

## GROWING UP IS HARD TO DO

*"I tell you the truth, when you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then He said to him, 'Follow Me!'"*

*John 21:18-19*

One would've thought that Jesus would have said everything He had to say to His disciples before He died. But He was gracious enough to appear to them *after* His "mysterious disappearance" from the grave. He didn't just appear to them, he ate with them and told them what to do next...several times! What a loving act when He could've been in His true heavenly home instead.

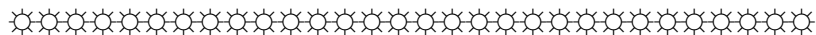
Of all the disciples, Peter probably needed to see Jesus the most...not because he loved Jesus more than the others, but because He needed to be reconciled after he had told Jesus he would be faithful, only to deny him 3 times. Jesus has the familiar conversation with Peter: The "Do you love me?" question series....all 3 times Jesus asks him the question, Peter pledges his love to Him—"Lord, you know that I love You."

The next verses, the ones listed above, are those that really strike me in this conversation. Isn't this the case with us, though? *"...when you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted..."* When we were young Christians, and some of us still are, we pretty much did what was expected of any new believer...we began to live a "Christian life." *"...but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands..."* The more we mature in our faith, however, the more out of OUR control our lives become. We begin to learn the process of suffering, of depending on Him for our next move, and of giving up the more meaningless methods of coping with life.

Just as Jesus stretched out His hands, let others clothe Him, and allowed Himself to be led to the cross, we too will learn to give ourselves up and be led for Kingdom purposes as we become "old" in our faith. What is really surreal is that each one of us will learn to die to ourselves in different ways. God is creative as He works on us...His masterpiece, His creation. AND...it will take more work on some of us than others to lead us to that place of spiritual old age with Him.

As Peter and Jesus were having this conversation, the verse goes on to tell us what John was doing: *"Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them...when Peter saw him, he asked, 'Lord, what about him?' Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? YOU must follow me.'"* In other words, we can't compare our walk with Him to anyone else's. He is very clear—YOU must follow Him.

Isn't it cool that John didn't even have to be asked... He just followed. John followed Him during His ministry, he followed Him at His death, and He followed Him the rest of His life. Let's ask God to help us do the same....hopefully, without being asked to do so over and over.



PONDER THIS VERSE, AS WELL AS THE VERSE ABOVE, THEN PRAY...ASK HIM TO TEACH YOU FROM HIS HEART TODAY:

**Mark 8:34 -35 says: *Then He called the crowd to Him along with His disciples and said: 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.'***

**What does "losing your life for the gospel" mean to you? What does following Him look like to you?"**