



May 13, 2017 – Grand Rapids, MI

How to Live to Your 90s

Today's message is based on my father-in-law, Don Jones, or Joner as most of us knew him. As I said [Wednesday](#), he passed away last Sunday. He lived to 94 years and six months; Peggy, the sister he was closest to, died at the exact same age. How was he able to live that long? I'll give you my observations based on his life.

- Genetics: it pays to have the right genes and Dad certainly did. Several of his siblings lived into their 90s.
- Quit smoking: he quit smoking before he turned 21 years old. That's probably the single most important thing he did. His father and siblings who smoked all died much younger. He never drank alcohol after that either.
- Love: he loved his wife of over 70 years deeply, and as I said Wednesday, he longed to be with Ruth again. That's a love that transcends life itself.
- Humor: he had a great sense of humor. He gave it and was able to take it as well. My big ears were a frequent target. Once after we came in from a run together on a cold day, he said, "I know why you wear that headband: reduce wind resistance."
- Demeanor: he was almost always calm and pleasant and rarely showed any anger. Paula said when she was a kid and acted up, he'd just hang his head and sigh, and that hurt worse than any spanking. Once when he was mad at me, he showed it by leaving the newspaper at the top of the steps instead of putting it on the counter. He never stayed mad long.
- Faith: he believed in God and lived his faith.
- Exercise: he worked physical jobs most of his life. Then he began running when he was 70 and continued until he was in his mid-80s, hitting 700 miles for 2002. No doubt that helped him live longer than he might have with a genetic tendency toward stroke. He was never very fast but once you're over 70, there's not a lot of competition and he enjoyed picking up trophies at many of his 5Ks. I'm sure that competitive spirit added zest to his life.
- Body weight: he was never fat for his height. That reduced any additional stress on his joints.



Those are my observations on how Joner lived into his 90s. While you can't change your genes, you can certainly make the most of what you've got; his lifestyle and approach to life certainly helped my father-in-law.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet



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