



# Spirit of Grace Herald

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## Mellowing with Age

Throughout our journey in this world, we are all in a constant state of change. Some change is for the better; other for the worse. Most of us hit the summit of our looks in our late twenties and early thirties. By the time we are about to exit our thirties, most of us are starting to show at least a few signs of wear.

In Christ there are inevitable changes as well, although in spiritual matters we have no reason to go downhill, the way we all do in the physical realm. Ideally we are supposed to go from grace to grace—to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” as Peter put it.

Usually we think of this growth in terms of the fruit of the Spirit: patience, kindness, love, and so forth. But there are also some changes and hopefully growth that will occur in our attitudes. As I look back over forty years to my first days and years in Christ, I find that in a lot of ways I am a mellowed version of me than I was so long ago. First, I am less hasty to tell others what they should do in the major decisions of their lives. In my own life I have been wrong enough times, and made enough mistakes that it seems pretty presumptuous of me to try to pressure others to follow a certain course. In matters which the Bible condemns I am not reticent to share what the Word says.

But there are many, many decisions that are neither morally right or wrong, and I have learned to allow friends and family members to make their own decisions, and if need be, their own mistakes.

In a similar fashion, I am not nearly so quick to declare that I have heard the word of the Lord for myself when faced with various crossroads. I am far more likely to say “I think this is what the Lord may be saying” these days. In my younger years I would have said, “God has told me that I must...” The reasons for this change are pretty simple. I have had more than a few occasions when I thought I knew the mind of God, and circumstances later proved that I decidedly did not.

Of course I have had my “home runs” in this department as well.

My mistakes have not stopped me from listening for the voice of God, and doing my best to follow it. But I generally allow time and circumstances to confirm that the voice I am hearing really is the Lord’s.

In my early days I was pretty judgmental when it came to churches. I saw most churches as “dead” and had little use for them and not much respect for those who attended them. But over the years I have learned that sometimes you

find some amazing believers in some of the more formal churches, and some pretty immature Christians in some of the churches which have the liveliest worship.

I guess what I’m saying is that I have discovered that life is too short to go through it with constant harsh, judgmental, and “I know it all” attitudes. After all, we follow the One who said, “I am gentle and lowly in heart.” And following up on that, He declared to those who would follow His gentle ways, “And you shall find rest for your souls.” The older I get the more I like the idea of rest—not so much physical rest, but spiritual and emotional rest. I have been in enough conflicts, and jumped to enough conclusions, only to fall on my face, that I have learned to slow down a bit. I really don’t need to fix everybody of everything, and confront everyone with whom I may disagree. God is the One for that!

**“Take My yoke upon you  
and learn from Me, for I  
am gentle and lowly in  
heart, and you will find  
rest for your souls.”**

# Feeding Jesus' Sheep / Proclaiming His Gospel

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"Does he not leave the ninety-nine and...seek the one that is straying?"