

One Month to Live
Living The Dash
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John 10:10

I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of. (The Message)

One of my favorite places to visit is a cemetery.

When I was a student in North Carolina, my friend Mark and I would often go out riding our motorcycles and stopping

I am fascinated by old tombstones → looking at them makes me imagine how the person might have lived → trying to guess what was important to them.

I don't think that I can visit a historical site and not seek out the cemetery.

Boston, of course, has some wonderful cemeteries in the area. The most famous may be the Granary Burial Ground on the Freedom Trail that is the final resting place of Paul Revere, Samuel Adams and John Hancock, as well as the five victims of the Boston Massacre and Mother Goose (who was a real person).

Erik Ewers, a film editor for documentarian Ken Burns said:

"You look at these tombstones and each tombstone represents an individual life, existence, a career a family history. For me, graveyards are like a thousand untold stories. It spurs your curiosity."

And one of the things that you quickly notice, when looking at old tombstones, is that a person's life is often reduced to two dates and one little dash.

When you think about it, we don't have control over many things in life.

We didn't get to decide where we were born,
who our parents are,
or which time period and culture we face.

We don't get to decide the dates on our gravestone.
We don't know when our time on this earth will be up.
It could be next week or next year or decades away.
That is something that we all should have learned the last couple of weeks.

While we can't control when we will die, there is one thing we have a vast amount of control over.

We get to decide how we're going to use our dash.

You get to choose how to spend that little dash of time between the two dates of your earthly existence.

What are you spending yours on?

Are you living the dash, knowing fully who you are and why you're here? Or are you dashing to live, hurriedly spending precious time chasing things that really don't matter to you?

The problem is, most of us don't really accept the idea that one day we are going to die.

For some reason we think that we are going to be the one exception to the rule of life.

One of the things that I have witnessed during my 25 years of ministry is that when someone is given a terminal diagnosis – something happens.

When they know they only had a few months or weeks to live they have an amazing clarity about how they would like to spend their remaining time.

They focus on their relationships, saying the things they had always wanted to say.

They forgave and ask for forgiveness.

They didn't waste time on insignificant daily routines but made the absolute most of their time left.

If you knew you had one month to live, how would your life be radically transformed?

But why do we wait until we're diagnosed with cancer or we lose a loved one to accept this knowledge and allow it to free us?

Don't we want all that our life has to offer?

Wouldn't life be a lot more satisfying if we lived this way?

I want to challenge you to live the next 30 days as if they were your last – not because you're going to die in a month, a week or a year.

The point is if you live the next 30 days as if they were your last then you'll begin to know how to really live!

To do that, I want to challenge you to do several things.

First, every day, every morning ask yourself the question: *“What would I do if I had one month to live”*.

Use that question to set the tone for how you would live.

Second, read one chapter (and only one chapter) of the book, One Month to Live each and every day. The book is written as a devotional and designed for you to read each day.

Third, take some time and journal every day

Fourth, join us on Wednesday nights as we dig deeper into this subject.

Over the next several weeks together we will discover four principles that will transform the question, *“What would you do if you had one month to live”*, into an amazing lifestyle of meaning and purpose.

These four principles can be seen in the life of Jesus.

What did Jesus do when He knew He had one month to live?

He lived passionately,
He loved completely,
He learned humbly and He left boldly.

Jesus challenges us to do the same.

Listen to what Jesus said in John 10:10. *I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of. (The Message)*

To have real, and full life → Jesus demonstrates in his life four principles for each of us.

1) Jesus lived passionately

Did you listen to that passage from John?

Jesus didn't say that he came so that we could just live

Or that we might have a ho-hum life

No, it says that Jesus came so that we can have a better life.

Most of us are constantly waiting to live.

We think some day then I'll really live.

When I get a raise
When the kids are grown
When the kids are gone
When I retire . . .

We are constantly waiting to live.
 But I hate to tell you --- this is all you've got. TODAY.
 This is your life.
 Life moves so fast.
 It's gone before you know it.
 It's a precious, sacred gift that God gives us.

You still have a chance.
 You're still breathing so you still have this sacred gift of life that God has given us, but you have to take advantage of it.
 You have to make the choices to take advantage of it.

John Maxwell, for years, has kept a sign on his desk that simply says "yesterday ended last night." He says it reminds him of no matter how badly I failed in the past, it's done and today is a new day. No matter what goals I've accomplished, they have little direct impact on what I do today.

That's the power of today.

So first I start living. I have to choose to start living passionately.
 The greatest risk is not risking. Not living.

The second greatest risk is the second thing we're going to talk about. You were made to love and the second greatest risk is loving. Our second principle is:

2) Jesus lived completely

Jesus summed up the entire Bible in a couple of verses in Matthew 22:37-39,
"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

It's saying love God first and love others like yourself.

At the end of your life

- it won't matter how much money is in your bank account,
- it won't matter how many awards you've won,
- it won't matter how many goals you've achieved,

all that will matter is did you love?

Did you love the people in your life.

Did you love God with all your heart?

That's the only thing that's going to matter one day.

If you knew you only had one month left to live I think you would really focus on relationships.

Our third principle is:

3) Jesus lived humbly

Jesus taught us through example how to live humbly.

(Philippians 2:5-8 NRSV) Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, {6} who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, {7} but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, {8} he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross.

We will spend time in a couple of weeks learning how we too can live humbly like Jesus.

The fourth principle is my favorite:

4) Jesus left boldly

Not only did Jesus live passionately, love completely, learn humbly but He also left boldly.

If you knew you only had 30 days to live, I think, you would be resolved to make sure that the important things were done, and that you went out with a bang.

You wouldn't waste time or energy on things that didn't really matter but you would look for ways to leave a lasting legacy.

For the next 4 weeks, Nathan and I are challenging you to live as if you had only one month to live.

I want to challenge you to do several things during these next 30 days.

First, every day, every morning ask yourself the question: *"What would I do if I had one month to live"*.

Use that question to set the tone for how you would live.

Second, read one chapter (and only one chapter) of the book, *One Month to Live* each and every day. The book is written as a devotional and designed for you to read each day.

Third, take some time and journal every day, write about what is going on in your life and how your attitude is changing.

Fourth, join us on Wednesday nights as we dig deeper into this subject.

Harold Kushner the great modern Rabbi once wrote:

I am convinced that it is not the fear of death, of our lives ending, that haunts our sleep so much as the fear . . . that as far as the world is concerned, we might never have lived.