

“The Great Mistake”

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There is a theme that flows through Scriptures of honoring and valuing our elders.

The word “elder” or “elders” is used about 200 times in the Old and New Testaments. The base word in English is “presbyter” or “presbyteros” meaning an older or senior person. Often this word is used in describing a civil or religious leadership group—“the elders.”

Key Scripture verses dealing with “elders”

Old Testament:

Genesis 50:7 - Elders are mentioned as important.
Exodus 4:29 - Elders are respected as leaders.
Exodus 20:12 - Honor your father and mother.
Leviticus 4:15 - Elders play critical role in leadership.
Leviticus 19:32 - Connection between God and respecting elderly.
Numbers 11:16 - Elders appointed (not youth) to aid Moses.
Deuteronomy 21:18-21 - Stoning a rebellious son.
Deuteronomy 32:7 - Seeking wise counsel from the older generations.
1 Chronicles 11:3 - David made King in the presence of elders.
Psalm 107:32 - Elders hold a place of honor.
Isaiah 3:5 - Wickedness connected with disrespecting elders.
Joshua 24:31 - Older people know the history of God’s working.
1 Samuel 2:31 - A curse not to have old people in your family.
1 Samuel 15:30 - respect among elders is important.

New Testament:

Four Gospels - Elders are Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus.
Matthew 15:4 - Honor “revere” your father and mother.
Luke 18:20 - Honor your father and mother.
Acts 14:23 - Elders appointed in new churches.
Acts 15:22 - Elders chosen for ministry oversight.
Ephesians 5:21 - Mutual submission applies to everyone.
1 Thessalonians 5:12 - Respect those (older) who are over you.
1 Timothy 5:1 - Do not rebuke an older man.
1 Timothy 5:17 - Elders to be respected and honored.
Titus 2:2 - The standard for older men and women.
1 Peter 5:1 - A good Elder looks like this.
1 Peter 5:5 - be subject to Elders in humility.

Everyone should build relationships with older Christians for three reasons:

1. They are smarter than you think they are.

Suggestion for younger people: Be humble enough to recognize wisdom when you see it.

Suggestion for older people: Share your life and wisdom with younger people (successes and failures).

2. They will bless you more than you can imagine.

Suggestion for younger people: Ask sincere questions and be a good listener.

Suggestion for older people: Be an encourager, not a complainer.

3. They need you more than they will admit.

Suggestion for younger people: Look for tangible ways to love and serve older people.

Suggestion for older people: Share your needs with a gracious spirit.

Assignment:

Who do you need to invest more time with?

How will that look?