

Living Your Life for Maximum Impact (Part 2) **Acts 20:17-35**

Introduction:

1. How many of you have a DVR on your television? People are acting, or players are running around in a game, and you can simply hit “pause” and everything stops. You can also push “rewind,” go back, and play it over again.
2. Have you noticed that real life isn’t this way? There is no “pause” or “rewind.” Life just keeps moving forward, hour by hour, and day by day. Unfortunately, we don’t get any “do-overs” or replays, do we? Once a day is gone, there is no way to get it back.
3. Because of this truth, we must live our lives in a way that will result in having a maximum spiritual impact on those around us. We only get one life to live on earth.
4. The apostle Paul had spent almost three years of his life in the city of Ephesus. There, he established a local church and won many people to Christ. These people were dear to his heart.
5. So, on his way to Jerusalem, Paul stopped at Miletus and sent a message for the Ephesian elders (pastors) to meet him there. vs. 17
6. Paul knew that this probably would be the last time he would ever see these men (vs. 25, 37-38). What would be Paul’s last words? What would they consist of? This text is an absolute gem because it reveals Paul’s final words of instruction to a group of people he loved dearly.
7. Paul had lived among these people for three years. His life was an open book (vs. 18). He was able to look back and review the godly pattern that he had set. Paul had lived his life for maximum impact (with no regrets), and this text shows us how he did it.
8. How can you live your life for maximum spiritual impact?

First, serve the Lord with humility. vs. 19

1. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ – THE apostle of the Gentiles. He had a very important position in God’s plan and God’s work. Yet Paul was not an insolent dictator who tried to lead by bullying and intimidating people.
cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11
 - Paul didn’t allow his position to go to his head. He had a servant’s heart.
2. Do you want to impact lives? Here’s the biblical secret: you impact others by serving others. Matthew 26:26-28
3. Serving the Lord is essentially serving others. This is how we serve the Lord. But it takes a mindset of humility. Philippians 2:3-4
4. Do you know what mindset Christ possessed that led Him to go to the cross and die for our sins? Philippians 2:7-8
 - Without humility of mind Christ would not have gone to the cross, and we would all be doomed to die in our sins.

5. Fathers, do you want to impact your children for the Lord? Possess humility of mind and have a servant's heart at home.
6. Married couples, do you want to have maximum impact on your children? Let them see you serving one another and giving of yourself to serve others. Serve as a family!
7. When we serve others, we are demonstrating in a very real and powerful way that life is not just about us. It is about Jesus Christ, and it is about others and their needs.
8. Let me warn you - when you serve the Lord it will not always be smooth sailing. vs. 19
9. When Paul served the Lord in Ephesus, he did so with many tears and temptations (adversities). There were Christ-rejecting Jews who didn't appreciate Paul's stand and message of Jesus Christ. cf. Acts 19:8-9
10. The other believers in Ephesus saw Paul's tears. They observed as Paul faithfully continued to serve the Lord despite the tears and despite great adversity.
 - Marriages have adversity, but when you continue to serve the Lord and each other through the adversity, it has a powerful impact on others.
 - You will encounter adversity at work, at home, at church, in your health, etc. But will you continue to serve the Lord with humility?
11. Our life is not a DVR. You can't go back. Do you want your life to have maximum impact? Serve the Lord with humility, even through adversity.

Second, show what you know about the Lord. vs. 20-21

1. As you grow in your relationship and knowledge of Christ, what is the purpose? Why do we come to church, read our Bibles, study God's Word in L.I.F.E Group, etc.? There really **is** a purpose! In fact, there is a two-fold purpose:
 - You grow in your knowledge of Christ so that you can personally grow and change.
 - In other words, you grow for your own internal benefit. This is inner heart change, allowing God to change your innermost thoughts, ambitions, priorities, attitudes, etc.
 - As you grow in Christ you experience joy, contentment, peace, etc. As you grow, it allows you to be set free from destructive attitudes and thought patterns. Galatians 5:22-23 become reality in your life.
 - As you grow and change in your spiritual character, it automatically enhances every other area of your life (your family life, your marriage, your friendships, your church life, your job, the way you handle problems you go through, etc.).
 - But you also grow in your knowledge of Christ so that you can share Christ with others.
 - Your spiritual growth is not just for **you** - that is, for **your** internal benefit. Your spiritual growth is important for others.
 - God desires that we be witnesses for Him. We are to be a light to others. If not, how will those who are without Christ come to Christ? Acts 1:8; Philippians 2:15

- So God’s plan is that we grow in Christ so that we can share our faith in Christ with others.
 - Your joy in heaven will be the lives you have impacted for Jesus Christ. We must get serious about our spiritual growth because other lives are at stake. There are people you see every day that I will never meet. It is your responsibility to be a light to them.
2. Paul did not hesitate to share his knowledge of Christ with others. vs. 20
 - The phrase “*kept back*” was a medical term used for withholding food from patients. Paul did not do this spiritually. He shared all of God’s Word with the Ephesians. vs. 27
 - Even food that may have been difficult to digest or didn’t taste too good - Paul declared it and taught it to these people.
 3. But not only did Paul **teach** the Bible to others, he also **lived** it daily. Notice he says, “*I have **showed** you, and have taught you...*” Paul’s walk matched his talk. He was showing what he was knowing! This is such a crucial principle if we are to have maximum impact.
 4. God definitely wants us to **speak out** for our Savior, Jesus Christ. But God also desires that we **live out** what we say we believe. This provides maximum impact.
 - **Illustration:** A baseball coach teaches his players to always catch fly balls with two hands. He constantly emphasizes it verbally. But every time he catches a ball, he is hot-dogging it with one hand. This causes his verbal teaching to lose impact.
 - **Illustration:** A dad teaches his children that God should come first in their lives, but he is constantly putting hobbies and other interests ahead of God. His teaching loses impact.
 - **Positive Illustration:** Dad has a chance at a promotion at work but the family would have to move. Dad turns it down because after prayer he decides it wouldn’t be in the family’s best spiritual interests. This will make an indelible impact on his kids.
 - **Negative Illustration:** Mom tells the kids they shouldn’t be talking to one friend about another friend, and then they hear her on the phone bashing a church leader with one of her friends. What speaks louder? But what if the kids overhear Mom telling a friend that she is **not** going to gossip about another person and they hear her taking a stand? What an impact!
 5. Parents, you are to be the primary spiritual teachers of your children. There is nothing more powerful than when Dad or Mom (or both) read the Bible and talk to their children about God. I don’t care if Dad just reads a verse and says nothing but, “That is God’s Word and I believe that.”
 - Do you know why it is so impacting? Because you have the opportunity to show your kids what you are teaching them on a daily basis in a variety of different real-life situations (in the car, on the phone, doing chores at the house, relaxing, family relationships, etc.).
 - The pastor, Sunday School teacher, youth pastor, etc. do not have that opportunity like you do. That is why you have the greatest impact on your children. You are able to teach, but then show. And as the old saying goes,

“A picture is worth a thousand words.” Remember “Show and Tell” in school?

6. Likewise, when you **speak out** for Christ at work and then **live it out** in your daily life, it has high impact. The same is true wherever you go.
7. Paul said he had shown and taught Christ publicly and from house to house. Privately and publicly you consistently live out what you say you believe. This is a recipe for maximum impact.

In Conclusion:

1. Paul’s verbal words and daily testimony revolved around two things – repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. vs. 21
2. Did you know people cannot be saved from their sins without these two things?
3. You must possess a change of mind about God and a faith that rests solely in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Have you been saved from your sins? Have you ever trusted Christ as your Savior? This is the first step in having your life make a maximum impact.