

Small Group Guide



Ice Breaker

Share one word that describes how you feel about the year that just passed and one word for what you hope for in the year ahead.

Key Scripture

Ephesians 5:15-17 - "Be very careful then how you live, not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

Key Takeaways

1. **The Unexamined Life** - Most people drift through life on autopilot, driven by daily needs without deep reflection on purpose and meaning.
2. **Numbering Our Days** - Recognizing that our time is limited isn't morbid; it's wisdom that helps us live intentionally rather than wastefully.
3. **The Days Are Evil** - The cultural current naturally pulls us away from God's will. Without intentionality, we'll be assimilated into the values of our culture.
4. **Continuous Conversation with God** - Seeking God's will isn't a one-time event but an ongoing relationship that requires regular check-ins.
5. **Make Every Effort** - Spiritual growth requires intentional pursuit. When we stop pursuing growth, we don't stay the same—we stagnate and go spiritually blind.

Discussion Questions

1. The sermon opened with Socrates' quote: "The unexamined life is not worth living." How would you describe the difference between an "examined" life and an "unexamined" life? Which one do you tend to live more often?
2. Why do you think the psalmist would pray such an unusual prayer: "Show me, Lord, my life's end and the number of my days. Let me know how fleeting my life is" (Psalm 39:4)? What wisdom is there in remembering our mortality?
3. Paul says to "make the most of every opportunity because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16). What does he mean by "the days are evil"? How have you experienced the cultural current pulling you away from God's purposes?

Personal Reflection

4. **Question 1 from the sermon:** What is quietly shaping you more than you realize? Consider your music, TV shows, podcasts, social media, and relationships. What messages are you absorbing without realizing it?
5. **Question 2 from the sermon:** What area of your life have you not had a conversation with God about in a while? (finances, marriage, parenting, health, work, spiritual disciplines, etc.)
6. **Question 3 from the sermon:** What will be your rhythm of seeking the Lord's will for your life? How often do you currently have intentional conversations with God about the direction of your life?
7. The sermon mentioned that when we realize our time is limited, our gut reaction is often to just cram more stuff in. Have you experienced this? What's the difference between being busy and being intentional?

Going Deeper

8. Read 2 Peter 1:5-9. Peter says to "make every effort" to grow in these qualities. Why do you think spiritual growth requires effort? What happens when we stop making that effort?
9. Jeff shared about doing devotions in a cemetery for several months. He said, "I didn't get depressed doing my devotions there. I got wise." What's the difference between being morbidly focused on death versus wisely remembering our mortality?
10. The sermon stated: "Wherever you are not intentionally pursuing Christ, living carefully and thoughtfully and deliberately...you're going to be assimilated by the culture." Where do you see this happening in your own life or in the church today?