

Three Rules for Long Life

Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. – Exodus 20:12 HCSB

A long-standing legend has circulated among middle-eastern and western cultures since around the third century of a mystical Fountain of Youth. It probably originated in a collection of fables, poems and tall tales called the Alexander Romance. In this fantastic work, Alexander the Great crossed the Land of Darkness and discovered this fabled spring. The tale was popular among the Spanish Moors and probably spawned Ponce de Leon's search for the Fountain during his explorations of Florida in 1513.

Humanity has always been fascinated by the possibility of discovering a one-size fits all, cures-all pill that will grant its intrepid discoverer with longevity. I call it the Shortcut Con. The Shortcut Con's premise is that you don't have to work. You just need to be lucky. Isn't that the basis of the very first temptation? Didn't the Devil tempt Eve with "Hey! Eat this piece of fruit and you will suddenly be like God"?¹

God actually has given us three principles that He promises will, short of an accidental death, lengthen our lifespan. The first rule says "Honor your parents and you will be granted long life."

The second rule says that if you come across a bird's nest with chicks or eggs, either in a tree or on the ground along the road, and the mother is sitting on the chicks or eggs, you must not take the mother along with the young. You may take the young for yourself, but be sure to let the mother go free, so that you may prosper and live long.² Odd, I know, but I'll explain it in a second.

The third rule states that you must have a full and honest weight, a full and honest dry measure, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.³ Again, you may be scratching your head, but bear with me.

Humanity has always felt that if we could just find a special piece of fruit, or dip in a particularly lovely spring, or take a little blue pill – we could be forever young. Ridiculous, I know! But it keeps cropping up!

In contrast, God says, "The secret to long life consists of respect, environmental stewardship and integrity." It's not as flashy as a pond surrounded by beautiful Amazon warrior princesses but it comes with an impeccable guarantee.

Show respect and you will get the best advice and help from others. Take care of your environment and you probably won't die of cancer or global warming. Live a life marked by integrity and you won't end up in jail with a guy named Bubba or with a terrible disease. Simple, straightforward, no-nonsense advice from the One who made us.

¹ Genesis 3:4

² Deuteronomy 22:6-7 HCSB

³ Deuteronomy 25:15 HCSB