Only One Life
Ephesians 5:15-21

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

You have only one life; what are you _______ with it? Does your life matter, or are you chasing after the _______? The Bible teaches us _______ to live an abundant life. It helps us to distinguish what’s wise from what’s foolish; what’s important from what doesn’t matter; what’s good from what’s evil. You can search the world over and never find a book that will _______ you like the Bible.

Living without God’s teaching in your life is like sewing with a needle that has no _______ or like writing your biography with a pen empty of _______. Some years ago psychologist William Marston asked 3000 people, “What do you have to live for?” He found that 94% were simply enduring the present while waiting for the _______. They were waiting for something to happen someday. They wanted to finish school, or watch their children grow up, or take a long vacation, or retire. They were _________, not realizing that all anyone ever has is today, because yesterday is gone and tomorrow is only a hope.

Solomon said, “Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was _______ and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:11). You might look at your life and wonder what __________ you’ve made in this world. Is your life merely a striving after wind?

C. T. Studd, nearly a hundred years ago, wrote two lines that make one pause and consider what _______ in life. He wrote “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.” Because there’s _______ to life than the here and now, we must consider our eternal destiny and what matters when this life is over.

Our reading today comes from Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians 5:15-21.

God gives us life one day at a time, and it’s _______. Jacob, when he was 130 years old, told Pharaoh, “few and unpleasant have been the years of my life” (Genesis 47:9). One hundred and thirty years still seems long to me, but Jacob called them “______.” David said, “LORD, make me to know my _____ And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am. Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere __________” (Psalm 39:4-5).

How we live matters, and whether we remember God through our lives is crucial to how we spend __________. The Preacher, Solomon, wrote, “Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to ______________ for all these things” (Ecclesiastes 11:9).
We must take notice of God’s Word where he says, “Therefore be _______ how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:15-17). I’d like to suggest some things that we must take time to do:

First, take time to _______. God said through the prophet Isaiah, “Incline your _____, and come to Me: hear and your soul shall live” (Isaiah 55:3). Above anyone else, we must listen to _____ and hear His voice in all matters. The psalmist said, “Thy testimonies also are my ________; They are my counselors” (Psalm 119:24). God’s Word always gives the best counsel, because God has no limits to His _______. God’s Word is also a blessing in _______ times. Psalm 119:50 says, “This is my comfort in my affliction, That Thy word has revived me.” Again, in verse 52, “I have remembered Thine ordinances from of old, O L ORD, And comfort myself.”

Read Psalm 1.

The Scriptures also encourage us to listen to ________, to wise people. Everyone needs a listening ear at times. Listening is the first _______ to loving. Listening encourages and solves __________; it brings comfort and it brings healing. Your life will be richer by far the more you _______ to listen. Proverbs 11:14 says, “Where there is no guidance, the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is ________.” Proverbs 15:22 says, “Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they ________.” Getting godly and wise advice can make the difference between success and failure. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Second, take time to _______. I don’t know everything that I want to know, for sure; but I suspect you feel that way too at times. Psalm 119:105 says, “Thy word is a _______ to my feet, And a ________ to my path.” I want to know what God says. Psalm 119:98-99 says, “Thy commandments make me _________ than my enemies, For they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, For Thy testimonies are my meditation.” God gives us _______ wisdom that guides us now and leads us to eternal life.

Psalm 119:133 says, “Establish my footsteps in Thy _______, And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.” We need to know what will _______ us and what will _______ us.

The Lord Jesus promises, "If any man is willing to do His _______, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself” (John 7:17). The more you put God’s Word into ___________, the more you realize the Bible truly is from God Himself.

The Scriptures _______ us how to think, how to deal with others, and how to behave. Paul said, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Could you say that? Could you encourage _______ to live like you live, to think like you think, or to treat others the way you treat them? When we follow Christ, we know we’re doing the ________ thing. You can study many things, but only knowledge of God can give you _________ life. How sad to think that many people are brilliant when it comes to _________ things but know nearly
Third, take time to laugh and _________. Proverbs 17:22 says, “A joyful heart is _______ medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.” Many people have forgotten how to laugh or ________ life. Their lives are sad, dreary, and drab. We should learn to laugh at ourselves, to enjoy others without embarrassing them, and especially to rejoice in the ________! Paul, while in ________, wrote, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). He found a way to ________ joy in life even in the harshest of circumstances.

Rejoicing is not merely being ________. Rejoicing comes from something ________ and precious. Ezra 8:10 says, “the joy of the L ORD is your ________.” Because we know the Lord, we can rejoice in all His ________ and ________. This joy gives us strength, hope, and promise. After love, joy is the second quality of the ________ of the Spirit. The more we count our blessings, the more that we’ll find joy in life. God is the giver of all ________ gifts. James 1:17 says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from ________, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” God gives us every good thing that we ________. Let’s learn to rejoice ________ day. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Fourth, take time to ________ others. There are many ________ things happening all around us, calling for us to lend a ________. Mark 9 tells of the boy who was afflicted with a ________ that made him deaf and mute. This demon often ________ him to have convulsions and be thrown into the fire and the water. When Jesus commanded the demon to come out of him, the boy convulsed on the ground and lay motionless like he was ________. Verse 27 says, “But Jesus took him by the hand, and ________ him up.” Jesus gave him the ________ that he needed. Jesus forgave _______, gave sight to the blind, healed the ________, raised the dead, and gave ________ to the poor (Luke 4:17-21). He blessed ____________ He came in contact with.

Galatians 6:2 urges us, “Bear one another’s ________, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” There are still many surrounding us who need a helping hand of ________. Many people are too ________ with personal pursuits and pleasures to lift the less fortunate; but the more we bless others, the more we find blessing. Send a note, make a phone call, give a compliment, smile, encourage, and show that you ________! First Thessalonians 5:11 says, “Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.” You have “only one life; ‘twill soon be past; only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Fifth, take time to ________. First John 4:16 says, “God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” The man who doesn’t love is not ________—he’s just merely existing. Everybody needs love and to be loved. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Because Jesus loved us, we can know ________ to love others. Read 1 John 3:16-18.

I have a dear friend who ________ his wife a few years ago. Each time we meet, Jasper
reminds me to __________ and spend time with my wife and my loved ones while I can. I know he’s right. It’s time to love our families and our neighbors as __________. Today is all you have; all any of us have. When you take time to love, you’re __________ God. More than anything, we _______ to love God and love other people! Read Colossians 3:12-14. Beyond ______, put on love. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

If your life isn’t what you want it to be, today is the best day to __________. You can begin today to listen, learn, laugh, lift, and love! You can become the salt and the light of the world by becoming a __________ of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is “the way, and the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father _______ through” Him (John 14:6). The Lord Jesus came that you “may have ______ and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Don’t waste your life chasing after _______ in the here and now and then miss heaven. If you place all your _______ on your passions and your pleasures in this life, they will soon __________; but if you place your hope in the Lord, you can find __________ blessings in this life and the life to come.

Read Isaiah 1:18-20. In Christ, we have hope that we can be __________, that we can transform our lives into the kind of people that God can use to _______ the whole world. You only have one life, and it will not _______ on this earth forever. Serve the Lord and make the ______ of your days! The most important things in life are always expensive; but there is a far greater _______ to doing nothing and being unprepared. Life is brief; and as we age, each year passes more quickly than the last one. This means what matters becomes more and more _______. Cougan Collins recently asked, “If you knew the day you would die, would that _______ the way that you live?”

There are many uncertainties in life, and we can’t foresee what the __________ holds; but you must prepare for at least one divine appointment. One day you’ll stand before the throne of God to give an ________ for your life. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is _____ for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Corinthians 5:10). What do you see when you look at yourself? Are you the person that God could ________? Are you living for the Lord or are you chasing after the wind? Don’t waste your life with the things that don’t matter. Build your house upon the rock by ___________ to the Lord Jesus and doing what He says! Make your life count for eternity!

The best thing you can do is to place your _______ in Christ Jesus who created you. Since you’re made in the __________ of God, let God work in and through you to make a difference in this world. Trust in the Lord and in His words and promises. Turn from sin and follow the Lord in repentance. Confess to everyone that you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and let _______ know that you belong to Him. Upon confession, be __________ into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Act 2:38). Your commitment to follow Jesus will be the most important decision that you’ll ever make. So do it today!