

Past, Present and Future
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Introduction: Our God offers us priceless wisdom concerning time.

A. To understand time is to understand life! (**Ecc 8:5-6**)

1. Real wisdom comes when we clearly see that without God we cannot understand!
2. What seems certain and reasonable to us concerning a future outcome often is wrong. (**Ecc 9:11**)
3. How then can we have any assurance about the next hour, day or year?

B. We are greatly limited by our short life and experiences.

1. Consider the differences between myself (1954) and my father (1918).

“U. S. statistics for 1904: The average life expectancy in the US was 47. Only 14% of the homes in the US had a bathtub. Only 8% of the homes had a telephone. There were only 8,000 cars in the US and only 144 miles of paved roads. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph. Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California. The average wage in the US was \$0.22/hour. More than 95% of all births in the US took place at home. 90% of all US physicians had no college education. Most women only washed their hair once a month and used borax or egg. There were only about 230 reported murders in the entire US.”

2. While we cannot know, God does! (**Ps 37:18-20**)

I. How Should We View the Past?

A. If we know God we look at the past with great gratitude for God’s grace.
(**Eph 2:11-13**)

1. We, of all people, can see the hopelessness of living without God.
2. We should look on our past like Israel did their slavery in Egypt.
3. As the Israelites observed the Passover and remembered, so should we completely identify our past with the deliverance in the cross of Christ!

B. How we view the past will determine how we view ourselves.

1. The power of conversion and forgiveness as a true foundation of our lives gives us a power and a confidence to live. (**1 Tim 1:12-15**)
2. Here is where many struggle. Their conversion does not release them from the past. This is a battle we must win.

C. Consider the OT character Shimei, of the house of King Saul.

1. This man identified himself with his family and all views they held.
2. While David was a faithful servant of Saul, Saul slandered and attacked David and expected everyone to line up with the king’s “reality.”
(**1 Sam 22:8**)
3. Saul’s son, Jonathan, trusted God and would not accept a false report.
(**Prov 18:17**)

4. 20 Years after Saul's death, Shimei shows his heart to everyone. How sad for a man to let his past mold him this way! **(2 Sam 16:7-8, 13)**
5. A bitter past brings a depressed and angry life.

II. How Should we View the Present?

- A. Our present should be determined by God's presence. **(Heb 13:5-6)**
 1. How do we begin each day? At any given time how do we view reality?
 2. It is a great comfort to know of the "eyes of the Lord." **(1 Pt 3:12)**
 3. Here is where great comfort and courage is found. What if this thought frightens you? **(Prov 28:1)**
- B. Consider how God's presence influenced Joshua. **(Josh 1:5; 3:7)**
 1. The man of faith will walk a very different path from the world.
 2. We will have great battles just like Joshua. We must know where we stand with God!
 3. The greatest moment of terror for Joshua came in the defeat at Ai. **(Joshua 7:6-8)**
- C. We are an actual temple of God!
 1. How can the Holy Spirit dwell in us? Do you realize what that means? **(1 Cor 6:18-20)**
 2. This truth helps me to know the protection and care of God. **(1 Cor 10:13; Psa 121:4-8)**

III. How Should We View the Future?

- A. Our future must be completely identified with God's kingdom. **(Phil 2:16-17)**
 1. It is a life of great fulfillment when we see our work impacting eternity.
 2. Paul's sacrifice for the Philippians had the entrance into heaven as the focus. **(Phil 2:14-16)**
 3. I want my loved ones crossing the finish line of heaven!
 4. We should never find ourselves in the realm of the mummies. What are we looking at that is making us miserable? Politics? Other's faults?
- B. We should be the most optimistic and joyful people on earth. **(Phil 4:4-7)**
 1. The battle is completely fought within our own minds.
 2. When we view everything in light of eternity then it changes the importance of everything. **(Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:17-18)**
 3. What will the next year bring? We do not know except that we can be confident that it will be for the glory of God!
 4. Do we have the faith to let God open doors of opportunity for us?

Conclusion: What would your loved ones say about the driving purpose of your life? **(Phil 3:13-14)**