

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, October 8, 2019

Numbering Our Days – Psalm 90

Overview: My wife and I are in the season of life reflected in the prayer of Moses. *“Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”* Actually, we all are. No matter what age we are, God’s Word includes this reminder that our days are numbered -- by Him, not us. As Christians we live with the assurance of eternal life because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Yet, we also desire to live a long life on earth, to make a difference in someone else’s life, to provide for our families, and, perhaps, to leave a legacy that will continue even past our years on earth. We’ll explore what it means to ask for a *“heart of wisdom.”*

God Working In My Story: Dave Ebeling

Segment Questions:

- **Psalm 90:12:** *“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”* What are characteristics of a “heart of wisdom”?
- **Psalm 90:15:** *“Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.”* Does this make sense? Why should we be glad under these circumstances?
- **Psalm 90:17:** *“May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us.”* What is the “work of our hands” in today’s culture?
- Where in this Psalm do you see the LAW: that we are sinners and daily displease our Creator? What statements of Moses’ prayer declare the GOSPEL: that God is gracious and merciful? Why are both important for Christians?

Action Questions:

- From your personal history, name a person who had died. This could be a close relative, a dear friend, or even someone you’ve never met; but who left a legacy that that you still remember and impacts your life. Tell a brief story about that person and that person’s legacy as you reflect on his or her life.
- Some people plan their own funeral. If you were to do so, what Bible text might you request be used by your pastor or other officiant.
- Do you have a will? Is it up to date? How might it express your Christian faith in some way?

Personal Prayer: Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray Thee Lord, my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake
I pray Thee Lord my soul to take.
If I should wake before I die
I pray Thee Lord to show me why.

Introduction

In the first week of this fall's Men's Life studies, Aaron Brown talked about the seasons of life, focusing on Autumn. We're in that season now, just starting to really enjoy it after a hot, dry summer. The lesson for today challenges us to look at winter. Moses was the author of Psalm 90. Think of it as a winter prayer.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.² Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. ³You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!" ⁴For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. ⁵You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: ⁶in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.⁷ For we are brought to an end by your anger, by your wrath we are dismayed. ⁸You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. ⁹For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. ¹⁰The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty yet their span^[c] is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.¹¹ Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you? ¹²**So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.** ¹²Relent, Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants. ¹⁴Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. ¹⁵Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. ¹⁶May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. ¹⁷May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands. (NIV)

28,889! That's my number today. If you've recently had a 27th birthday, you're in the 10,000-day range. Or perhaps you saw an obituary last week of an infant. His number was 13. The mother of a good friend died last week at age 103. Her number was about 37,600 days. When Moses penned Psalm 90, perhaps near the end of his life, he did not intend that God should give us a math brain (or a calculator) to actually count our days. Let's look at his prayer.

So teach us to number our days We pray that God would instruct us to recognize [1] that there is a number; a finite number for each of us; [2] that the rapidity with which days pass away is swift; [3] that there is a certainty that they must come to an end; and [4] what happens in our days has a bearing on eternity.

That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom We pray that God would enable us to be truly wise. Help us live to live recognizing it will end. God sees the end in which life will close. Although he has wisely hidden that from us, yet he can enable us to recognize its inevitability. If anyone knew when, where, and how he was to die, it might be presumed that this would exert an important influence on him in forming his plans, and on his general manner of life.

The term "legacy" is being used in all areas of life. It's not a Bible word. But I hear it often these days. The IU Foundation says I'll leave a legacy if I donate big bucks in this 200th anniversary year. The ad selling solar panels claims I'll leave the legacy that I was environmentally aware. Read obituaries. Very likely the person who writes an extended obituary references some profession, some hobby, some passion, some contribution that will be remembered into the future. It is a time to reflect upon one's life and all the lives the person touched. In some ways, the power of a person's life is [the stories they leave behind](#).

We leave a legacy if we want to or not. Ponder these four quotes:

- a) Legacy is not leaving something for people. It's leaving something in people. —*Peter Strople*
- b) The greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of character and faith. —*Billy Graham*
- c) Father, the hour has come. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. —*Jesus (John 17:1-5)*
- d) May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. —*St. Paul Romans 15:1-5*

Thinking about dying is not forefront in most people's minds – until there is a critical illness, a sudden accidental death, or simply aging. As Christian men, we have the responsibility to have adequate life insurance and prepare a will or trust that directs what will happen to children and earthly goods upon death. Consider a tithe to a ministry dear to your heart.

Like Moses, my witness to others can be one of confidence that from "everlasting to everlasting, you are God."