

Seminar

The Mature Years



Helen Thorne-Allenson

Discussion

What are your hopes and dreams for your later life?

What hopes and dreams are you aware of from others in your church family?

Hope and dreams

- Free time
- Loss
- Pain
- Death
- Time with family
- No more office stress
- Dementia
- More investment in church family
- Time to study
- Illness
- Unstructured time
- Struggling to make ends meet
- Isolation

Discussion

In what ways does culture mold your view of later life?

Old v Young

- Culture of youth
- Energy and creativity trumps wisdom
- Though in some spheres of life (politics / media) there is no limit to service
- Identity in productivity v identity in emotion

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Discussion

What big questions of identity arise as we consider later life?

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Big questions

- What is my value when I can't contribute to work?
- What is my value if I can't bear or bring up children?
- What is my value if I have failing health? Etc

Seminar structure

- Proactive preparation
- Reactive pastoral care

See the call

Moses was in his 80s when he saw the burning bush

Caleb was in his 80s when he entered the promised land

Daniel still active in service in his 80s

Anna was still in the temple in her 80s waiting for the Lord

The Bible sees later life as a time of service – fruitful for God

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See the honour

You shall rise before the grey-headed and honour the presence of an old man and fear your God; I am the LORD.”
(Leviticus 19:32)

“The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, It is found in the way of righteousness.” (Proverbs 16:31)

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See the heart preparation needed

- Prayer (Philippians 4:6)
- Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Battle (Ephesians 6:10-11)

See the opportunities for service

- Still a role-model (Titus 2)
- Still called to speak (Ephesians 4:15)
- Still called to use gifts
- Still called to pray
- Still called to spur one another on (Hebrews 10:24)
- Still have the Great Commission
- Still in the image of God

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See what the church can do

- Retirement preparation
- Marriage in later life preparation
- Menopause evenings
- Mentoring partnerships (general – or specific e.g. menopause)
- Later Life Bible Study Groups
- Training for "grey evangelism"
- Seniors' ministry
- Think biblically about end of life care

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DISCUSSION

What does Seniors' Ministry look like in your church?

Walking alongside the struggling

Attend to **transitions** with

- Compassion
- Listening – exploring expectations
- Prayer
- Problem-solving
- Mediation

BCUK resource: Retirement and Identity / suite of Menopause resources

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Walking alongside the struggling

Attend to **losses** with

- Comfort
- Listening – exploring the impact and interplay of various losses
- Practical Support
- Reflection on the Lord's presence
- Lament
- Community

BCUK resources: Grief Gathering and other loss resources

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Walking alongside the struggling

Attend to **chronic illness** with

- Compassion
- Listening
- Involvement in church even if not able to be present
- Access to simple nourishment (spiritual and physical)
- Willingness to talk about loss of intimacy – loss of hope etc
- Prayer
- Discussion about end of life

BCUK resource: micro-devotions (more to come)

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Walking alongside the struggling

Attend to questions of **value and purpose** with

- Compassion
- Listening
- Reflection on Ephesians 1 – being in Christ
- Identifying gifts and opportunities
- Taking thoughts captive

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Later life, hope and Psalm 92

Read Psalm 92

- What does this Psalm say about later life?
- How does that chime or conflict with your views?
- How do you think your views developed?
- What beliefs is God calling you to turn away from?
- What does fruitfulness and flourishing look like?
- How do we pursue such flourishing?
- How shall we respond to the Lord in light of his word?
- What practical steps shall we take?

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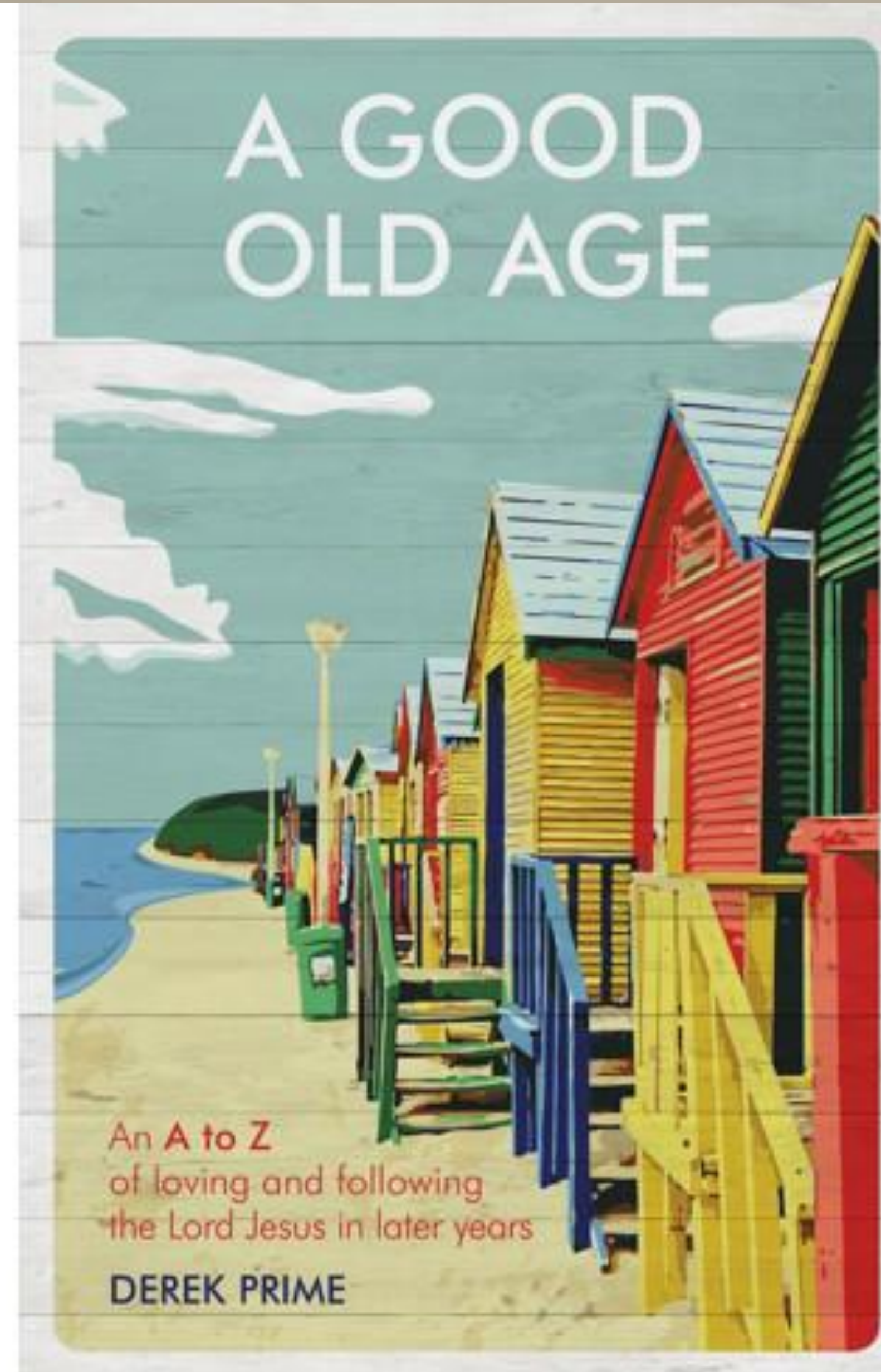
From the author of
Zeal without Burnout *and* Married for God

Not Old, *not young,* Not Done.

→ Following Jesus
in Your 50s & 60s

Christopher Ash

Bcuk.org/resources



Any questions?



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