

“Why Am I Still Here?”

Most preachers/elders who have been around a while themselves have been asked our title question, usually by a “senior citizen” of the kingdom. For most of us, it’s not an easy question to answer, at least with more than a general response that does little to actually help the inquirer. I certainly don’t claim to have “the” answer for everyone, and perhaps not even for anyone, as my knowledge/understanding surely isn’t infallible or complete, and a “one size fits all” answer is likely impossible. But, I have thought about it, and will do my best to provide some possible biblical perspectives that may provide some potential answers. However, be warned that you may not like the implications. So, “**Why am I still here**”? Perhaps **because**:

- **God is letting “nature” take its course, cf. 1Cor.15:36,42.** Since sin’s entrance into the world (cf. Rom.5:12ff), *death* has been a part of life for pretty much everyone, Heb.9:27. How long it takes an individual to meet this “appointment” (death), depends on several factors, such as overall strength of body (cf. Deut.34:7), how many pills and procedures one is willing to ingest/endure (one elderly gentleman ask the very question of our title because he wanted to “go” but kept on taking a bunch of medications that were keeping him alive anyway), and of course, God, cf. Isa.38:1-5.
- **God is letting your *flesh* “reap” that which it has “sown,” Gal.6:7-8.** Question: Why didn’t God kill Cain for murdering Able? In fact, God took steps to even insure that on one else would kill him, cf. Gen.4:9-15. Have you ever wondered why? Have you ever considered that God is allowing you to remain that you might “*from the flesh*” “reap” what you have “sown”? I realize such is an unpleasant thought which lacks any comfort, and I’m certainly not writing to or suggesting such is the case for any specific individual, but shouldn’t we at least consider the possibility?
- **God still has “work” for you to do, cf. 1Kings 19:13-16.** Elijah clearly wanted to die. He even asked God to “*take my life*,” v.4. But instead, God sent a messenger to *comfort* and *provide sustenance* for him. Why? Because despite Elijah’s thoughts and feelings, his “work” was not yet done, vv.15-18! Many who, like Elijah, think they’re “finished” and “have nothing left to offer” are just as wrong as he was. Simply put: We’re not “finished” until God says we are. So instead of asking “Why am I still here?” try instead asking, “What can I still do?” Then adopt the attitude and ethic of Paul found in Phil.1:20ff, and get busy doing “what you can,” cf. Mark 14:3-9.
- **God is kind, longsuffering, and patient, and is therefore not (yet) willing for you or others you may still influence, to perish, Rom.2:4; 2Pet.3:9.** It could well be, that one is “still here” simply because God is hoping that His *kind, longsuffering patience* will *lead you to “repentance”* and salvation; or even that He is *patiently* allowing you to remain so that you may be His agent of influence in the lives of others who need to repent and be saved. Question: Exactly *who* is the antecedent of the pronoun “*you*” in 2Pet.3:9? Is it not the Christians to whom Peter is writing, cf. 2Pet.1:1-5? If so, God’s *patience* in 2Pet.3:9 is being manifested toward Christians (to do their job of evangelism) because He doesn’t want “*any to perish but for all to come to repentance*”! Think about it, won’t you?

- **The choice is not ours to make, Deut.31:14.** God determined *“the time for you (Moses) to die”* not Moses. David believed and stated that, *“... in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them,”* Psalm 139:16. The choice is just not rightfully ours to make. And when that “appointed” time may be is just not revealed... to any of us.

Are there “better” answers to our question? Probably, but you’ll have to ask someone smarter than me to get them! Nonetheless, perhaps these will at least provide some spiritual “food for thought/contemplation” until you can find and ask him/her! But I do have one concluding suggestion. Instead of asking “Why am I still here?” try asking, “What can I yet do to glorify God with whatever time He allows me?” Having then seriously and soberly contemplated that question, get busy! (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)