



WOW: Word Of the Week

Aging

August 21, 2024

An interesting phrase recently caught my attention: “growing up on the inside.” Most of the talk about aging is concerned with our physical beings. Wrinkle creams, aches and pain relief, restoring youth, supplements, medications. All in the name of remaining young—our society and culture does not want to grow old. Multiple ads target people who want to avoid aging. Our society and culture does not want to grow up. Need proof? Childishness is on prominent display almost daily.

Think with me about the phrase. “Growing up on the inside” is not to be avoided. “Inside” aging to be sought after, to be cultivated, nurtured. Growing up on the inside is the process of “spiritual aging” – the Bible word is often translated maturity. The root meaning is complete, finished, ripe.

Incredible. Who would have thought it? Aging is to be desired! Last week, Jan and I celebrated our emerald anniversary, #55. (Or 110, if you know our counting technique.) Aging is to be desired. Cheese is aged. Wines are aged. A favorite hot sauce is from Honduras, the brand is D’Olancho. The label says it is undergoes a fermentation and aging process that gives it flavor and aroma. And bite! Picante!

What will help us grow up on the inside? How does healthy spiritual aging happen? What are the results? Based on Ephesians 4:11-16, I mention four ideas. Here is aging on the inside—to be desired, to be sought! Growing up on the insides means....

- Learning to serve, minister, doing the work of ministry, getting self out of the way
- Building others up spiritually, edification, putting others first, mentoring and encouraging others
- Learning to agree about faith, unity of the faith, faith defined, lived out, practical, not theoretical
- Knowing Jesus, knowledge of the Son of God. This phrase, “Knowing Jesus,” has been a major focus in my studies for the past two years, leading up to the recently released Knowing Jesus video study series.

The result? Well-aged, mature Christians! Not perfect but mature. A measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Next time you see or hear an anti-aging advertisement, remember our word: aging. Remember our phrase. Growing up on the inside. May God help us grow up into the image of Jesus—more and more.