

Steeple News

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The Gift of Aging

When we were young, most of us were told by our parents to eat the vegetables before the dessert. Later on, we were told to put "business before pleasure." This is the way that life works. We put the time, effort, and expense into a project and then we feel that we are going to reap the rewards of our efforts. "These are the rules of life", we are told. But sometimes we find out that life doesn't follow its own rules.

Sometimes the best parts of life do come first. When we are young, we usually have a healthier body, perhaps a more beautiful face. We can enjoy the excitement and challenges of youth. When we are young it will seem to us that we have endless years to accomplish our plans and dreams. Nothing seems beyond the realms of our aspirations. Therefore, it seems that we, indeed, are having our dessert first in life.

At some point, the responsibilities of life rest heavily upon us. Our physical strength begins to weaken. Skin becomes wrinkled, eyes begin to dim, and our hearing becomes less acute. Our goals slip further and further beyond our reach. We then start to be reminded of our mortality. It is at this point that we begin to realize that many of the dreams of our youth many never be realized. We realize that we are old. It seems to be true that in life we have the best first, followed by a gradual decline in accomplishment and fulfillment and fall into gradual decay and desolation.

At first glance, this would seem to be the case and it would be if all that life offered were the passing amusements of youth. But fortunately, that is not all that life has to offer. There are many joys and satisfactions that only can be tasted by the senior citizens among us: the fulfillment of a job well done; a career honorably completed; the satisfaction of using our experience to help others along in their lives; and the hand clasp of friends we know are true because they have been tested and deep love that can come only to people who have weathered many summers and winters together.

So, if some morning we peer into the mirror at a new wrinkle or say goodbye to an old hairline, we may nurse a moment of nostalgia. But this can be replaced by a deep soul satisfaction that we are learning lessons and building character that can only come after many years of living. These are the deepest and richest joys this world has to offer. If we achieve wisdom and understanding from our years here on earth, our years will have been well spent, profitable, satisfying, and sweet to us.

Rev. Hans Lillejord