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| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | By **Martha Rodman** on February 6, 2025 |   *Listen to the words of the wise; apply your heart to instruction. For it is good to keep these sayings in your heart and always ready on your lips. I am teaching you today—yes, you so you will trust in the Lord. Proverbs 22:17-19. NLT.*  I have been having an ongoing conversation with the Lord. We have discussed why so many in their later season of life experience so many challenges. It seems the advertised "golden" years are not as golden as the commercials would like to portray! People hear about the joys of retirement with traveling, golfing, or cruising. However, many seniors face unexpected physical diagnoses. These diagnoses can limit their mobility and interactions. Last year I got to experience physical therapy for the first time because of a knee condition. Now both knees are complaining and I need to courage up to tackle a flight of stairs! These are fairly common complaints for those of us in our 70's.  There is also the hovering concern or specter of dementia! Oh, I forgot a word or date. Could this be an early sign of dementia or Alzheimer's? So what are we to do? Let fear ruin our lives? That definitely is not the answer! So I prayed and talked with the Lord about navigating these older years. I asked Him why things seem to be so hard. He shared a simple insight. He said it is time to apply all the lessons about Him we have already learned. Every lesson about His trustworthiness and His faithfulness, we are to put into practice. It is a time to lean ever more upon Him and what His Word has to say in every situation.  Often we can move through life with our heads full of knowledge about God and His ways. It is when we face challenges to actually apply what we know , is when we find out how much faith we truly have. Jesus told us that in this world we would suffer tribulations. James is very clear on this as well. *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know when your faith is tested, endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. James 1: 2-4.*My senior friends, if your faith is being tested, it is a good thing. It is not easy, but He will work it out for your good. It will also benefit others. This is not just for senior friends, but for all of God's children.  He also reminded me. These years are our last opportunity to show what it means to be a believer in Him. Whether or not we like it, people are watching you. Your family, friends and acquaintances really need us to model what it means to be a believer during trying times. When my sister was first diagnosed with lymphoma, God led me to Philippians 4:6-7. Very simple and familiar scriptures, but they became very real to me. *Don't worry about anything, instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.* I keep applying these lessons through her breast cancer journey and now her heart and kidney concerns. The don't worry part is challenging, but I am getting better at it!  My friends, it is not God's plan that we simply spout platitudes about His goodness, but we must believe it. When faced with the trials of our faith, we must know that 2 Peter 1:3 is true. *By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life.* There is no disqualifying circumstance to this verse. He has given us everything we need for living a godly life,  the choice is "do we believe it?". Oh my friends, the lessons you are learning today will benefit you greatly. They will help you, no matter what you face tomorrow. Many times it is the small things that help us endure. I remember singing (very croakedly) "this is the day the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it), during the first few weeks after my husband's stroke. It came from deep within my spirit from the earlier lessons He taught me. This simple scripture helped me get through those tough days.  So no matter what season of life, learn to apply what you know. If you need more help in a matter, ask Him for it--or a good friend. Remember, He is our teacher. What a blessing it brings to Him, when we apply what we know!  *Father, I thank you for teaching us how to apply Your Word to every circumstance we find ourselves in. I thank you we don't have to worry about our future, because you are already in it. Prepare us for our future, but helping us learn to walk with you today. Help us truly "apply our heart to your instruction". In Jesus's Name, amen.* |