



As a companion to the book, *Half Two*, this devotional can be used for personal reading/reflection and as a springboard to group interaction. For more in-depth understanding, you are invited to read the full book, [available on Amazon](#).

A two-week vision trip into the Land of Life Over Fifty.

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Day 1. TAKEOFF

HALF TWO: MAKE IT WHOLE!

From this second half journey's start, let's admit that minimizing interaction with younger people doesn't make a lot of sense. What an injustice when quality faith stalwarts, who have walked with the Lord for decades, miss out on meaningful relationships with those who are younger. What a disappointing waste of experience, maturity, wisdom, time, and other resources.

Self-sufficient generational pride short-circuits our capacity for mercy. It's a loss in both directions, up and down the age spectrum. Both younger and older generations miss out when we don't intentionally reach out and love one another.

To be fair, some churches reflect healthy, loving, intentional dynamics *between* generations. But unfortunately, church life can often take the shape of our generationally-segregated culture.

We know instinctively how vital relationships between generations are within our families, but this coveted ingredient can be overlooked in our churches.

Discovering that you're still '*young enough*' to relate to those younger can add years to your life. Deciding prematurely that you're '*too old*' may move your finish line closer. While the idle path may appear safer, it's actually more treacherous.

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8 (NIV)

Unpacking Day 1

All of us probably know Christians who finished life exceptionally well, and those who finished poorly. What were some keys to their success or premature decline?

What can you do today - with God's help - to act justly and honor another generation beyond your peer group?

Day 2. HARD LANDING

HALF TWO: MAKE IT WHOLE!

As we appreciate life's seasons, we recognize that churches, too, go through seasons. Lots of excitement surrounds the planting of new churches; deep pain may surface when churches are uprooted or die.

Some churches are predominantly full of those from life's early seasons. Some graying congregations are on the verge of aging out, dying off.

If we believe the local church is God's primary strategic method for reaching the world and making disciples, a chief emphasis of Christian ministries needs to gear toward strengthening local churches. One of our passions is to see churches come together with deeper appreciation for all seasons of life.

So, do we act to make local churches stronger? Or do we give up on the local church and divert resources? Do we call people to remain faithful to their local bodies, or make them perhaps more cynical toward their local church? Do we bypass the Church in our efforts to do what we think is noble and right? Do we gloss over interdependent dynamics, blurring the picture of God's family, the Church?

We see parallel bypass dangers within churches, sometimes overlooking people in one season of life to reach those in another season. In some churches, age segregation takes over so completely that high school and younger students never rub shoulders with adults, apart from a handful of youth leaders.

Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might acts to all who are to come. Psalm 71: 17-18 (NIV)

Unpacking Day 2

How do you describe your church climate between those in earlier vs. later life seasons? Warm and sunny? A bit cold and apathetic? Some turbulent winds of discord? Cloudy with a potential for rain?

If a better climate is needed, how can YOU help?

Day 3. GROUND RULES

HALF TWO: MAKE IT WHOLE!

Suggesting we who are older and wiser may share blame doesn't sit well with lots of folks. We have things figured out, and by golly, we're the victims here.

Generational gaps result from external factors over which we have no control, right? Some of us older ones may say, "Those kids are so tethered to their technology. They won't even look adults in the eye."

"Millennials aren't committed to church life like we were. Some manage to fit church into the margins, but that's primarily to connect with their peers. We're completely off their radar."

Life experience should help produce wisdom, but some life lessons die on the vine when we always assume the role of the overly ripe, overlooked, and discarded fruit. We've seen this victim mentality take root in old, cantankerous curmudgeons and in some younger killjoys as well.

So, although our destination on this vision trip is to the Land of Life Beyond Fifty, we discover that we're not visiting an island. This is not a culture best experienced in isolation. Most of our heroes are found among those deliberately standing in the gap ... deliberately connecting with other generations, not just their own.

"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one." Ezekiel 22:30 (NIV)

Unpacking Day 3

How well are you personally connecting with other generations? Is there room for improvement?

Can you think of practical ways to bridge generational gaps in your church?

Day 4. SCHEDULE

HALF TWO: MAKE IT WHOLE!

Some argue that fifty is much too early to define as the start of life's second half. Perhaps we will live past one hundred; perhaps we will get struck down by lightning at 55; perhaps ... but there's too much conjecture here. Women tend to live longer than men, but there's no promise. Life expectancy tables show us that most of us begin our second half **well before fifty!**

Because we don't escape the womb stamped with an expiration date, we can't assume everyone in their teens, twenties, or thirties is still in life's first half. Steve Jobs unknowingly moved into his second half of life at 28, dying at 56. We all know people who departed from this life much earlier than we may have expected. Princess Diana reached her halfway mark at 18, Elvis Presley at 21, JFK at 23, Whitney Houston at 24, and Michael Jackson at 25.

While numbers are non-specific, by our mid-fifties, we have entered life's Half Two before eternity with Christ. Some of you fully accept that you're in life's final quarter. Some enjoy declaring that you're in 'overtime', beating the odds and living on borrowed time.

Half Two is not an old dusty road to avoid or postpone; it's a new avenue that deserves thoughtful reflection and preparation of the heart. Some of that preparation comes through quality time with more experienced trailblazers.

So the Lord blessed Job in the second half of his life even more than in the beginning. Job 42:12a (NLT)

Unpacking Day 4

Are you ready to help others discover a more fruitful path for life's second half?

You may not want to publicly share their names, but who might you help nudge forward? Perhaps simply ask them to join you in an upcoming serving event.

What other actions might you consider?

Day 5. HONORING FELLOW TRAVELERS

HALF TWO: MAKE IT WHOLE!

Both the Old and New Testament are full of wonderful examples of effective, strategic intergenerational relationships. In the New Testament, spend time looking at the dynamics between Paul/ Timothy or Paul/ Titus.

Titus 2 shows significant movement up and down the age ladder. Paul the older instructs Titus the younger to teach the older, so that they in turn will influence the younger. And these relationships are not random anomalies that we conveniently set aside as happenstance or as irrelevant to our culture. About three quarters of Paul's letters begin with intergenerational relationships.

And parts of this intergenerational paradigm, particularly the young teaching the older, were even more radical back in Paul's era and paternalistic culture.

When your team has a growing sense of the value of generation-to-generation ministry, you can then begin charting a more intentional course at your church. Because each church is unique, don't simply download our or someone else's playbook. Learn from others and prayerfully prepare a game plan that dovetails with the unique mission of your church and the special opportunities present in your community.

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV)

Unpacking Day 5

Can you think of one young leader right now who might join you in serving, inspiring, and mobilizing the Encore Generation? You don't need half a dozen to get started—you need only one. Consider taking that person out for coffee or a milkshake to explore ministry possibilities. This could influence that young person significantly and revolutionize your second-half adult group.

Day 6. EXCHANGE RATE

HALF TWO: MAKE IT WHOLE!

God loves every generation, and He wants us to thrive, ourselves, but also love and encourage all generations, not simply our own.

Generations are not meant to live in isolation. Healthy families enjoy vital relationships that intentionally cross generational lines. Our bodies have highly interdependent parts. The Church, as we know, is both the *Family of God* and the *Body of Christ*.

When seasoned adults are integral to the whole body and effective ambassadors in reaching those outside the Church, churches are more apt to invest in Half Two ministries. When we remain half-focused and self-contained, partial investment often follows.

Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound faith and be filled with love and patience. Titus 2:2 (NLT)

Unpacking Day 6

If you are a leader entrusted with ministry to and through adults in life's second half, can you enlist help from a broader age swath to help you both encourage and challenge your adults? How can you accomplish it?

Day 7. ROYAL TREATMENT

HALF TWO: MAKE IT HIS!

We may with good reasons love our generation, church, denomination, nation, and cultural heritage.

But our grasp of kingdom breadth can weaken when we become *too* generational, *too* denominational, *too* national, or *too* culturally ingrained. It can narrow to, “My kingdom come, my will be done.”

The kingdom of God transcends our generation, church, denomination, political party, socio-economic background, community, county, state, nation, gender, language, life stage, personality type, even our favorite sports teams. We can’t pretend to know God’s plan for you, but His plans may be bigger and more unorthodox than you imagine.

We stress having a big heart open to hearing from God—and new possibilities, not limited or compartmentalized by societal norms.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:10 (NIV)

Unpacking Day 7

So, we come face-to-face with this question for empty nesters and retirees: Is Jesus the Lord of our lives—after the kids are raised and after we’ve said goodbye to full-time employment?

If you’ve stepped out of circulation, how is God asking you to step back into the mix, using your gifts, talents, life experience, and wisdom? How will you respond?

Day 8. READY TO ROLL

HALF TWO: MAKE IT HIS!

Early on, working with adults over fifty, we engaged in some reverse engineering conversations with adults serving Christ fervently in their later years. By then, some of these full-throttle Christians had serious mobility issues and were no longer able to actively participate in many church activities. But they were still active in telling their stories—through writing, blogging, phone and in-person conversations—spreading the gospel to any and all they met.

When did their light bulbs go on? What made them different from more complacent Christians, who seemed to lose power at the breaker switch?

We encourage you to initiate similar conversations with older adults in your church whose present exemplary lives are worth emulating. Probe their history as followers of Christ. Get into who, what, when, why, where, and how.

When did you become a Christian? What led up to that? Who was the first person you led to Christ? Were there times of significant faith surges forward? How about times when you weren't firing on all cylinders? What keeps you from spiritually retiring? Favorite Scripture verses?

For most we interviewed, this passionate fire had been lit much earlier in life. Then when they reached the ripe ages of fifty, sixty, or seventy, there was little thought of slowing down and certainly no thought of quitting. Yes, some had reduced physical stamina, but they continued to ask the Lord for His help and re-direction in making an impact for Him.

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 (NIV)

Unpacking Day 8

We're looking for clarion calls to serve. After almost gluttonous intakes of Bible studies, hymn sings, and potlucks, do our personal and church calendars reflect our desire for what's most comfortable—or engagement with God's wisdom, calling, courage, and supernatural/ Scriptural direction?



Day 9. RESORT ACCOMMODATIONS

HALF TWO: MAKE IT HIS!

Prayer is not meant to be our last resort; it should become our first resort.

“I was praying this morning, and God brought you to my mind.” You’ve hopefully heard this from others many times.

How great to know Christians who faithfully set aside time to pray, and what a blessing to know that God cares about us in such a personal way! We can do the same in our verbal or written conversation with others, as He directs. It’s a rich way to allow God to begin directing more of our thoughts, actions, agendas, and relationships—using us to touch the lives of others.

Prayer is a wonderful discipline with huge personal dividends, but prayer is so much bigger than us. It represents conversation with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It takes us into realms of possibility and perspective not found on a human level. We can travel without a traffic jam, jump continents, and touch heaven.

Best of all, God answers prayer. Not always in the exact way we think He will—sometimes wildly exceeding our finite imaginations, sometimes painfully testing our finite understanding.

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. 1 Chronicles
16:11 (NIV)

Unpacking Day 9

We encourage you to befriend an older or younger individual/couple with whom you can share life, share needs and pray together. We who are older realize that God has entrusted us with a storied lifetime to help illustrate His faithful provision.

What are some of your favorite stories? Share them, and then together in prayer, trust God for new stories of His tender and miraculous care.

Day 10. SECOND LANGUAGE

HALF TWO: MAKE IT COUNT!

Sticky Faith research conducted by the Fuller Youth Institute found that students who have ongoing, caring, authentic relationships with five or more Christian adults outside their peer group are considerably less prone to walk away from their faith.

Students relying almost exclusively on their peers for spiritual encouragement were most vulnerable. Benefiting from their extensive research, we like to turn the 'five' spotlight on the Encore Generation.

People know when they are being used and when they are truly valued. Excel at valuing them.

Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green. Psalm 92:14 (NLT)

Unpacking Day 10

Under 50: Who are the FIVE (or more) older people you could invite into your life - to pray with you, hold you accountable, and occasionally hang out with you?

Over 50: Who are the FIVE (or more) younger people you could ask to pray with, encourage and root for?

What can you do today to get the ball rolling?

Day 11. MARKETPLACE

HALF TWO: MAKE IT COUNT!

When we're in the marketplace, fixing our eyes on our smart phones often signals to others that we're unavailable for face-to-face conversation.

Let's recognize the many mission field opportunities at our disposal. Let's remember that our identity as followers of Christ and fishers of men should far outweigh our objective to be efficient shoppers, consumers, or patrons ... or technology users lost in the cloud.

We invite you to a new level of deliberateness as you step into the marketplace. You may not have official pastor credentials, but you have God-given authority to be a minister wherever you go. God will put people in your path who need an encouraging word from you.

Let's purpose in our hearts to become more alert to the opportunities around us.

Wherever we place our feet, that's our beat.

I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you. Joshua 1:3 (NLT)

Unpacking Day 11

Where in the marketplace can you envision your light shining more brightly?

What will you do to become more intentional, less distracted?

Day 12. ARCHITECTURE

HALF TWO: MAKE IT COUNT!

If we don't get outside our cozy corners, we can become hoarders of the gospel. That's a sign we've set His design drawings aside. And Half Two is a terrible time to go dark, bury our gifts, or hoard.

As we're about to head for home, it's time to roll up our sleeves. We may need to challenge the status quo, not through a hostile takeover, but through prayerful listening and obedient follow-through.

Have we helped create environments that unintentionally encourage complacency and generational separation? Can we introduce some new faces into the mix, helping all of us become disciples who make disciples?

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.

Psalm 127:1a (ESV)

Unpacking Day 12

What would it take to stir you and those around you to new levels of compassion?

Are you in a bubble? Whom could you invite to help pop your bubble and move your prayers into refreshingly new, less predictable territory?

Day 13. LATE ARRIVAL

HALF TWO: MAKE IT COUNT!

“How quickly the pilgrims became settlers!” This observation from a US history textbook applies to Half Two sojourners as well. It’s a big challenge to keep us older pilgrims on the pilgrim track, or to get us back to our pilgrimage. But with God’s help, it can happen.

Even good, seemingly harmless things can keep us from God’s best. In Matthew 6:19 (NLT) Jesus admonishes us, “Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal.”

God saves us, in part, so that we can reach others. His plan doesn’t end with our becoming disciples. Disciples are meant to make disciples who make disciples!

We need to raise the expectation bar for Christians beyond 50, 60, 70, 80, and even 90. God’s most productive days for us could quite possibly still be ahead.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:12
(NIV)

Unpacking Day 13

Is there an older person in your world who might greatly benefit by a visit, word of encouragement and prayer from you? Your reaching out *could* make an eternal impact.

Now, how ‘bout a younger person?

Day 14. HEADING HOME

HALF TWO: MAKE IT COUNT!

Hospitality starts in our hearts, as we make room for Jesus and others to enter our lives and make themselves at home. If we wait until our lives or homes are perfect, we miss the point and miss out on many opportunities to share Christ's love.

May we always be champions for engaging more meaningfully with those different from us, including those well outside our peer, ethnic, socio-economic, and Christian silos.

The Pharisees criticized Jesus for hanging out with publicans and sinners. Jesus saved his greatest criticism for the Pharisees and religious leaders who over-insulated themselves in ivory towers, falling prey to what Howard Hendricks referred to as “the hardening of the categories.”

The same trap remains today. The bait has been set. Let's not succumb to living the life of a Pharisee or curmudgeon.

Let's remember, we're in the process of *completing* well—not competing or retreating—completing! Let's add a sense of healthy completion to our lives, families, churches, neighborhoods, communities, and national/global witness. Let's finish well the work to which God calls us.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16 (NIV)

Unpacking Day 14

What kingdom-building opportunities would you like to be part of?

With God's help ... **GO FOR IT!**

If you found this devotional helpful, please share this link with others. Thank you!

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