

Never Too Old... to Change or to Learn

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Al Lepley did not really become a Christian until he was 83 years old. He had been married for 54 years to Audrey, a Christian woman, and to please her had been involved in church for most of his life but had never really accepted Christ for himself. It was not until her death that he had to come face to face with his own faith rather than just living in the glow of hers.

When Al did finally really believe, he did so in a big way. He had two burning desires. First, he desired to study the Bible and learn for himself its teachings. Second, he felt compelled to share his faith with others.

Here at Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church he heard about our *Disciple Bible Study* series and began to immerse himself in Bible study. In the fall of 2006, he and his daughter, Karen Greathouse, began coming to *Disciple 1* together. Over the following years they took the other levels of *Disciple*, including *Jesus in the Gospels* – which was his favorite.

As the years went by, Al's mobility became more of a challenge. Often, he had to miss class but he would always read his lessons. Because his hearing and vision prevented his full participation in class, I let him borrow extra sets of video lessons from our library so he could listen to them at home. During this time, he also came to other classes led by Pastor Larry or myself and participated in as many of the Senior Adult Ministry activities as he could, including going on their retreats. His daughter Karen and many of his church friends have provided transportation to many Senior Adult events.

Al was 90 years old this past May when, with the completion of *Disciple 4*, Al and Karen both received their special "Disciple multi-level" lapel pins to wear proudly as an indication they had completed the entire series. (By the way, in 2009, another father/daughter pair of Andy Craig and Sarah Peters also completed the series together.)



AL LEPLEY AT BUCKNER – MARCH 2011

During this time, while he was learning more about Christ each week, he continued to evangelize to many he came in contact with. He encouraged those already at church to study the Bible harder and deeper and to reach out to others in mission and in spreading the Good News. He continues to do this with great joy and a big smile.

Al has been a great joy in my life both personally and as a big supporter of the *Disciple* program and of any other classes I've taught. He always has a question to ask and a story to tell. And he gives me hope that everyone can benefit from the Disciple program if they really want to do so.

I encourage you not to wait as long as Al did to start really reading the Bible on a daily basis. I truly believe the Holy Scripture is God's special gift to us to teach us what it means to be human and how we are to live in relationship with each other and with Him. So many of life's questions are answered there if we only take the time to read and listen. You too can be transformed by its message.



Whatever your age, I hope you will be choosing some kind of Bible study class to participate in this fall. You should be able to find something that will help you along in your Faith Journey.

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