

These Are God's Days Of Our Lives

Psalm 90 September 3, 2023

If you live to be 80 years old, that's 29,200 days. More than 9,500 of those days will be spent sleeping. Between red lights, the doctor's office, checkout at the store, and getting YouTube to load, upwards of 1,800 of your days will be spent waiting.¹ If you're 20, 7,300 of your days are gone. If you're 40, you're past 14,000.

The internet provides *many* lists of how to make every day count. The suggestions are mostly self-centered. Make time for yourself, exercise, learn something new. One said what you really need to do is "make a vision board."

Of all the articles I scanned, two were sensible enough to acknowledge that our lives are going to end one day. One put it bluntly: "Every second you're alive, you're a second closer to death." So their advice is: Do what makes you happy!² I found it ironic that the most recent article published on that same site was titled: "*7 Tips For How To Negotiate Credit Card Debt.*"

Psalm 90 has a blunt message for us: Life is short and will soon be over. Perhaps you find yourself thinking, "I woke up this morning weighed down by cares or pains or sorrows. I came here to feel *better*, not worse." It's important that we consider our expiration date and the reality of our condition. It is a great advantage that our God is not afraid to tell us hard truths. You would not want a doctor to withhold a terminal diagnosis from you, especially if he also had the cure in hand.

The inevitable end of our mortal lives is not the whole message of Psalm 90. Yes, you're going to die - in fact, you're dying *now* - but each and every one of us can have a life full of joy and purpose, a life that *counts*. Considering these things reveals to us just how climactic God's love for us is.

Most of those "How to make every day count" lists pretend we can just ignore the problem parts life. One said, "Stop spending time with people who don't make you happy." Luckily, the author of our Psalm didn't follow that advice. We read above verse one that Psalm 90 is:

Psalm 90:SuperScript - A prayer of Moses, the man of God.

Moses was a songwriter, but this is the only one found in Psalms.³ This is the oldest Psalm in the book, as far as we know. The title calls him "the man of God." Exodus 33 tells us that the Lord spoke to Moses face-to-face, like a man speaks with his friend. But, that doesn't mean Moses was perfect - far from it. He was a "man of God" because he had faith and walked with the Lord. He listened to God and shared his heart with Him.

Psalm 90:1 - ¹Lord, you have been our refuge in every generation.

¹ <https://www.thefactsite.com/how-much-time-people-spend-doing-stuff/>

² <https://www.clevergirlfinance.com/making-everyday-count/>

³ See Exodus 15 & Deuteronomy 32

We don't know the specifics, but Moses was facing a time of hard realities. As we begin this trip through some difficult verses, Moses wants to remind us of *this* truth: God is a refuge. He is a place of shelter and protection and provision. It's the term used for an animal's den.⁴ God does not limit access to a person or two. The door is flung wide to *anyone* who will flee to Him. The Psalms are full of this idea: *Anyone* can take refuge in the Lord. He will not turn you out.

In Moses' day, the Lord was *literally* their shelter. As they traveled in the wilderness, the Lord's glory went with them as a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, giving light and protection.⁵

That doesn't mean God's people had no problems. These Israelites faced the attacking Egyptians and Amalekites. They endured hard passage over rough terrain, sometimes short on water. They dealt with temptation and interpersonal conflict. But the Lord was always their refuge.

Whatever state you're in, whatever generation you belong to, God is a refuge. He invites you to make your home in Him and open up your heart so He can dwell in you.

Psalm 90:2 - ²Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity, you are God.

Moses is contrasting the vast greatness of God with our own finite weakness. We can barely keep our potted plants alive. Meanwhile God fashioned the universe. He hung the stars in their place. He holds the atoms together. Only 4,000 people have climbed Mount Everest.⁶ With a *word*, the Lord formed it and *Olympus Mons* - a mountain on Mars that makes Everest look like a little foothill.

Why did God give birth to the world? So that there would be a place for *you* to live. So He could love *you*, have a personal relationship with *you*. *That's* the reason creation exists. In Ephesians 1, Paul explains that, before time began, God called you by name, made detailed plans for your life, decided to adopt you into His forever family if you're willing to put your faith in Him.

Psalm 90:3 - ³You return mankind to the dust, saying, "Return, descendants of Adam."

God had this plan, He constructed a universe so that He could commune with human beings. He created man and woman immortal. What happened? *Adam* happened.

Death and sorrow and suffering were not part of the plan. But Adam and Eve chose to go their own way. They chose to reject what God had said and did the one thing He asked them not to do, even though they were told doing so would bring death into the cosmos.

⁴ Daniel J. Estes *Psalm 73-150: An Exegetical And Theological Exposition Of Holy Scripture*

⁵ Exodus 13:21-22

⁶ <https://explorerspassage.com/chronicles/facts-mount-everest/>

They immediately discovered that God wasn't lying. He wasn't exaggerating. He wasn't bluffing. Death flooded into creation. That's why we are so fragile. That's why every one of us is dying here today. That's why we need a refuge: A predator is coming to dust us and we are helpless against it.

Psalm 90:4 - ⁴For in your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that passes by, like a few hours of the night.

We're fond of saying that, with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day. We do so because that's what Peter says, quoting this verse. Moses goes further and says, with God, a thousand years are like a few hours of the night. The Israelites divided sunset to sunrise into three four-hour blocks.⁷

Isaiah gives us another comparison between God and humanity. He says in chapter 40 that all the nations of the earth are like a drop of water in a bucket or a speck of dust on a scale.

That's not to say God doesn't keep track of time. He does. In eternity we know at least months will be counted.⁸ And it doesn't mean God doesn't care about the nations - He does. He cares so much about you that He was willing to send His One and only Son to die in your place. He cares so much that He continually spends His time intervening in human history on our behalf. Moses' point is that God is beyond comparison. There is none so great, none so powerful as the God of the Bible.

Psalm 90:5-6 - ⁵You end their lives; they sleep. They are like grass that grows in the morning –⁶in the morning it sprouts and grows; by evening it withers and dries up.

God is in charge of the beginning and end of a life. The Bible explains that He fashioned us in our mother's womb and that He gives life to all things.⁹ Psalm 31 says, "[Our] times are in Your hands."

That doesn't mean that if someone is murdered God caused it. The Bible reveals that God's providential dealing with men has some wiggle room. Sometimes lives are cut short of what the Lord intended. The Israelites in the wilderness are a great example. God wanted them to go into the promised land, they said no, so the Lord said, "Alright. *All* of you 20 years and older are going to die within the next 40 years." In the church at Corinth there were Christians who were sinning in such a way that God decided to strike them with fatal illnesses, bringing them home to heaven *earlier* than would've happened if they hadn't been sinning.

But, *if you are alive this morning*, it's not an accident or a coincidence. God has some plan, some intention, some direction for you. Because *you* are His masterpiece, meant to display His glory not only to this world, but to the unseen cosmos filled with supernatural beings.¹⁰

⁷ *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*

⁸ Revelation 22:1-2

⁹ Psalm 17:14, 1 Timothy 6:15

¹⁰ Ephesians 3:10

Moses says we're like grass. Grass is a weak and fragile thing. It is helpless against a hot sun, a heavy boot, or a hungry cow. From heaven's perspective, the strongest man is just a blade of grass.

This image isn't just about our weakness. It uncovers the incredible kindness and generosity of God, Who does so much for creatures who are so vulnerable.

We all know the stereotype of the neighbor who is so obsessed with his lawn that he cuts it by hand with scissors. Now consider that *you* are like a blade of grass. Yet the Lord loves you individually. He planted you specifically. He tends to your life. He pours out all He has on your behalf, sparing not even His own Son, but giving Him up for you - a blade of grass. A wisp of vapor.

Psalm 90:7-8 - ⁷For we are consumed by your anger; we are terrified by your wrath. ⁸You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

This is the *why* of our weakness. It's sin that has ruined things. It brings wrath. Moses knew about hidden sins coming to light. His secret murder had been exposed - his secret family failures, too.

If God is so powerful, and if His plan is to rescue anyway, why not just let it slide? The same reason why you don't let it slide if there's a big stain on the front of your shirt. The same reason why we watch lawlessness play out on our television screens and feel angry. The same reason why, if you had absolute power, you'd make some changes to this world, wouldn't you? George Costanza once said if he were running for office, he would seek the death penalty for double parkers!

My first apartment had a little grass just outside the front door. Periodically, one of my neighbors would dump their used up fry oil right there on the grass in a stinking, putrid puddle. It killed the grass and greeted me with its stench whenever I came home. I would've liked that to not happen.

Now, God is not simply annoyed by things. He is absolutely holy. Sin is absolutely rancid. It is the worst stain, the worst rot, the worst lawlessness, the worst rebellion against a righteous God. God *cannot* overlook sin or pretend it isn't what it is or sweep it under a rug somewhere. If He did, He would not be just, He would not be pure, He would not be good, He would not be holy.

The truth is, we want God to overlook *some* sin but not others. We want Him to let *our* guilt slide. But those *other* people? Hang them high! But all sin is sin. And God hates it.

One reason He hates it is because it separates us from Him. His great desire is to commune with you - for our hearts to be joined with His. Adam and Eve sinned and immediately they hid from God. Now, for thousands of years Emmanuel, *God with us*, has been working to repair that breach.

Psalm 90:9-10 - ⁹For all our days ebb away under your wrath; we end our years like a sigh. ¹⁰Our lives last seventy years or, if we are strong, eighty years. Even the best of them are struggle and sorrow; indeed, they pass quickly and we fly away.

Life expectancy in California is 79 years. For those of you seeking an escape to Tennessee, beware: You may have to trade in a few years. Life expectancy there is just 73.¹¹

Moses is speaking generally here. He himself lived to be 120. So call it 100 years. Make it a *thousand*. Compared to eternity, it's a few passing moments. Meanwhile, human life is hard, even when it's easy! Moses had a wide life experience. He knew life in the palace, life as a powerful leader. He knew the quiet life of pasturing flocks. We'll find days of struggle no matter where we live. No one escapes the difficulties of life when it comes to worry, regret, mistake, sorrow, pain, disappointment. It all points to the reality that we're in trouble and need a rescue.

Psalm 90:11-12 - ¹¹Who understands the power of your anger? Your wrath matches the fear that is due you. ¹²Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts.

We deserve wrath, but suddenly Moses pivots and reveals there is a way out. God has a remedy. He is always ready to rescue. He gave Adam and Eve a substitute. He brought His people out of Egypt. He saw them through the wilderness. He defeated the giants that came against them. He brought down the nations that surround them. He was always a refuge for His people.

If you want to escape wrath, the way is simple: "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who rejects the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him."¹²

Moses asks the Lord to teach us to number our days that we may develop wisdom. This isn't about getting smarter. Wisdom means seeing things as God sees them. It means applying His truth to our life. In context, it means to recognize that *God* has numbered our days and so we should number them, too - to make them count not for what I think will make me happy, but to make them count toward those intentions God designed for my life before the world was even created.

How can we number our days? In part, it's important for us to take the theme of this Psalm to heart. Life is short. Eternity is coming. Short timers make decisions purposefully, don't they?

So, how can we number our days? That's something the Lord has to *teach* you. It's not just, "*Oh well then we all have to work round the clock without stopping.*" After all, God doesn't just intend labor for your life, He also intends rest. I need God to *teach* me what He wants for my day today. This is the day God has made and I have a place in it that He wants me to discover and walk in.

God plans to *develop* this wisdom in our lives. It's not an instant acquisition. It a process of growth as we walk with Him. But there's another layer that we can apply in light of the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians we read that Jesus Christ "became wisdom from God for us."¹³ So, developing wisdom

¹¹ https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/life_expectancy/life_expectancy.htm

¹² John 3:36

¹³ 1 Corinthians 1:30

means growing in our knowledge of Jesus, becoming more conformed into *His* image. God's plan is for Christ to *fill* our hearts with His heart and mind and Spirit.

God's wisdom, in Christ, is the most valuable thing we could devote our lives to. It's more valuable than gold or rubies or even cryptocurrency!

Psalm 90:13 - ¹³Lord—how long? Turn and have compassion on your servants.

It's interesting for Moses to say "how long" here. After all, he just said a thousand years was like a few hours to God. But, from our perspective, it *is* long when we're struggling. Moses shows us it's ok to pray this way. We don't have to pretend we aren't downhearted. God *is* mindful of your suffering. And He is a God of active mercy - a God of tender compassion - Who can be counted on.

Your version may have Moses asking God to "return" to us, but the Lord hasn't left. He will never leave us or forsake us. Moses is comparing again. As we are turning back to dust in verse 3, we see *God* turning to us in grace and compassion. Where sin ruins, the Lord redeems.

Psalm 90:14-15 - ¹⁴Satisfy us in the morning with your faithful love so that we may shout with joy and be glad all our days. ¹⁵Make us rejoice for as many days as you have humbled us, for as many years as we have seen adversity.

Moses calls on God's faithful love - His *hesed*. This is an active, loyal love, where a stronger party takes it upon himself to help a weaker party because he loves them and cares for them.

Moses asks the Lord to fill up the lives of His people. Filled with all the fullness of God, where our lives overflow with an abundance of joy and contentment and worship and purpose and strength. This *is* what God wants. Jesus said He came that we may have life and have it in abundance.¹⁴

In the end, God will *not* give us a one-for-one trade for our days of adversity. He's going to give His people a *trillion*-to-one reward. Though our present sufferings are real, by looking into eternity we can remind ourselves that, "our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."¹⁵ And we can rejoice along the way.

Psalm 90:16 - ¹⁶Let your work be seen by your servants, and your splendor by their children.

Moses didn't *only* ask for eternal relief, he's asking for God's intervention right here, right now. And his prayer is that God would work in such a way that a magnificent testimony would shine through our lives as a proof of God's powerful splendor.

¹⁴ John 10:10

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

As we walk with God, even in adversity, He works in our lives so that our families and friends and the world around us can see our joy, see how we're invigorated to praise the Lord, so they might come to the conclusion that God is real and He is good and His is *with* His people.

Psalm 90:17 - ¹⁷Let the favor of the Lord our God be on us; establish for us the work of our hands—establish the work of our hands!

What an ending compared to how the song started off! God can make something of our nothing. Your version may say let the *beauty* of the Lord be on us. The term can also mean goodness or kindness.¹⁶

When Moses refers to the work of our hands, he doesn't just mean the job we do. He's talking about our response to what *God has done*. The term can also mean "workmanship."¹⁷ It reminds us that we are God's workmanship - His masterpiece - and we are able to participate with Him in that everlasting, cosmic work. And so the prayer is *not*, "Lord, give us an extra 100,000 days on this earth," it's, "Lord, who am I that You are mindful of me? Lord, involve yourself in the days I have left. Show me how to be in step with what you have planned for my life."

Gene Simmons is quoted as saying, "*Life is too short to have anything but delusional notions about yourself.*" That's a *real* good way to waste your life.

Before time began the Lord determined to create you and to portion out your days. David said that if we could count how many thoughts God has for you it would outnumber the grains of sand on the beach. There's no need for you to have delusional notions about yourself. The Lord wants you to have *supernatural* notions about your life. He certainly does.

Psalm 90 reminds us that the clock is ticking. But these expiring days of our lives can overflow with joy and have everlasting impact when we realize that the Lord has made this day, He has counted this day, and He has called each us from eternity past to walk with Him in it as partners in His good work. Today counts as we make our home in Him. As we flee to Him, are filled by Him, and find our rest in Him.

¹⁶ *Theological Wordbook Of The Old Testament*

¹⁷ *ibid.*