



The Time of Your Life

For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. —James 4:14

Do you wear a wristwatch on your arm with a secondhand on it? Maybe you go by the clock in your cell phone or in the lower right corner of your computer screen. But stop for a moment and follow the little hand on your time piece as it ticks away one for minute. Those seconds, of course, are the way we measure time in this first world culture we live in, and the “time” it represents for many of us... seems to have become the very essence of people’s lives. By the time you reach the age of 75, the clocks and watches of this world will have ticked away a total of nearly 2.5 billion seconds. Man, that’s a whole lot! What are you doing with time—the precious commodity? Are you seeking the Lord with it and being used of Him?

Like the morning fog along the coastline... we’re here for only a short period under the sun and then we’re gone. And all the glory of our achievements so to speak (with more splendor for some than others) then rapidly fades away. Unfortunately, most people will quickly forget about us and our trophies. Others will come along and end up replacing us with our duties. But does this inescapable brevity of our existence here necessitate a radically-hurried-up lifestyle?

Are we trying to make others believe something about us by darting here and there non-stop, and why is what we achieve in this world so important? What are you going after? Must you have it in order to make you feel that you are enough? What’s your master passion? Stuff that tears or rusts-out simply doesn’t satisfy—it just gets obsolete and out of style by next season when all the bills for it start rolling in. Sure slothful-laziness is lame, but the other extreme can be equally as bad. Do you really want to be a workaholic for God when He wants you to enjoy balance... or one for yourself? Isn’t it time to lay down your idols? When you or I get too industrious for time alone with Jesus, then we’ve gotten too industrious.

You know which fast lane I’m talking about... Get a jump on it babe, peddle to the medal, don’t be late again... drop your kids off at school, meet with the teacher, then shuttle them to soccer practice, after that you all are expected at Joey’s birthday party at the lake. Don’t forget that dinner date, or that appointment with the board and that evening conference call tomorrow. We’ve got to produce more, More, MORE! We’ve got a quota to reach, before our manager reaches us!

How do you make the days of your brief life count? For you, does it have lot more to do with keeping busy or with the settling the Lordship issue? Can a person labor to enter into God’s rest—living in His presence—and simultaneously cultivate a sense of evangelistic urgency and enthusiasm, obeying Christ in daily surrender? It’s possible! If

He's not Lord of all—in the big things, the small, the fast-paced, the slow, the medium and the tall—then, He's not Lord at all.

*I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend
He referred to the dates on her tombstone from the beginning... to the end.*

*He noted that first came her date of birth and spoke the following date with tears,
But he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.
For that dash represents all the time that she spent alive on earth...
And now only those who loved her know what that little line is worth.
For it matters not, how much we own; the cars.... the house... the cash,
What matters is how we live and love.. and how we spend our dash.*

*So think about this long and hard—are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left, that can still be rearranged.
If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real,
And always try to understand the way other people feel.
And be less quick to anger, and show appreciation more..
And love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.*

*If we treat each other with respect, and more often wear a smile.
Remembering that this special dash May last only a little while.
So, when your eulogy is being read with your life's actions to rehash...
Would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your dash?¹*

What are you doing with that elongated stretched out hyphen? Does it (our dash, our life) just happen? Will your choices and follow-through make it what it is? Will you spend your dash for yourself or for Christ and others? If you live 60 years ...If you do.. how much can you accumulate, hoard, earn, hide away, store, indulge in ...and will your hands end up empty just like the poorest person's hands anyways? If you are blessed to live 70 years, will you get right with God through Jesus and help others do the same? What else other than souls can you bring with you to Heaven? Degrees, bonds, wardrobes, cash, awards, cars, homes ...none of it is transferable. It's all going to rust, tear, rot, be swiped or burn. Jesus asked, **"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?—or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"** (Matt. 16:26, kjv).

Hey gang; who doesn't ever feel that almost magnetic pull towards the things of the flesh, towards mere busyness, towards too much TV and entertainment? We must resist and reject all those time-wasting activities that suck us downward. Perhaps saying "no" more often and "yes" to Jesus and His will, can bring more effectiveness to your witness that you ever imagined. Die to what's worldly and second best; sow to the Spirit instead!

Perhaps the quality of our existence here should *not* be measured by how much money we can generate, how many people we can hire, how much stuff we can purchase, how far and often we can travel on vacation, what labels we can dawn with our apparel, how much power we can exert over the poor, how much popularity and connectivity we can enjoy with movers and shakers, or by how much activity we can pack into a single day.

You want to **"aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business"** (1 Thess. 4:11) like I do. A family counselor has noted what she's identified as *"a salt-mine mentality"* in our modern society. Mori Freed says that *"in the 1980s it became all work, work, work," and "earning as much money as you can"* took on greater importance to Americans. Mori recognizes that even today greedy citizens obsessed with earning big bucks will quickly get thrown out of balance. She explains how they have no peace, become

stressed and depressed and many won't even learn why or how to deal with it, even though they've already met a lot of their personal goals in life. Other counselors see a similar trend in the arena of education, where homework time for elementary school kids has almost doubled in the past 20 years. Man, I remember when we were missionaries in Germany during the '90s and our small children had to do two to three hours of Hausaufgabe (homework) per day just to keep up. It's a Western World kind of pressure.

Solomon offered these words of wisdom for everyone racing against the clock and striving for success in life: **"Do not overwork to be rich; because of your own understanding, cease!"** (Prov. 23:4). Another translation says, **"Don't weary yourself trying to get rich. Why waste your time? For riches can disappear..."** (vv. 4-5, nlt).

What's it like in our homes? Is there time for fun and laughter together, or are there lots of quarrels about work, and bills ...for temporal widgets and stuff we never even needed. Is there deadlines and school, with harsh words about getting the job done? What's it like in our hearts? Even Christian ministry can become an unhealthy obsession.

*Way too busy for prayer, your family, relaxation and fun?
Have top priorities fallen to the bottom of the list or do they line up with biblical values?
Taking time for those who need to be your best friends?
All work and no time for play—that'll hijack the joy of life far away.*

*But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.'
My times are in Your hand. —Psalm 31:14-15*

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. —Psalm 90:12

Do you remember the sad story of Lazarus and the rich man and how both died and went to separate places forever. The rich dude who squandered his days then, **"cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'** **"But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things..."** (see: [Luke 16:19-31](#)). It gets too late for people before they know it and then they are overwhelmed with regret.

But what does it signify when we **"redeem the time"**? It shows that we mean business and want to make that small little dash in-between the two dates on our future tombstone mean something positive. In the original Greek, the Bible word used is *Exagorazo* and it means: to rescue from loss, to improve upon, or to make the most of the opportunity that's given to you. Redeeming the time is seizing the day in the very best way, when the majority aren't and will be sorry! I like what best selling author, Greg Laurie, once said, **"So many people are never satisfied! We all want the moments of our lives to count for something. We all have something that's built into us as humans; we all have the desire to make a mark! And people will go to drastic measures to preserve their lives, to somehow turn back the clock."**

May I ask you a question? How late in life is it for you? According to the life span of the average American man, which is 74 years of age (some say it's 78.9 years for women and only 72.5 years for men²), but assuming that 12 midnight is when it all comes to a close for you and me... (We might not even be afforded that benefit and most people never get the privilege of time to think in a death bed), how much time do you have left?

Are you using your time wisely? Personally, I can't think of a better way to spend ones life than knowing Christ and being a witness for Him. If our years could be equated to the time on a clock, I started preaching the Gospel at about 11:00 AM and now it's getting late in the day. What time is it for you?

When you are...

*1 year old, it is 6:00 AM
4 years old, it is 7:00 AM
8 years old, it is 8:00 AM
12 years old, it is 9:00 AM
16 years old, it is 10:00 AM
20 years old, it is 11:00 AM
24 years old, it is 12:00 PM
28 years old, it is 1:00 PM
32 years old, it is 2:00 PM
36 years old, it is 3:00 PM
40 years old, it is 4:00 PM
44 years old, it is 5:00 PM
48 years old, it is 6:00 PM
52 years old, it is 7:00 PM
56 years old, it is 8:00 PM
60 years old, it is 9:00 PM
64 years old, it is 10:00 PM
68 years old, it is 11:00 PM
70 years old, it is 11:30 PM*

No matter what time it is, the Bible says, **"Prepare to meet your God!"** ...for, **"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."** Yup, it's time to [get ready!](#)—**"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"** (2 Cor. 6:2). You can know Him and be apart of the greatest Cause.

I'm sure you know of actor, Michael J. Fox, who pretty much became a favorite entertainment figure here over the years due to his charm, humor and sincerity. He has a cause today. And we feel for him with that huge struggle that he has had to battle with for so long. It's hard for him and so sad. Did you know that his Foundation has now funded 126 million dollars for Parkinson's Research. In an interview he gave not too long ago, he said he has realized how vulnerable he really is. He says **"I've realized it doesn't matter how many awards I have or how big my bank account is, the end of the story is you die. We all die."**

The stats are pretty impressive. Every 10 out of 10 people will reach room temperature, but they all could live on ...in a better place, if they would just [make reservations in advance](#).

*Time keeps on slippin, slippin, slippin
Into the future
Time keeps on slippin, slippin, slippin
Into the future
Feed the babies who don't have enough to eat
Shoe the children with no shoes on their feet
House the people livin in the street
Oh, oh, there's a Solution*

Remember Pink Floyd singin' about societal needs against the clock? Well, never forget that the Solution for your dash (no matter how long it will be) has a name—Jesus! And this beneficent dash-giver cares about you deeply and about all your friends. He promises to meet all your needs. No matter the problems during the length of your dash, the Answer is God the Son.

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¹ This is the poem: *Dash* by Linda Ellis.

² Did you know that there are 18 countries now with populations of 1 million or more that have life expectancies greater than that of those living in the USA? See www.therubins.com/health/healthy2010.htm