

**April 25, 2021**

## **Vessels for the Lord**

### **2 Corinthians 4:7-18**

Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh and the longest-serving consort in British history, has died. At the time of this writing, the official cause of death has not been released, but in recent months, Prince Philip had been in poor health. He died at the age of 99, an age that would be hard to argue against being “ripe” and “old.” Newspapers and websites in the days following his death were plastered with photos of the prince as a young man and as nearly a centenarian. One thing that did not wrinkle and gray with age was the faith of the Duke of Edinburgh.

Baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church, Prince Philip became an Anglican when he married the Queen of England. Throughout his life, he remained curious and supportive of others’ religious beliefs. He helped set up St. George’s House, a religious study center near Windsor Castle. He regularly visited a monastic community in Greece; and in 1986, he organized a summit of representatives from a vast range of religious backgrounds to create an alliance of religion and conservation. He was “a man whose gruff exterior hid a strong personal faith and deep curiosity about others’ beliefs.”<sup>1</sup>

We have treasure in clay pots, fragile and temporary pots. Clay pots are not built to last forever; they aren’t steel or stone. They weather, they crack, they perish. But those clay pots can hold priceless treasure. The student book author writes, “The treasure that they held and the treasure they were called to share is the good news of Jesus Christ. The human body, like pottery made of clay, is fragile. It can be bruised and broken.”<sup>2</sup> Though we age, the good news inside us never does. Even if we make it to the ripe old age of 99, our souls are eternal. “But even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person that we are on the inside is being renewed every day. Our temporary minor problems are producing an eternal stockpile of glory for us that is beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:16-17).

1. What do you know about Prince Philip? Were you aware of his religious background? Does that change what you think of him?
2. Is it harder or easier to focus on your faith as you age? Why?
3. Paul used the phrase “clay pots” to describe Christians. Do you think this is a good descriptor? Why or why not?

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<sup>1</sup>From [apnews.com/article/justin-welby-prince-philip-england-royalty-london-661a6818e944b1401099a8f43dabd64c](http://apnews.com/article/justin-welby-prince-philip-england-royalty-london-661a6818e944b1401099a8f43dabd64c).

<sup>2</sup>From *Adult Bible Studies*, Spring 2021, by Clara Welch (Cokesbury, 2021); pages 77-78.