



#2: Live Passionately, Pastor Joe Wittwer

January 4, 2009

A. Fellowship Time (10-15 minutes)

1. Chitchat. Perhaps offer coffee, tea, or a cold drink with some snacks.
2. Pray (or invite someone to pray) to open the discussion.

B. Review Time (Read the summary below to the group: 5-10 minutes)

What would you do if you had only 30 days to live? Even though it's a clarifying question, if all we do is ask the question, the whole thing is an exercise in futility, a big waste of time. The point is to live the life! Live as though you had one month to live! Take action! Here are three ideas for living passionately, living to the max every day:

1. Make the most of every day.

To live passionately means you make the most of every day. Each minute becomes precious. David prays, *"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom"* (**Psalm 90:12**). Life is short. None of us knows how many days we have, but we all have a finite number of days in this life. We have no guarantee about tomorrow. But many people are waiting to live. It's called the "someday syndrome." But **Psalm 118:24** puts it like this: *"This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."* The psalmist doesn't say, "Tomorrow is the day." Too many people think, "I'll be happy someday when the conditions in my life change." But today is the only day you have. **Ephesians 5:15-16** says, *"Be very careful, then how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."* And **Colossians 4:5** says, *"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity."* Notice that wisdom is associated with "making the most of every opportunity." The literal translation of the Greek in both verses is "redeeming the time." Most people are more concerned about their money than their time, but time is far more precious than money. You can never gain more time. This is your life. There is no someday. Stop constantly waiting to live and start living the life that you were made to live.

2. Take risks; don't play it safe.

To live passionately means that you take risks, that you don't play it safe. **Luke 9:51** tells us, *"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."* Jesus knows the end of his life is near, but does he play it safe? No. He "resolutely set out for Jerusalem" where His enemies were conspiring to kill him. With courageous determination, He heads for the front lines. How about you? Are you playing it safe, or are you taking some risks? We're not talking about crazy risks, but about moving beyond your comfort zone and letting God do something bigger than you. In the story of David and Goliath, Goliath was a mountain of a man. No one in Israel wanted to go toe-to-toe with this monster. Then David showed up. He was only a boy, but when David heard Goliath make fun of God, he got righteously indignant, and offered to fight the giant. What gave David such confidence? David was only a boy, but he knew the Lord. He had confidence that God would be with him and make him victorious (the details are in **1 Samuel 17:34-37**). David had ridiculous faith! He let God do something bigger than him. You've got to take a shot to make one. You can't win without risking. Somebody has to trust the Lord and take on the giant; why not you? [Read **Matthew 25:26-30** together.] The only way to really lose is by not trying at all, by playing it safe, hanging there white-knuckled on the monkey bars. You've got to believe that the God who made you wants you live life to the full. He wants you to let go and know that He will catch you. God made us for risk taking. You will miss 100% of the shots you never take.

3. Get connected with God.

To live passionately means that you get connected with God. Are you ready to meet God? To some people this just sounds like fire insurance. You've lived your whole life without God, but now that you're dying, so you'd better get ready to meet Him. Certainly a deathbed or final month conversion is better than no conversion at all, but better early than late because Jesus came so that you could have life and have it to the full. **In John 10:10** Jesus claims, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* So many people mistakenly think that when you begin to follow Jesus, the fun is over. Ask most people what they think of being a Christian and you'll hear things like "boring" or "too restrictive" or "no fun." On the contrary, the adventure *begins* when you start following Jesus. So how do you get connected to Jesus? You make a decision: follow or not. When you follow someone, you hang out with them, get to know them. Then how do you stay connected? [Read **John 15:1, 4-5** together.] Just like a branch stays connected to the vine, we've got to stay connected to Jesus. If we do, we bear much fruit. God does remarkable things in and through us. He produces fruit from our lives that would be impossible on our own. So how do you stay connected? Constant communication. One of the ways that God talks to us is through His word, the Bible. Each morning, start the day by giving God an opportunity to speak to you and give you something for that day. Let God talk to you. And talk to God. Pray that one thing back to Him, and then talk with Him about what is on your mind. The conversation doesn't end when we close our Bible and journal. The conversation keeps going all through the day because He is with us wherever we go. Stay connected to God and live life to full.

C. Life Group Questions (select, revise, and add as desired: 20-40 minutes)

1. What are your biggest time wasters? What would you stop doing if you had 30 days to live? What would you do instead?
2. Are you playing it safe or are you taking risks, doing things that require "ridiculous faith"? What is one risk God is calling you to take? What would you attempt for God if you knew you couldn't fail?
3. Are you ready to meet God? Is He a stranger or a friend? How do you stay connected to God?

D. Personal Application (1-3 Minutes)

- This week honestly wrestle with the questions you've just discussed; they're in the sermon outline from Sunday. Write down your responses in your devotional journal.
- Talk about what you're learning and experiencing with someone outside this group.
- Decide on at least one action step each week. The goal isn't to *imagine* how you would live. Do it.
- Share your story as a Life Group or individuals on our blog: go to www.lifecenter.net and comment on the *One Month to Live Blog*.

E. Prayer Time (As a whole group or subgroups of 3-4: 10-15 Minutes)

- Pray that God would help you see His priorities for your life and help you put your time and energy there.
- Also ask Him to help you to dream His dreams for your life and to take some risks for expanding His kingdom in your home, workplace, community, or church that require "ridiculous faith."
- Let God know that you want know him better, and pray that He would help guide you in that path through His Word and prayerful conversation with Him throughout each day.
- Bring other praises and requests before God that arose from your discussion.