

The Luxuries of Old Age

A Personal Reflection on Growing Older

Reflections Reflections WhatsApp post, 28 May 2025

There are many different views on the small "luxuries" (food, health, peace, friends, family and so on) that might be missed in old age.

I am sitting at my desk after having Kerala appams with vegetable stew for breakfast (yes, I do eat vegetables now and then). Since food is always interesting, I will start there. I do not miss home-cooked food, because I make the things I like myself. If I want something, I just cook it, no big deal.

Getting less sleep does not bother me. I use my waking time to give my brain a workout. I do tend to forget names of people, objects, and places sometimes. To help with that, I am practising association techniques to improve my recall. Over time, my vocabulary might shrink a bit, but I plan to gather all my writings and mine them through some artificial intelligence tools, to preserve the vocabulary I have used for years. Who says older people cannot use technology?

I am in good health overall. I believe degeneration (or depreciation, if you prefer accountants' terms) is something we are all aware of from the start. Otherwise, hundreds of people would be living in the same house for eternity! Knee pain is my main health issue now, but I have learned to live with it, just as I accept love, anger, and compassion in life. If you see pain as an emotion, it becomes easier to deal with it.

My family is small but tightly connected — though one important member is missing.

Peace is a tricky thing, probably the most elusive of all. The world generally does not want peace, and it certainly does not want us to have it. The peace we offer each other at church services often feels superficial. Sometimes people just exchange peace with the one on my right or left, skipping me entirely. Maybe that brings peace to them — and I genuinely wish them well. Peace has never really been my thing. Imagine being publicly criticised, or having bricks thrown at you, for doing what you believe is right in the service of the Lord. That ripple of negativity stays with me for a few days, gradually fading away. Eventually, I find peace, because I can forgive and let go of hatred.

Nature encompasses all of God's creation. I am surrounded by cats and dogs, but I miss the greenery, flowing clear waters, and birds that one finds in the countryside. An annual trip to Kerala helps me reconnect with that natural beauty.

Having fun with friends is very important, but getting everyone together is becoming more difficult. Fortunately, we have WhatsApp, Facebook, and Zoom to stay connected.

So, I will repeat what I have said before: I am happy as I grow older, minute by minute, day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year, because I am getting nearer to the Lord!