

Title: How to make the Most of Life?

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 6:7-11; Ephesians 5:15-16

My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,

²Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

³Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

⁴Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

⁵Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

⁷Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

⁸Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

⁹How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

¹⁰ Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

¹¹ So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

‘Be careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.’

Life is an extraordinary and wonderful gift. **Psalm 113:14 says,** ‘Life is a precious gift from God.

Ephesian 5:15-16 says, ‘Be careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.’

In the Bible we are constantly urged not to waste this life, this gift, but instead to make the most of our lives.

1. Master self-discipline

The truth is money is not the most important thing in life, but it will make the most important things in life so much better.

The late Zig Ziglar said, 'Money isn't everything, but it ranks right up there with oxygen.'

It is true that money doesn't buy happiness. But it will open doors, create opportunities and may even save your life or the life of a loved one.

Proverbs 13:11 says, 'dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow.'

One of the areas of life that requires self-discipline is our finances. There are always plenty of financial traps and snares – such as unmanageable debt, unwise investment and foolish pledges.

Master your time.

The summation of times equal life?

The ant

‘It has no commander, no overseer or ruler’, yet it works extremely hard: ‘It stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at

The difference between success and failure, between potential disappointment of fulfillment is often hard work. Christ sends us to the school of the birds of the air, and the lilies of the field, to learn dependence upon divine providence, and to the stork, crane and swallow, to be taught to take the seasons of grace, and not to let slip the opportunities God put in our hands. Here the ant is wise and worthy of imitation because she works hard without having to be told to work hard. The ethic of diligence comes from within and does not have to be imposed by an overseer.

2. Give your life away

Mark 8:31-32 says, 'And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.'

Jesus has to explain to his disciples the extraordinary paradox involved in making the most of our lives – of which he is to show the supreme example. He says if you want to make the most of your life, you have to give it away. You have to abandon your life to his service and the gospel – 'whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it' (Mark 8:35).

The actor Jim Carrey said, 'I think everyone should get rich and famous and do everything they

dreamed of so they can see that it is not the answer.'

The words 'deny yourself' mean *saying no* to yourself. The Christian life involves the challenge of daily denial. The world thinks that the way to life is to deny yourself nothing. Jesus says that the opposite is true. The way to *find life* is to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow him. You are called to love. You are to live for God and for other people. And as you give yourself away, God will take care of your life.

God cannot fit into our plans, we must fit into his,' writes Eugene Peterson. 'We can't use God – God is not a tool or appliance or credit card.'

The Hebrew word 'holy' (*qadosh*) probably originally meant 'separate' or 'set apart'.

For something else to be 'holy' simply means for it to be dedicated to God. You are holy to the extent

that your life is devoted to him and your actions reflect his character. Holiness and *wholeness* are closely related, and God wants the *whole* of your life.

3. Serve God at Work

Exodus 31:3-5 says, 'I've filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him skill and know-how and expertise in every kind of craft to create designs. He's an all around craftsman.'

To glorify Christ in our workplace, as employees we must obey our employers. We obey with the right perspective. We obey because Christ wants us to obey our employers. We must obey with respect and fear. Fear here means reverence. We obey with sincerity of heart and not with eye service.

On the other hand some of you are employers. To glorify Christ in the workplace, as employers you must care for your employees. Treat them the way you want them to treat you.

