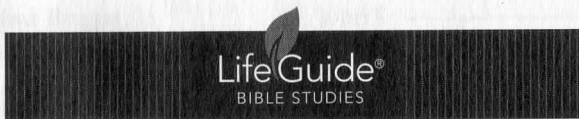


NEW TESTAMENT CHARACTERS

10 STUDIES FOR INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS



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Anna & Simeon

Growing Old with God

Luke 2:21-40

My friend, a photographer, displays a favorite photograph in his studio. It is not a cute child or a beautiful young woman. Instead he captured beauty in a place few people think to look. His photo shows an ancient woman, wrinkled, toothless—in a full, belly-shaking laugh.

Proverbs 31, in its litany of womanly virtues, startles us by sticking into verse 25 “She can laugh at the days to come.” Most people shrink from old age. But some welcome it with confidence and joy.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What do you want to be like when you are old?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What qualities have you admired in people who are old? What qualities do you hope to avoid as you become aged yourself?

When Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple at the age of forty days, they encountered two aged people: Simeon and Anna. Both had lived long and well with God. *Read Luke 2:21-40.*

1. If you had been a bystander observing these events, what would have impressed you? Why?

2. Why did Jesus and his family go to Jerusalem (vv. 23-24)?

3. In what ways was Simeon already prepared to meet Jesus (vv. 25-27)?

4. What did Simeon know about the past and the future (vv. 29-35)?

5. Why did Simeon feel that he was ready for God to dismiss him from this life (vv. 26, 29)?

6. What would you like to see happen so that you could say at the end of your life, "Lord, now dismiss your servant in peace"?

7. Focus on verses 36-40. Why might you say that Anna's life was difficult but fulfilling?

8. How did God use Anna?

9. How did the next stage of Christ's life prepare him to do and be what Anna and Simeon had predicted (vv. 39-40)?

10. What do you admire about the aged characters in this story?

11. What could you do now to prepare for an old age that is at peace with God?

Pray, thanking God for an older person who has been an example to you of aging gracefully with God.

Now or Later

Visit a nursing home. (If you have a friend or family member there, all the better.) Your visit could have two goals. First, as you walk through the hallways and common rooms, silently pray for one person after another. If it seems appropriate, stop and speak to several, touching a hand or an arm with encouragement.

Second, consciously look for small examples that you would like to emulate as you grow old: perhaps a tastefully decorated room with reminders of family, a smile, a word of thanks, patience with disability, a statement of trust in God, a gesture of kindness, a sparkle of humor. Begin now to cultivate the person you want to become as you grow old with God.