

Making the Most of 525,600 Minutes

Hope for Renters

January 8, 2023

Overarching Theme: 2023 – Living the Dream

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Point: 2023 can be a year of *living the dream* of faithful discipleship as we take a step forward in following Jesus Christ.

Reflect on this Scripture: Psalm 90 NRSV

¹*Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.*

²*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

³*You turn us back to the dust, and say, "Turn back, O mortal ones!"*

⁴*For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.*

⁵*You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass which is renewed in the morning;*

⁶*in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.*

⁷*For we are consumed by your anger; by your wrath we are overwhelmed.*

⁸*You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.*

⁹*For all our days pass away under your wrath; our years come to an end like a sigh.*

¹⁰*The years of our life are three score and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.*

¹¹*Who considers the power of your anger, the awesomeness of your wrath?*

¹²*So teach us to number our days that we may receive a heart of wisdom.*

¹³*Return, O LORD! How long? Have compassion on your servants!*

¹⁴*Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*

¹⁵*Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us, and as many years as*

we have seen evil.

¹⁶Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.

¹⁷Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands. Yes, establish the work of our hands!

Commentary:

In the wake of the devastating Babylonian Exile and its' effect of disrupting any illusion the people of God had about being in control, Psalm 90 employs the voice of Moses (the only Psalm attributed to this foundational Biblical leader) in calling for a sort of 'reset' for God's people. Psalm 90 is in itself a sort of theological reflection on the priority of God's activity/God's time to reshape human activity and human time. Without a doubt we are mortal and we are sinful. But given these realities, our days and years are not simply moments to be endured on the way to oblivion; our efforts are not simply fleeting and futile. Because God is eternal and faithful and eternally faithful in turning toward humanity, our allotted time even in exile can be redeemed - becoming something meaningful, purposeful, joyful, and enduring.

In the final analysis, Psalm 90 functions like the songs of praise as a call to decision. We are called to entrust ourselves and our allotted time to God with the assurance that, grounded in God's work and God's time, our lives and labors participate in the eternal (see John 3:16-17, where trust in God's forgiving love results in "eternal life"). Psalm 90 is finally, therefore, not an act of futility but an act of faith. And it is also an act of hope. Without having to see it happen, the psalmist trusts that God can and will satisfy and make glad and manifest God's work and establish the work of our hands (vv. 14 - 17). And Psalm 90 is also an act of love. The psalmist's trust puts him or her in communion with past generations who found a dwelling place in God (v.1) and with future generations, the children, to whom the work of God will be manifest (v. 16). For the psalmist, sin and death are inevitable realities. But so are forgiveness and life! Psalm 90 is a profession of faith that invites us and instructs us to live the only way it makes any sense whatsoever to live - in faith and in hope and in love.

- Adapted from the New Interpreters Bible Commentary, Vol IV, p. 1044

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. What is the value of recognizing that “*from everlasting to everlasting*” God is God and that we are mortal?
2. Verses 7-9 emphasize human sinfulness and our need for God’s mercy. How is this confession helpful for us spiritually speaking?
3. What does the prayer of verse 12 mean – “*teach us to number our days that we may receive a heart of wisdom?*” How can the recognition of our limitedness contribute to better personal priorities as we consider the finite number of minutes in any given day/week/month/year?
4. How can the experience of God’s compassion and love each morning (v 12-13) lead to a clearer sense of what is really important in life?
5. Why do you think the Psalm concludes with a request for God’s favor and blessing upon our human endeavors?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Psalm 90:12 ¹²*So teach us to number our days that we may receive a heart of wisdom.*