

## Aging with Grace Handout

# INTRODUCTION

1. **The purpose of this study is summarized in the title of the book:** For women to think biblically about aging, to pray for grace to flourish spiritually in every season and circumstance of life, and to live covenantally as they help one another flourish in an anti-aging culture.

## 2. Responsive Reading

**LEADER:** *Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18b-20).*

**WOMEN:** *Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women . . . that the word of God may not be reviled (Titus 2:3-5).*

**ALL:** *We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us (1 Thess. 2:7-8).*

Covenantal discipleship is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

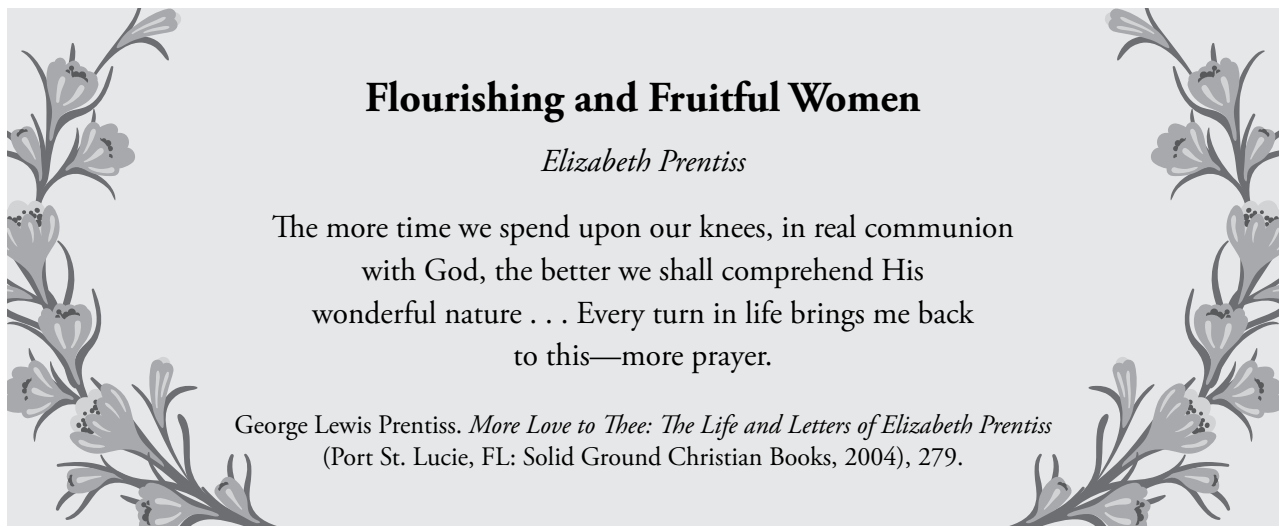
and \_\_\_\_\_.

## 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. **One way we flourish is by learning to pray Scripture.** Select portions of Scripture on the handout and write a prayer.
  
5. **Pray about writing your own story** of flourishing or writing about an older woman and how you have seen her age with grace. The stories in the book are approximately 400 words. Follow this pattern in writing your story. Pray about reading it for a Community Building segment. If you write about an older woman, such as your grandmother, you may want to show one or two items that belonged to her such as her Bible or a favorite serving bowl. Below is an example of writing a story about someone else.



## **My Mother-in-Law**

*Jane Anne Wilson*

I marvel at the eighty-something-year-old women who write books or continue to teach Bible studies. But what about the gifted woman who spends her years confined to her home because of physical limitations? What about the woman who cannot communicate though she was once a teacher and well-known speaker? What does flourishing look like for these women? My mother-in-law Janet Wilson daily shows me.

During a recent hospitalization, the nurse caring for Mom Wilson said, “This is a pleasant woman.” I responded, “Yup, that’s her.” Although she is physically immobile, and conversation is challenging because her hearing is so bad, others quickly see the essence of who she is. She is often described with words such as delightful, warm, and joyful, words that defy her circumstances.

Mom Wilson is pleasant, but there is nothing passive about her.

With the help of her devoted husband, she fights hard against her progressive degenerative multiple sclerosis. The soup cans she uses for her daily arm exercises sit by her chair as a reminder to all that even in her eighties she is still fighting to steward well whatever function her body has left.

She fights the spiritual battles against discouragement, doubts, frustration, and fear. Her pleasant disposition is a hard-won daily battle. When we visit, we consistently find her sitting in her chair with her large, well-worn Bible in her lap, mentally embracing the truths her limitations seem to scream against. The more her body betrays her, the more deeply she abides in her Savior’s love. She thinks biblically and she lives covenantally. Her face lights up with a warm welcome, and she wants to know about our lives. She works hard at listening. I can see her making mental notes of how to pray, and I know that on the next visit she will follow-up with questions. Her concerns are never about herself, but always about the interests of others.

Although I am inspired by her determination to stay as physically strong as possible, it is her spiritual strength that fills my heart with love and admiration. She is a spiritual giant to me. As I think of all the ways that I “do ministry” somehow it pales against her ever-deepening love for the Lord and others. My faith-filled mother-in-law shows me the way of flourishing, even in old age.

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*Jane Anne Wilson, wife of David and mother of four adult children, lives in Newark, Delaware. She serves on the women’s ministry leadership team in her church. Cuddling her three grandbabies, long walks with her husband, and family reunions are her favorite blessings.*