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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ RELIGION

Golden Apples for Golden-Agers

Leroy Brightup
Eva M. Brightup
iUniverse (Mar 28, 2012)
Softcover $16.95 (242pp)
978-1-938908-00-2

A Christian devotional that addresses the spiritual needs of seniors, *Golden Apples for Golden-Agers* provides daily guidance on the life-changing issues that many seniors have in common. The golden apples of the title refer to the snippets of guidance included within the book's fourteen chapters, which coauthors Leroy Brightup and Eva M. Brightup describe as "baskets."

Alluding to the old adage about an apple a day keeping the doctor away gives the book a homey touch. An "apple" a day from one of the Brightups' baskets may help keep senior Christians' spirits high and their eyes on God as they confront a host of changes in their lives. Each chapter offers about a half-dozen devotionals that focus on topics such as how to make use of a sudden wealth of free time, how to cope with the deaths of dear friends and family members, how to adjust to new living arrangements, and how to continually grow in one's relationship with God.

The Brightups' topics could not be more appropriate, touching as they do on many of the challenges that people of any faith confront. This is a devotional that shows respect and compassion for older Christians who are making the transition from full-time work, good health, and numerous family responsibilities to a more sedate lifestyle that, in its own way, can be just as daunting as anything they may have dealt with in their younger years.

However, this is not a devotional that will speak clearly and persuasively across the broadest spectrum of Christian believers. Each "golden apple" includes a brief passage of scripture, reflections of the Brightups themselves or other elder Christians, a suggested prayer, and the title of a hymn—the lyrics and music of which readers may not be familiar with. It is likely that the Brightups' book can only be fully appreciated by readers who are immersed in traditional church culture and able to derive some meaning from the mention of a hymn's title. Unchurched Christians and those new to the faith will find little comfort in a song suggestion such as the one for "Redeemed," which appears with a parenthetical note to pay particular attention to the last verse.

It's also possible that struggling seniors may find the bulk of the Brightups' devotionals a bit shallow. While a few of the entries begin to plumb the deepest emotions, most of the guidance offered in this book is light, if not superficial. Exhortations to pray and to call upon God for assistance are fine, but a grieving senior with limited funds, serious health problems, and an unsupportive family might not find comfort in lines like this one: "We lean on the Lord to provide for our needs when we can't." In times of real distress, even a stout believer might question exactly how such words will help in the real world of prescription medication bills and mortgage payments.

A gentle and sweet devotional, *Golden Apples for Golden-Agers* will appeal to readers with strong roots in traditional church services and those who are facing minor difficulties adjusting to life in their senior years.

DIANE TAYLOR (September 13, 2012)

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