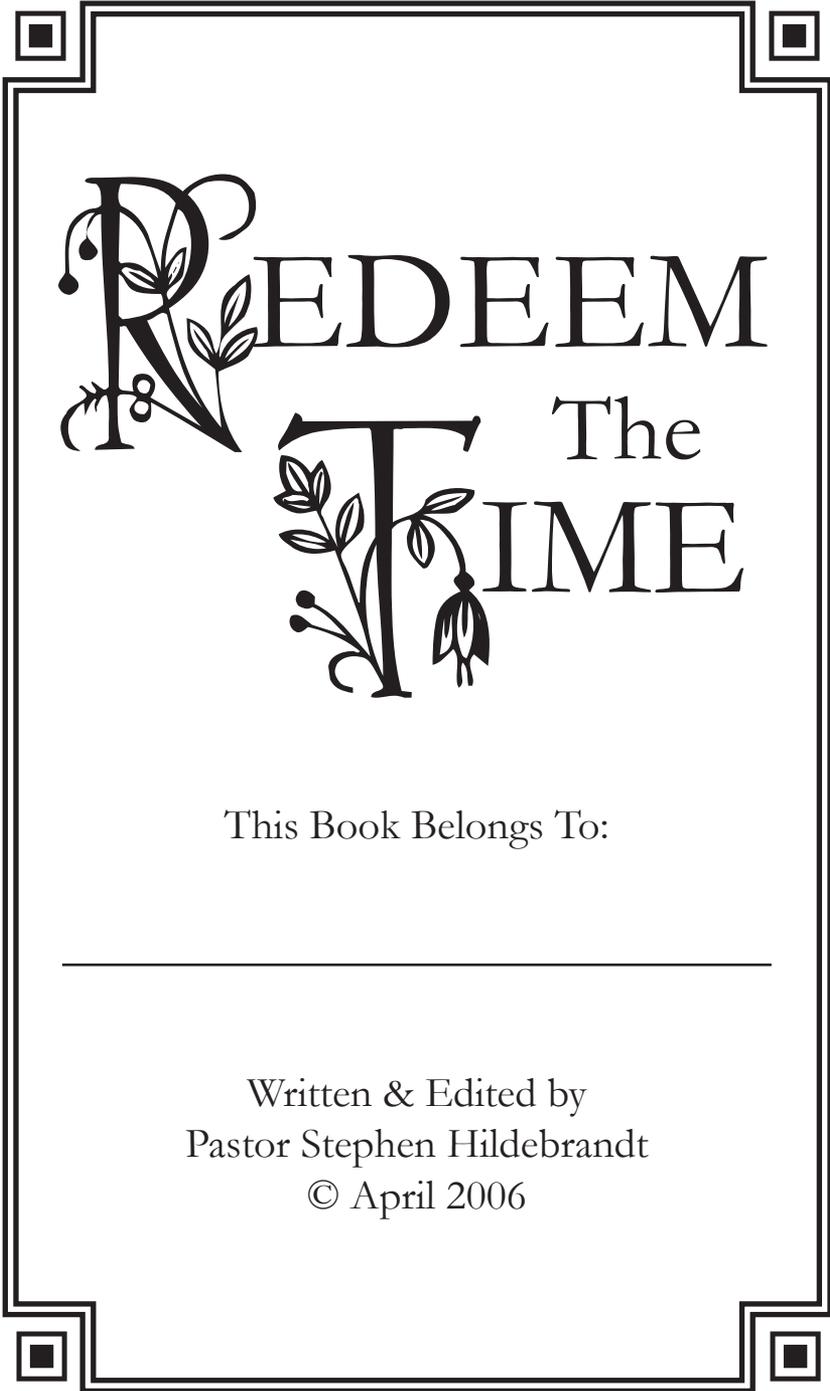


# *T* Redeem the *Time*



LIVE  
WITH A  
PASSION  
FOR  
CHRIST!

*Pastor Stephen Hildebrandt*



REDEEM  
The  
TIME

This Book Belongs To:

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Written & Edited by  
Pastor Stephen Hildebrandt  
© April 2006



*Dedicated to the men of  
Agape Christian Fellowship at  
their tenth annual men's retreat,  
April 21-22, 2006.*

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# ·C·O·N·T·E·N·T·S·

## 1

### **Lesson 1. Life is Short. Lord, Teach us to Number our Days.**

*Pages*  
1-14

Time seems like an inexhaustible resource when we're young, but increases in value with age. The Bible uses several metaphors to describe the shortness of man's life: a handbreadth, a shadow, a vapor, and a flower. Because life is short, God commands His people to number their days.

## 2

### **Lesson 2. Today is a Gift. Carpe Diem, Seize the Day!**

*Pages*  
15-26

Life is too short to waste time continually reliving past successes or lamenting past mistakes. Neither is there time to be so future-minded that we forget to live right now for Jesus Christ. Man's purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, but we can only do that in the present.

## 3

### **Lesson 3. "Redeem" the Time. Bad, Better & Best Uses of Our Time.**

*Pages*  
27-44

As we explore what it means to "redeem" the time, we discover that God does not just want us to make *good* use of our short time on earth, but to make the *most* of it. TV, the internet, computer games, and other things that steal our time are only symptoms of several underlying problems.

## 4

### **Lesson 4. One Great Pursuit. Developing a Passion for Christ.**

*Pages*  
45-60

In this life, there is only time for one great pursuit, one all-consuming passion. The Christian's calling is to enjoy God and to joyfully make others glad in the Lord. Christians can do this, in whatever vocation God has called each one to, in very substantial and practical ways.



# Foreword

od created me - and you - to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion - namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying His supreme excellence in all the spheres of life.<sup>-1</sup> ... The wasted life is the life without this passion. God calls us to pray and think and dream and plan and work not to be made much of, but to make much of Him in every part of our lives.<sup>-2</sup>

You may not be sure that you want your life to make a difference. Maybe you don't care very much whether you make a lasting difference for the sake of something great. You just want people to like you. If people would just like being around you, you'd be satisfied. Or if you could just have a good job with a good wife, or husband, and a couple of good kids and a nice car and long weekends and a few good friends, a fun retirement, and a quick and easy death, and no hell - if you could have all that (even without God) - you would be satisfied. That is a tragedy in the making. A wasted life.<sup>-3</sup>

John Piper  
*Don't Waste Your Life*

# 1

## Lesson 1. Life is Short. Lord, Teach us to Number our Days.

### Lesson 1 Outline

- A. Mankind's Life-Expectancy ..... 1
- B. Metaphors for Man's Life in the Bible ..... 3
- C. Mathematical Analogy: If Water was Life..... 7
- D. Marathon of Earth's History ..... 9

## A. Mankind's Life-Expectancy.

### 1. B.C. - Life-Expectancy Decreasing since the Fall.

- Genesis 5 - Antediluvian World (i.e. Pre-Flood), Adam to Methuselah (~4000-2350 B.C.). Life-Expectancy ~ **1000 years**.
- Genesis 6:3 - (Post-Flood) "Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be **120 years**'"
- Psalms 90:10 - (David, ~1000 B.C.) "As for the days of our life, they contain **70 years**, or if due to strength, **80 years** yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away."

### 2. A.D. - Life-Expectancy in Modern Era. - 4

- Classical Greece & Rome: **28 years**
- Medieval England: **33 years**
- End of 19th Century: **37 years**
- Early 20th Century: **50 years**
- Circa 1940: **65 years**
- Current (Western World): **77 - 81 years**

$$e_x = \sum_{t=l}^{\infty} t P_x$$

**N · O · T · E · S**

 What reason(s) might God have for decreasing man's life span from 1000 to less than 100 years?

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 How much has man's life-expectancy changed in 3000 years since David wrote Psalm 90:10?

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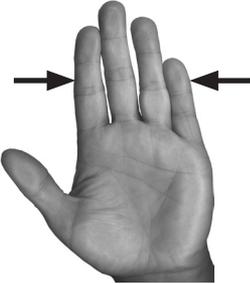
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## B. Metaphors for Man's Life in the Bible.

### 1. Man's Life is like a Handbreadth.

- Psa. 39:4-5 - "Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the extent of my days, let me know how transient I am. Behold, Thou hast made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in Thy sight ..."

**Ancient Hebrew Measurements**



The handbreadth is the smallest ancient biblical linear measurement, equal to the width of four fingers, or about three to four inches. Compare this to: [1] a span - the distance from the tip of the thumb to the little finger, when these are extended, which for an adult is about nine inches; and [2] a cubit - the length of the forearm from the point of the elbow to the end of the middle finger, which is about eighteen inches for the average adult.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1.  
A Handbreadth

### 2. Man's Life is like a Passing Shadow.

- Psa. 102:11 - "My days are like a lengthened shadow"
- Psa. 109:23 - "I am passing like a shadow when it lengthens."
- Psa. 144:4 - "Man is like a mere breath; his days are like a passing shadow."



*"Give an account of the stewardship of thy time. How hast thou spent it? Have not many hours been allowed to run to waste, or worse than waste, in frivolity and sin? Hast thou lived as a dying man should live? Hast thou employed thine hours as remembering that they are very few, and more precious than the diamonds in an emperor's crown?" - 6*

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)



## N · O · T · E · S

☀ How is man's life like a handbreadth?

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☀ How is man's life like a passing shadow?

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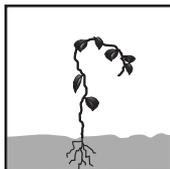
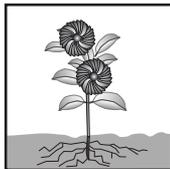
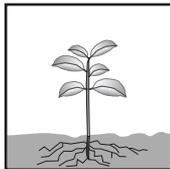
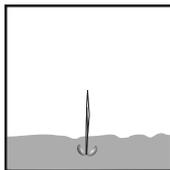
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### 3. Man's Life is like a Mere Breath or Vapor.

- Psa. 144:4 - "Man is like a mere breath..." Hebrew:
- Psa. 39:5, 11 - "... my life-time as nothing in Thy sight, surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Selah. ... 11 Surely every man is a mere breath. Selah." *hebel* - breath or vapor. - 7
- James 4:14 - "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." *selah* - pause, meditate, exalt - 8

### 4. Man's Life is like Grass or Flowers of the Field.

- Psa. 90:5-6 - Man is "like grass ... in the morning it flourishes, and sprouts anew; toward evening it fades, and withers away."
- Psa. 103:15-16 - "As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more; and its place acknowledges it no longer."
- Job 14:1-2 - "Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil. Like a flower he comes forth and withers."
- Isaiah 40:6-8 - "All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass." cf. 1 Pet. 1:24
- 1 Pet. 1:24 - "For, 'All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off.'"



*Queen Elizabeth I, called Elizabeth "the Great", cried on her deathbed, "All of my possessions for one moment of time!"- 9*

Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603)



## N · O · T · E · S

☀ How is man's life like a breath or a vapor?

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☀ How is man's life like a flower?

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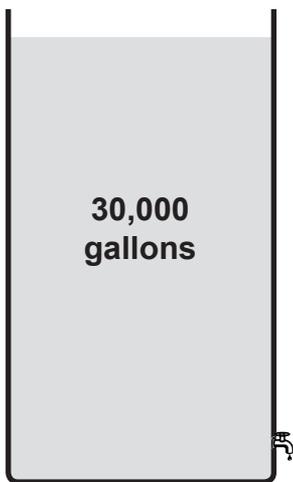
## C. Mathematical Analogy: If Water was Life.

### 1. Starting Point: An "Inexhaustible" Reservoir.

- A certain man lived his entire life in a desert. There was plenty of food, and a water tank filled with 30,000 gallons of cool, clear water - enough for him to drink a gallon of water a day for eighty years. But, when the water ran out, he would get no more.
- At the beginning of his life there was so much water that wasting a little here and there seemed inconsequential. Day after day, he would draw out water and it was hard to tell that the level was decreasing at all.

### 2. The End: Savoring Every Last Drop.

- But the years passed by and the water level was not the only thing that changed. One by one, those things the man had once treasured slowly lost their value, compared to the last few gallons of water remaining in the tank. And something else happened: the water somehow tasted better than ever. The man savored every last drop.
- Each second of your life is like a drop of water. Unfortunately, most of us don't appreciate what we have until it is almost gone. Must we wait until we're about to die, before we really start to live?



### Psalm 90:12

"So teach us to number our days,  
that we may present to Thee  
a heart of wisdom."

$$1 \frac{\text{gallon}}{\text{day}} \times 365 \frac{\text{days}}{\text{year}} \times 82 \text{ years}$$

$$\approx 30,000 \text{ gallons}$$





# D. Marathon of Earth's History.

*If Earth's History Were a Marathon* 



Hebrews 12:1 - "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance **the RACE** that is set before us."

## 1. The "Last Days" Began 2000 Years Ago!

- Acts 2:16-17 - On the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter declared, "This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 'And it shall be in the **LAST DAYS**,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind...'"
- Hebrews 1:1-2 - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these **LAST DAYS** has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world."



## 2. How Much Closer are We to the Finish Line Today?



*Warning*  
*Dates in Calendar are Closer*  
*Than They Appear!*

**N · O · T · E · S**

☀ Why do you suppose God didn't tell us the day and the hour of Christ's return? How should the possibility of Christ's imminent return affect us?

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|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Redeeming the Time</b>   | <b>Lesson 1</b>    |
| <b>Number Your Days</b>   |                    |
| <i>"So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom."</i> |                    |
| <b>Life is Short</b>  | <b>Psalm 90:12</b> |





# Selah. Pause & Meditate.



~ *Individual or Small Group Bible Study* ~

- 1 If you have ever had a close friend or relative pass away prematurely, discuss how it affected you and what your immediate thoughts were when it happened?
- 2 Read 2 Corinthians 5:10. If doctors told you today that you had one year left to live, what would you do different for the next 365 days?
- 3 What is hindering you from doing the things that you mentioned in question 2, above, right now? (Read Eph. 5:15-16)
- 4 Read Philippians 1:21-23. When the apostle Paul was imprisoned in Rome and facing possible execution, what was his attitude toward death?

# Private Devotions

## Psalm 90:12. Number Your Days.

Suppose that you are going to live to be 80. Subtract your current age from 80 and write the number in big bold numbers in the box to the right. List five things that you would like to accomplish for Christ in that time.

Years Left?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Psalm 39:4-6. Prayer of Application.

Read Psalm 39:4-6 and write a personal prayer regarding the application of these verses to your life.

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**2**

**Lesson 2. Today is a Gift.  
Carpe Diem, Seize the Day!**

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**Lesson 2 Outline**

- A.** Re-Living the Past: .....15  
Replaying Past Successes and Failures.
  - B.** Pre-Living the Future: .....17  
Worrying / Day-Dreaming about Tomorrow.
  - C.** The Top Ten Personal Benefits .....19  
Of Focusing on the Present.
  - D.** Every Day is a Gift, Invest it Wisely!.....21
- 

**A. Re-Living the Past:  
Replaying Past Successes and Failures.**

**1. Languishing Over Lost Opportunities.**

- "Opportunities fly by while we sit regretting the chances we have lost."-11

**2. A Monolith to Warn Others, "Don't Look Back!"**

- Gen. 19:26 - "Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt."

**3. Paul, the Pity-Party Pooper, Preaches: "Press On!"**

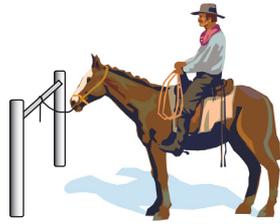
- Phil. 3:13-14 - "...forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

**4. Don't Rest on Your Laurels.**

- Joshua 6:1-7:5 - cf. Victory at Jericho / defeat at Ai.

*"The past is a guidepost,  
not a hitching post."* - 12

L. Thomas Holdcroft



## N · O · T · E · S

☀ How should I handle my past mistakes

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☀ Is there a place for "auld lang syne"?

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**Redeeming the Time**

**Lesson 2**

### **Focus on the Present**

*"...forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward  
to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the  
prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

**Today is a Gift**

**Philippians 3:13-14**

## B. Pre-Living the Future: Worrying / Day-Dreaming about Tomorrow.

### 1. You Have No Control Over the Future.

- Prov. 27:1 - "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth."
- Luke 12:16-20 - "And [Jesus] told them a parable, saying, 'The land of a certain rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, '...You have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'"
- James 4:13-15 - "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.'"

### 3. The Christian Worldview.

- Christians may not know what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future.
- Isa. 46:9-10 - "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'"



### 2. Tomorrow: The Birthplace of Anxiety.

- Matt. 6:27, 34 - "And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? ...Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."
- "When I am anxious it is because I am living in the future. When I am depressed it is because I am living in the past." - 13



## C. **Top Ten Personal Benefits of Focusing on the Present.**

- 1. Lower Anxiety Level.** ..... Matt. 6:27, 34  
Not worrying about the future.
- 2. Less Prone to Depression.** ..... Phil. 3:13  
Not dwelling on past mistakes.
- 3. Greater Contentment.** ..... Phil. 4:11-12  
Greater appreciation for what's in front of you now.
- 4. Greater Ability to Forgive.** ..... 1 Cor. 13:5  
Not keeping mental lists of wrongs suffered.
- 5. Able to Tackle Bigger Tasks.** ..... Phil. 4:13  
Not incapacitated by the size of a task, but focussing on the next step.
- 6. Improved Listening Skills.** ..... James 1:19  
More attentive to what people are saying now.
- 7. Closer Relationships.** ..... Phil. 2:3-4  
More attentive to the present needs of others.
- 8. Less Procrastination.** ..... Prov. 13:4  
Not putting off to tomorrow what you can do today.
- 9. More Effective Bible Study.** ..... James 1:22  
Applying the Bible to your current situation.
- 10. Enjoying God.** ..... Psalm 16:11  
God can only be enjoyed in the present.

# N · O · T · E · S

☀ What is man's chief end?  
(cf. Westminster Catechism, Q.1)

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☀ What is the only piece of time that you have  
any control over doing the above?

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*"Now let me live  
this one day well!" - 15*

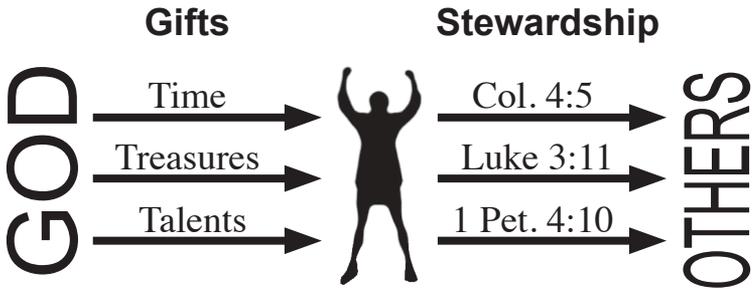
Joseph Alleine (1634-1668)



## D. Every Day is a Gift, Invest it Wisely!

### 1. Parable of the "Talents". (Matt. 25:14-29)

- "Talents" = Time, Treasures & (Personal) Talents.
- i.e. Each day is a gift to be invested wisely for God's interests.
- Matt. 25:21, 23 - Be a "good and faithful steward" of your time.
- *Carpe Diem* (Latin), "Seize the Day", Horace (65-27 B.C.)



### 2. Examples of those who were given only a few "talents" of time, but invested them wisely.



- David Brainerd (1718-1747). Died of tuberculosis, age 29.
- 15,000 mi. on horseback as missionary to Amer. Indians.
- Inspired a revival in missions in 18th & 19th centuries.
- Read, "*The Life of David Brainerd*", by Jonathan Edwards. - 16



- Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843). Died of typhoid.
- Church of Scotland pastor at St. Peter's Church in Dundee.
- Known as a man of deep piety and prayer. Never married.
- Read McCheyne's *Memoirs and Remains*, by Andrew Bonar. - 17



- Jim Elliot (1927-1956). Martyred by Auca Indians, age 29.
- American Missionary to Ecuador near the Amazon River.
- Read *Through Gates of Splendor*, by Elizabeth Elliot.
- Oct. 28, 1949 journal entry: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose." - 18

*Yesterday is History;  
Tomorrow is a Mystery;  
Today is a Gift;  
That's why it's called  
the 'Present'. - 19*

~ Anonymous ~



## N · O · T · E · S

☀ If we were to give the Lord the "first-fruits" of our time, how would that be applied?

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*"A musician is commended not that he played so long, but that he played so well. And thus it is not the days of our life, but the goodness of our life ... that is acceptable unto God Almighty" - 20*

Josiah Shute (1588-1643)







# Private Devotions

## Philippians 3:4-7. Past Successes.

Write down your top six earthly awards, achievements and accomplishments, then read Jer. 9:23-24, Phil. 3:4-7.

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

## Philippians 3:13b. Past Failures.

Many Christians have a hard time forgiving themselves for past sins -- perhaps you are one of them. Below, write out what the Bible says, in 1 John 1:9, about these sins.

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## Philippians 3:14. Press On.

Pray and ask God to help you not dwell on past glories or failures, but to focus on what God wants you to do right now for Jesus Christ.

# 3

## Lesson 3. Redeem the Time. Bad, Better & Best Uses of Our Time.

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### Lesson 3 Outline

- A.** What Does it Mean to "Redeem" Time? ..... 27
- B.** Time-Bandits ..... 29
- 

## **A.** **W**hat does it Mean to "Redeem" Time?

### 1. Keeping Divine Appointments.

- Eph. 5:15-16 (KJV) - "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
- "redeem" Gk. *exagoradzo*, ransom or rescue from loss. A compound word, from *ex*, "from", or "from out of" and *agoradzo*, "to buy in the market place" to "purchase". - 21
- "time", not *chronos* time on a clock or calendar, but *kairos*, opportunity. - 22
- Opportunity, from Latin *opportunus*, a compound word from *ob*, 'in the direction of' and *portus*, 'harbor'; originally describing the wind driving toward the harbor. - 23
- Yet the Christian knows Who controls the winds (Gen. 8:1; Ex. 10:13, Ex. 10:19, 14:21; Num. 11:31; Psa. 78:47; Jonah 1:4, 4:8; Rev. 7:1), as well as every opportunity.
- Opportunities are divine appointments.

### 2. Seize the Day (Moment), Carpe Diem.

- Eph. 5:15-16 - "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." (NIV)
- Greek present tense: "keep on making the most of every opportunity."

# N · O · T · E · S

 Summarize what the Bible means when it commands the Christian to "redeem the time"

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 n ancient Greek statue depicted a man with wings on his feet, a large lock of hair on the front of his head, and no hair at all on the back. Beneath the statue was this inscription: "What is thy name? My name is opportunity. Why hast thou wings on thy feet? That I may fly away swiftly. Why hast thou a great forelock? That men may seize me when I am come. Why art thou bald in back? That when I am gone by, none can lay hold of me." The idea being you either grab opportunity when it comes or it is gone for good. - 24

## B. Time-Bandits



- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Greed - Pursuit of Money & Possessions | 26. Gossip                            |
| 2. Hedonism - Pursuit of Pleasure         | 27. People-pleasing                   |
| 3. Pursuit of Popularity                  | 28. Prejudice                         |
| 4. Pursuit of Fame                        | 29. Workaholism                       |
| 5. Pursuit of Power                       | 30. Micro-Management                  |
| 6. Pursuit of Beauty                      | 31. Mismanagement                     |
| 7. Pursuit of Earthly Awards & Rewards    | 32. Disorganization                   |
| 8. Selfishness                            | 33. Television                        |
| 9. Jealousy                               | 34. Surfing the Net                   |
| 10. Impurity / Immorality                 | 35. E-mail                            |
| 11. Pride                                 | 36. Playstation                       |
| 12. Lust                                  | 37. Computer Games                    |
| 13. Revenge                               | 38. Shopping                          |
| 14. Anger                                 | 39. Sports                            |
| 15. Apathy                                | 40. Recreations                       |
| 16. Worry                                 | 41. News / Newspaper                  |
| 17. Depression                            | 42. Hobbies                           |
| 18. Procrastination                       | 43. Day-dreaming                      |
| 19. Perfectionism                         | 44. Reminiscing the Past              |
| 20. Drunkenness                           | 45. Excessive Sleep                   |
| 21. Addictions                            | 46. Bible reading without application |
| 22. Life-Dominating Sins                  | 47. Prayer from selfish motives       |
| 23. Partying                              | 48. Obsession with home improvements  |
| 24. Pornography                           | 49. Obsession with Politics           |
| 25. Self-Pity                             | 50. Obsession with Exercise           |

*"Time misspent is not  
time lived but lost. Time is a  
precious commodity." - 25*

Thomas Watson (1620-1686)



## N · O · T · E · S

☀ Read Matthew 13:22.

What affect can these things (left) have on  
spiritual growth and fruit?

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# Top 5 Time-Bandits



## Busyness

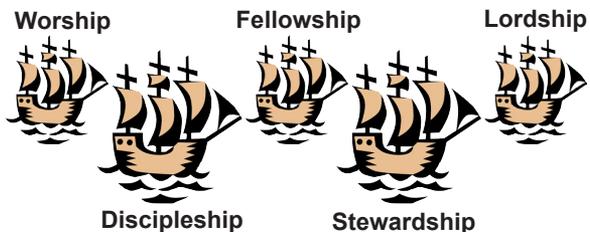
### 1. The Story of Mary & Martha. (Luke 10:38-42)

- 38 Now as they were traveling along, [Jesus] entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.
- 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet.
- 40 But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him, and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."
- 41 But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;
- 42 but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

### 2. Christian Standard Operating Procedure (CSOP).

- Learn how to say, "No" to job offers, promotions, people, activities, etc. that take you away from your family, church, ministry.
- It is better to let lesser things go undone, than to let your "ship" sale.

The Five  
"Ships"  
of the  
Christian  
Armada



**N · O · T · E · S**

 What was wrong with Martha's actions & attitude?

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 How does Martha's attitude play out in the 21st century Christian?

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# Top 5 Time-Bandits



## Prayerlessness

### 1. Worldly-Mindset in God's Own People: So Much to do, I've *NO TIME* to Pray.

- 2 Chron. 12:14 - "And [Rehoboam] did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the Lord."

### 2. God's Thoughts & Ways.

- Isa. 55:8 - "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord."

### 3. Christ-Mindedness: The Busier I am, the *MORE* I Need to Pray.

- Mt. 14:23 - "And after [Jesus] had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone."
- Lk. 5:15-16 - "But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and great multitudes were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But He Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray."
- Rate Jesus' Ministry:

Busyness:           Low - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - High

Prayerfulness:    Low - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - High

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 4. The Truth: You are Too Busy Not to Pray.

### 5. Action Without Prayer is Inefficient.

- James 5:16b - "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (KJV), or "can accomplish much" (NASB).

*"I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer." - 26*

Martin Luther (1483-1546)



*I got up early one morning,  
And rushed into the deeds of the day.  
There was so much work to accomplish,  
That I'd no time to kneel down and pray.*

*Problems surged all around me,  
Heavier and heavier each task.  
'Why doesn't God help me?' I wondered;  
He answered, "Why didn't you ask?"*

*I saw nothing of grandeur and beauty,  
The day sped by heavy and bleak.  
I asked, "O Lord why won't you help me?"  
He said, "Me, you never did seek."*

*So I tried to enter God's presence,  
I used all my keys at the lock.  
But God lovingly, gently chided,  
"Dear child, why not just knock?"*

*So I woke up much earlier this morning,  
And paused before starting the day.  
I had so much work to accomplish,  
I had to kneel down and pray. - 27*

# Top 5 Time-Bandits



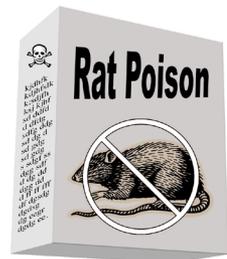
## Settling for "Good" Things

### 1. Bad, Better & Best Uses of Time.

- Eph. 5:15-16 - "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil."
- This verse DOES NOT say: "make *good* use your time".
- But it DOES say: "make the *most* of your time"
- cf. Story of Mary & Martha (Lk. 10:38-42)

### 2. Is My Time-Usage like Rat Poison?

- Rat poison is 99% good food and 1% poison.



### 3. Are "Good" Things Crowding Out the Best Things in my Life?

- Taking a well-paying, but highly demanding job, so I can provide a nice living for my family, even though I am left with very little time to spend with them.
- Regularly scheduling "family time" at home, when we could be fellowshiping with our church family.
- Moving based solely on physical factors (job, family, location), rather than spiritual factors (church, ministry, growth).
- Encouraging our kids how to give 100% on the athletic field, and not how to serve at church.
- Using all my raises to increase my family's standard of living, but not my church's outreach.
- Working instead of worshipping, cf. Martha and Mary (Lk. 10:38-42).

# N · O · T · E · S

☀️ God warns us that "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). How might that relate to this "time bandit"?

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**Redeeming the Time**

**Lesson 3**

## **Make the Most of Your Time**

*"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil."*

**Redeem the Time**

**Ephesians 5:15-16**

# Top 5 Time-Bandits



## Peace-Time Mentality

### 1. We're in the Lord's Army, Yes Sir!

- [2 Cor. 10:3-4](#) - "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, **4** for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."
- [Eph. 6:10-12](#) - "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. **11** Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."
- See also: 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:11.

### 2. Our Prince of Peace is a Warrior.

- [Ex. 15:3](#) - "The Lord is a warrior"
- [Josh. 5:13-15](#) - "Captain of the host of the Lord"
- [Psalm 24:8](#) - "mighty in battle"
- [Isa. 42:13](#) - "a man of war"
- [Jer. 20:11](#) - "a dread champion"
- [Zeph. 3:17](#) - "a victorious warrior"
- [Rev. 19:11-16](#) - "He wages war"

### 3. Cowering in Foxholes vs. Battlefield Faith.

- [Num. 13:1-14:10](#) - Israel's failure to engage.

### 4. Settling for an Avoidance Ethic.

- In peacetime we tend to ask, "What can I do to be more comfortable? To have more fun? To avoid trouble and, possibly, avoid sin." - 28

**Peacetime Vs. Wartime Mentality.**

*"I need to hear this message again and again, because I drift into a peacetime mind-set as certainly as rain falls down and flames go up. I am wired by nature to love the same toys that the world loves. I start to fit in. I start to love what others love. I start to call earth "home." Before you know it, I am calling luxuries "needs" and using my money just the way unbelievers do. I begin to forget the war. I don't think much about people perishing. Missions and unreached peoples drop out of my mind. I stop dreaming about the triumphs of grace. I sink into a secular mind-set that looks first to what man can do, not what God can do. It is a terrible sickness. And I thank God for those who have forced me again and again toward a wartime mind-set." - John Piper - 29*

**N · O · T · E · S**

 Read 1 Peter 3:15. Notice, "hope" is singular. How often do people ask you about that hope?

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# Top 5 Time-Bandits



## An Incomplete Experience of God

We waste time on unnecessary activities which neither refresh us, edify others, or glorify God.

Rom. 13:12-13  
Eph. 5:11  
1 Pet. 4:2-4  
1 Cor. 10:31



Why?

... Because we like doing those things.

1 John 2:15-17  
Jam. 4:4



Why?

... Because we think those activities are more satisfying than the things of God.

Eccl. 5:10  
Isa. 29:8  
Isa. 55:1-2



Why?

... Because we do not fully appreciate how incredibly good God is.

Psa. 31:19  
Psa. 84:11  
Psa. 118:1



Why?

... Because we have not fully "tasted" the goodness of the Lord.

Psa. 16:11  
Psa. 34:8  
Psa. 36:7-8

*"Inside all of us is the sneaking suspicion that God is not as good as He says He is." - 30*



Sinclair Ferguson (1948-Present)

**N · O · T · E · S**

☀ How is your life better since you became a Christian?

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☀ What is the next step in your Christian walk that God has been convicting you to take?

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☀ Do you think your life will be better or worse, if you take that next step?

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# Private Devotions

## Psalm 27:4. To Behold His Beauty.

In Psalm 27:4, King David writes, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ...to behold the *beauty* of the Lord" (KJV). How can a better comprehension of God's "beauty" wean us off of the things of this world that steal our time away from Him?

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## Colossians 3:2. What Attracts You?

What "good" things have crowded out the best things (i.e. opportunities for spiritual growth) in your life.

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# 4

## Lesson 4. One Great Pursuit. Developing a Passion for Christ.

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### Lesson 4 Outline

|           |  |    |
|-----------|--|----|
| <b>A.</b> | Time for One Great Passion / Pursuit. .... | 45 |
| <b>B.</b> | To Live is Christ. ....                    | 47 |
| <b>C.</b> | The Christian's Call to Risk it All. ....  | 49 |
| <b>D.</b> | Taking Practical Steps .....               | 51 |

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## **A. Time for One Great Passion / Pursuit.**

### **1. Solomon's Many Pursuits.**

- Worldly Wisdom (1 Kgs. 4:29-34, 10:23-24; Eccl. 1:13-18)
- Worldly Pleasure (1 Kgs. 11:3; Eccl. 2:1,8,10)
- Worldly Power (1 Kgs. 4:21-26, 10:26)
- Worldly Wealth (1 Kgs. 10:14,21,25-27; Eccl. 2:4-8. 5:10)

### **2. Solomon's Sad Conclusions about His Life.**

- "vanity of vanities" (2x, Eccl. 1:2); vanity (18x).
- "chasing after wind" (9x); "futility" (10x).
- "I hated life" (Eccl. 2:17).
- "I hated the fruit of all my labor" (Eccl. 2:18).

### **3. Christ Came to Give you a Passion for Life.**

- John 10:10 - "I came that [you] might have life, and might have it *abundantly*."

### **4. The Single Nature of the Christian's Passion.**

- Psalm 27:4 - "*One thing* have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ... to behold the beauty of the Lord"
- Phil. 3:13-14 - "*One thing* I do... I press on toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

*"God created us to live with a single passion: to joyfully display his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life. The wasted life is the life without this passion. God calls us to pray and think and dream and plan and work not to be made much of, but to make much of Him in every part of our lives." - 31*



John Piper (1946-Present)

**N · O · T · E · S**

☀ When Jesus said that He came so that His people might live an "abundant" life (Jn. 10:10), was He referring to material wealth? If not what?

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☀ What does Luke 12:15 say?

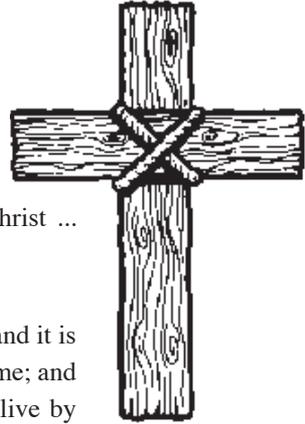
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## B. To Live is Christ.



### 1. Paul's Personal Passion.

- Phil. 1:21-22 - "For to me, to live is Christ ... this will mean fruitful labor for me."
- Gal. 2:20 - "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

### 2. Paul Prayed for the Same Passion in You.

- Eph. 3:18-19 - I pray that YOU "may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth ... of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge."

### 3. The Overflow of our Passion for Christ.

- 1 Peter 2:9 - "... that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

### 4. Defining Our Passion.



*To know Christ and make Him known.*

- Eph. 3:18-19

- 1 Peter 2:9

- **Godward:** *To glorify God by enjoying Him forever.* - 32
- **Manward:** *To joyfully make others glad in the Lord.* - 33

*"Only one life, t'will soon be past;  
Only what's done for Christ will last." - 34*  
~ Source Unknown ~

## N · O · T · E · S

☀ From Philippians 1:21-22 and Galatians 2:20, what does the apostle Paul mean when he says, "to live is Christ"?

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| <b>Redeeming the Time</b>  | <b>Lesson 4</b>    |
| <p><b>Proclaiming His Excellencies</b></p> <p><i>"You are ... a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."</i></p> |                    |
| <b>One Great Pursuit</b>   | <b>1 Peter 2:9</b> |

## C. The Christian's Call to Risk it All.

### 1. What is Risk.

- *Definition.* Risk - An action that exposes oneself to the possibility of loss or injury, such as the loss of money, relationships, reputation, health or life.

### 2. Following Christ is Risky Business.

- Lk. 21:16-17 - "But you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all on account of My name."
- John 15:20 - "A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."
- John 16:33 - "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
- Acts 14:22 - "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."
- 2 Cor. 1:5 - "For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ."
- 2 Tim. 3:12 - "And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

### 3. Those Who Risked and Won (Heb. 11:1-35).

- Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab, etc.

### 4. Those Who Risked and Died (Heb. 11:36-38).

- Did these lose it all? Rom. 8:18, 2 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 1:21

### 5. Risk it All or Waste it All.

- Israel in the Wilderness (Num. 13-14)
- Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:15-30)

*"It is right to risk for the cause of Christ, and not to is to waste your life. ... the Christian life is a call to risk."-35*

John Piper (1946-Present)



## N · O · T · E · S

☀ What does a Christian in America risk?

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☀ Can a life be wasted on Christ?

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## D. Taking Practical Steps



### We Redeem the Time by Priorities, Schedules, Calendars & Day-Planners That Give Christ First Place.

#### 1. Give Christ First Place.

- Col. 1:18 - "... that He Himself might come to have **FIRST** place in everything."

#### 2. Be a Kingdom Seeker.

- Matt. 6:33 - "But seek ye **FIRST** the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

#### 2. Guard Your First Love.

- Rev. 2:1-4 - "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4 'But I have this against you, that you have left your **FIRST** love.'"



*"I cannot conceive it possible for anyone to receive Christ as Savior and yet not to receive him as Lord. A man who is really saved by grace does not need to be told that he is under solemn obligations to serve Christ. The new life within him tells him that. Instead of regarding it as a burden, he gladly surrenders himself" - 36*



Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

## N · O · T · E · S

☀ Like everyone else, Christians plan for vacations, their retirement, and big events like birthdays, weddings and anniversaries, but very few Christians make concrete plans about their spiritual growth, and subsequently make very little progress. What is your plan to put Christ first?

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## Taking Practical Steps



### Break Out of the Sacred / Secular Mind-Set.

#### 1. Definitions.

- "Sacred" - Things, such as the Bible, church buildings, prayer, worship, etc. which are dedicated to God for a religious purpose.
- "Secular" - Things that we tend to think have no religious or spiritual basis, such as eating, sleeping and work.

#### 2. We Live in Two Worlds.

- The Christian resides in the natural world & the spiritual world.

#### 3. Jesus' Life had No Sacred / Secular Distinctions.

- John 8:29 - "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him"

#### 4. The Sacrament of Living.

- Recognize that you live every moment before the face of God (*coram deo*) - 2 Chron. 16:9; Job 28:24; Psa. 33:13-15, 90:8, 139:1-4; Prov. 5:21, 15:3; Isa. 29:15, 40:27-28; Jer. 16:17, 23:24; Heb. 4:13.
- Redeem the time by dedicating even routine activities to the Lord as sacred acts of worship.
- 1 Cor. 10:31 - "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
- Col. 3:17 - "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

*"We must offer all our acts to God and believe that He accepts them. Then hold firmly to that position and keep insisting that every act of every hour of the day and night be included in the transaction. Keep reminding God in our times of private prayer that we mean every act for His glory; then supplement those times by a thousand thought-prayers as we go about the job of living. Let us practice the fine art of making every work a priestly ministrations. Let us believe that God is in all our simple deeds and learn to find Him there." - 37*



A.W. Tozer  
(1897-1963)  
*Pursuit of God*  
Chapter 10  
Sacrament of Living

# N · O · T · E · S

☀ What is a Sacrament?

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☀ How can life be lived as a Sacrament?

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# Taking Practical Steps



## Live on the Threshold of Eternity.

### 1. Live like There's No Tomorrow.

#### Worldly Philosophy.

- "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die" (Lk. 12:19-20)

#### The Christian's Version of "Eat, Drink and be Merry".

- Whether we eat or drink, we do all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), and we are merry (i.e. rejoice) in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4), for tomorrow we may die, but even that would be gain! (Phil. 1:21)

### 2. Ready to Go, Willing to Stay [in Christ's Service].

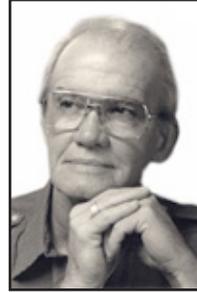
- Phil. 1:21-23 - "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better"



*"I love to live on the brink of eternity"- 38*

David Brainerd (1718-1747)

*"Live this day as if it will be your last. ... "Take the baton, now. Run with it! This is your day! Beginning today, treat everyone you meet, friend or foe, loved one or stranger, as if they were going to be dead at midnight. Extend to each person, no matter how trivial the contact, all the care and kindness and understanding and love that you can muster, and do it with no thought of any reward. Your life will never be the same again." - 39*



Og Mandino  
(1923-1996)

## N · O · T · E · S

🌸 What made the apostle Paul so ready to go and be with the Lord?

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# Selah. Pause & Meditate.



~ *Individual or Small Group Bible Study* ~

- 1 Read Colossians 1:18. What areas do you find it most difficult to give Christ first place? (e.g. work, school, recreation, marriage, parenting, thoughts, words, attitudes, prayer, Bible study, etc.)
- 2 Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. How has the separation of activities into "sacred" and "secular" affected your thoughts about routine daily activities?
- 3 Read Philippians 1:21-23. How would you rate your readiness to die right now and be with the Lord? How would you rate your willingness to stay and devote yourself to Christian outreach in whatever vocation you are in?

# Private Devotions

## Colossians 1:18. Christ First.

The apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 1:18, "that Christ might come to have first place in everything". In what new ways can you give Christ first place in your daily or weekly schedule. Pray and list three.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Philippians 4:4. Rejoice in the Lord!

Pray and list three practical ways that you can work to make others glad in the Lord?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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# Psalm 90

2 Before the mountains were born,  
or Thou didst give birth to the  
land and the world, even from  
everlasting to everlasting, Thou  
art God.

4 For a thousand years in Thy sight  
are like yesterday when it passes  
by, or as a watch in the night.

5 [Man] is like grass ...

6 In the morning it flourishes, and  
sprouts anew; toward evening it  
fades, and withers away.

10 As for the days of our life, they  
contain seventy years, or if due to  
strength, eighty years ...

12 So teach us to number our days,  
that we may present to Thee a