

# Fathers' Studies: Personal Growth

"...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

LESSON 13 OF 52

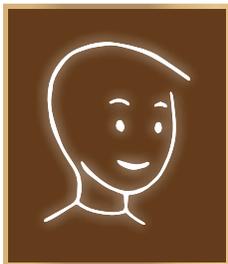
## PRESSURES OF GROWING OLDER

**LESSON AIM:** To understand why many middle-aged men face emotional, spiritual, and moral problems.

### KEY VERSE:

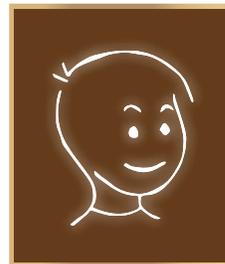
- 1. PSALM 77:5-10** As the man who wrote this psalm grew older, he was sad because he felt that God no longer \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. ECCLESIASTES 7:10** At this age a man realizes that he is no longer young. He thinks back to the "good old days". Is this wise? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. 2 SAMUEL 11:1-5** Do you think it was good for King David to remain in Jerusalem when his soldiers went out to battle? \_\_\_\_\_ Give reasons for your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. 1 KINGS 19:14-16** Elijah felt depressed about his past and future. What new goals did God give Elijah? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. PSALM 40:1-3** David felt more settled after he passed through some of the pressures of mid-life. He felt as if he had been lifted out of the \_\_\_\_\_.

## For You To Do



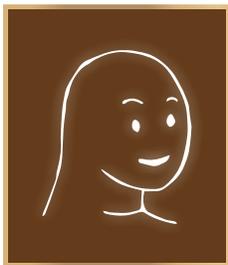
### By Yourself

Ask your doctor to help you plan physical exercises that you can do every day. These will help you feel good about yourself, even in mid-life.



### With Your Children

Go on an all-day outing with them. This will refresh you and help build warm relationships.



### With Your Wife

Drink tea with her tonight while you talk about this lesson. Then when these pressures come to you, she can understand and help you.

# PRESSURES OF GROWING OLDER

LESSON 13 OF 52

The man approaching the middle years of his life may have some difficult times ahead of him. These are the years when many men change careers, have marriage problems, or become angry, depressed, frustrated, or rebellious. What are the reasons for these problems at this stage of life?

## WHY MID-LIFE PRESSURES HAPPEN.

When a man reaches the middle years of his life, it is as if he has reached the top of a mountain. He can look back at where his life has been. As he looks back, he begins to think such questions as, "Is this really what I want to do with my life?" "Do I feel fulfilled?" "Have I accomplished anything worthwhile?" His feelings about the past start to shape his future. At this point many men start trying to make their future more satisfying than their past. They may find a new kind of work to do. His feelings about himself often cause him problems.

## FORCES AT WORK.

In mid-life, several forces come together at the same time in a man's life. He begins to notice that his body is getting older. Death seems more real than when he was young. Also, the people around him are telling him that life loses some of its meaning after age forty. This affects the way he thinks about himself. He begins to see himself as less of a man than he was before. Last of all, the force of time is at work. All the things he was going to do and be "someday" must be done soon, because he is running out of time.

## WHAT ABOUT GOD?

Men in mid-life often blame God for the pressures they feel. They turn away from Him. But God is not to blame. Turning away from Him only makes it harder to feel good about life. During this time a man needs God to keep him secure. He needs hope in God as an anchor to hold his life steady and guide him in decisions for the future. As a man accepts himself for who he is and accepts what he can do, then with God's help he can move through the pressures of growing older and move on to living life at its best.

PSALM 55:4-8, PSALM 62:1-2, PSALM 94:17-19

**I HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT THE DAYS OF OLD, THE YEARS OF LONG AGO.  
(PSALM 77:5)**

## Mid-life pressures are expressed by:

- marriage problems
- depression
- job changes
- rebellion

## Mid-life is a mountain peak:

- looking back
- looking ahead

## Forces at work:

- physical
- social
- psychological
- time pressure

## Don't turn away from God.

## WINDOW TO LIFE

Bill was a successful middle-aged pastor and husband. However, one spring he became very depressed. His depression stayed all summer and fall. Often he sat and stared out the window, looking at nothing. He was ready to give up all his responsibilities. In his mind he imagined himself getting on a boat and sailing off to some unknown place where nobody knew him. God seemed far away and not interested in him.

Bill shared his feelings with his wife and friends he trusted. One night in bed when he felt at his lowest, he lay awake making plans to leave and start another life. It was then that God spoke to him and said, "Why can't you trust Me to take you through this struggle without running away?" Bill decided to stay and dropped off to sleep in peace. As the days went by, God helped Bill as he moved through his mid-life pressures to a happy and productive life.

