

How People Change

7 strategies to aid in the pursuit of growth

Equip Class – Session 5 – February 14, 2024

Ponder the Brevity of Life

I. Introduction

“The serious thoughts of our short stay here would be a great means of promoting godliness. What if death should come before we are ready? What if our life should breathe out before God’s Spirit has breathed in? Whoever considers how flitting and winged his life is, will hasten his repentance” (Thomas Watson, *A Godly Man’s Picture* pg. 208).

a. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

b. Hebrews 12:1

c. 1 Timothy 4:7-8

d. 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Two lessons

1. You do not get better or grow without effort and practice (Hebrews 5:12-14).

2. At the end of competition the intensity, focus, and effort all peaks to maximum capacity because the game is almost over.

II. The Reality of the Brevity of Life (Psalm 90:10; James 4:14).

- This word mist “refers either to a puff of smoke or one’s breath that appears for a moment in cold air” (John MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible NKJV* pg. 1933).

III. The Reminder of the Brevity of Life

A. In addition to speaking of the brevity of life, the Bible also emphasizes the imminent return of Christ – further underscoring life is short and could end at any time (Luke 12:35-40; 1 Thessalonians 5:16; Matthew 25:1-13).

B. The key point of these and other passages of the imminent return of Christ is that we are always to be ready for His return.

IV. The Response to the Brevity of Life and the Imminent Return of Christ (Revelation 22:6-12). *These four responses come from John MacArthur’s book Because the Time is Near.*

A. Immediate Obedience (Revelation 22:6-7).

“After reading Revelation, Christians should love Christ more, seek to be more like Christ, hope for their resurrection bodies, and anticipate their eternal rewards” (John MacArthur, *Because the Time is Near* pg. 330-331).

“Such considerations are meant to drive us to quick repentance and to motivate a deep longing for godliness. “You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Luke 12:40). Are we ready” (Tim Challies, “Ponder the Brevity of Life”)?

B. Immediate Worship (Revelation 22:8-9).

C. Immediate Proclamation (Revelation 22:10-11).

“Immediate proclamation of this book is called for because the end is near. Indeed, the coming of Christ has been imminent for every generation from John’s day until the present” (John MacArthur, *The Time is Near* pg. 332).

D. Immediate Service (Revelation 22:12).

E. If we want to grow in godliness – which is the purpose of this class – there ought to be urgency to our lives.

V. Conclusion – *In Conclusion let me close with a Challenge* – Brevity breeds urgency! (Psalm 90:12; Psalm 119:60; Psalm 96:9; Matthew 28:19-20; Matthew 25:14-30).

VI. Discussion Questions

- A. What was most encouraging, challenging, or convicting from this message?
- B. What is your reaction to the reality that God offers a reward to motivate us towards faithful service? Does that surprise you? Why or why not?
- C. What are some examples in your life when the time is short has helped produce a good result in you?
- D. Describe a skill or task or experience that you learned from that has translated over to helping you in your spiritual life. *For example, I learned discipline, sacrifice, and hard work from playing sports and those characteristics helped me tremendously to become a student of the Bible. I would not be the person I am today if it were not for sports in my life.*
- E. After 5 sessions, which session has been most helpful to you in growing in godliness and why?
 - 1. Be Diligent in the Means of Grace (Bible reading, prayer, and belong to a local church)
 - 2. Guarding against Worldliness - we recognize that custom (it is accepted by culture), example (everyone seems to be doing it), and interest (it is a benefit to me) can blind us to the sins of our day like John Newton was blinded by the sin of slavery in his day.
 - 3. Thinking Holy Thoughts – you were encouraged to create a meditation sheet to aid in the pursuit godly thinking.
 - 4. Watch for Temptation while Redeeming Our Time – we described a temptation cycle using James 1:13-18 – and you were guided through creating your own temptation cycle and invited to respond with corresponding biblical truth to help you overcome your temptation cycle.
 - 5. This week's talk – Ponder the Brevity of Life.