

Living Your Life for Maximum Impact (Part 3)

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

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

Third, live a life of sacrifice. vs. 22-24

1. Our flesh loves to be served. The flesh asks questions like, “What’s in it for me? Will it make me happy? Will it be to my advantage? Will it require too much from me?”
2. Let’s be honest. We are all selfish and self-centered by nature. The idea of sacrificing ourselves for somebody else’s benefit doesn’t set well with the flesh.
3. But since Paul had been saved, Christ had taught Paul a different way of living. His attitude was no longer, “What’s in it for Paul?” Paul’s first and foremost thoughts were, “How will this help the cause of Christ? How will it help others?”
4. Let’s read verses 22-24, and you can catch a glimpse into Paul’s heart and mind – his innermost thoughts and attitudes.

- Paul was compelled in his spirit to go to Jerusalem despite the fact that it most likely meant persecution and afflictions.
 - Why? Because Paul had such a heart for his people to turn to Christ. Paul would take a love offering from the Gentile churches to the poor saints at Jerusalem, and he truly hoped this would help many people to understand and receive the gospel of the grace of God.
 - Paul's attitude was that he would gladly serve the Lord, despite personal expense. In fact, he knew it could even cost him his life. But his personal safety was not the paramount issue in his mind – Christ and the message of grace was the issue.
 - Paul said, “*But none of these things move me...*” What things? Personal sacrifice (bonds) and potential problems (afflictions).
5. People ask, “How could Paul make such a maximum impact with his short life?” Herein we have the reason. Paul lived unto Christ, not unto himself.
2 Corinthians 5:14-15
6. Paul said that he did not count his life dear unto himself. In other words, Paul didn't view his physical life as something God owed him. He viewed it as a gift to be used to magnify Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:20-21
- “If I live and continue my physical life, it is all to be used unto Christ and for Christ. If I die serving the Lord, it is gain because I will be with the One I love so much.”
 - This does not mean that God is looking for us to have a kamikaze mindset and **look** to die as a martyr. Paul was **willing** to die for the cause of Christ (if unbelievers took his life), but God's desire is that we live our life unto Him.
7. In fact, in Romans 12:1 Paul implored believers to present their bodies a **living** sacrifice to God. He said it is our “*reasonable service.*”
- “*Reasonable*” – this comes from the Greek word from which we derive our English word “logic.”
8. Why is it logical (or reasonable) to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God? Think about it. Christ died for us on the cross. He took the awful penalty that you and I would have had to have paid for our sin, and He paid it in full.
- This means no eternal death, no eternal punishment, no lake of fire, and no eternal separation from God, all because of what Christ did for us!
9. If Christ died for us, surely we can live for Him. In other words, we shouldn't resent any personal sacrifices that we make on His behalf.
- A believer may say, “I **have** to go to church today. I have to go and serve in Awana. I have to go and work all night at WTB. I have to give my offering today...”
 - This is equivalent to a person rescuing you and your loved ones out of a burning house and dying in the process. And then you say, “I guess I have to go to his funeral. I have to take his family food. I have to take his widow to the store.”
 - Your attitude is, “It's my reasonable service. I will gladly give of myself. Without him, I wouldn't even have life. I don't **have** to, I **get** to...”

10. People who live their lives for maximum impact do not have a “me-first” attitude. Personal gain or personal expense are not the overriding issues. vs. 33-35
11. Those whose lives have big-time impact view their lives as a gift from God to be used to magnify Christ and minister to others.
 - When you wake up in the morning, you should have the attitude, “Thank you Lord for another day of life! Let me magnify Christ today. Let me lead somebody to Jesus today. Let me help somebody and be a blessing to somebody today.”

In Conclusion:

1. When we live a life of sacrifice, we exalt Christ and we minister to others. But I must mention that there is, in fact, a personal, internal benefit to the person who lives this way.
2. He experiences true, lasting, consistent joy in his heart and life. Notice in verse 24, it says “...so that I might finish my course *with joy*.” Paul said, “I have this sacrificial mindset in order that I can finish my course with joy.” Look at the end of verse 35.
3. Selfish people (or “me-first” people) are miserable people, but when you are living your life as a living sacrifice unto Christ it brings incredible meaning and joy to your life.
 - Do you want to have an impact on your family? Live a life of sacrifice. Do you want to have an impact on your neighbors and co-workers? Live a life of sacrifice. Do you want to be a person of impact here at church? Live a life of sacrifice.
4. You want a blessing? **Be** a blessing to somebody else! When you live a life of sacrifice, your life has maximum impact! There is no greater joy and fulfillment in life than this.