

*Don't Grow Old --  
Grow Up!*

*by*

*Emalyn Spencer*

## "DON'T GROW OLD - GROW UP!"

### Information for the Facilitator:

"DON'T GROW OLD - GROW UP!" is one message which has been divided into two 30 minute sessions.

You may want to make copies of the outline and give to the women so they can make notes as they listen. You may also want to make copies of the "Prayer of an Aging Woman."

The following information may be used in your publicity or as an introduction to the video.

*"You are at eighty what you were at forty - only more so," someone has said.*

*In that case, let's set some goals for the kind of person we want to be at eighty, and start working on them now - however old or young we may be.*

*It is a natural tendency for people to become self-preoccupied, complaining, intolerant, uninterested and uninteresting as they age. God's Word says: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar...They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." (Psalm 92:12-14)*

*Let's keep growing up by developing new interests, new friendships, learning, contributing, caring for our bodies and sharpening our minds as the years inevitability pile up.*

*Let's expect and appreciate the blessings God has for us, and find joy in His purposes for us in each day of the remaining years of our lives.*

The lines above were written by Emalyn Spencer as an introduction to her video on aging. Emalyn is an elect lady who has been used of God to bless the hearts of many women in the PCA. She became involved early in the development of the Women In the Church as the first president of the women in Evangel Presbytery. Emalyn later served as a member of the Women's Advisory Sub-Committee and wrote four Bible study books which were published by the PCA Christian Education and Publications Committee. Emalyn and her husband John Spencer, a PCA elder, live in Birmingham, Alabama, where they are active in the Briarwood Presbyterian Church.

"This very practical video will further endear Emalyn to the hearts of PCA women. She points out warning signals of habits that creep up on us and make us unpleasant to be around as we age, but she also suggests a number of positive steps that we can take to enrich our lives and the lives of those around us. This is a video that I believe every women's group should show every three or four years. I was with Emalyn as the video was being filmed and found it convicting and helpful; a few weeks later I watched it in the privacy of my home and was thankful to be reminded of the goals I had set for myself the first time I heard it. I highly recommend it to you!"

*Georgia Settle, Project Manager*



### **Suggested Preparation For Each Session:**

1. Be sure to view the video in advance and go over the discussion questions.
2. The outline may be copied and used as a handout.
3. Adapt the discussion questions to your particular group, situation, and time-frame.
4. Have extra pencils.
5. Pray for the women who will attend.
6. Pair the women as prayer partners or into small prayer groups. Encourage them to share with one another about joys, struggles, and fears of aging.
7. If you expect unsaved women to attend, be sure to have a clear gospel presentation. Have women available to talk with individuals about their relationship with Christ.

### **Suggestions For Presentation:**

1. Introduce the video by telling the women about Emalyn Spencer. Open with prayer.
2. Give the women a copy of the outline.
3. Show the video.
4. Use the discussion questions. Also ask if there are any comments the women would like to share.
5. Divide into prayer groups for reflection, sharing and prayer.

## **Don't Grow Old -- Grow Up Discussion Questions**

### ***Part I***

1. Describe a person you have known who is a good model of growing up, not old.
2. Answer truthfully. Is outer beauty more important to you than inner beauty? An honest answer may be a problem for some. What should we do? Look at I Peter 3:3-4.
3. In addition to the ideas mentioned, what are some ways we can resist the normal tendencies of aging?
4. What is your greatest apprehension about growing old? What can you do about it?

### ***Part II***

1. How can growing old, with all its down side, be a great adventure?
2. What is the most effective way you could improve your attitude toward growing old?
3. Do you think that it is unrealistic to believe that growing old can be a positive experience? Why?
4. What application(s) do you plan to make from this message on growing up, not old? How will it make a difference in your life? In the lives of those around you?

*Prayer of an Aging Woman*  
*Anonymous*

*Usually attributed to a seventeenth-century nun, this prayer is in fact of unknown origin--but its sentiments are only too familiar!*

Lord, you know better than I know myself that I am growing older, and will some day be old. Keep me from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

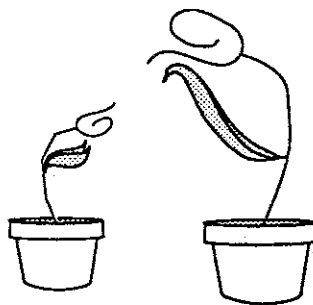
Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom it seems a pity not to use it all, but you know, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end. Keep my mind from the recital of endless details--give me wings to come to the point.

I ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of others' pains. But seal my lips on my own aches and pains--they are increasing, and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. Help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible that I may be mistaken.

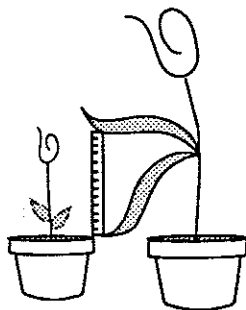
Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a saint--some of them are so hard to live with--but a sour old woman is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.



## Don't Grow Old--Grow Up Outline: Part I

- A. Introduction
  - 1. Greetings
  - 2. Explanatory remarks and background
  - 3. Defining the message and its purpose
- B. A new look at old age
  - 1. The normal pattern
    - a. Bad news--undesirable traits develop
    - b. Good news--they are controllable
  - 2. Positive examples
  - 3. God's purpose for the aging. Psalm 92:12-14
  - 4. Goals and plans
- C. Four mental approaches
  - 1. Acceptance
    - a. An inevitable process
    - b. The mark of maturity
    - c. Importance of right attitude
  - 2. Understand, plan, and prepare for the process
    - a. Recognize natural tendencies
    - b. Consequences of these mindsets
    - c. Formula for resisting, based on Luke 2:52
      - 1) Intellectual growth and development
      - 2) Physical well-being and attractiveness
        - a) Health
        - b) Beauty, inner and outer
      - 3) Spiritual health and growth
      - 4) Social growth
        - a) Hindrance of self-centeredness
        - b) Help of focus on others
        - c) Open to new experiences
        - d) Awareness of being/not being a bore



## Don't Grow Old -- Grow Up Outline: Part II

### A. Review Part I

(Four mental approaches, continued)

3. Attitude of anticipation
  - a. Illustrations
  - b. Application of Psalm 118:24
4. A thankful and cheerful spirit
  - a. Antidote for a critical and complaining spirit
  - b. Application of Psalm 103:15
  - c. Physical health enhanced. Select Proverbs

### B. Health and growth of inner being, our real selves

### C. Putting into practice the principles of growing up

1. Plan specific action
2. Give of ourselves
3. Improve our attitude

### D. Patience with others who are on the journey

### E. Never too late

### F. Facing reality

1. Not a pleasant picture
2. Down is up
3. A guide for facing each day

### G. God's unfailing promises. Isaiah 41:10,13

### H. God's special message to the aging. Psalm 71

