

LIFE IS SHORT!

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14) What has always impressed me about this verse is its candidness. In very accurate terms, James openly illustrates the value of each of our lives. It is so brief and so uncertain. Our lives are here one moment, disappearing the next, separated but somehow connected to an eternal source.

As I grow older, I have learned more and more to appreciate the realities held in this particular verse. I have discovered that each of us must appreciate life. Since it is so brief, it makes sense then to guard life carefully. We must make wise decisions, to act like today could be my last day on this earth.

Certainly I have many regrets in life. It would be so nice to go back in time and change my many mistakes. But that is impossible. As someone once said, "Yesterday is gone, tomorrow is only a promise. All we really have is today." Therefore, let us use this day sensibly. Now let me share with you some recent thoughts I have gleaned from meditating on James 4:14. These suggestions will have a profound impact on my life and hopefully, will be beneficial to others. These are nothing new nor earth-shattering, but a friendly reminder of my concern for my fellow man. I hope you will share these, too.

1. Get my priorities straight! In this materialistic world of ours, God is not at the top of most of our lists. However, he has to be. *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matt. 6:33) Spiritual things should be our goals in life: God, Christ, heaven, church, etc. Yet, how much of our day is spent thinking about things like: sports, sex, television, music, and gossip? How often do we seek the elements of: power, prestige, possessions, and professions? Our goal should be that crown of righteousness which Paul described in 2 Tim. 4:8. *"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 3:14)

2. Set a good example! One reality about having a life that is like a "vapour", is that we don't have as much time to spend with our loved ones as we would like. Hence, we need to make sure we leave them with good memories filled with good examples. *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men,*

especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10) Our influence certainly has an impact on our children, our grandchildren, and on the younger members of the Lord's church. Let us show them the happiness we enjoy from being a child of God.

3. Life isn't about making money! Some of us work so hard to provide for our families, that we neglect them. In America we are consumed with profits, earnings, overtime, and anything labeled FREE. Why are we so miserable until we feel "rich"? "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." (1 Tim. 6:7,8) Later in that same chapter Paul reveals "*the **love** of money is the root of all evil*" (v. 10). I believe that "love" will only make our life shorter than it already is.

4. Don't hold grudges! For all our spirituality, Christians fall short more often in our dealings with people than in any other area taught by Jesus Christ and the apostles. Paul put it very bluntly, "*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*" (Eph. 4:31-32) We must learn to exercise more forgiveness and have more compassion for our fellow man. Life is too brief to hold meaningless grudges!

5. Enjoy the presence of God! No matter where we are, our Creator will be there for us to feel him (Psa. 139:7-12). I am fortunate to live in a place where I can hear a creek trickling and the birds singing in the morning. I can see leaves running across the ground, the clouds floating by and some occasional country wildlife. I can also feel the breezy wind through the trees and the sun's warmth. These are things we usually take for granted but they merely prove the existence of a higher being, the Almighty Father. Before I leave this world, I can attest to the presence of God and can only look forward to an eternal abode with him in that heavenly place.

There was a reason why James reminded his readers about the brevity of life. He wants us to realize how uncertain it is. And that we must make the most of it. Learn to appreciate what few days we have left and let us not waste this precious gift from God on trivial pursuits. May the Lord bless us all!

RAY McMANUS

TENACITY

Failed in business	1831
Lost election for legislature ..	1832
Failed again in business	1834
Sweetheart died	1835
Nervous breakdown	1836
Lost second political race	1838
Defeated for Congress	1843
Defeated for Congress	1846
Defeated for Congress	1848
Defeated for US Senate	1855
Defeated for Vice President	1856
Defeated for US Senate	1858
Elected President of US	1860

-- Abraham Lincoln

Today's thought is somewhat a continuation of the things we mentioned (previously). But instead of explaining a lot of things myself, I want to present a few examples of individuals who encountered hardships in this life, lived through the difficult times, and then found success. Of course, the intent is for us to make a comparison to our spiritual lives.

First, let's look back at two verses: *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;"* (2 Cor. 4:17). *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."* (Heb. 12:11)

The Polish scientist Marie Curie worked through four winters inside the leaky walls of an old shed, the best laboratory she could afford. She processed an entire ton of "pitchblende" (raw Uranium ore) to succeed in isolating only a fraction of a gram

of pure Radium. For this, she became the first female recipient of a Nobel Prize.

"Let me tell you the secret that had led me to my goal. My strength lies solely in my tenacity." -- Louis Pasteur

It was said that at the Battle of Waterloo, the British soldiers were not any braver than Napoleon's troops, but that they were brave five minutes longer.

When James J. Corbett was boxing's heavy-weight champion, someone asked him, "What is the most important thing it takes to be a champion?" He replied, "The willingness to fight one more round." "Nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'Press On' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race." -- President Calvin Coolidge

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
Feb. 28 - - March 2	New Bethel Church Cullman, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 9 - 14	Freefield Church Sand Hill, MS	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 14 - 16	Mt. Carmel Rd. Church Gay, GA	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
March 24 - 28	Liberty, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 28 - 30	Antioch Church Douglasville, GA	Bill Prince (Oxford, AL)

March Willow Oaks Church James McDonald
29 - 30 Russell Springs, KY (Woodbury, TN)

Mar. 31 - Goochtown Church James McDonald
- Apr. 4 near Eubank, KY (Woodbury, TN)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. In Corinth Paul found a man named Aquila. What was his wife's name?
2. When receiving the Commandments, how long did Moses spend on top of the mountain with God the last time he went up?
3. When Jesus arrived in Bethany, which of Lazarus' sisters ran to greet Him?
4. Jeremiah prophesied in Lamentations that better were those who were slain by the sword than those slain by what?
5. Were the cherubim on the mercy seat facing out or in?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. What king was the last of the giants? KING OG (Deut. 3:11)
2. According to 2 John, whom does the person who abides in Christ's teaching have? THE FATHER AND THE SON (2 Jn. 9)
3. How long did Jesus tarry before leaving to go to Lazarus? TWO DAYS (John 11:6)
4. To which of the following does the Psalmist compare youth: a young lamb, new grass, or dew? DEW (Psa. 110:3)
5. What did David do with Goliath's weapons after killing him? PUT THEM IN HIS OWN TENT (1 Sam. 17:54)