

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

Let me begin with a question: **How can you make the most of the rest of your life.** Many of us are retired or near retirement, a some of us are a decade or two away from that milestone; a few may have a bigger chunk of time away; but truth is all of us are going to die. So if you were going to slip a message in a bottle what kind of message would you leave behind for your children, your grandchildren; your extended friends and family? Scripture tells us, *"All the days ordained for us were written in God's book before any of them came to be"* [Psalm 139:16]. There's *"a time to be born and a time to die"* [Ecclesiastes 3:2]. Truth is, you're born in one hospital and will die in another. So, here's the question: You have only so many days left. **How could you make the most of the rest of your life?**

Psalm 90 is going to help us answer that question. This Psalm was written more than likely by a very old man, Moses. We read that in the superscription of Psalm 90 "A prayer of Moses the man of God." One can split Moses' life up into three trimesters. **1st 40: Education in the Egyptian Court of Pharaoh. 2nd 40: Shepherding for his father-in-law Jethro in the Sinai Desert.**

3rd 40: Leading Israel out of Egyptian bondage through the Wilderness and onto the Promised Land.

Moses is nearly 120 now. It appears that Moses is coming near to the end of his life. The threat of death compels Moses to wrestle with God over the value of life. With Moses' help we want to ask, How can we make the most of the rest of our lives.

I. SPIRITUALITY: LIFE IS A RISKY JOURNEY. YOU NEED A PLACE TO CALL HOME. Vs. 1 reads, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations." Moses is reaching up to the Lord and saying: "God, it seems you've been our home forever" [The Message]. Remember that the tabernacle, the tent of God rested in the center of the twelve tribes of Israel, in the center of the camp of 2 ½ million people. A glorious cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night rested right over the tent. God made His home smack dab in the middle of His people. And so His home was their home. Through Jesus we all enter the Tent of God and can find immediate access to God's sheltering presence. Moses built a tent. Solomon built a Temple. But Jesus has come to build a house of prayer for all peoples.

Remember the movie E.T. [image] when the Extra terrestrial felt alienated, lonely, disconnected standing before a mechanical device he rigged up to communicate. Remember his cry. He points heavenward, "E.T. phone home." You know what it is to ache for God. And in the ultimate sense your place of deepest comfort isn't found in friends or family. God is the ultimate source of shelter. As we make our rush to the end, let me encourage you on a deep feeling level to nurture your sense of being at home with God. When I feel disconnected, dislocated, or discouraged, I'll say to God, *"Father, Mother me."* [For God transcends gender and is neither male nor female]. "Father, Mother me." [cf. Notes from NIV Study Bible Isaiah 49:13-15; 60:16; 66:11-13 cmp. Jesus' words in Matthew 23:37 *"Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem...How often like a Hen gathers chicks beneath her wings, How often I wanted to gather you. But you were not willing."*]. And then just wait for God's mothering presence to draw me close. Life is a risky journey. Spirituality matters. You need a place to call home.

II. PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE. LIFE IS SHORT. GET WISDOM! Any way you look at it, life is brief. **Compared to God,** humans live but a moment. Long before the Rocky Mountains you

see on vacation or the vast stretches of land around you; long before that, God was there. Moses says, *"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God"* [90:1-2]. God is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. From eternity backwards to eternity forwards, that's God. Moses says to God, *"For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by"* [90:4]. According to God's timetable a thousand years is over in the snap of a fingers.

Chronologically too, calendar wise, man's life-span too is a temporary thing. In Moses' day people ordinarily lived to be 70 years or sometimes if the individual was extremely strong, he lived to be 80. *"The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength"* [90:10]. In 1900 life expectancy from birth was only 47. In the US today life expectancy is 78.8 years [US-76.4 men; 81.2 women]. We've come a long ways. We may be able to extend life with the help of medicine and breakthroughs in the areas of cancer control and heart disease. But we can never overcome death. Psalm 90:3 whispers the terrifying curse on sinful Adam's race in Genesis 3:19 "For dust you are and to dust you will return."

Depicted, **Poetically**, Moses declares, *"Are we no more to you than a wispy dream [gone in a flash], no more than a blade of grass that springs up gloriously with the rising sun and is cut down without a second thought?"* [90:5-6 The Message]. Are we no more than *"a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes"* [James 4:14]. At age 40, I'm told we try on our own shroud for size, we reckon with our mortality and sense that we're next in line. Morbid realism can get the best of us. One older woman lamented, *"Do you know what the problem of getting older is? There's just not much future in it."*

The flow of Psalm 90 isn't, Life is short, thus "Life Stinks." No Life is short ergo, "Get wisdom!" Moses prays in vs. 12, *"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."* (image) When you realize how really short life is, when it hits you that you are but a heartbeat away from eternity, suddenly every moment, every second, every hour, everyday becomes absolutely precious. So here's the challenge. Don't kiss your brains good bye. Don't become a coach potato. Don't vegetate. Cogitate. Think! Think God's thoughts after Him! Make the study of God's Word the central delight of your life. *"For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding"* [Proverbs 3:6]. But don't just study the word. Study God's world. Grow in emotional intelligence. You only have so many days to live. Study life in God's world that you might live them well.

III. ATTITUDE: LIFE IS TOUGH. DON'T POSTPONE JOY! Moses remembers the many years that God's people were afflicted with trouble on their journey through that *"vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land with its venomous snakes and scorpions"* [Deuteronomy 8:15]. But now Moses on the threshold of the Promise land flowing with milk and honey, is anticipating a reversal of fortune. He writes, *"Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love [covenant love, hesed], that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days"* [90:14]. Eugene Peterson's translation is classic: *"Surprise us with love at daybreak; then we'll skip and dance all the day long."*

I love this quote Pastor Chuck Swindoll gave the world:

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"The longer I live the more convinced I become that life is 10 percent what happens to us and 90 percent how we respond to it. I believe the single most significant decision I can make on a day-to-day basis is my choice of attitude. It is more important than my past, my education, my bankroll, my successes or failures, fame or pain, what other people think of me or say about me, my circumstances, or my position. Attitude keeps me going or cripples my progress...It alone fuels my fire or assaults my hope. When my attitude is right, there's not barrier too high, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too great for me."

Chuck Swindoll, *Tale of the Tardy Oxcart*, p. 38]. Remember Jesus alive and Lord. And Jesus' resurrection energy flows in your veins. For that reason every day you can wake up and say:

"This is the day the Lord has made. I will be glad and rejoice in it" [Psalm 118:24]. Let this carpe diem lifestyle, Moses asks, this enthusiasm for life before your face be passed on to our children, that the next generation as well might know the splendor of knowing You.

IV. VOCATION: WORK FEELS FUTILE. MAKE IT COUNT!

Moses closes with these rich words, *"May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands."* This is a prayer, that God would give firmness, solidity, permanence to the work of our hands and of our minds. Somehow Father, make what we do in this world last. Give it durability, make it count: establish the work of our hands. Moses hadn't thrown in the towel. At 120 he had not yet retired. In terms of the Kingdom, Moses' greatest contribution came in the final trimester of his life. Did you know that more men die of retirement than of old age? [John Piper, *Desiring God*, p. 189]. Why's that? It happens because when people throw in the towel, when they lose focus, purpose and passion in life, their lives feel vain and pointless. But when we continue to make a contribution in God's world, our lives can sizzle with purpose and passion.

Life is a risky journey. You need a place to call home.

Life is short. Get a heart of wisdom

Life is tough. Attitude is Everything.

Work life feels futile. Do your best to make it count. Make a commitment to serve the Lord with gladness until no more breath comes out of your nostrils. *"May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands"* [90:17]. **Come home.** You may have been a Christian for a long time. But for some reason you're emotionally distant from God. Come home. Rest in the shelter of His love. Let the Father mother you. He'll help you make the most of the rest of your life.