

Biblical Foundations

This Could Be Your Last Night

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*Be generous: Invest in acts of charity.
Charity yields high returns.
Don't hoard your goods; spread them around.
Be a blessing to others. This could be your last night.*

— Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 (MSG)

The late-night phone call that no parent wants to receive . . .

The diagnosis that changes everything . . .

The housefire that claims its victims before the firefighters can arrive . . .

When we consider our mortality, we confront our limitations. We feel the clock ticking, and no one knows how much time remains. We acknowledge that every day of life is a gift, yet still we wonder: What can I do to be prepared for that moment when the Lord calls me home?

When Solomon contemplated the meaning of life, he noted its brevity, its fleeting nature. If you live to a hundred, that would qualify as a long life, but it's just a blip on the timeline of eternity. We're born, we live, we die: Where's the meaning?

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon says that finding meaning in this brief life can come through investing our lives in other people. We do that by regularly demonstrating love in practical, purposeful ways. In preparation for God's call home, our first priority must be seeking reconciliation, forgiveness, and peace in all our relationships. No one wants to leave important things unsaid or depart this life clutching to bitterness or regret. We want to use the time on the clock to bring healing with our friends and family members.

¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/rich>



Along with our bodies, every thing on Earth is also temporal. Not only will we not take anything with us when we die, but, as Peter reminds us, the clock of the whole planet will one day run out: “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; when it comes, the heavens will disappear with a horrific noise, and the celestial bodies will melt away in a blaze, and the earth and every deed done on it will be laid bare” (2 Pet 3:10 NET). Only one created thing is eternal: the human soul. When we practice love, we impact eternal souls. And because those souls are eternal, the impact is eternal as well.

Doesn't it make sense, then, to invest as much of our short lives and temporal resources as we can into the lives of people whose souls will outlast the clock? In choosing to do this, we follow the venerable encouragement of a seventeenth-century preacher: “He is no fool who parts with that which he cannot keep, when he is sure to be recompensed with that which he cannot lose.”¹

We can't know when time will run out and the Lord will call us home—but we needn't live in fear. Instead, let's live every day with Christ's love, delighting in all that God gives us and investing in those who will come after us!

¹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/they-were-no-fools-60-years-ago-today-the-martyrdom-of-jim-elliott-and-four-other-missionaries/>