



PART 3: Time

INTRODUCTION

Scripture says God has determined the number of our days. We can make more money and we can make more friends, but we can't make more time. We can count our money and our friends, but we can't count our time. Considering that truth, knowing what to do with our time matters. It's vital that we use our time wisely.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

PART A

Job 14:5 says: *"A person's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed"*.

Some interpret this to mean that God has predetermined the exact number of days that a person will live. Others, such as the authors of *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, interpret it differently: *"The idea here is probably not that any particular lifespan was predetermined but that any lifespan was a comparatively insignificant period of time"*.

What is your view? Do you believe that God has predetermined everything before the beginning of time, or are some things yet to be decided? What are the strengths and weaknesses to each view?

PART B

Take some time to consider Matthew 24:16-21. This is a prophecy that Jesus gave regarding the destruction of the temple: *"Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equalled again"*.

Here we discover that the temple is going to be destroyed no matter what. But the prayers of God's people determined if it happened in winter.

Do you believe that this passage supports or refutes the idea that God predetermined everything before the beginning of time?

QUESTION 2

In Job 14:1-12, Job seems to be making the point that 'LIFE IS SHORT, DEATH IS COMING'.

Jack believes that our culture is obsessed with death. He believes that the news is too focussed on people dying, and not enough on the things that make life worth living. He quotes the Apostle Paul who said: *"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things"* (Phil 4:8).

Sally believes that too many people in our culture have buried their heads in the sand regarding the shortness of life and death. She argues that unless we work in a hospital or a nursing home, it is rare that we even see someone die.

Do you agree with Jack or Sally? In what ways could Jack's perspective help us to make better use of our time? In what ways could Sally's perspective help us to make better use of our time?

QUESTION 3

The Apostle Paul was incredibly aware of the truth that 'LIFE IS SHORT, DEATH IS COMING'. He said:

"If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain." (Phil 1:22-25)

"I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace." (Acts 20:24)

Paul believed that he had been left here on earth to testify to the good news of God's grace. If this is true for all of us who are believers, how would it impact our approach to the following...

- > The time we spend on rest and recreation.
- > The time we spend at work.
- > The time we spend with family and friends.
- > The time we spend gathering together with other believers.

QUESTION 4

Kanye West was recently asked by James Cordon how he can go from being a non-Christian to a Christian so quickly. Kanye responded by saying that people can go from being asleep to being awake in an instant. It simply requires that they are woken up.

On Sunday, we looked at how the criminal on the cross went from not knowing he had eternal life to knowing for sure he had eternal life in an instant.

The truth is that life is short. We only have a limited time to lead as many people to Jesus as possible.

The good news is that it may not take a lifetime. People can cross over from death to life in an instant. Who are the people that you long for God to save this week? What role might God have you play? Spend some time praying for them now.