

# Honor Due

*HE IS JUST YOUR AVERAGE OLD MAN. He served in the army during World War II. Until he retired from it and turned the work over to his sons, he was a farmer. His stature and countenance are unremarkable. Just your average old man. The church is filled with them.*

"RISE IN THE  
PRESENCE OF  
THE AGED, SHOW  
RESPECT FOR  
THE ELDERLY AND  
REVERE YOUR GOD.  
I AM THE LORD."

LEVITICUS 19:32 NIV

Japan has Living National Treasures, individuals who are held in high regard as "bearers of important intangible cultural assets," such as creators of exquisite pottery, woodblock printers, and textile designers. They are honored as highly skilled people who possess and teach crafts that are considered fundamental to the Japanese culture. They are bearers of an important (and fading) heritage.

A gray head is a crown of glory;  
It is found in the way of righteousness.

Proverbs 16:31

The church, too, has "Living Treasures," individuals who possess a deep knowledge and understanding of God and His word, and who are willing to pass down that knowledge to others.

*He is soft-spoken, his prayers barely audible. He does not speak to impress others, only to be faithful to his Lord. He speaks of the word as one would an old and cherished friend, for, to him, the Scriptures are not less than the intimate voice and presence of God. He knows them perhaps better than he knows himself.*

We learn from the church's treasures not just about God, but about God working in a life, the deep and unutterable holiness with which He longs to fill each of us. We learn what it must be like to be so imbued with His word and His Spirit that every utterance is quickened by echoes of holiness.

Oh, not that they are in any way perfect; they are, after all, mere flesh. But over their many years they have dwelt so intimately with God, and have given Him such free reign over their lives, that, without even trying, their insight into God's word bears the music of the third heaven.

*He opens the word and holds it in his hands. When he reads, there is an urgency in his voice; after all these years he still marvels at what God has put down in the pages, and he is in a hurry to share it with others. As he lifts his gaze from the printed page, he continues to speak the holy words from memory. His mind is active and sharp. It is accurate. Verses and supporting passages, long ago made permanent in his memory, flood into the front of his mind, pouring from his lips faster than he can form the words.*

The glory of young men is their strength,  
And the splendor of old men is their gray head.

Proverbs 20:29 NKJV



At the same time, God uses the old among us to reveal His own Fatherhood. There is no one more "gray-headed" than the Lord, yet no one more worthy of honor and respect. As the church pastor is the type of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, so the righteous aged among us are the type of our wise and gracious heavenly Father.

For, you see, none of this is about them, but Him. It is in their character to always point you away from themselves, to the author and object of their devotion. God is the one who has given them their years. If there is dignity, it has come from Him. If there is deep wisdom, it is a wisdom supplied from above.

If there is honor due, they are but simple, everyday vessels bearing the glory that belongs, entirely, to Him.

