

# STRENGTHENING YOUR GRIP

## HOW TO BE GROUNDED IN A CHAOTIC WORLD

### STUDY EIGHT

## Strengthening Your Grip on Aging

*Joshua 14:6–14; Psalm 90*

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*Since every day is a gift from God, I live each one enthusiastically for Him. Not for my circumstances, because they may become grim. Not for myself, because that inevitably caves in on me. And not just for others, but for Him, that I may present to Him a heart of wisdom.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**M**IRRORS speak!

We gaze into our bathroom mirror and see the imprints of years gone by. Aging creeps in uninvited and persists despite our strong opposition. So, we strive to embrace the wrinkles and fine lines that accompany our gracious smiles. We long to dance to the piper of youth, but our stiff joints and brittle bones won't let us. The message in the mirror flashes: *You aren't who you used to be!*

Another mirror—the mirror of Scripture—invites us to see ourselves as our Creator sees us. It calls us to contemplate the eternal purpose of every breath. It guides our steps into new days and unknown tomorrows and reveals the unfading beauty of His marvelous plan.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll hear Moses and Caleb in their eighties teaching us how to live a life of radical obedience to God in our older years. Their faces beamed with *enthusiasm for God* and *expectation for the future*—two essential attitudes for strengthening our grip on aging.



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## PREPARE YOUR HEART

James advised, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you” (James 1:5 NIV). In prayer, ask His Spirit to fill you with His wisdom so that you may hear God’s truths and obey them wholeheartedly.



## TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Moses and Caleb were born in Egypt to Hebrew parents who lived under Pharaoh’s iron yoke of slavery. Both witnessed the parting of the Red Sea (*Exodus 14:19–31*), manna from heaven (*16:1–36*), and Aaron’s staff budding, blossoming, and yielding ripe almonds (*Numbers 17:5–8*). Israel’s exodus and the wilderness journey taught these two men that lives yielded to God can bring forth fruit even in old age.

Moses wrote *Psalm 90* when he was beyond 80 years of age. Caleb took on a new conquest at the age of 85 in *Joshua 14*. Let’s turn to these passages for more insights.



## Observation: Aging in God’s Mirror

Our first step is *observation*, the process of reading carefully Scripture to find out what it says.<sup>1</sup>

### A Psalm of Moses

Read *Psalm 90* attentively to overview the passage. How did Moses describe God’s agelessness in *90:1–2*?

Write down Moses’ depictions of human life in *90:3–9*.

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Against this bleak backdrop, Moses' positive, God-focused prayer in *Psalm 90:12–14* shined with hope. What did Moses request? How do you think this focus gave Moses a passion for life?

*God says in this passage, “I want to shed some light on your life that you may not hear from any other source. You live each day unto Me, you adopt an attitude that honors Me, and I will give you in return some enthusiasm like you can’t believe.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

## Caleb's Enthusiastic Living

Caleb picked up on Moses' enthusiasm and yearning for wisdom. Read Caleb's recounting of his life in *Joshua 14:6–14* in various translations. Describe Caleb's positive attitude in each life stage.

Early years (*14:6–9*): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Middle years (*14:10–11*): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Later years (*14:12–14*): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Caleb simply walked with God. He gave God the burdens and the guilt and the horrors of his life, and he let God bear them for him. That kept Caleb young.*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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## Interpretation: God’s Mirror Reflects Wisdom

The mirror of culture tells many older people that their best years are behind them. They don’t fit in today’s changing world. If we take these messages to heart, we risk stumbling into four pitfalls of aging:

1. *Uselessness*: “I’m over the hill . . . I don’t have much to contribute anymore.”
2. *Guilt*: “I’ve blown it . . . I wish I could have lived life differently.”
3. *Self-pity*: “Nobody cares anymore . . . I’m all alone.”
4. *Fear*: “The world’s moving too fast . . . I can’t succeed.”

Moses responded to growing old differently in [Psalm 90:12, 14](#). He asked for a heart of wisdom and longed to be satisfied with God’s “unfailing love.” Explore the term, *wisdom*, in your own Bible-study resources or look up the word online in [Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary](#) at [biblestudytools.com](#). Scroll down to the section titled “The Old Testament.” Read it carefully. Write down the meaning of wisdom and its significance.

Reread Caleb’s biography in [Joshua 14:6–14](#). How did Caleb demonstrate wisdom in each life stage?

*One of the ways you get old faster is chafing under the sovereign choices of God. The Lord will not ask your permission regarding whom He places over whom. Let me tell you what you can learn during those years of serving the Lord under that new authority. You can learn wisdom. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

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We observed Caleb's enthusiasm in *Joshua 14:10–12*. Look up the word *enthusiasm* in the *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* and note its meaning below.

Cultivating wisdom in our hearts means grasping how God sees us and embracing where He has placed us to fulfill His purpose. Enthusiasm floods our spirit when He satisfies our deepest longings and when we realize that the infinite God has chosen to touch His world through our hands.



## **Correlation: Two Mirrors**

Men and women of God have always faced the choice between viewing life from the horizontal plane or from God's perspective. On the border of Canaan, Moses sent twelve spies to look over the land. Read *Numbers 13:1–24* for the account. What were the reports of the majority according to *13:25–29*? Summarize their complaints in a single phrase.

What was Caleb's report in *13:30*?

Read *13:31–33* and *14:1–5* carefully and write down how the ten spies saw themselves as they looked into the Canaanites' mirror. Also note the impact of their vision on the community.

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As you read *Numbers 14:6–9*, how would you describe Caleb? How did seeing God's reflection of himself and the circumstances impact his actions?

*You may not live years and years longer with the right attitude, but I'll tell you, you'll live years and years better. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

Compare Caleb's attitude to the psalmist's in *Psalm 92* dancing to a song of gratitude for God, who makes the righteous flourish in old age. Now think of older people such as Elizabeth and Zechariah (*Luke 1:6–25*), Anna and Simeon (*2:25–38*), and Timothy's grandmother, Lois (*2 Timothy 1:5*) whom God used to do great things. Which story challenges you the most? Why?

*You're growing older? Welcome to the club! You can curl up, fold up, and dry up . . . or you can follow Caleb's example and take a new mountain.  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



## **Application: Keep on Looking into God's Mirror!**

If your mirror reflects the human perspective, you'll only see aging as life slipping away. To strengthen your grip on aging, look in God's true mirror—Scripture—and see life from His point of view.

What did you see in God's Word that can help you avoid attitudes of uselessness, guilt, self-pity, and fear?

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Moses' and Caleb's examples in Scripture reflect a couple of God-oriented guidelines:

1. *View life as a challenge, not a threat.* Yes, the world is changing. But that's the challenge! Ask the Lord for help, adopt a "can-do" attitude, and embrace the challenge.
2. *Follow the Lord fully, not halfheartedly.* Fountains of youth don't exist. Christ, the Living Water, is who you need to live with purpose and satisfaction.

What would today be like if you followed these guidelines? How might you put them into practice?

What encouragement has the Holy Spirit revealed that you can share with an older person in your life?

What are some practical ways you can live each day as a gift from God, regardless of your age?

Pastor Chuck Swindoll closes our study with a word of encouragement:

*I want to tell you that if you're reaching the beautiful sunset years . . . your life models for those of us still in the rat race of life a lifestyle and a wisdom that we need. If nobody has told you lately, hear me today. We need you. God could do whatever He pleases with your life. And He sovereignly chooses to give you breath in your lungs and a heartbeat in your chest. He sovereignly graces this place with your presence. It comes from Him as a gift to us.*

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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## A FINAL PRAYER

Moses responded to the agelessness of God and the frailties and finiteness of our lives with a prayer for a heart of wisdom to make each day count for eternity. Echo his request in your own words below as you respond to what you saw in God's mirror about aging that relates to your life.

### ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1981, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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