven “feasts of remembrance,” which were seasonal gatherings given to the people of God to cease from their work and remember the Lord.

God took increments of time to make the world; He deliberately modeled six days of creative work and then a day of rest as a pattern for mankind to model. He began with an earth that was formless, empty and dark. On the first day He established light and made day and night. This backdrop became the foundation for day two, when He separated the heavens from the earth. The work of day three was built upon the previous day’s work and so on. God finished His masterpiece on day six when the pinnacle of the Creator’s work, the first man, was formed from the dust of the ground. God saved His best for last and made man in His own image.

Then He rested.

Just as seasons pace life on earth, they also propel the lives of individuals. As God made the earth in six days and rested on the seventh, a man's life can be viewed in a similar pattern: six distinct stages of development followed by rest in eternity. A man's time on earth comes in incremental seasons, each with its own purposeful design, building upon earlier foundations. Foundations laid early in life set the course for a man's direction. As a twig is bent, so grows the tree. With love and proper training a person can go far in reaching his potential. Without foundations and training in childhood, the course of a man's life can lean toward self-destruction. Absent of intervention, a man's sinful nature will greatly affect his choices in life.

Consider the parallel of God's week of creation to the lifespan of a man, divided into incremental stages as follows:

Season One:

THE SEASON OF FOUNDATIONS INFANT AND TODDLER

0-3 years

Season Two:

THE SEASON OF OBSERVATION BOYHOOD/GIRLHOOD

4-10 years

Season Three:

THE SEASON PREPARATION ADOLESCENCE

11-18 years

Season Four:

THE SEASON OF PROVISION YOUNG ADULT

18-30 years

Season Five:

THE SEASON OF PRODUCTION MIDDLE AGE

30 -55 years

Season Six:

THE SEASON OF INFLUENCE ELDER

55+ years

Season Seven:

THE SEASON OF REST

Eternity

The early stages of life correspond directly to physical development (growth, puberty, cognition). Children are dependent on parents and other adults to form in them what they are too young to form in themselves. There are peak seasons when physical strength, reproductive ability, mental acumen, and influence are at their highest.

**“He has made everything beautiful in its time.”
Ecclesiastes 3:11a**

Similar to the natural world, there is an optimal time for things to happen in the lives of people. God has designed in human beings certain priority benchmarks to be achieved in each stage of life. If the proper end is not obtained at the appropriate time, a person’s development will be compromised to varying degrees. Missed opportunities can be recovered; with God all things are possible. However, once a window of opportunity passes, it becomes much harder for a man later in life to form in himself what was previously neglected.

All men live life with a less than ideal past. Childhood setbacks can include neglect, parental divorce, dysfunction in the home, sickness, and unfortunate circumstances. Some men are able to look back to their formative years and identify missing pieces in their past; others are blind to this. Some can cope and move on while others suffer their entire lives.

Christian parents and grandparents should dwell on the importance of proper foundations in child development. It is well recognized that the formative years directly affect a person’s success and fulfillment later in life. Establishing appropriate levels of attainment for each season should become a priority for every parent as they endeavor to raise and train their own.

But what is good training, and at what ages should specific skills and concepts be presented? Relational skills, management, and effective communication can all be taught in childhood, building confidence in children. On the other hand, a lack of training and character formation

in childhood can easily compromise a child as he or she enters the teen years. Teens with low self-esteem enter adulthood lacking confidence and may be hesitant to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves. Young people have the potential to think on their feet, take initiative, make good decisions, ask thoughtful questions, communicate clearly, and be self-motivated. Effective training is what moves potential toward reality.

Beyond childhood, adults should be aware of the time and season of life they are currently in. Each season of life carries with it new and exciting opportunities for growth and fulfillment. Living life in the past or worrying about the future robs a man of God's favor in the present.

Listed below are seven seasons of life and a few examples of appropriate and timely formation for each one. Seasonal transitions are not fixed or rigid. The age ranges given below serve as general guidelines, not necessarily exact ages. Seasonal characteristics are offered in six categories:

- **BENCHMARKS**
- **VIRTUE AND CHARACTER**
- **FAITH DEVELOPMENT**
- **SEASONAL ASSETS**
- **SEASONAL OBSTACLES**
- **BIBLICAL EXAMPLES**

In short, life is incremental and what is established early, positive or negative, has an effect upon later years. As men receive the freedom and healing that God offers and the opportunities they have at various ages to impact others, their lives are rich and fulfilled.

FROM BIRTH I
HAVE RELIED
ON YOU; YOU
BROUGHT ME
FORTH FROM
MY MOTHER'S
WOMB. I WILL
EVER PRAISE
YOU.”

—
PSALM 71:6

Season 1: Infant/Toddler

THE SEASON OF FOUNDATIONS

Age 0-3 years

Newborns come into the world with only a few instinctual behaviors—the rest are learned. Infants are born with a natural curiosity about their world. They learn to discriminate between sounds, learn to smile and evoke a response, begin to recognize faces and achieve limited mobility. Toddlers observe things and wonder how they work. They ask questions constantly and have an innate curiosity which serves as a motivator to watch, observe, and learn.

SEASON ONE BENCHMARKS

- **Trust and Attachment** — Infants and toddlers need to be held, cuddled, and spoken to often. Trust and attachment form emotional bonds between parent and child. This nurturing process and the security it brings is critical to a person's ability to trust others later in life. Emotional neglect is a deep wound.

- **Limit Setting** — This is the season of learning right and wrong and toddlers must learn the relationship between action and consequence. Self-restraint taught through correction and discipline must be addressed early. Reasoning with toddlers appeals to parents but it is often ineffective due to the immature development of the brain. Immediate cause and effect discipline is a greater benefit to children. When misbehavior is simply redirected or negotiated by adults, children fail to grasp consequences and may have a difficult time coming under authority later in life.

- **Parent-centered Home** — God gave to parents authority and control of the family unit. A child-centered home is a home out of order; the stability and happiness of a family will be lessened when parents idolize their children and fail to train them.

- **Language-rich Environment** — Words and thinking go hand in hand. Speaking, singing, and reading often to infants and toddlers puts them in a verbal-rich environment that fosters thinking and creativity.

- **Basic Habit Patterns** — Routine, sequence, structure, order, and mobility add to proper early childhood development. Toddlers thrive in structured, ordered and predictable environments. If the groundwork for trust, discipline, and patience is not established in a toddler, then that same young child will move ahead into childhood at risk.

VIRTUE/CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- **Patience** — Toddlers live in the “right now”, and don’t enjoy waiting. If parents give in to their demands, patience will fail to take root and children may grow up to become impatient, demanding adults.

- **Self Control** — Toddlers should be taught to control their voices (screaming), and their actions (hitting, biting).

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

- **Trust** — God made the world, He is good and can be trusted.

TODDLER ASSETS

- Natural desire to play which develops curiosity, imagination, creativity and motor skills.
- Intuitive trust of parents.
- Unlimited curiosity about how the world works.
- Little sense of fear of failure

BARRIERS TO PROPER DEVELOPMENT

- Excessive screen time which impedes creativity and imagination. Watching is a passive activity and in excess can diminish a desire for active play.

- Neglect and lack of parental attention and interaction. For children, negative attention may be desired more than no attention.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

John the Baptist — leaped in the womb of Elizabeth when he heard the voice of Mary. Pre-born children are responsive and can discern sounds and voices.

“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.”
Luke 1:41,44

Samuel — was weaned by Hannah and given to the service of Eli the priest at a young age. He grew up ministering to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:24, 28, 2:12).

“So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord.’ And he worshiped the Lord there.”
1 Samuel 1:28

**SINCE MY YOUTH,
O GOD, YOU HAVE
TAUGHT ME, AND
TO THIS DAY I
DECLARE YOUR
MARVELOUS
DEEDS.”**

**—
PSALM 71:17**

Season 2: Childhood

THE SEASON OF OBSERVATION

Age 4-10 years

Children wonder about things all the time. They think in concrete terms, not abstract ones. Their world is ordered to the degree that their parents provide structure and sequence. Although the thinking of most children is quite random, they are adept at specific tasks and excel at memorization, rote, and the acquisition of language. The mind of a child can absorb an amazing amount of information but their brains have not developed to the extent that they can synthesize information into categories or see patterns. They see individual trees, not the whole forest.

Childhood is the season of life built upon the infant and toddler years and if the foundation blocks of love and trust have been laid, it is a great and happy season of life.

SEASON TWO BENCHMARKS

1. Accepting Authority — The sin nature in man resists God’s authority and causes children to defy their parents and exert their own power. Parental authority and delegated authorities (i.e. grandparents, teachers, babysitters) provide security to children who need to know their boundaries. “Thou shall not” is a beautiful phrase.

Jesus said to His disciples, *“You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” John 13:7.* Parents make decisions on behalf of their children who are not able to comprehend in the present what they will understand in the future. When children accept adult authority, security and trust are established.

2. Managing Conflict — Learning to apologize and forgive others are the steps to becoming a peace-maker. Children naturally blurt out without thinking, lack coordination, drop and break things, and make lots of mistakes. It is important for parents to work with childhood limitations and not over-correct or demand more than they

are able to give. At the other extreme, children should not be indulged when they are wrong or demanding.

3. Understanding Conscience — God has given children a conscience as a mechanism to understand right and wrong. (Romans 2:15)

4. Developing good habit patterns — Performing menial tasks, being responsible with chores, being reliable.

5. Understanding Gender — Boys and girls are equal in value but designed for fulfillment in different ways. Gender distinction goes back to Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. Masculine identity is born in achievement (Genesis 2: 15-19) while feminine identity is based in nurturing relationships. (Genesis 2:18-22).

6. Relational Skill Development — Childhood is the right time to learn to initiate conversation, listen well, and develop good friendship skills. Much of this can be obtained through creative play, teamwork, and board games. Isolation and individual entertainment stifle social development.

7. Steps Toward Limited

Independence — Parents should not do for children what they can do for themselves. Once a child can get dressed, tie shoes, make the bed, and perform other basic tasks, parents should encourage this independence. Over-dependency on others in childhood leads to passivity and inertia later in life.

8. Christian Identification — Children are subconsciously searching for where they belong in the larger community. Their initial identity is their immediate and extended family. As they grow, associations with friends, teams, clubs, etc. are formed. Parents and church leaders should reinforce spiritual identity to young followers of Christ. The Christian life is both taught and caught.

9. Manners and Etiquette — Civility and social protocols can be easily learned in childhood. Most children aspire to learn adult ways.

VIRTUE/CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

→ **Courage** — children can be held back by the fear of failure. “Be strong and courageous. Do not be

terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1: 9b

→ **Honesty** — telling the truth at all times. “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.” Ephesians 4:25

→ **Respect** — honoring parents, the elderly and those in authority. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise...” Ephesians 6:1-2.

“Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord” Leviticus 19:32

→ **Common Sense** — thinking before you act.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

The visible faith of parents and grandparents is observed by children. It is processed through stories, moods, symbols, images, and actions (i.e. prayer, worship). God is viewed as an authority

figure; a personal and relational God is harder for children to grasp. He is everyone's Creator but not everyone's Father. How parents themselves know and present God to their children, as kind and loving or harsh and legalistic, will greatly affect how their kids will form their own perspective about God. Key talking points are:

- Triune God—one God, three expressions
- Conflict between good and evil
- Absorbing the Word through Scripture memorization
- Telling stories

“We have heard with our ears, O God; our fathers have told us what you did in their days, in days long ago.” Psalm 44:1

CHILDHOOD ASSETS

- Endless energy
- A desire to grow up and be like older siblings and adults.
- A desire to try new things. (“My turn, can I do it.”).
- A desire to meet and play with other children without prejudice.

OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

- Fear of failure, hesitant to try new things
- Low self-esteem
- Unbridled ego

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Isaac, trusting his father:

“... and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.” Genesis 22:9b

Jesus at age 12, obedient to parents:

“Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. Luke 2:51

Most adult problems and issues are rooted in childhood neglect or negative experiences. A lack of healthy adult role models where love and affirmation are given, contribute to low self-esteem.

DON'T LET ANYONE LOOK DOWN ON YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE YOUNG, BUT SET AN EXAMPLE FOR THE BELIEVERS IN SPEECH, IN LIFE, IN LOVE, IN FAITH AND IN PURITY.”

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

Season 3: Adolescence

THE SEASON OF PREPARATION

Age 11-18 years

**“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.”
1 Corinthians 13:11**

The teen years fall between childhood and adulthood. Throughout history, the main transition from childhood to manhood has been puberty. Most primitive and ethnic societies have clear ceremonial transitions from childhood to manhood. Modern America has lost its seasonal transitions and many boys are uncertain as to when and how their manhood is obtained.

Whereas children think in concrete and component parts, teens become able to synthesize information and pick up inferences, innuendo, and social cues. They live in the present and tend to take risks without considering the consequences. Teens begin to experience

the world beyond the family and outside relationships often become primary influencers. Teens desire their own identity apart from their parents. They are concerned about how others evaluate them, and look for peer group acceptance.

SEASON THREE BENCHMARKS

Basic Management skills

- Managing time, money, possessions.
- Setting goals and following through.

Social Skill Development

- Deepening friendships and relational skills
- Learning social cues, protocol, appropriate behavior
- Appreciating gender difference appreciation — biblical masculinity and femininity and attraction to the opposite sex.
- Relational skills

Work Ethic

- Taking initiative, problem solving, completing the job.

VIRTUE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Restraint/Self control

- Controlling words and actions
- Moral purity in thought and deed
- Chastity — The sanctity of virginity
- Responsibility — following through

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

- Ownership of faith beyond parents
- Devotional life
- Grasping Christian doctrines
- Absorbing the Word of God— understanding God's ways
- Overcoming the evil one

“I write to you young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” 1 John 2:14b

TEEN ASSETS

- Physical strength
- Willing to take risks
- Desire to mature into adult manhood

OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

- Sexual desires
- Self absorption and pride
- Recklessness

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:

David, a young man of courage:

“Then Saul said to David, ‘You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth.’”
1 Samuel 17:33

Timothy, a godly example:

“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.”
1 Timothy 4:12



**IF ANYONE
DOES NOT
PROVIDE FOR HIS
RELATIVES, AND
ESPECIALLY FOR
HIS IMMEDIATE
FAMILY, HE HAS
DENIED THE
FAITH AND IS
WORSE THAN AN
UNBELIEVER.”**

1 TIMOTHY 5:8

Season 4: Young Manhood

THE SEASON OF PROVISION

Ages 18-30 years

**“Whatever you do, work at it
with all your heart, as working
for the Lord, not for men.”
Colossians 3:23**

In the Old Testament, the age of twenty qualified a man to be counted in the census, named in their family lineage, and serve in the military.

Young manhood is a stage of life where the individual thinks beyond himself and his own needs. His God-given desire to find a mate, get married and raise a family cause him to plan ahead and prepare and provide for the security of others. In the Old Testament the age of twenty qualified a man to serve in the army, be counted in the census and listed in the family clan (Numbers 26:2). Three times a year men aged twenty and older appeared before the Lord (Exodus 23:17).

SEASONS IN A MAN'S LIFE: AGING WITH PURPOSE

SEASON FOUR BENCHMARKS

- **Delayed Gratification** — Personal wants give way to the needs of others. Resisting debt and saving for the future is prioritized.
- **Sanctity of work** — Grasping biblical definitions of a man's calling to work.
- **Gifts and Abilities** — The art of understanding one's unique self, personality type, motivational style.
- **Self-sufficiency** — Working at a career, not just earning a paycheck.
- **Training and Education** — Investing time and finances to further one's education and expertise.
- **Acquiring Leadership Skills** — Leading in the home, church, community.

VIRTUE / CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- **Diligence** — Completing the work
- **Ambition** — Resisting procrastination

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

- Keeping Christ at the center of the marriage.

- Identifying ministry passion.
- Being disciplined by older men.
- Investing in younger men.

SEASONAL ASSETS

- Motivation for success in marriage and fatherhood.
- Strength, energy, health and fitness
- Health and fitness,
- Desire for education and training

OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

- Recklessness
- Inflated sense of abilities

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:

Jacob, patient and persistent, pursued Rachel at great sacrifice:

**“Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, ‘I’ll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.’”
Genesis 29:18**

Joseph, resisted sexual temptation:

“How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” Genesis 39:9b

**TEACH THE
OLDER MEN TO
BE TEMPERATE,
WORTHY OF
RESPECT, SELF-
CONTROLLED,
AND SOUND
IN FAITH, IN
LOVE AND IN
ENDURANCE.”**

TITUS 2:2

Season 5: Middle Age

THE SEASON OF PRODUCTION

Ages 30-55

Men in their middle years are able to think beyond the basic necessities of life. For most of their lives their lives they have been looking ahead. As they move through middle age, they begin to reflect on their past. The concept of leaving a legacy begins to resonate as men age and ponder the finish line. They are productive in their careers but also want to think beyond career success to leverage their talents and abilities to pursue other interests and help others. Much of their time is spent raising children and their time and resources reflect this. As their children mature and begin to leave the nest, many middle aged men experience a relational vacuum. This is a time to refocus and strengthen their marriages and invest in old and new friendships. This is also a season of give-back, stepping into opportunities for leadership, coaching, and mentoring. *“To whom much is given, much will be required.” (Luke 12:48).*

SEASON FIVE BENCHMARKS

- Strengthening the marriage relationship as children become more independent.
- Engagement in various ministries (volunteer, board member).
- Exercising greater leadership — Utilizing talents to lead and invest in others, being generous with time and resources. Moses invested in Joshua, Paul in Timothy. This is a season of transfer.
- Managing well
 - Balancing the demands of home and work.
 - Intervention in the extended family, preparing for the role of patriarch.
 - Peacemaking: arbitration and counseling, helping broken relationships.
 - Planning for post-career.

VIRTUE / CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- Kindness, generosity
- Self-sacrifice
- Control of emotions

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

- Deeper devotional life
- Corporate prayer
- Fasting
- Ministry increase

SEASONAL ASSETS

- Financial stability
- Social capital
- Life experience

BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

- Mid-life crisis
- Cultural pressure to wind down
- Lack of confidence

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Ezra and Nehemiah, productive men able to organize and motivate others:

“Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.” Nehemiah 2:4-5

**EVEN WHEN I AM
OLD AND GRAY,
DO NOT FORSAKE
ME, O GOD,
TILL I DECLARE
YOUR POWER
TO THE NEXT
GENERATION,
YOUR MIGHT TO
ALL WHO ARE TO
COME.”**

**—
PSALM 71:18**

Season Six: Elder

THE SEASON OF INFLUENCE

Ages 55+

In all human societies throughout history, the season of the elder is positioned to have great influence. As a man ages and his direct authority diminishes, his potential for influence increases. Many elders are retired from their careers and financially able to invest in people and ministries. Their two greatest assets are availability and a diminished ego. Willing and seasoned men of God influence and inspire. Elders focus on good generational transfer in their own families and also in the larger Body of Christ.

SEASONAL ASSETS

- Financial comfort
- Flexibility with time and schedule
- Empathy for those who have less
- Strong desire to give back

SEASON SIX BENCHMARKS

Sharing life experience to benefit and inspire others — Success and failure, lessons learned.

Wisdom, putting things in historical perspective — Connecting the generations, helping younger men see the big picture, what is important and what is trivial and fleeting.

The power of presence — An elder's presence in a room brings comfort and security.

Calling Forth the next generation — Elders call forth younger men to take up the mantle of leadership.

The blessing — Passing on to the next generation the blessing of God.

VIRTUE / CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- Humility
- Endurance

FAITH CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- Kingdom of God focus - big picture.
- Deeper walk with Jesus, rich prayer life.

SEASONAL ASSETS:

- Time and availability
- Passion, sense of urgency
- Understanding the times.

BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

- Health issues
- Diminished energy
- Resistance to change

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

John the Elder:

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth.”
3 John 1:4

**THEN I SAW A
NEW HEAVEN
AND A NEW
EARTH, FOR THE
FIRST HEAVEN
AND THE FIRST
EARTH HAD
PASSED AWAY,
AND THERE WAS
NO LONGER ANY
SEA.”**

REVELATION 21:1

Season Seven: Eternal Life

THE SEASON OF REST

Eternity

A redeemed man is born in the natural, born again in the spiritual, and resurrected to new life. In the natural world, new life comes forth from death. *“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” (John 12:24)*

In the spiritual realm, the same thing happens; life proceeds from death. The death of Christ brings us life, *“So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.” (Romans 5:18).*

Life in the season of rest is much different than life on earth. Notably, the effects of sin are gone and the redeemed are in the presence of God with the angelic host. The great wedding feast of Jesus and His bride has come. Pain,

sorrow, and death are no more. *“Then He who sat on the throne said, behold, I make all things new.” (Revelations 21:5a).* For the redeemed of the Lord, the final season of life is the fullness of joy.

CONCLUSION

Each stage or season in a man's life is intentional and wonderful; it is a unique opportunity to grow in our understanding of the ways of God whatever age and stage we find ourselves in. To recognize in advance seasonal maturation puts a man in a good position to anticipate and prepare for his future and the future of those he loves. He has learned how to grow old with purpose.

The great challenge for parents, grandparents, and church leaders in our day is to prepare and equip young followers of Jesus to grasp the scope of life. Good generational transfer starts at birth, not at the onset of adulthood. It is better to build children than repair men and when a child is intentionally trained in the appropriate season, he will be fully equipped to welcome

his future, not fear it. Caring adults will have prepared him and much heartache will be avoided. Adults that are aware of missing development in their own lives need not despair. Wounds and disappointments from the past can be transferred to the One who took them upon Himself, the Lamb of God. Dwelling on past hurt and disappointment is not productive. Repentance and forgiveness are steps of healing that propel us forward. For the Christian, his gaze is always ahead.

**“Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 3:13b-14.**

AUTHOR: RICK WILLIS

Rick Willis was born in England and came to the U.S. as a young boy. He received a BA in Sociology and a teaching license from Cleveland State University. Rick taught in several schools, public and private, and is the founding headmaster of Christian Community School, a private Christian school in Lorain County. Currently Rick serves as the Director of Development at Christian Community School and is also on the advisory council of the Northeast Ohio Christian School Collaborative.

Rick directs Elders At The Gate, a ministry for Christian men, 55 and older, which focuses on mentoring young men and gathering men for prayer. He and his wife Becky have seven children and twelve grandchildren. Rick enjoys writing, gardening, and a good cup of coffee.



“Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.” **Psalm 71:17**



IRON
SHARPENS
IRON