

# LIFE AND DEATH ARE IN THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

## *PART 4*

### Our Words and a Long Life

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December 4, 2010

Right brethren, over the last three weeks we have been talking a little bit about our tongues, our words, and the way that we use our tongues. We said before that using our tongues is really a God-like characteristic. We said that animals may moo, bark and squeak, and that birds might cheep and chirp, and so on. But really, proper communication, that of selecting words, is very God-like. We saw also that we do need to be somewhat careful of the way in which we use our words. The Lord Jesus said that we would be judged by every idle, non-productive word that we speak.

There are a few scriptures that I would like to return to briefly, because today's topic is sort of a bit of a postscript on the previous three weeks. It is not directly connected, but it is quite close.

**Proverbs 18:21** Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

We said before that the words that we use a lot, the words that reveal what is in our heart, eventually will produce *something* and we will eat *the fruit*. Our tongues have the ability, at the extreme ends, of bringing death or life. Death and life are in the power of the tongue. We spoke about being careful what words we use; and we do not want to be using words that tend to death. We would rather bestow favor with our words. The words that we use do not just affect necessarily other people, but they can affect ourselves. As we will see today, the power of death and life is in our tongue and it can affect us *personally*. Let us be careful to use words that are going to be up-building.

**Mark 11:20-21** Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

Peter said, 'You spoke to this fig tree, and we all thought that you were perhaps "losing it" a wee bit. But look, today the fig tree is all withered up, that is amazing!' Not to Jesus it was not.

**Mark 11:22** So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

Not what he *believes*, but what *he says*. So we spent some time looking at the fact that our faith is in two places; it is in our heart and in our mouth. We *believe* in our heart, and we *say* it. Jesus says here that you and I will have what *we say* if we believe it in our heart and say it with our mouth; we are setting in motion events and circumstances that will bring that to pass. So, therefore, what we say is important. We did comment briefly last week that sometimes we will probably pray a fairly good prayer in some ways, find God's word and go to Him and seek His response, His blessing and His favor. But then we are inconsistent, because when we stop praying we probably *say things* which are different! We might be asking God for some sort of favor, perhaps at work or in our finances, and we have found scriptures that tell us that God will look after us and prosper us and so we are very happy. So we ask God and thank Him for that, but then a day later or a week later, somebody asks us how it is going. We say, "Well it is grim, I do not think that we can survive, we are going under, and I think this is the end." Well, what we believe in our heart and say is what we will have. We may have prayed a good prayer, but we nullified it by *what we say*. We have to be consistent.

Last week in talking through some of these issues I made a brief aside of one example of potentially careless talk that I would like to return to. I would like to seek today to try and clarify the issue. I have mentioned this before, some four or five years ago, but we have quite a few new listeners, and welcome to you all. Plus, the majority of those that heard it last time will have forgotten most of what I said, and indeed I have probably forgotten most of it myself.

The illustration that I used last week was a minister who said, "I have just turned seventy years old, brethren, and that is all that the Bible promises; I am now on borrowed time and I do not know how much longer I will be with you." The point that he was making is that the Bible says three score and ten; and 'I have reached it and I may not even be here next week'. There are several problems with believing and saying that, because first of all if *you believe* that in your heart and *say it* with your mouth you are likely to get it. You are really talking *words of death*. Believe in your heart and say it with your mouth and Jesus says that you will have what you say.

Secondly, even if you do not fully believe it in your heart and you are just throwing it out as an interesting comment, you may *convince other brethren* that that is the way it is and they accept it and they believe it, and then *they say it* about themselves.

The third problem is that the Bible does not even say that anyway! But it is our traditional misunderstanding. There is also a somewhat related Bible opinion, which is that you and I have a "set time" to die. People say that the scripture says that there is a time appointed to men to die and after that the judgment. People misquote or misunderstand, whether it is careless or mischievous, I am not too sure. People sometimes believe words like that, and if they believe them in their heart and start to say them with their mouth then they are on this slippery slope.

Today, we will look at what the Bible actually says about how long you and I may live. If we believe wrong and say wrong, we will quickly get ourselves into trouble. Remember, death and life is in the power of the tongue. Yet if we believe right, and say right, it will be far better for us.

Today's title, if you like titles, is: "Our Words and a Long Life." Let us start with the "three score and ten" statement.

**Psalms 90:10** The days of our lives are seventy years (three score and ten, KJV); And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

We are cutting into the context, (which is what people who quote it normally do, which is very naughty).

This is a scripture that is commonly quoted, and this minister that quoted it was a sincere individual. He believed that when you reached three score and ten, you have had it. You might be one of the few that makes it to eighty, and then that is really struggling a bit. Thinking like this can lead to all manner of problems. Is it a Bible law that we have only three score and ten? No. All of us probably know people who are more than eighty years old. Mr. Armstrong was 93. Bob Hope lived to be a hundred. So how can this be a Bible *law* if somebody like Bob Hope lived to be a hundred? If you look at the oldest person alive today whose age can be verified, it is an American lady by the name of Eunice Sanborn, and she is one hundred and fifteen years old! She lives in Jacksonville, Texas, and was born in 1896. That is a good age, and she is the oldest person alive today (unless she died yesterday!). But that is not three score and ten; it is not even four score. So if this is a Bible promise, *or boundary*, how come there are people who go way past it? The oldest verified person in recent times, actually now dead about thirteen years ago, was a French man. He died at the age of one hundred and twenty two years old.

You can look at the average life expectancy in many countries. In Japan the average age is 81. Some of course are less than that for a whole host of reasons, maybe a car crash, or drugs and murders, and some are *much older* than that. There are a very large number of people who are over one hundred years old in Japan. In Australia the average is 80; in Western Europe the average is about 79.

It is definitely not a *Bible law*, yet some people are in danger of living "down" to three score and ten because *they think* that is what the Bible says. Some people see it as a milestone. 'Well I have reached my three score and ten, and I am on borrowed time'. Then they start living down to something that is actually not biblically true.

But if Psalm 90:10 is not a prediction and it is not a law, then what actually is it? We need to look at the context of verse 10, as we cannot ever pull out a verse from the middle of a book.

That is one of the pet peeves that I have; I hear people selecting a word out of the entire Bible, or half a verse, and building up some sort of teaching on that. They say any text without a *context* is a *pretext*. Psalms 90 is actually a psalm of Moses, and he is talking about a particular time in his life. We will look in Numbers 14, and see the situation that Moses found himself in, and I think that we are very familiar with this. Israel had reached the very edge of the Promised Land, and should have gone over and enjoyed a land flowing with milk and honey, and orchards and vineyards. But, of course, as soon as they got to the borders they sent some spies in, and they came back with what the Bible records as *a bad report*. Actually it might have been an accurate report in a sense, of what the facts were, but it was a bad report because it implied that God's promises would not be upheld.

**Numbers 14:1-2** So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!"

Talking of being justified and condemned by your words! They knew that God had promised to take them into the Promised Land, and to give them prosperity, peace and a great future. Here they are saying, "*If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!*" They should not have said that. Our words are important, and sometimes it is best to say nothing.

**Numbers 14:3-4** "Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

This was basically complete rebellion. They put no trust in God; and even said that He had brought them out there to kill them. They said, 'We cannot trust God; we cannot put our faith in this Divine Being; let us go back to slavery, and the cucumbers and garlic'. They were saying things that they would regret shortly.

**Numbers 14:9-10** "Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them." And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.

God was watching and was not entirely impressed.

**Numbers 14:11** Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?"

God has done this numerous times; He took them through the Red Sea, and destroyed all of the Egyptian armies, He gave them water from the rocks, and so on.

**Numbers 14:12** "I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

Moses interceded and said, 'That is not a great idea God, people will think that you cannot deliver Your promises; please forgive them'. And God sort of did.

**Number 14:20-25** Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; "but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD — because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now *these ten times*, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it. Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea."

There were ten separate occasions of complete rebellion.

**Numbers 14:26-28** And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: They carelessly spoke the words, and God told them just as they spoke they will be condemned.

**Numbers 14:29** 'The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.

So here is Moses getting instructions to pass on. God tells him that *the entire adult population is going to die in the wilderness.*

**Number 14:30-34** 'Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 'But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 'But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection.

*So if you are twenty or older you have at the maximum forty years to live; and in forty years' time, all of you adults will be dead.*

**Numbers 14:31** 'I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'"

So, here is Moses and he is looking at *a curse*. All of them are going to die who are aged twenty or more. Many would only reach sixty. For the majority, who were probably thirty or thirty-

five, they are going to die at age seventy, at the latest. Those who are forty or fifty years old, in theory could live another forty years, up to eighty or thereabouts at the latest. Of course, they were not all going to be allowed to live to the end of the forty years. They were going to die *during* that forty years, in the wilderness, in unpleasant territory. Nobody who is an adult is going to enjoy a long life. You are not going to enjoy it at all because it is wilderness, and manna and problems. They are not going to enjoy a long life, because the most that they can expect is forty more years, and probably many died much sooner than forty years. If you think about it, if there were roughly two million adults out there, give or take a bit, you are looking at a hundred or more funerals *every single day* of the forty years. That is a pretty miserable existence. Now let us turn back to Psalm 90, and look at the psalm in context. Looking at the heading it says, “A prayer of Moses, the man of God”. This is a psalm from Moses, and it appears to have been written *during that wilderness period* where Moses was seeing people dying off by the hundreds or more every single day. It must have been quite grim, and quite depressing.

**Psalms 90:7** For we have been consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath we are terrified.

This was a time when the people are being consumed because of God’s righteous anger and indignation against them, because they were complete rebels.

**Psalms 90:8-9** You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance. For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh.

This was a very hard time.

**Psalms 90:10-12** The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.



I think Moses was perhaps pleading with God perhaps to relent; but it was not to happen because even in the wilderness they were rebellious non-stop. The whole psalm is not about the days that are promised to people in every generation, but it is Moses recounting the very difficult circumstances in the wilderness, where people were dying far younger than they ought to. By the sound of it, most were dying by the age of seventy.

In the Amplified version they have a footnote to this particular psalm. It says:

“This psalm is credited to Moses, who was interceding with God to remove the curse which made it necessary for every Israelite over twenty years of age to die before reaching the Promised Land. Moses says most of them are dying at seventy years of age. This number has often been mistaken as a set span of life for all mankind. It was not intended to refer to anyone except those Israelites under the curse during that particulate forty years. Seventy years has never been the average span of life for humanity”.

So we see that Psalms 90:10 is not a general promise or prediction for all mankind, and certainly not for you and me. Now, if you want to believe that you only have seventy years, that is fine, it is your choice. But in reality the Bible does not put a limit on it. In fact, the Bible reveals that you and I *can influence* the number of years that we have.

**Deuteronomy 30:15-18** "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.

So if you do things which are wrong, your days will *not be prolonged*. In other words you will be responsible for *shortening your days*.

**Deuteronomy 30:19** "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;

Moses says, 'There is *life* over there, and there is *death* over there; this is the way of *blessing* and this is the way of the *curse*'. He says, 'You choose, and in case you do not know which way to choose, *choose life*'. It is your choice! It is not God's choice. *You choose* which way that you are going to go.

**Deuteronomy 30:20** that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

So Moses is making the point that *you can choose death* if you want, but why would you? Or you can choose life, and that is absolutely the case. Adam and Eve had to choose. King Saul had to choose. David had to choose. You and I have to choose every day. We can choose words of death, or we can choose to speak words of life. We can choose to sow to our flesh, or we can choose to sow to our spirit. We can choose to yield to God, or we can choose to rebel against God. We can choose to yield to Satan, or we can choose to resist. The choice is ours. We can choose life, or we can choose death. God says, 'Do not choose death, choose life'. Unfortunately over time most people have chosen death.

**Proverbs 3:1-2** My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; *For length of days and long life* and peace they will add to you.

So, according to the Preacher, it says that if we remember the law and keep the commandments then length of days and *long life* will be added to us.

The Message translation says: "He will help you to live a long, long time, a long life lived full and well." This will only happen if we choose to keep the law and the commandments. You can

see that the opposite would be true, and if we do not do that, then length of days and a long life will *not be added* to us. We have to choose right, otherwise we forfeit the benefits. It should be obvious that we cannot have a fixed appointed time to die, if by making certain choices, like here, we can have length of days and a long life added to us. It also says that in peace they will be added to you. Peace is the Hebrew word 'Shalom', but it means more than just peace; it also includes welfare, health and prosperity. All of this will be added to us if we live right, and make good choices.

**Proverbs 3:13-15** Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.

This is talking about wisdom. We have discussed wisdom in the past and this is something that you and I should seek out and search for. We must endeavor to grow in wisdom because it is far more valuable than precious stones and gold and silver.

**Proverbs 3:16** *Length of days* is in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor.

So the man or woman who acquires godly wisdom can expect riches and honor, but on the right hand, the dominant hand, length of days.

**Proverbs 3:17** Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who retain her.

The tree of life sounds positive and that sounds like something that we would want. Again think of the opposite, if you do not find wisdom and you remain pretty foolish and ignorant of God's ways, then you will not find the tree of life, and length of days will not be found in your right hand. So we can either have length of days or not, and the choice is down to you and me.

**Proverbs 4:5-7** Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you.

Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.

You and I should take that for what it says; that the number one thing that you and I should be acquiring is wisdom. We find wisdom in the pages of God's word, of course. But studying for all of five minutes a week will not deliver what we are looking for! We must put God's word first and make time for it. It should be higher on our agenda than the television documentaries, the re-runs of Gunsmoke. I am not saying that there is no place for those, but first things first, it says get wisdom. It says that wisdom is the principal thing, not E.R.

**Proverbs 4:8-10** Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you. Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, *And the years of your life will be many.*

And conversely, if you do not hear, then the years of your life will not be many. It is your choice. The implication is that if you and I choose God's way and choose to learn wisdom, then years of life can, and will, be added to us. So then, plainly, there is no set time for us to die, and the seventy or eighty years is irrelevant anyway. Again, how do you gain wisdom?

**Proverbs 4:20** My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.

Do we do that? Is it so very, very hard to find time to look into God's Word? We all have busy lives, I know that, and we have lots of demands on our time. But, if we want to find the tree of life, if we want to have a full life, and years added to us, and if we want peace, welfare and prosperity, if we want the good things in life and the wisdom, well where will we find it?

**Proverbs 4:20-22** My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh.

God's word literally produces life and health.

**Proverbs 4:23** Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you.

“*Perverse lips*” is crooked. If you say, ‘I am seventy now, I guess my time is up, I am not long for this world. After all, the Bible says that I am three score and ten...’ Those actually are, in my view at least, *perverse words*, and we need to put them away far from us.

**Proverbs 9:10-12** "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your *days will be multiplied*, And years of life will be added to you. If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, And if you scoff, you will bear it alone."

That is fairly plain and it implies that there is no set appointed time. It says that if we do have the fear of the Eternal, meaning to hear and obey, is to gain wisdom.

If you hear God's Word, and you are wise and get wisdom then you will reap the benefit yourself. But if you scoff at it, it is your choice, and in which case you will bear the lack. It is our choice, nobody is trying to persuade anybody here, and we are just going through the scriptures. It says that years of life will be added, but the converse is also true:

**Proverbs 10:27** The fear of the LORD prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.

It is not just a one-way process. If we have wisdom and we are going God's way, and if we are speaking words of life, then we can reap the benefits and prolong our days and have years of life added to us. Or, for those that choose to be wicked, their lives can be shortened. There is no set time, no set date in our future when we must reach that date and then our number is up. The time can be extended and the time can be shortened, and what happens is largely up to you and me.

**Psalms 34:11** Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Who is the man who desires life, And loves many days, that he may see good?

Well we have covered this before, but notice that it is implying that there are some people who desire life, and who are looking forward to and would like many days. Not just many days, because living a long life of poverty, or if you are chronically ill, or under horrendous oppression would be not something to look forward to. But living a long time, and *seeing good*, now that would be something that many people would find quite attractive. So the Psalmist is saying, “Who is the person who desires life, and to have *many days*, and see many good things”.

Clearly, he is saying that there are some things that you can do to achieve that. If that is a desire that you have, then keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking guile or deceit, depart from evil, do good, seek peace and pursue it. Do those things and you will be one of those people who finds life and many days. But if you speak guile, speak evil, follow evil and you do not do good, then you will not enjoy life for many days. He is saying if you would like to have life, and have it more abundantly, be a person who does not use their tongue improperly, be a person who does not follow after evil, on the contrary be a person who follows after peace.

Wisdom obviously applies in more than one area. Wisdom could apply in the quality of life that we lead, and some of us do not exercise much wisdom there. It would not be wise, for example, to carry too much weight. It would not be wise to have too much sugar, or alcohol, or too many fatty foods. It would not be wise to spend too much time flopped in front of the television set. It would not be wise to lose too much sleep (and that is one that I struggle slightly with). It would not be wise to take drugs, and not particularly wise to take that many pharmaceuticals. It would not be wise to live a stressful life. Wisdom would suggest that we would exercise a bit more care in how we live. We must be following God’s ways whole-heartedly. Then if we pursue wisdom good years will be added to our life.

**Psalms 103:1-2** Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits...

So, this implies that there are going to be benefits from choosing God's way, and from having a relationship with our Father. It implies that we might forget them if we do not go over them from time to time. So, he says, 'Do not ever forget the benefits of God'.

**Psalms 103:3** Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that *your youth is renewed* like the eagle's.

That sounds quite promising. If we walk in God's blessings then it says that our youthfulness is renewed like the eagles. Maybe this is referring to the fact that an eagle, in its prime, is very vigorous and our youth can be renewed making us as vigorous as a strong eagle. Nobody seems to be too sure what David is actually referring to here, other than what is clear is that our youth is renewed in some way like an eagle's.

This would require us to speak words of life to ourselves, and not keep talking about our aches and pains, and blaming it on our age.

**Psalms 91:1-2** He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

Here is a person, male or female, that has a great relationship with their God. So here is a person speaking good words, "...*God is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.*"

**Psalms 91:3** Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler *And* from the perilous pestilence.

So, no worries about swine flu, or any other flu for, that matter.

**Psalms 91:4-6** He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of

the arrow that flies by day, Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.

You and I should not be particularly perturbed by terrorists and things of that nature, because God is well able, and if He is our refuge and fortress, and He is our God and we trust in Him, then we should not be overly concerned.

**Psalms 91:14** Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

God recognizes this person, and they have an intimate relationship with Him.

**Psalms 91:15-16** He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. *With long life* I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation."

What does it mean to *be satisfied*? Well, that is up to you. If you are not satisfied, and there are still things that you are passionate about doing, there are things that you still want to do, well that implies that we can ask for more time, *until we are satisfied*. He says when WE are satisfied, God does not dictate to us, and say, 'You are satisfied now'. We would say to God, 'I have some things that I really desperately want to do; I am not satisfied yet, and you have said in Your Word that you will satisfy me with length of days'. You can ask God for more days. This is what it is implying.

The Barnes Commentary says:

"The meaning is: I will give him length of days as he desires, or until he is satisfied with life".

Even your uninspired commentators can see that it is pretty plain.

Adam Clark says:

"Literally, it says, with length of days I will fill him up".



And Mr. Clark continues, "He will neither live a useless life, or die, before his time. He shall live happy and die happy".

This sound pretty good; but it only applies to the person who is described in verses 1 and 2, "*He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust"*".

This person can expect to be satisfied, fully filled up with life, until they are happy. They will say that they have done what they wanted to do, been where they wanted to go, and they have achieved everything they have wanted to achieve and they are ready to close their eyes and then wake up in the resurrection. But, if you are not satisfied, *ask for more*.

So, in a nutshell, when you are looking at these scriptures, the so-called three score and ten is not a law, and we have to be very careful not to talk ourselves into an early death! If the power of death and life are in the tongue, be careful what you are saying. We should be saying to ourselves that our youth is renewed, and be looking forward to living a long life. "The Spirit of God gives life to my mortal body, Romans 8:11" It is up *to us* whether we choose to speak words of life or words of tiredness, and, 'I am running out of time, and I am sixty nine years and eleven months and I have one month to go'. That sort of attitude can be quite injurious. You and I can add years to our lives, or if we do not have wisdom we can shorten our lives.

Does the Bible actually anywhere, as some people seem to think, say that there is a set time or an *appointed time* to die? You have a number of people that say, "that is it, your time is up." Hopefully we have seen enough scriptures already to show that we can extend our lives, and have years added to us. You could not really do that if you had a fixed set time. But what are the scriptures that people are referring to, what is the problem?

Sometimes they just turn out to be misquotations or people perhaps emphasizing the verse in the wrong way.

**Hebrews 9:27-28** And as it is *appointed for men to die* once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

It is verse 27 that is sometimes so badly garbled, "...it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment..." It does not say, '... there is *an appointed time* for men to die,' which is the way that I have heard it misquoted. It does not say that there is an appointed time in your life when, come what may, you will die; if you are satisfied or unsatisfied, following wisdom or being wicked. It *is* appointed to all men once to die, that is physically, and after that we will be judged. So of course we are all appointed to die; (we might be potentially the final generation that does not die, because if the trumpet blows soon enough we might get changed and go straight into spirit life). The answer is that it is appointed to all men to die, *not* an appointed time to die. So do not misunderstand that one. Of course, there is a judgment headed our way, so be aware of that too!

**Ecclesiastes 3:1** To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

Solomon, the preacher, is making some reasonable observations.

**Ecclesiastes 3:2-3** A time to be born, And *a time to die*; A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted; A time to kill, And a time to heal; A time to break down, And a time to build up;

It does say in verse 2 that there is a time to be born, and a time to die. Well, of course that is true, as there is a time in our lives when we will die. At *some time* in our lives we will die, but not a set time. This is the point that people seem to misunderstand. There is no set appointed day and then your time is up. It does not happen that way, as there is no set time. There obviously is a time to die, and hopefully that will be when we are well advanced in years and fully satisfied with a full life. Then our time will come when we say, 'I am satisfied, I have everything that I wanted to do, and I am really grateful but I think I would rather close my eyes now and the next instant of my consciousness wake up in the World Tomorrow'. If we have not

reached that stage then we should say to God, as per Psalm 91, 'I am not satisfied yet, I am not ready to go yet, I have things to do. If you do not mind I would like a little bit longer'.

So there is no reference here to a set appointed specific date, day, hour, and second when the whistle blows and you are out.

There are quite a few centenarians around these days. In the United States there are currently over seventy thousand people that are over one hundred years old. Although there is a bit of a dispute about the numbers in Japan, there is one study that suggests by the year 2050, that there will be about *one million Japanese* over one hundred years old. You certainly get the impression that people in today's day and age, in the world that we live in, that one hundred and twenty would be pretty much the upper boundary. Certainly it is not set at the age of seventy or even eighty. So there is no need for any of us to start mentally winding down. Wisdom includes some wisdom in how we feel. Being stress free I think is good advice, casting all of our cares on the Eternal. Or as the Bible says, "*Take no anxious thought.*" There are many scriptures that tell us that we must keep our mind peaceful and calm, and put your trust in God. Also clearly some sense applied to our food, and our exercise and our sleep, and so on.

I think that some people think it is all down to being spiritual, and the physical body is not relevant, and it is just a "suit" that we wear, and "what God is interested in is just that I pray a lot, that I am a deeply humble person, and I read my Bible easily five or ten minutes a week, so I am one of the real pillars of the church, but my body might be a complete wreck. But after all God looks at the spirit and the heart, not this wreckage I am currently lumbering around in."

**I Corinthians 6:19-20** Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore *glorify God in your body* and in your spirit, which are God's.

What an unfortunate scripture, it almost implies that you and I should be glorifying *God in our body*, which is God's; and our spirit, which is God's. And that we were bought at a price, body and spirit. Let us read verse 19 again, "*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the*

*Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God, and you are not your own?”* That sort of implies that although we have our body, and we put ourselves in front of the mirror and look at ourselves thinking, ‘What features, what scintillating eyes, look at that hairstyle’, it is actually not entirely *our* body is it?

Verse 20: “*For you were bought at a price*” - we were redeemed, we have been delivered.

“...*Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s*”. So we cannot really take the excuse that, ‘God is only interested in the spiritual part of me; my body can be a walking disaster area, but after all I am a really humble person, and so on’. Well, I guess as a priority God is interested in the spirit. But God *also says* that we should not abuse our bodies.

**I Corinthians 9:24-25** Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the *prize is temperate* in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

The margin says that “temperate” means *exercises self-control*. You may say, ‘Well that is okay if you are an athlete, or play tennis, you have to be careful about your body’. You would not win gold medals and championships if you are 200 pounds overweight. You have to keep yourself fit, you have to watch your diet, watch what you drink, watch your sleep, watch your exercise program so that you are “*temperate in all things*”. You are going to be self-controlled, and you will exercise discipline because you want your body to be able to do what is required to achieve the prize. He says, “Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown”. He is saying that if these athletes are prepared to be up at 5:00 am in the morning, and run ten miles before breakfast, or swim for two hours in the local pool, seven days a week, to obtain something that is very temporary, a moment’s fame, how *much more* should you and I be prepared to *discipline ourselves* for an eternal imperishable crown that will last for ever and ever?

**I Corinthians 9:26** Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats

the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

So Paul is saying that he exercises self-control *over his body*; and he does not allow it to do what it wants to do. He is in charge of his body, and it goes the way that Paul wants. When we are looking at our lifestyle let us not forget that we have to exercise some wisdom here. If we want to live a long life, that is great — and God is more than happy with that. God will add years to us, give us a long life, and we can find the tree of life. We can exercise wisdom and enjoy a long life until we are fully satisfied, and filled to the full. This is no problem to God, but He does require *some cooperation* from us, and like Paul says, you and I should be prepared to discipline our bodies, exercise some self control and then exercise some wisdom in *how we live*. We need to be stress-free, peaceful and so on.

As we conclude, if you and I want a long and satisfying life then that is *our choice*. There is no prohibition by God. There are no boundaries that are clear in scripture.

So brethren, if you and I want a long life, **let us go for it!**

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*Transcript by Patricia Plunkett (many thanks Trish!)*