



Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

1 Corinthians 6:19

Stewardship of Health

GROWING OLDER

Parents were deeply revered in Jesus' faith and culture. Proverbs tells us it is children's duty to gladden their parents' hearts, and that parents deserve to rejoice in their children.

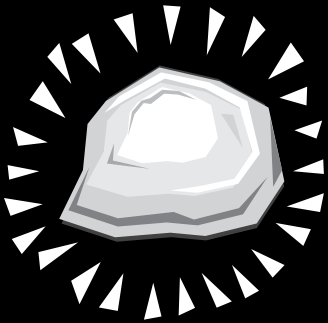
Likewise, neglect for parents was abhorred. Warning of the fall of Jerusalem, Isaiah describes the holiest of cities as a mother whose children have forgotten her.

Jesus taught his followers to greet God as "Father" when they prayed, rather than approach Him as king, hero or master. In Matthew, he explains why: "...your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."

The words of the "Our Father" express the nature of love, grace and our relationship with God in the most essential and familiar of terms.

On the cross, Jesus commanded those dearest to him to call each other mother and son. We all know these roles, and could not love God or each other in a more natural way.

We may not like to face our aging parents' declining health and ability. But good Stewards will expect and understand these changes, to make the best use of God's gifts.



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Americans over 60 express the most concern about the following health disorders:

- **Alzheimer's disease** and dementia
- Breast and prostate **cancer**
- **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease** (COPD, an illness that makes it hard to breathe, usually caused by smoking)
- **Depression**
- Type 2 **diabetes**
- **High blood pressure**
- **High cholesterol**
- **Obesity**
- **Osteoporosis**
- **Rheumatoid arthritis.**

Signs of chronic health problems may appear too gradually for others to notice. Parents themselves may not realize what is happening, or may not wish to be a burden. Adult children should look for the following signs of possible illness and intervene if necessary to help their parents: Don't wait to be asked!

- **Weight loss.** Overweight is a common health risk, but unintended or unexplained weight loss can be the first sign of a serious problem like **cancer, dementia, depression or heart failure.** If the doctor rules out a serious illness, the parent may be **malnourished.** Help with menu planning, shopping and cooking can keep parents at their "fighting weight."
- **Home Safety.** Independently living older people may be unaware of or unable to deal with **home maintenance issues** like burned out light bulbs, thermostat set too high or low, soiled clothing or dishes, clutter underfoot, overgrown

yards or outside steps and walkways in disrepair. Parents may need **railings or ramps** to navigate or avoid falls, or may need **help reading or understanding** prescription bottles and medical instructions.

- **Hygiene.** Parents may need help keeping their clothes clean and minding their personal and oral hygiene, cleanliness and grooming. A doctor may be needed to confirm or rule out an illness, such as **dementia or depression,** as a cause.

- **Changes in mood.** Sadness, detachment, pessimism or **drastic changes in a person's spirits without an obvious cause** can be a sign of **depression or dementia.** Children should ask regularly about their parents' leisure interests and urge them to maintain an active social life.

- **Impaired mobility.** Chronic illness may limit parents' ability to walk, climb, drive or even stand. Impaired mobility may make it hard for them to care for themselves and get adequate medical attention. These difficulties come on gradually, so children should be sure not to overlook them.

Children who see signs of possible illness need to **talk to their parents** about them. A loved one's concern can move parents to see a doctor and help them live as well as possible.

"Aging is a natural process. However, as we age, we may face multiple health problems," says David Sengstock, MD, MS, director of Oakwood's Geriatric Medicine Clinic. "These unique needs are best treated by a team of providers dedicated to helping older adults maintain a healthy lifestyle and age gracefully."

And he said to them,

"When you pray, say,
FATHER, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME.
 Your kingdom come.
 Give us each day our daily bread."*"*

Luke 11:2-3