

Hard Truths – Week 2 – Sands of Time – Bible Study Helps

Title: The Sands of Time: Using Your Days Wisely

Sermon Summary: This sermon confronts the hard truth that time is finite and precious, challenging believers to live with intentional wisdom rather than presuming endless opportunities. Drawing from Psalm 90, Moses' prayer near the end of his life, the message emphasizes that we have approximately 70-80 years on earth and must steward each day carefully. The sermon warns against the illusions of youth—believing we have plenty of time, that we can delay obedience, and that we can always change later. Through biblical examples like Moses striking the rock and Solomon's pursuit of worldly pleasures, the message illustrates how moments of poor judgment can have lasting consequences. The call is to number our days, avoid wasting time on sin and worldly pursuits, and invest in eternal priorities that outlive us. The sermon particularly emphasizes the older generation's responsibility to share their wisdom about time's fragility with younger believers, helping them avoid the regrets that come from chasing things that don't matter.

Key Points:

- Time is a stewardship from God, not an unlimited resource we can waste
- The Bible gives no promises of "later" or "tomorrow"—today is the day to act
- Moses' life demonstrates how one moment of disobedience can cost years of blessing
- Young people fall prey to three illusions: plenty of time, ability to delay, and control over their future
- Life passes quickly—described as a vapor, grass that withers, and a tale that is told
- Sin makes our limited time even more burdensome and difficult
- We should build our lives around biblical priorities, not worldly pressures
- Busyness does not equal spiritual progress or growth
- The older generation has a responsibility to share their hard-earned wisdom about time with younger believers
- Every choice about how we use time has eternal consequences
- We must decide early what we will not waste time on
- Relationships and discipleship are crucial investments of our time

Scripture Reference:

- Psalm 90 (primary focus—Moses' prayer about time and mortality)
- Numbers 20:1-12 (Moses striking the rock instead of speaking to it)

Hard Truths – Week 2 – Sands of Time – Bible Study Helps

- Deuteronomy 34:1-7 (Moses viewing the Promised Land but not entering)
- Proverbs 27:1 (Do not boast about tomorrow)
- James 4:13-17 (Life is a vapor)
- 2 Corinthians 6:2 (Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation)
- Hebrews 12:14-17 (Esau selling his birthright)
- Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 (Solomon's pursuit of worldly pleasure ending in vanity)
- Matthew 6:33 (Seek first the kingdom of God)
- Ephesians 5:16 and Colossians 4:5 (Redeeming the time)

Stories:

- Moses' life and ministry, including seeing an entire generation die in the wilderness during 40 years of wandering
- Moses striking the rock twice in anger instead of speaking to it as God commanded, resulting in being forbidden from entering the Promised Land despite leading Israel for decades
- Moses viewing the Promised Land from Mount Nebo before his death at 120 years old with full strength
- Esau selling his birthright for a single meal, later seeking repentance with tears but finding none
- Solomon's experiment with worldly pleasure, wealth, and folly described in Ecclesiastes, concluding it was all vanity
- The pastor's aunt facing terminal illness and being ready to stop treatments, having lived those extra difficult years beyond 70
- The illustration of a preacher using a rope to demonstrate how much time remains after accounting for sleep, work, eating, and other activities
- Reference to a telephone pole with flowers marking where a young man died, illustrating that youth doesn't guarantee time
- The pastor's personal testimony of being saved at 25 and now being 55, reflecting on 30 years of growth

Hard Truths – Week 2 – Sands of Time – Bible Study Helps

Discipleship Questions

Moses wrote Psalm 90 near the end of his life after seeing an entire generation die in the wilderness. How does facing mortality change the way we view time and our daily choices?

The sermon mentions that Moses was denied entry to the Promised Land because of one moment of disobedience at the rock. What does this teach us about the lasting consequences of decisions made in momentary frustration?

James 4 describes life as a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. How should this reality shape the way we plan our days, weeks, and years?

Solomon had everything the world could offer yet concluded it was all vanity and vexation of spirit. Why do we still chase after worldly things when Scripture repeatedly warns us of their emptiness?

The sermon identifies three illusions of youth: plenty, delay, and control. Which of these illusions do you struggle with most, and how can older believers help counter these deceptions?

Psalm 90:12 says 'teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' What practical steps can you take this week to become more intentional about how you spend your time?

The message warns that unconfessed sin makes our already-brief time feel burdensome and wasted. How does maintaining short accounts with God help us redeem the time we have left?

Moses asked God not for more time but for wisdom to use his remaining time well. Why is this a more biblical prayer than asking for extended years?

The sermon suggests building your life around priorities rather than pressures. What pressures are currently dictating your schedule that should be replaced with biblical priorities?

How can the older generation effectively share their hard-won wisdom about time with younger people who still feel they have endless opportunities ahead?

Small Group Guide: The Sands of Time

Hard Truths, Big Help Series - Psalm 90

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share a moment when you were surprised by how quickly time passed. What were you doing, and why do you think it felt so fast?

Key Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

Read together: **Psalm 90:10-12**

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away... So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Understanding the Message

1. **Moses' Perspective:** Moses wrote Psalm 90 near the end of his life after watching an entire generation die in the wilderness. How does knowing this context change how you read this psalm?
2. **The Reality Check:** The sermon emphasized that a full life is 70-80 years. How does this biblical perspective challenge our modern assumptions about time?
3. **Sin and Time:** Why does Moses spend three verses (Psalm 90:7-9) talking about sin in the middle of a psalm about time? What's the connection between unconfessed sin and wasted time?

Personal Reflection

4. **The Three Illusions of Youth:**
 - The illusion of plenty ("I have time")
 - The illusion of delay ("I'll do it later")
 - The illusion of control ("I can always change")

Hard Truths – Week 2 – Sands of Time – Bible Study Helps

Which of these illusions do you struggle with most, regardless of your age?

5. **Moses' Mistake:** Moses struck the rock twice in anger instead of speaking to it as God commanded (Numbers 20). He never entered the Promised Land because of one moment. What does this teach us about the weight of our daily choices?
6. **Solomon's Regret:** After pursuing everything the world offered, Solomon concluded it was all "vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 2). What modern pursuits might lead to similar regret?

Generational Wisdom

7. **For Older Members:** What is something you spent time on that you now realize didn't matter? What would you tell your younger self?
 8. **For Younger Members:** What area of your life are you most tempted to say "I'll deal with that later" about? What might the cost of that delay be?
 9. **Cross-Generational:** How can we create more opportunities in our church and personal lives for older believers to share wisdom with younger believers?
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Key Takeaways (10 minutes)

Review these main points together:

1. **Time is a stewardship, not just a resource** - We are accountable to God for how we use our days.
 2. **"Later" is one of the most expensive words** - Delayed obedience often becomes permanent disobedience.
 3. **Moses didn't ask for more time; he asked for wisdom to use what remained** - This should be our prayer too.
 4. **Your life is a vapor** (James 4:14) - Brief, fragile, and quickly gone.
 5. **Now is the accepted time** (2 Corinthians 6:2) - Whether for salvation or obedience, today matters most.
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Practical Applications (15-20 minutes)

Individual Exercises

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE of the following:

1. **Time Audit:** Track how you spend your time for three days. At the end, evaluate: What percentage went to eternal things? What would you change?

Hard Truths – Week 2 – Sands of Time – Bible Study Helps

2. **Number Your Days:** If you're 30, you have approximately 14,600 days left (assuming 70 years). If you're 50, about 7,300 days. Calculate your approximate remaining days. How does this number make you feel? What does it motivate you to do?
3. **Wisdom Interview:** Schedule time with someone at least 20 years older than you. Ask them: "What did you waste time on?" and "What do you wish you'd done differently?"
4. **Priority Reset:** Write down your top 5 priorities according to Scripture (God, family, church, etc.). Then write down where your time actually goes. What needs to change?

Group Commitments

Discuss and commit to one of these as a group:

- **Accountability Partners:** Pair up to meet weekly/bi-weekly for discipleship and accountability
- **Generational Connections:** Match younger and older members for monthly mentoring conversations
- **Time Stewardship:** Share your "time audit" results with the group next meeting for mutual encouragement

Immediate Action Steps

Before you leave today:

1. **Confess any unconfessed sin** - Don't let another day pass living under the weight of sin that breaks fellowship with God.
2. **Text someone you've been putting off connecting with** - Don't wait for "when things slow down."
3. **Set a reminder** on your phone for tomorrow morning: "Lord, teach me to number my days. Help me use today wisely."

Closing Reflection (5 minutes)

Read together: Ephesians 5:15-16

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Final Question: If today were your last day, what would you regret not having done? What can you do this week to address that?

Closing Prayer

Have someone pray, focusing on:

- Thanking God for the time He's given us
 - Asking for wisdom to number our days
 - Confessing areas where we've wasted time
 - Committing to live intentionally for His glory
 - Praying for specific needs shared during discussion
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For Next Week

Prepare: Bring your "time audit" results or insights from your wisdom interview to share with the group.

Remember: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." - Psalm 90:12

Note: This guide works for groups of any size. Adjust timing and number of questions based on your group's needs. The goal is meaningful conversation, not covering every question.

5-Day Devotional: Numbering Our Days

Day 1: The Eternal God and Fragile Time

Reading: Psalm 90:1-6

Devotional: Moses begins this profound psalm by contrasting God's eternity with humanity's brevity. Before mountains existed, God was. Yet our lives pass like yesterday, like grass that flourishes in the morning and withers by evening. This isn't meant to discourage us but to recalibrate our perspective. When we grasp that a thousand years to God is like a single day, we realize how precious each moment becomes. Our dwelling place isn't in the permanence of our own lives but in the eternal God who holds us. Today, pause and consider: Are you building your security on temporary things or on the everlasting God? Let this truth anchor you—not in fear of time's passing, but in confidence that the eternal God is your refuge through every fleeting season.

Day 2: The Weight of Unconfessed Sin

Reading: Psalm 90:7-11; 1 John 1:5-10

Devotional: Moses connects the brevity of life with the burden of unaddressed sin. Why would we waste our limited days under the weight of unconfessed sin? When we harbor secret sins, our fellowship with God suffers, making life's already difficult journey even harder. Time feels burdensome when we're not walking in the light with our heavenly Father. The good news is that confession brings immediate restoration. We don't have to spend another day in spiritual isolation. Today, examine your heart honestly before God. What sins have you been carrying that need to be brought into His light? Don't waste another precious day separated from intimate fellowship with your Creator. Confess, receive His cleansing, and walk forward in the freedom that comes from obedience.

Day 3: Learning to Number Our Days

Reading: Psalm 90:12-17; James 4:13-17

Devotional: "So teach us to number our days" is Moses' central prayer—not to become morbid about death, but to live wisely with the time remaining. James echoes this wisdom, reminding us that life is a vapor, appearing briefly then vanishing. We don't know what tomorrow holds, yet we constantly live as if we have unlimited time. The hard truth is this: delay is a decision. When you say "later" to God's promptings, you're choosing to use that time for something else. Moses, at the end of his life, didn't ask for more time—he asked for wisdom to use what remained well. What has God been prompting you to do that you've delayed? Perhaps it's reconciling a relationship, serving in a specific way, or deepening your prayer life. Today is the day. Number it. Use it wisely.

Day 4: The Cost of Trading Eternity for the Moment

Reading: Hebrews 12:14-17; Genesis 25:29-34

Devotional: Esau's story serves as a sobering warning about trading permanent blessings for temporary satisfaction. In one moment of hunger, he despised his birthright and sold it for a bowl of stew. The tragedy wasn't just the trade itself, but that afterward, when he sought the blessing with tears, he found no place of repentance—the consequences were irreversible. How often do we make similar trades? We sacrifice time with God for entertainment, exchange spiritual investment for material pursuits, or trade eternal impact for immediate comfort. Solomon tried the world's pleasures and declared it all vanity. The younger generation especially needs this wisdom: what seems appealing now may cost you decades of regret. Before making choices today, ask yourself: Am I trading something permanent for something temporary? Choose the eternal inheritance.

Day 5: Redeeming the Time That Remains

Reading: Ephesians 5:15-21; Colossians 4:2-6

Devotional: Paul's exhortation to "redeem the time" takes on profound meaning when we understand that time is not neutral. Every moment is either invested wisely or wasted—there is no middle ground. To redeem time means to buy it back from worthless pursuits and invest it in what matters eternally: growing in Christ, serving others, making disciples, and living for God's glory. This doesn't mean joyless busyness, but intentional living. Build your life around biblical priorities, not cultural pressures. Invest in relationships that outlive you. Seek first God's kingdom, and everything else falls into proper place. The older generation's testimony confirms this truth: those who chased the world's promises found emptiness, while those who invested in eternal things discovered lasting joy. Today, audit your time. What needs to change? Remember: you're not losing time—you're making choices. Choose wisdom.