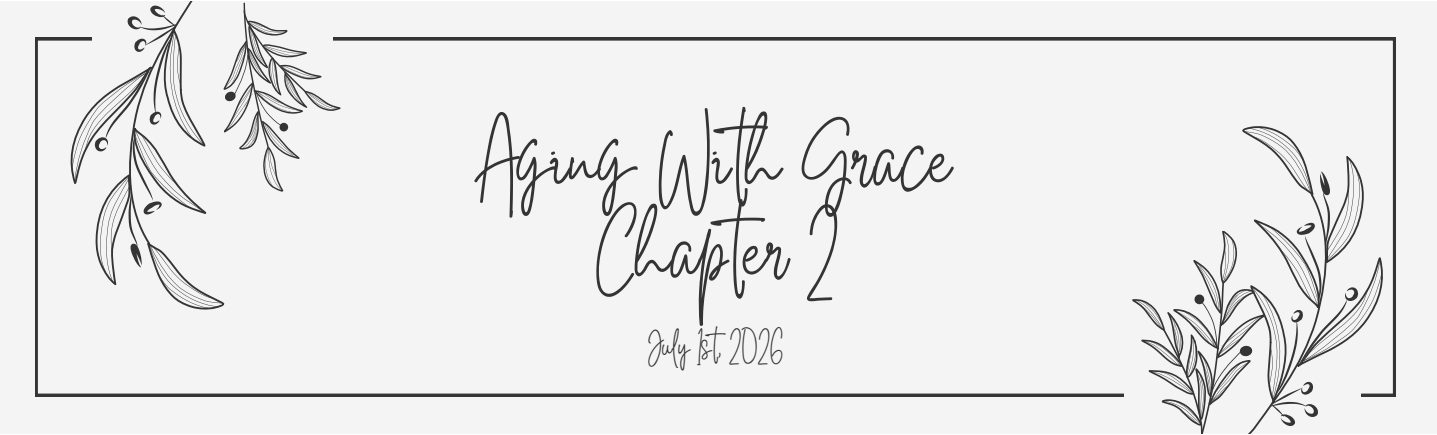


The header features a light gray rectangular box with a thin black border. Inside the box, on the left and right sides, are illustrations of olive branches with leaves and olives. In the center, the title "Aging With Grace" is written in a large, elegant cursive font. Below it, "Chapter 2" is written in a similar but slightly smaller cursive font. At the bottom center, the date "July 1st 2026" is written in a small, simple font.

Aging With Grace

Chapter 2

July 1st 2026

Worshipping In the Darkness

I vividly remember two moments in my life where I physically cried out to the Lord. I'm not talking about raising my voice a little. I'm talking about falling on my knees, feeling my heart skip a beat (or two), tears streaming down my face, looking up to the heavens and pleading with the Lord, with everything I had in that moment in time. The first moment would be when I heard that my father, only 56 years of age, had been admitted into the ICU with covid. The second being almost a year later when I hemorrhaged in our bathroom, alone at home with our second baby asleep in the other room. My sisters in Christ, those two moments felt monumentally dark. How do we press on in the darkest of times?

On page 53 of our book *Aging with Grace* we read, "Will hopelessness or unbroken hope take up residence in our hearts? Will hope stir us to sing with those who have gone before us, "For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy." I ask you, sister, has hopelessness taken up residence in your heart? As you enter into a new day doing the same old thing, going to work, mothering, caring for your aging relative, shuttling your children to and fro, eating dinner at an empty table that was once full, do you find joy in those things? It's far more tempting to grumble and complain, "If I weren't here to clean this toilet would it ever get done?!"

Why do we read our Bibles? The author poses this question to us at the end of chapter, and I think it's a valid question. Do we read scripture as something to check off of our list for the day? I wager that we should be reading scripture for many reasons but let's focus on two in particular. The first being to give ourselves ammunition to handle the darkness that creeps into our lives. When tragedy strikes, and life feels hopeless do you have the truths of scripture to orient your heart? Do you have the guard rails to place on your heart and emotions that the Lord truly does work all things for his glory? The second being so that we can know our Savior. When we read scripture we begin to have an intimate knowledge of who we will spend eternity with. Isn't that beautiful? Romans 14: 7-8 says, "For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." When I read this verse and think back to those moments on my knees pleading for my life or my father's life to the Lord I am able to see hope. It's a gift that the Lord gives us that as we age we are able to look back on these pivotal moments of our walk with the Lord and see his loving hand in it all. We see that the Lord works all things to draw us closer to himself, and that can be at any age, twenty-six, fifty-six, or ninety-six. Let us live to the Lord in our daily tasks of wiping the toilets, giving our toddlers the 1 millionth snack that they will crumble into the carpet, driving the children to one of their many extra curriculums for the day, or pouring into that young woman at church because we have no one around our table at home. And as we age and grow closer to meeting our Savior let us move forward in confidence that if we die, we die to the Lord. I challenge you, sister in Christ, to move forward in this hope.

-Audrey Ashcroft

Questions to Consider:

- Take some time to compare your understanding of aging with a biblical view. How does it differ? How is it the same?
- Think through an event in your life where you can now see how God was working to advance His kingdom in your heart and to prepare you to encourage others.

Yours in Him,

Katherine Colquitt