

Preacher! Keep Your Heart Mindful of the Brevity of Life.

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Psalm 90:12 — So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.

If you do this it will most certainly result in the following...

1. You will live an upright life.

Keeping your heart mindful of the brevity of life will result in the man of God living a pure life before God. The minister of God's Word will bear in the mind the piercing nature of God's Word and the examining effect it has on the soul of man. Remembering that you may die *at any moment* should launch the man of God to a laser-beam focus of living uprightly, purely, godly, and devoutly. He must have this in his soul, in his heart, in his mind, and then with his life.

2. You will preach as if every sermon were your last.

The more the man of God remembers the stark reality that he may die before he ever steps foot in his pulpit again, the more he will preach with passion and conviction. Just as all men are destined to die, so the preacher is not exempt. He is bound to die and he must remember this reality with great frequency so that he will preach with utmost conviction and passion. He should preach as a man in love with Christ; not out of obligation because there's nothing else for him to do. He should preach with such fire and with such zeal and with such emotion as if he knew he would die on Monday morning never to preach again.

3. You will persuade sinners & call for a response in every sermon you preach.

A godly minister believes what he preaches. He has persuaded his own heart and endeavors to impact his hearers as his own heart has been informed and transformed by the piercing power of God's penetrating Word. This kind of preacher will persuade sinners with all his might. As if their salvation depended on him, he will plead for a decision. And the man will preach with such confidence knowing that the Spirit of God must draw sinners to repentance and give life for them to respond in saving faith. Yet he still pleads. And he begs. Then he beckons. Finally he then urges! Every minister of the Word should preach as if every congregant will die before they step foot in his church again next Sunday. He should preach to convert! He should expect God to save! He should beg God to transform! He should beseech the Spirit to regenerate! Paul was not ashamed to beg, and neither should the minister who has been gripped by the brevity of life.

4. You will take sin very seriously in your heart and in the lives of your people.

Sin kills. Sin brought death into this world and sin plunges sinners into the unending abyss of hell forevermore. The man who knows the brevity of life will not tolerate the least inkling of sin in his heart. He will strive to mortify it. He will uproot the weed from his heart. He will have no mercy on his iniquities. And after he deals with his own heart and life, he must allow no leaven in the flock of God. O the preacher must remember that a little leaven leavens the entire lump. Christ's church must fight sin and Christ's ministers

must preach against sin and equip believers to fight sin with the God-given and Spirit-empowered resources that are available to them.

5. You will remember that you'll stand before God and give a strict accounting for every word you said, how you handled God's Word, how you preached it, and how you cared for God's sheep.

Keeping an eye on eternity appropriately reminds the preacher that he will stand before the all-seeing God at the Judgment Seat. God will hold the man accountable for every word he said. Was every word spoken from the pulpit (in what was called a 'sermon' declaring the 'Word of the LORD') *God's* word? Or was it the minister's thoughts? Did the man handle God's Word accurately? Reverently? Submissively? Obediently? Boldly? Did the man speak God's Word to the people with no fear of man? Was the minister overcome with a dominating fear of God that propelled him to speak the truth of Scripture to anyone and everyone present? The minister must remember God will judge him for how he shepherded *God's* flock — yes, they are blood-bought, precious, owned sheep. The man who remembers the brevity of life acutely remembers that he will stand before God and give an account — and that accounting may come before this day ends.

6. You will be defined as a 'winner of souls'.

A wise man who honors God is a winner of souls. The believer obeys God's command to proclaim the gospel to every person and see them repent and believe the gospel. The preacher who understands the imminency of the judgment seat will make it a priority to win souls on Sundays and on weekdays. He will proclaim the gospel in his sermons and on the streets. He will plead with sinners who have come to church and those who are outside of church. O the sheep that are headed for the slaughter are innumerable. And yet the man with an eternal mindset, understanding his life may end soon, glorifies God by seeking to win souls to the Savior and snatch souls from the fangs of the devilish lion and bring them to Christ's loving arms.

7. You will invest more time in the only two things which live on forever: the Word of God and the souls of men.

Much of what the minister does is temporary; that is, it'll burn. Much of what humans devote time, effort, resources, and thought to are earthly, fading, and quickly passing. But the minister who sensitively remembers that his life is a vapor and that his days are merely a handbreadth is one who consciously reminds himself of the two crucial elements which will live on forever: (1) the Word of God and (2) the souls of men. It is this man, impressed with these eternal realities upon his soul, who lives profitably and eternally during the few days that God has allotted to him. He spends more time reading the Word than reading *about* the Word. He spends time memorizing the Word and hiding it in the factory of his heart. He knows the Word of God endures forever. News, sports, programs, campaigns, and other activities that can quickly crowd a minister's schedule must never usurp the primary place of the consuming of God's Word deep into the fiber of the man's soul. Furthermore, the souls of men will live on forevermore. The man who remembers the brevity of life will invest much in the souls of men. He will call men and woman, boys and girls, to examine themselves to see if they trust in Christ. He will exhort the old to die well. He will plead with the young to live for Christ. He will urge families to live purely. He will endeavor to live and speak and proclaim the gospel in all that he does because it is the gospel that is the power of God to salvation.