

Will you die in order?



This is perhaps the strangest Question of the Month I have ever written. I had other ideas regarding what the question would be for the topic I will be addressing, but I also knew what I ended up choosing would definitely get your attention.

So, where in the world am I heading with this? Good question.

As I am writing this, it was just 4 days ago (Dec 29, 2024) that former President Jimmy Carter passed away. When I first heard about it, my reaction was, “You’re kidding?” It was a knee-jerk reaction, seemingly conveying disbelief. Could I really be surprised or in disbelief that he would have died? After all, he was 100 years old! When was I expecting he would die? At what age would I say, “Yeah, that makes sense.”? It wasn’t that I was in disbelief in any real sense; it was that it came as a surprise and was ultimately a very sad event.

In reality, no one should be surprised that a 100-year-old person passes away. But how often do we react with shock when we hear someone else has passed away? In essence, we have an acceptable time when certain people can die without it being hard to believe.

As an example, when someone very young dies, it is not only very sad, it truly is a surprise and understandably unexpected. How could they die at such a young age? Or, in a slightly different category, it’s not quite as much the age as the prominence of the person. When a prominent dignitary or skilled athlete dies, we are generally shocked and at least subconsciously feel that they should not have died yet. Why not? Good question. Are talented people or famous people deserving of living longer than others? I don’t think you’d necessarily say, “Yes.” However, that is often the attitude we have. Especially when it comes to prominent Christians. “How could God allow them to die at that point in their life and ministry? They were having such a tremendous impact for the kingdom!”

Does God “owe” it to people involved in effective ministries to live lengthy and healthy lives? I don’t see that anywhere in the Bible. I actually tell people, somewhat humorously, if I get hit by a bus and die tomorrow, don’t react in horror and ask, “How could God let him die? His ministry was doing so well. I can’t believe it!” God doesn’t owe me anything regarding my life on Earth. He only “owes” me eternal life in heaven with Him and that’s only because He promises that to everyone who places their faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. Regarding what happens on Earth prior to that, all bets are off, so to speak. He certainly promises to provide everything we need to do everything He wants us to do, but too often, what we see as a “need” is more of a “want.”

So, since we’ve established that we should not have hard and fast expectations as to how long we are on this planet, what are we doing with the time we do have?

There are actually two issues to consider.

Question of the Month

1. How many years you will live.
2. When Christ will return.

Both of these factors limit how long we have to carry out what God has planned for us.

I am in the middle of preparing a sermon for this weekend at my own church ([Spring Creek Church](#) - Pewaukee, WI). I am not a pastor there, just filling in for the weekend services. I will be sharing a football-related analogy. It has to do with a strange phenomenon that occurs all too often. It's the first game of the season, and your team completely flops! After the game, the head coach is interviewed and says, "Well, I guess we just weren't prepared." My reaction is always, "Wait a minute! You had ALL off-season. You had ALL pre-season. And you had ALL the prior week to focus on that specific team! You have no excuse for not being prepared."

Let's bring this home. It's January 2025. You had all last year, and you'll have the beginning of this year to position yourself to accomplish whatever God is calling you to do. Don't get to the end of the year and say, "Well, I guess I just wasn't prepared. Maybe next year."

Yes, we have to eat, sleep, work, do chores around the house, etc. But what are we doing with the rest of our time? How many people will come to know the Lord through God's grace and His sovereignly allowing your actions to be a part of that process? How many Christians will be stronger in their faith because of your encouragement?

We are not lacking the tools to get started:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16 - 17).

Let me paraphrase a portion of this passage:

God has given us His inspired Word, so we would have everything we need to do everything God wants us to do!

I'll end with a powerful quote you most likely have heard before. It comes from C.T. Studd, a British missionary:

"Only one life, twill soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last."

Whether you call it a New Year's resolution or not, let's make 2025 a year of seeking God's will more than ever, and when January 2026 comes, we can all be fired up about all God accomplished through His empowerment and our willingness to be available and follow His lead!

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to [contact us!](#)