

Aging Well

Getting in Touch with Life's Deeper Meaning

© 2013 by Dick Wulf, Director
The Lamb's Bride Project
P.O. Box 8240, Colorado Springs, CO 80933

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As your remaining time on this earth shortens, getting ready for heaven is more critical than ever.

1. **Teach one another about heaven** so you know well where you are going when you die. There is so much in Scripture about heaven, but much of it is not immediately obvious. Read and discuss Randy Alcorn's very helpful and comprehensive study titled *Heaven or N.T. Wright's Surprised by Hope*. (See *Teach One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)
2. **Begin meditating on what the kingdom of heaven** (to which you already belong) is like here on earth — and then how it will be so much better after death. Go through the *Togethers* and see how you can live the ways of the kingdom now. Consider how some of the *Togethers* will not be ways of the kingdom in heaven because sin will no longer exist. Doing those now are opportunities to worship God — opportunities that will disappear when we die. (Read *Seek the Kingdom Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)
3. **Since the fear of criticism reduces as you get older**, consider how you can boldly act like a citizen of the spiritual kingdom that will never end. Dare yourself to demonstrate radical love to Christians and non-Christians in surprising ways. (See *Live as Citizens of Heaven* at ChristiansTogether.org)

4. **Wherever you live, be a part of a group of seniors** who praise God together by talking about how wonderful He is, perhaps with singing and prayer. You are going to do a lot of this in heaven; might as well get started now. (See *Worship God Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

5. **Communicate with God through Bible study, prayer and obedience** (especially in godly attitudes). Make them mainstays of your senior life in ever increasing measure. Don't settle for less. Relationship with God both individually and in a group is most important. (See *Communicate with God Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

6. **Be of help to other Christians** and to those outside of the faith as well. Avoid becoming useless in old age. Don't wait around for others to serve you, as so many seniors do. Make a cup of tea to help someone feel less lonely, or teach a latchkey child what life has taught you. You can and will make a huge difference. If you haven't already, learn how to help the people you love through the art of dialogue. (See *Serve One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

7. **Make it your personal challenge to converse with others** and treat them pleasantly, even when they irritate you. This graceful interaction is the antidote to becoming a cranky old man or crabby old woman. Depend on the Holy Spirit, because it is only natural to get "touchy" as we age. (See *Administer God's Grace to One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

8. **Pray diligently for the spread of the Gospel** around the world. Make this more and more a major activity of your senior years. (The book *Operation World* will give you many specifics to take to God.) (See *Proclaim the Gospel and Be Light to the World Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

9. **With others your age who face similar challenges**, help each other grow more and more like Jesus Christ. In light of your understanding of Scripture, change your thinking and feelings to be like His. Then respond to others and to life in general as Jesus probably would. A key part of that is thanksgiving. An elderly person who is grateful (and therefore joyful) will be a blessing to himself and everyone who knows him. But ingratitude makes old age hellish for all. (See *Pursue Holiness and Perfection Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

10. **Since these are the last miles of the race** and heaven is more and more in sight, examine the faith of your close Christian senior friends and relatives. Prayerfully think about what they say and how they act and guess what areas of faith are strong or weak. Compliment them on their strong areas of faith and help them deal with weaknesses. (See *Examine One Another's Faith* at ChristiansTogether.org)

11. **At this point in life**, when you are not trying so hard to impress people, look deep into yourself and acknowledge sinful thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviors. Confess them to your closest Christian friends and relatives. In this way, you can be healed of sin and get cleaned up a bit more for heaven. Remember that after confession, it is God who will do the healing. Jesus has died for your sins, and the Holy Spirit will help you leave sinfulness behind. (See *Confess Sins to One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

12. **Praying for others should be a growing ministry** as your body is able to do less and less. When just sitting in a chair feels good, remember to keep a list of people and their needs to pray for. This just might be the most powerful ministry of your life, and in your senior years you will become more useful than ever. Don't forget to pray for Christians in other nations too, especially those who are being persecuted. (See *Pray for One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

13. **Since the finish line is getting closer**, gather around your Christian friends and relatives who are a bit older (and some a bit younger) to walk together on the straight, narrow path through the spiritual transformation of death. When you are together, don't avoid discussing the reality that the door to heaven is beginning to open, and you want to be able to walk through it as much like the Savior as possible. Keep each other growing into the likeness of Jesus. (See *Run the Full Race Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

14. **Don't let any of your senior Christian friends or relatives lose hope** at the very time when hope should be exciting. Talk about what heaven will be like just as you would if you were looking forward to a fantastic vacation. Help each other anticipate the glory and majesty of God that you will soon see clearly instead of through the dirty window of this fallen world. (See *Preserve One Another's Hope* at ChristiansTogether.org)

15. **Help one another stand strong on the truth of Scripture**. During the senior years, we can become apprehensive about our approaching death because there is less experiential evidence of life after death than we would like. Doubts can arise. It is important to remember the truths of the Christian faith. (See *Hold to the Truth Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

16. **If you see one of your senior Christian friends** or relatives acting more feeble than their health condition would justify, do what you can to get them back to doing good. Don't let them grow old too soon. Enable them to see that they are still very useful in one way or another. (See *Spur One Another on to Love and Good Deeds* at ChristiansTogether.org)

17. **Show your senior Christian friends** and relatives how you are dealing with advancing age so that they can follow your faith-driven example. Learn from each other what it means to live a mature Christian lifestyle. (See *Disciple One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

18. **Take a stand with your fellow senior Christians** against the deceptive promises of other religions, superstitions and cultural detours. Sometimes older adults become too tolerant of spiritual things outside of the Christian faith in an attempt to cope with increasing illness and disability. Keep each other safe from hollow promises made by the domain of darkness. (See *Contend for the Faith Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

19. **Push yourself to do what you are physically able to do** when a Christian needs your help. Without foolishly endangering your health, try to think “can do” rather than “probably cannot.” (See *Die for One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

20. **Help each other avoid revenge.** Let go of any resentments that have bothered you for years as well as new ones that crop up. Urge one another to remember that the joys of heaven are not far off, and the hurts of this life do not matter as much as they did earlier. (See *Keep One Another from Revenge* at ChristiansTogether.org)

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