**The Five Greatest Facts of Life**

James 4:13-16

# I. Introduction:

1. We all live life at such a “break neck,” whirlwind pace (work, school, family, mail, bills, phone messages, house, yard, vehicles, recreation, etc.).

2. Under these circumstances it’s easy to be totally consumed with the everyday business of living. Sometimes I wish there were 36 hours in a day, but I’m sure soon this would not be enough.

3. We become so engaged in the process of living our lives and trying to take care of things we forget about the basics of life; the things that are of real value, the things that are truly essential.

4. \*\*Perhaps we should remember the words of Dwight Eisenhower. He once said this: *“I have found that the most urgent things in life are rarely important and that the most important things in life are rarely urgent.”*

5. 2 In today’s lesson I want us to relax, sit back and thoughtfully consider what I call the “The Five Greatest Facts of Life”. An understanding and appreciation of these five great facts from a Biblical perspective should help us prioritize our lives so the truly important and essential elements of life do not “slip through the cracks.”

# II. Discussion:

1. 3 **Life Is Brief** (Jas. 4:14)

A. Even if we live 90, 100, or even 500 years our life would still be brief (Job 7:6).

B. Please consider Psa. 90:1-12: Especially notice verse 10.

C. Ask nearly any elderly person if they feel their life has been short. Where are most of their contemporaries? As Sherry’s dad used to say, “they are in the bone yard.”

D. Considering that our life here on earth is so short, we need to take advantage of the time we have (Psa. 90:12; Rom. 13:11-14; Eph. 5:14-16; Acts 24:25; Psa. 103:15; Job 14:1-2).

E. Do you take time from your busy life to consider how short life is, and what ramifications that fact has on how you should be living your life?

F. If you do you will never take one minute of life for granted (Jas. 4:13-16) and you will strive to live a life in harmony with God’s will (Matt. 16:26).

2. 4 **Death Is Certain**

“But in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”

Benjamin Franklin

“Nothing in the world is as certain as death.”

Jean Froissart

“And come he slow, or come he fast,

It is but death who comes at last.”

Sir Walter Scott

A. We all tend to live our lives as if we will live forever.

(1) For example, I knew an 85 year old man that tried to borrow money on a 30-year note!

(2) We laugh, but most of us travel through life “whistling in the graveyard” trying to ignore the inevitable.

5 “Death is a friend of ours; and he that is not ready to entertain him is not at home.”

Sir Francis Bacon

(3) The Bible teaches us differently! Jas. 4:14; Heb. 9:27; Eccl. 7:2

B. 6 Death is the great equalizer. Death does not respect wealth, death does not respect fame, education, or social standing. Death is the sure and certain fate of all men.

“As men, we are all equal in the presence of death.”

Publilius Syrus\*\*

C. What are your chances of being struck by lightning? Of your house burning down? Of being involved in a severe car wreck? Of being the victim of an airplane crash? What do all four of these events have in common? They are less probable than our death! Heb. 9:27

3. 7 **Judgment Is Sure**

A. All will be at the judgment (Matt. 25:31-32; Rev. 20:12-13).

B. Judgment is sure and personal. It is one appointment that all of us will keep (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:11-12).

C. Judgment will be just (2 Tim. 4:7-8; Rom. 2:5b-10).

D. Judgment will be by God’s word (Jn. 12:48; Rom. 2:16; 1:16-17).

E. Judgment will be final (2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:41, 46).

F. 8 How will we deal with this great fact of life? Eccl. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10-11a

4. 9 **Eternity Is Long**

A. Did you ever stop to contemplate how long eternity will be?

(1) We often use the concept in very flippant ways:

(a) “I had to wait in the check-out line for an eternity.”

(b) “There’s an eternity left in this game.”

(2) \*\*Even Webster has trouble defining eternity: “infinite time” (an oxymoron)!

(3) Maybe we can begin to appreciate eternity by taking a journey through time and space. In the book *The Universe and Beyond* (Dickinson, T. 1992 Camden House, Buffalo, NY) we find these words of reflection that should make all of us appreciate the vastness of our universe, not only in terms of space, but also in terms of time:

10 “The spring evening is crisp and cool and pitch black. Stars fill the sky in a glittering tapestry that goes unnoticed by the occupants of a car speeding down the rural highway, far from the city lights and traffic. Dimly at first, the headlights reveal a steep hill ahead. Without losing speed, the automobile hurtles upward and reaches the crest, and for an instant, the headlamps shine into the blackness like two ghostly fingers. 11 That instant marks the freedom for at least one photon of light which avoids bumping into dust motes or absorbing molecules of air on its way up from the Earth’s surface. Less than two seconds later, it passes the moon. One minute after that, Earth and moon diminish to star-like points. 12 Within an hour, they fade into the starry backdrop. One month away from Earth, the photon of light is so remote that all the planets are invisible and the sun dwindles to a star, though still far brighter than any other. In two years, the sun is reduced to a bright but not extraordinary star. Several other stars are similarly luminous.

13 Over the next 50 years, the sun slowly fades until it is dimmer than the faintest stars visible to the unaided eye. Yet the sky still appears basically as it does from Earth and has the same general proportion of bright and dim stars. But by the hundredth year of travel, a distinct thinning of the stars becomes apparent ahead. The photon is moving out of the Milky Way galaxy.

14 After cruising in its arrow-straight trajectory for 2,000 years (6 x 1012 miles; 6 trillion miles), the photon is completely outside and well above the spiral arm of the galaxy where our solar system resides. From this vantage point, only a handful of stars speckle the sky. But the view back toward the galaxy reveals an impressive panorama: the sweeping curves of the spiral arms and, beyond them, the bulging galactic nucleus. Continuing its voyage for another 22,000 years, the photon nears a mammoth swarm of stars, the Hercules Cluster, a million suns congregated in a rough sphere about 75 light-years across. This is one of approximately 150 globular clusters that orbit the Milky Way galaxy like satellites.

15 The photon races onward, but the scenery becomes less inspiring with each millennium as the Milky Way fades to a mere puff in the blackness. Only one additional galaxy, Andromeda, is easily visible; other galaxies appear as mere smudges. After 10 million years, both the Milky Way and Andromeda are lost to view. Millions more years will pass before chance encounters with other galaxies break the monotony of the void. And the journey has just begun.” (page11).

16 “As each tiny spear of starlight enters the eyes, it ends a journey that began decades or centuries ago. Five of the seven stars in the Big Dipper, for example, are members of a nearby star cluster roughly 75 light-years away. Their light takes a human lifetime to reach Earth. Nestled between the constellations Perseus and Cassiopeia lies a twin cluster of stars-the Double Cluster. Their light travels for 7,000 years before it reaches us from the next spiral arm beyond the one that we occupy in the Milky Way galaxy.” (page 14)

17 “The unaided eye can bridge even greater gulfs. Overhead, on late-autumn evenings, we can see the Andromeda galaxy, a small, oval, hazy patch that is, in reality, a colossal platter-shaped stellar metropolis larger than our own Milky Way and populated by perhaps a trillion stars. The combined light of those stars is dimmed by its enormous distance from Earth: two million light years.

When the light from the Andromeda galaxy meets a human retina and registers as an image in the brain, that particular bundle of photons terminates an uninterrupted voyage of two million years.” (pages 14-15)

18 “The Andromeda galaxy is just the nearest of billions of galaxies similar to the Milky Way. The most powerful telescopes on Earth can detect galaxies eight billion light-years away.” (pages 15-16)

(4) \*\* I cannot even be to fathom the vastness of the universe. Light from the galaxy (Andromeda) nearest our own galaxy (Milky Way) traveling at 186,000 miles per second takes two million years to travel to Earth! And the galaxy so close to our own is but one of many billions of galaxies in the universe!

(a) Speed of light is 186,000 miles/sec (1.29 sec from earth to moon!)

(b) 669,600,000 miles/hr (~670 million mph)

(c) 16,070,400,000 miles/day (~16 billion miles/day)

(d) 5,865,696,000,000 miles/year (~6 trillion miles/year)

(e) 6,925,568,000,000,000,000,000 miles (almost 7 septillion) in 8-billion light years

(5) 19 Just think of the vastness of eternity: two million years is not even a snap of the finger, it is not even one tick of the clock. Because after the passage of two million years, two billion years, or a million, billion years; there are no less days to spend in eternity than when we started! (*Amazing Grace*) Ladies and gentleman if such things do not stir your thoughts, if that does not cause your heart to at least slightly tremble I feel sorry for you.

B. 20 Did you ever stop to contemplate that everyone is going to live forever? Jn. 5:28-29; Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Cor. 15:22, 35-38

(1) Here on earth we are prisoners of time (clocks, calendar, date book), but eternal punishment and eternal life are forever! No clocks, no calendars, no date books; only the surety and the absolute certainty of FOREVER!

(2) 21 Eternity is “timeless.” In eternity we never cease to exist that is why Jesus emphasized the importance of contemplating it (Mk. 9:43-48; Matt. 10:28; 16:26).

C. 22 Are you ready to be ushered into eternity when you die? The question is not will it happen, but are you ready! Eccl. 12:13-14

5. 23 **Preparation Is Necessary**

A. Everything we strive to achieve in this life requires preparation.

(1) Prepare for good job by getting a good education.

(2) Prepare to harvest a crop by preparing soil (tilling, fertilizing, spraying weeds, planting seed, etc.).

(3) Prepare to build a house by making a blueprint, list of materials, pull permits, asemble the materials, workers and tools.

B. But, when it comes to eternity most believe everyone goes to heaven regardless of whether they’ve prepared for it or not! How many funerals have you ever attended where it was said, “At least is now in a better place.” (Matt. 7:13-14)

C. “Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.”

(1) We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-10).

(2) But working the good works that “*God prepared beforehand that we should walk in*” is required (Jas. 2:14-26); obedience is required (Heb. 5:9); will be judged by our *“deeds”* (Rom. 2:5-9).

(3) Preparation is individual - No one can do it for you! 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 2:12

(4) There is only one time to prepare…NOW! 2 Cor. 6:2

# III. Conclusion:

1. 24 Do you understand the five great facts of life?

A. Life is brief

B. Death is certain

C. Judgment is sure

D. Eternity is long

E. Preparation is necessary

2. Do you appreciate the five great facts of life? Are dealing with them or ignoring them?

3. If you are not a Christian it is imperative that you become one:

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| Hear (Rom. 10:17) | Repent (Acts 17:30) |
| Believe (Heb. 11:6) | Baptized (Gal. 3:27) |
| Confess (Rom. 10:9-10) | Faithfulness (Rev. 2:10) |

4. If you’re a Christian and you’ve wandered from the fold of safety you also need to change! Acts 8:22

5. Be saved by obeying right now! 2 Cor. 6:2