



REFLECTIONS

January 4, 2015

**The glory of young men is their strength,
gray hair the splendor of the old.**

Proverbs 20:29

The Gift of Years

Time waits for no man. It just keeps marching on and I find myself ten years older than when the first edition of *Reflections* was published. The inspiration for its inception is a mystery to me even today, but perhaps ten years ago I had reached an age that persuaded me to ponder some of life's challenges, blessings and mysteries.

At least sometime through the years one must think about the mysteries of life. There are so many to pose. "How was it really formed?" we ask. The biology lessons can't really explain the soul and spirit formed at the inception of human life. And how can one ever explain why someone's life is taken so early when often so many less deserving in our eyes live so very long. And does life end with retirement?

The Gift of Years is a blessing from God and the book by the same name is a gift to you and me from Joan Chittister. With uncommon insights she identifies the wonderful benefits of life in the older years. "Life grows us," she writes. "Life shapes us. Life converts us. Life opens us as we age to think differently".

Wisdom is uncommon in the young. They haven't lived long enough to experience the fullness of life that is so deeply rooted in it. But years allow wisdom to bloom—to nurture the young, to comfort them when life's blows come along, and to serve up warnings of dangers that lie ahead. The years allow time to come alongside them and guide them with the benefit of experience.

But the gift of years is not only about imparting wisdom. Amidst the pains and diminishing physical abilities of aging, there is time to set aside the pursuit of tomorrow and just live today. With the years a kind of healing comes along—time to forgive and be forgiven; time to share and to receive; time to love and to be loved. And there is time to set aside regrets in favor of thanksgiving; time to praise God and to prepare to join his presence one day. After all God is the giver of life.

The Gift of Years—it's a blessing from God. It's also a book worth the read.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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