

HOME GROUP DVD STUDY MATERIALS

OCT – NOV 2015

The next series of Home Group Teachings, to be delivered over three sessions, will be based on the book entitled “**One Month to Live**” by **Kerry and Chris Shook**. These teaching notes include extracts and quotes from the book and a guide to the accompanying videos.

INTRODUCTION

If you have only one month to live, what would you change?

Nothing focuses a person’s priorities in life like discovering that we are about to die. For most of us, if we knew we have only ONE month to live, we would live our lives differently. We would be more authentic about who we are and be more deliberate about how we spend the time we have left. Many may suddenly realise that they spent their lives on things that do not matter and are unimportant. The fear of death paralyses most people, preventing us from taking risks necessary to fulfil God’s plan for our lives.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful to be able to honestly say, ‘I do not need to change anything simply because this is how I have been living and I will continue to do so!’ Sadly, many people who are facing death make radical changes in order to die well and rarely do we meet people who change just a little. It’s not they are unwilling to change. It’s because they have lived so purposefully, deliberately and authentically that the news of the end of this life doesn’t turn their lives upside down. They will still struggle with grief over the news, they will ache for their families and people they love, but they take comfort knowing that they have lived a fulfilled and purposeful life!

By embracing the fact that our time on earth is limited, we can live more intentionally, no longer postponing the joy and peace that come from fulfilling our God-given destiny. The Bible reminds us that our lives are so short compared to eternity. “*Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.*” (James 4:14).

At the end of our life, the only thing that will matter is whether we have accomplished God’s purpose for our life and completed the assignment intended for us. Jesus was twelve when He said, “I must be about my Father’s business.” And just twenty-one years later, He could say to the Father, “I have completed the work you gave me to do.”

SESSION 1: LIVING THE DASH

Watch DVD Session 1: Living the Dash (25 minutes)

In the video, Kerry gives an illustration of a cemetery and a variety of tombstones. This makes us realise that our entire lives are now reduced to two dates (the day we are born and day we die) that is separated by a “little” dash. Some tombstones include facts or sayings, Bible verses or poignant memorials, but each person’s life boils down to what transpires between these two dates! It comes down to what’s “in” the dash.

e.g. **1950 – 1998**

When we look at the dash of a particular tombstone, what questions come to our mind?

(Note: These questions are NOT for discussion but just to get the group to start thinking)

- What did he/she live for?
- Whom did he/she love?
- What were his/her passions?
- What were his/her biggest mistakes?
- What were his/her greatest regrets?

Come to think of it, we have no control over many things in our lives

- We didn’t get to decide where/how/when we were born
- Who our parents are
- Which time period or culture we will be part of
- We don’t get to decide the dates on our gravestone, we don’t get to decide when our time on earth is up – it could be next week, next year or decades away; only God knows.

But there is one thing we have a vast amount of control over – we get to decide how we are going to “use” our dash, no matter how short or long the dash is going to be. You get to choose how to spend that ‘little’ dash of time between the two dates, your earthly existence.

DISCUSSION

1. Read Ps 90:2

- a. What does it mean to number our days?*
- b. What is the connection between numbering our days and gaining “a heart of wisdom”? (Refer to James 1:5).*

2. Read James 3:13-18

- a. How does verse 13 show wisdom is evidenced in a person’s life?*
- b. What are the differences between earthly and Godly wisdom?*

3. Read Ps 39:4-5 - In the light of the brevity of our lives here on earth,

- 1. How should we embrace each day we are given to live out the dash?*
- 2. If you knew you only had one month to live, what changes would you do right now and what do you wish to see in your dash?*

SESSION 2: LIVE PASSIONATELY

Watch DVD Session 2: Live Passionately (20 minutes)

Last session, we discussed about brevity of our life and how we are going to live it out. In this video, Kerry & Chris use the analogy of a roller coaster ride. If you take a roller coaster ride, sometimes you can wait for hours before we getting on the ride. And before you know it the ride is over in just seconds! Like a roller coaster, the ride of life is full of ups and downs, twists and turns. It moves at a fast pace, and before you know it, it's over. Our lives on earth are temporal and finite. Psalm 90:10 says *"The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."* This fact can be discouraging, causing us to miss out on all that life has to offer, or it can be liberating, allowing us to take advantage of every moment and every opportunity, and reminding us to be all that God made us to be. The question is not will we die one day, but rather are we truly living today?

DISCUSSION:

What gets you most excited in life? (Is it a relationship, your kids, your hobby, a beautiful day outside, intimacy with God, serving God or something else?)

Think about this anonymous quote, *"Plan for eternity but live as if there's no tomorrow"*. Most of us have a tendency to procrastinate and like Chris said in this video, we fall into the "Someday" syndrome.

- Someday I'm going for all that life has to offer
- When I retire, then I'll be free to serve God
- Someday I'm really going to live for God and get my act together
- When I make enough money, then I'll spend more time with my kids, etc

That 'someday' may never come for some people. Don't wait for someday to come, 'Someday is right now!' Today is the day that you will live totally for God; today is the day you are making time to take your family out; today is the day you need to pick up the phone to call that person you have yet to forgive, and so on.

Read 1 Samuel 17 (David & Goliath). For forty days, the Philistines mocked Israel to try to get them to fight. However, no one dared to come forward to challenge Goliath. Jesse, David's father sent him to check out his how his brothers were doing on the battle frontline and to take them some food. No one in Israel dared to challenge Goliath. But when David on the very same day, heard and saw him what Goliath was doing, without hesitation he pleaded with King Saul to fight Goliath. David did not wait for 'someday' but he acted on the day itself ('today') and God gave him victory over Goliath. King Saul's army could only see from 'ground' level whereas David saw from 'God' level.

DISCUSSION:

a. *What's in your dream box (something that you are passionate about) that you have been putting away? The enemy may be putting negative thoughts in you and is blinding you to see God's purpose fulfilled through you. But you know in your heart God is nudging you to open this dream box 'today' not 'someday'.*

b. *So what are you waiting for if you know that you have only one month to live?*

SESSION 3: LEAVE BOLDLY

Watch DVD Session 5: Leave Boldly (20 minutes)

Can you relate to what Kerry & Chris said about building sandcastles? It's nice to watch tiny children build sandcastles. They would put in much care and effort to create a beautiful sand masterpiece. However, it takes them a while to realise that these sandcastles are not permanent and the waves will wash them away eventually. Once they know that, they are not devastated when their sandcastle is washed away because they enjoy building them and they don't sweat over it! They are not attached to the sandcastle no matter how beautiful it is.

There's nothing wrong with having resources and wealth as long as we realise that all the material things we have are just like sandcastles. Just like the children who enjoy building them and when the tide comes, they watch as they are washed away. Likewise, we should enjoy our earthly possessions God gave us but never get too attached to them or we'll be crushed when the tide of time takes them away.

Take time to read Luke 12:13-21, the parable of the "Rich Fool"

In this parables Jesus reminds us that when we are blessed with possessions or material wealth, but are warned 'set not our hearts on them' and 'be rich towards God'.

Read Ephesians 5:15-17.

DISCUSSION:

What can we do right NOW to make use of every opportunity so that we could be rich towards God? (With the Time, Talents & Treasures that you possess, please provide examples that have lasting eternal significance/impact)

The Three Last Wishes of Alexander the Great

Alexander, after conquering many kingdoms, was returning home to Greece. On the way, he fell ill and it took him to his deathbed. With staring death in the face, Alexander realised how his conquests, his great army, his sharp sword and all his wealth were of no consequence. He now longed to reach home to see his mother's face and bid her his last adieu. But, he had to accept the fact that his sinking health would not permit him to reach his distant homeland. So, the mighty conqueror lay prostrate and pale, helplessly waiting to breathe his last.

He called his generals and said, "I will depart from this world soon, I have three wishes, please carry them out without fail."

With tears flowing down their cheeks, the generals agreed to abide by their king's last wishes.

1. "My first desire is that", said Alexander, "My physicians alone must carry my coffin."
2. After a pause, he continued, "Secondly, I desire that when my coffin is being carried to the grave, the path leading to the graveyard be strewn with gold, silver and precious stones which I have collected in my treasury".
3. The king felt exhausted after saying this. He took a minute's rest and continued. "My third and last wish is that both my hands be kept dangling out of my coffin".

The people who had gathered there wondered at the king's strange wishes. But no one dared bring the question to their lips. Alexander's favourite general kissed his hand and pressed them to his heart.

"O king, we assure you that all your wishes will be fulfilled. But tell us why do you make such strange wishes?"

At this Alexander took a deep breath and said: "I would like the world to know of the three lessons I have just learnt. Lessons to be learnt from last 3 wishes of King Alexander...I want my physicians to carry my coffin because people should realize that no doctor on this earth can really cure anyone. They are powerless and cannot save a person from the clutches of death. So let not people take life for granted.

The second wish of strewing gold, silver and other riches on the path to the graveyard is to tell people that not even a fraction of gold will come with me. I spent all my life pursuing Greed and Power, earning riches but I cannot take anything with me. Let people realize that it is a sheer waste of time to chase wealth.

About my third wish of having my hands dangling out of the coffin, I wish people to know that I came empty handed into this world and empty handed I go out of this world".

With these words, Alexander the Great closed his eyes. Soon he let death conquer him and breathed his last.

DISCUSSION:

If you have only one month to live, think about all the possessions you will leave behind. Remember, we don't really own anything. We are just stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

- a. *What will be your three last wishes?*
- b. *Will you consider storing up for yourselves part or all of it in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and thieves do not break in or steal (Matthew 6:19-21)? If yes, in what ways do you think you could do?*