

the Wisdom Years

Prayers & practice for finding joy
in life's second half

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INTRODUCTION

Amazing things happen in the second half of life. We embark on a journey toward wisdom using all of the lessons we learned from the past, all of the joys and challenges of the present, and all of our hopes and dreams for the future.

During the second half of life, we experience a new kind of freedom. Insecurities diminish. We know who we are and our strengths and weaknesses. We envision new things that

we want to experience. We recognize the need to make the most out of each passing day.

But the second half of life is not without difficulties. We may encounter physical limitations. We may lose friends and loved ones. We may face situations that demand courage, understanding, insight, and the need to let go of the things that are out of our control.

At the same time, we recognize that difficulties are nothing new for us. We have faced and overcome difficulties in the first half of our lives. We learned lessons, developed survival skills, and deepened our faith. With all of our rich experiences, the second half of life unfolds before us as a new adventure.

This little book of meditations offers ideas, prayers, and practical things you can do as you journey through the

second half of life. Let us begin this journey filled with the belief that we will experience God in new ways, and we will start to see the world and other people from a new perspective.

May the Holy Spirit inspire us, lead us, and protect us on this profound journey to finding new meaning, greater joy, and deeper fulfillment.



The Story of Our Lives

PONDER

Each person's life tells a unique story, starting at birth and unfolding throughout the years. Our story contains loving relationships, personal growth, successes, failures, adventures, and a lot of ordinary day-to-day moments that become more precious with the passing of time. Our faith assures us that the Lord remains with us as each chapter unfolds to guide us, encourage us, comfort us, and love us unconditionally.

PRAY

Lord, help me to understand and appreciate the story of my life. Allow me to see that throughout my life, through all the good times and all the bad times, you have remained with me and loved me with an everlasting love. Amen.

PRACTICE

Reflect on what it means to be loved unconditionally. Make a list of the times in your life when you felt God's comforting, healing, and merciful love.



Looking Back

PONDER

Looking back allows us to recognize profound lessons in life. We see the times we fell down and how we stood up again. We see people we helped and people who helped us. We see moments of great hope, times of powerful healing, and situations where the only explanation for what happened was a miracle of God's grace. It is important to remember that we can look back, but we cannot *go* back. We can cher-

ish memories, but if we keep wishing we were back in the past, our lives stall, and we cannot move forward.

PRAY

Lord, allow me to recognize the deepest lessons in my life. Help me to see that everything in my past—the good and the bad—is a piece of a puzzle that makes me the person that I am today. Amen.

PRACTICE

Think back on the most important lessons you have learned on your journey through life. Share your life lessons with friends or family members. Ask them to share their life lessons with you.



The Second Half of Life

PONDER

Some people dread growing older. Others insist that with age comes wisdom, a deep appreciation of life, and a new kind of freedom. When we embrace the second half of life, we can scoff at stereotypes depicting older people as forgetful, feeble, and bad-tempered. We can cling to the adage that aging is simply mind over matter: if we don't mind, it doesn't matter!

PRAY

Lord, help me to embrace aging and to grow older gracefully. Give me a deep appreciation for every moment of every day. Give me the courage to live my life to the fullest. Instill in me the gift of wisdom. Amen.

PRACTICE

Decide to do something that you have always wanted to do. It might be something easy to accomplish. Or it might be something challenging. Explore with family members or friends the ways you might proceed.