

Continual Hope in the Lord

***Key Verse: “I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.”
—Psalm 71:14***

***Selected Scripture:
Psalm 71:12-21***

WE DO NOT KNOW WITH certainty who wrote Psalm 71. However, most Bible scholars believe it to be David based on the language throughout the psalm which mirrors his life. He had been taught from his youth. (vs. 17) He knew Jehovah as his refuge and his righteous savior.

(vss. 7,2) He talks of God’s mighty deeds, his strength and power, and the great things he has done (vss. 16,18,19) He realized that it was Jehovah who delivered and restored him in trouble, and reflecting on his life, he exclaims “O God, who is like unto thee!”—vss. 20,19

Throughout David’s life his trust and reliance on the Lord never wavered. Even when he made wrong choices which brought disastrous consequences, he accepted whatever chastening Jehovah gave for reproof and correction. By virtue of these experiences God referred to David as “a man after mine own heart.”—Acts 13:22; I Sam. 13:14

Now in his old age, David reflects on his life with the words of our Key Verse. The Bible is overflowing with examples of faithful individuals who refused to rest from their work upon reaching what many would call “retirement” age. As such, this psalm contains valuable lessons for all of us as we mature in our Christian walk. We focus

here on three characteristics of David which should inspire us to use our older years to serve God even more intensely.

First, let us continue to develop a deeper knowledge of God as we mature. This psalm is permeated with a personal and practical knowledge of our Heavenly Father. David's knowledge of Jehovah did not diminish as he aged. So should it be with us. Paul said, "For yourself, concentrate on winning God's approval, on being a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, and who knows how to use the word of truth to the best advantage." (II Tim. 2:15, *J.B. Phillips New Testament*) The Prophet Jeremiah assures us our hope extends throughout our life when he says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."—Jer. 29:11, *New International Version*

Second, let us persist in acquiring godly habits of trust, praise, and hope. Habits are established over time through much repetition. Once in place, they become almost instinctive. The habits we develop in our younger years tend to take deeper root as we grow older. Have we become habitually negative or positive in response to life's experiences? The word "continually" is found in verses 3 and 6 of Psalm 71 as well as in our Key Verse. It describes the proper habits of thought David had developed along the lines of trust, praise, and hope. Such habits we do not necessarily pick up naturally. We must deliberately cultivate them over a lifetime of experiences.

Third, we must daily work to develop a lifestyle of ministry for God. David was old when he wrote this psalm. After a life of service to Jehovah he could have concluded that he deserved some rest, but he dismissed such thoughts completely. As long as he had breath, he wanted to keep telling people about God's greatness and glory. Aging does not prohibit us from witnessing the Truth to others. In some ways it may provide more opportunities. Let us continually proclaim our hope in God by declaring his promises for us and the world of mankind. ■