YOUNG AT HEART
Living to the Fullest
While Growing Older

Facts:
Over 15% of North Americans live beyond the retirement age (20-30 years) and this percentage is expected to rise in the coming years. Few people fully anticipate the challenges that come with aging.

Issues:
What are the themes and topics that figure prominently in this season of life? How do we manage the difficulties and decisions that come for us or our parents as we age? What can we do to prepare or strengthen ourselves for this season? What wisdom does the Bible offer on these subjects?

Characters:
Ed & Chris Martinek – widower in his nineties and his daughter
Joe & Barb Vinci – older couple sharing the retirement years
Marilyn & Lynn Cawley – woman diagnosed with dementia and her daughter
Nan Hayes – life transition expert

Questions:
1. What are some of the toughest losses that arise for people as they age?
2. What sort of issues arise between parents and kids during this season?
3. What are the benefits of “aging in place” (i.e. staying in your home)?
4. What kinds of measures can make aging in place more of a viable option?
5. What feelings do you have (pro or con) about retirement home living?
6. What attitudes make a positive difference in this season of life?
7. **What are a few of the advantages of consulting a professional resource on elder care?**

**Biblical Principles:**

There are natural seasons and rhythms to life.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away
(Ecclesiastes 3:1-6)

God calls us to exercise active compassion for the losses that come with age.
A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead... a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. (Luke 10:30-33)

As children, we are called to honor our parents and elders through all the seasons of life.
Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that... it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 5:16)
Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. (Proverbs 19:20)
Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone. (Psalm 71:9)

As older persons, we still have a ministry of witness that we are called to exercise.
Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come. (Psalm 71:17-18)

In our final years, we are given the opportunity to have our character refined and to grow in our awareness of our ultimate dependence upon the grace of God.
God will sit as a refiner of silver (Malachi 3:3)

God is with us all the way to the end of this life and into the freedom and glory of the next.
Listen, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since
your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. (Isaiah 46:3-4)

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. (Romans 8:18-21)

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." (Revelation 21:5)