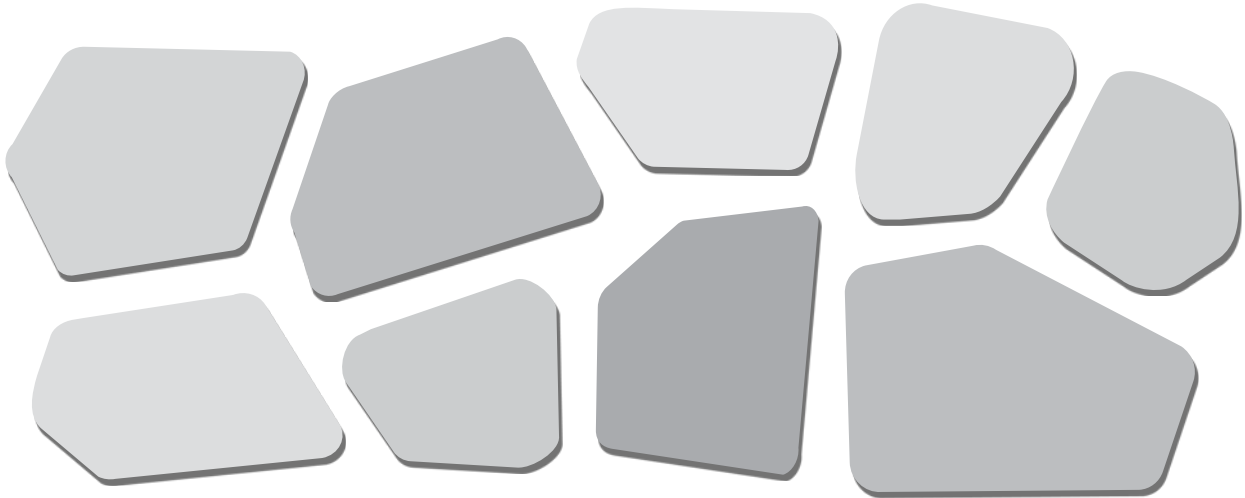


## CHAPTER 4: MATRIARCHS OF THE EXILE

### Jeremiah 29

1. . . . *ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls* (Jer. 6:16b).



#### 2. Growing in Grace Principles

- (1) Old age, when life becomes quieter and slower, is prime time to reflect on the power of the gospel to change us. It is also a time when we are tempted to think small—to think about our aches and pains, our disappointments, and unrealized expectations. Will we be good stewards of our old age? Even as physical strength diminishes, will we pursue our destiny—knowing God? We are never too old to look up and be transformed from beast to beauty, without Botox or anti-aging cream.
- (2) As long as we live in this world, we are prone to look down. The rhythm of Sabbath and daily worship recalibrates our minds and hearts in the present moment to remember our destiny and destination while “waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13) when we will experience the ultimate change—glorification.
- (3) Repenting women who find rest in Jesus become life-giving women who flourish as gatherers. When our heart is Christ’s home, we can become homey places for troubled hearts to find refuge, even if we are confined to a hospital bed. Pray for grace to cultivate a welcoming place for the discouraged and lonely. Aging with grace increases our capacity for this gathering ministry.

- (4) Jesus reminds us of the importance of covenant community when He says, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (Matt. 18:20). A temptation of old age is to withdraw, but we flourish when we gather with God’s people because He is there.

Sharon Better and Susan Hunt, *Aging with Grace* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 67, 69, 71, and 73.

### 3. Prayer

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.  
Make me to know Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths.  
Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation;  
for You I wait all the day long.  
You have made known to me the paths of life;  
You will make me full of gladness with Your presence*

Ps. 119:105, Ps. 25:4-5, ACTS 2:28

4. Which Growing in Grace principle above reminds us of our hope?
5. Which Growing in Grace principle would be helpful to someone who is facing fearful changes?
6. Which Growing in Grace principle helps us flourish even in exile?
7. What promises does God give in Jeremiah 29:11-14?
8. What practical tasks does God give in Jeremiah 29:4-7, 10?
9. How does Peter describe the women he encourages us to remember (1 Peter 3:1-6)?

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**10. Which Growing in Grace principle reminds us of our need for covenant community?**

**11. Responsive Reading**

*I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jer. 29:11).*

*I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake . . . and for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:24-27).*

- What word is repeated in both passages? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is our hope? \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Walking It Out**



After living in the same place for thirty years, your husband accepts a new position that requires a move. You had just become empty-nesters and you had expressed concern about making another transition. Now he is busy with his new job, and you feel uprooted and alone. You are more frustrated each day.

**Bonus:** Go to [www.agingwithgrace.online](http://www.agingwithgrace.online) to review *Aging with Grace – Ask an Older Woman* five-minute video of storyteller Barbara Thompson: “How do our expectations, plans, goals for aging influence our flourishing?” Listen to an extended interview with Barbara on the topic of caring for elderly parents.

A decorative border of stylized flowers and leaves in shades of gray surrounds the central text. The flowers are arranged in a circular pattern, with some buds and some fully open blooms.

## Flourishing and Fruitful Women

*Edith Schaeffer*

What are your choices? Whom are your choices for? Not just for yourself.  
Choose now whom you will serve, and that choice is going to affect the next generation,  
and the next generation, and the next. Choice never affects just one person alone.

It goes on and on and the effect goes out into geography and history.

You are part of history and your choices become part of history.

Edith Schaeffer, *L'Abri* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1992).